

Inspection of Tewkesbury School

Ashchurch Road, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire GL20 8DF

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October, and 8 December 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Many pupils like learning at Tewkesbury School. Pupils can attend a breadth of sporting, drama and musical activities and clubs. Pupils relish the opportunity to perform in school theatre productions, such as 'Beauty and the Beast'. Staff arrange visits to theatres and museums, such as the Natural History Museum, to enrich pupils' knowledge about the subjects they study.

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. However, there is a minority of pupils who do not behave well and who disrupt lessons. Pupils can define bullying accurately. They say that staff have started to address the issues of bullying in the school. However, pupils state that the relatively new systems introduced to resolve bullying do not yet work well.

Pupils have many opportunities to read for enjoyment. They use the well-stocked library, read in tutor time and enjoy books such as 'Ghost Boys' by Jewell Parker Rhodes. However, some pupils who struggle to read do not receive timely and well-planned support.

Students in the sixth form receive a good quality of education. They develop strong knowledge about the world beyond school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and staff have worked hard to revise the curriculum and ensure that it is sequenced well. For example, the mathematics curriculum ensures that most pupils build on their prior knowledge to learn new concepts. The English curriculum uses exciting texts, such as 'Noughts & Crosses' by Malorie Blackman, to develop pupils' knowledge of how writers craft their stories. However, the learning needs of some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not accurately identified. Therefore, such pupils do not receive the targeted support they need to learn well.

Leaders do not monitor the support that staff provide for pupils with SEND effectively. For example, some pupils who have difficulty with reading do not receive the support they require to catch up. This means that these pupils cannot learn the curriculum because they cannot read sufficiently well.

Most pupils are kind and friendly. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. However, although leaders have established new systems for reporting and addressing bullying, some pupils state that it persists. Leaders have appointed anti-bullying ambassadors, but it is too early to judge the impact of their work. Leaders have significantly reduced the numbers of pupils who are suspended from school. However, a minority of pupils continue to disrupt lessons and affect the learning of others.

Leaders have implemented a well-designed careers education for pupils. Across the year groups, pupils feel well informed about their next steps. Students in the sixth form also receive effective guidance about work, apprenticeships and further education. Leaders have established successful links with universities, such as the University of Gloucestershire. In Year 12, students do work experience to prepare them for the wider world.

Leaders in the sixth form have ensured that students receive a well-structured curriculum. For example, students were observed discussing their knowledge of drama texts when studying 'A Streetcar Named Desire' by Tennessee Williams in a Year 12 English literature lesson. Students develop their leadership skills well through the curriculum. For example, students listen to Year 7 pupils read.

Most pupils attend school well but some pupils with SEND do not. Leaders have introduced strategies to ensure that these pupils attend school regularly, but the impact is not yet apparent. Pupils and students in the sixth form are punctual to lessons.

Leaders have planned the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum effectively. In key stage 3, pupils have frequent opportunities to discuss the issues they have covered. However, in key stage 4, pupils do not learn the PSHE curriculum in as much depth.

Governors are reflective about their effectiveness and constantly strive to improve through accessing training and monitoring opportunities. They know the school well and share the new headteacher's vision for the academic, social and emotional success of all pupils. Governors monitor the work of school leaders effectively and pose challenging questions. Leaders and governors support the well-being of staff, including early career teachers. Staff are overwhelmingly proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are vigilant about ensuring that pupils are both physically and emotionally safe. They act appropriately and in a timely manner when pupils are at risk of harm. Leaders work well with external agencies to keep pupils safe and are not afraid to challenge when they have concerns.

Staff receive up-to-date safeguarding training. Leaders ensure that appropriate background checks are carried out on adults working in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that the learning needs of pupils with SEND are clearly identified. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not receive the support they require to help them learn well. Leaders must ensure that all pupils with SEND receive support pertinent to their needs, so that they learn confidently and successfully.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils who struggle to read receive targeted support in a timely manner. As a result, some pupils cannot learn the curriculum effectively. Leaders must ensure that a targeted early reading programme is implemented, so that pupils can catch up and learn well.
- Leaders have introduced new strategies to identify and address poor behaviour and bullying. However, a minority of pupils continue to behave poorly and impede the learning of others. Additionally, bullying persists. Leaders must continue to implement the anti-bullying and behaviour strategies, so that bullying and poor behaviour are eradicated from the school.
- Some pupils with SEND do not attend school as well as they should. Leaders must ensure that parents, carers and pupils understand that if pupils are not in school regularly, they are not learning effectively.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	137752
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10240130
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,293
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sue Maizonnier
Headteacher	Kathleen McGillicuddy
Website	http://www.tewkesburyschool.org
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 September 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Some pupils attend a registered alternative provision. This is run by this school and two neighbouring secondary schools.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Very occasionally, Ofsted receives information after a visit to a school that may suggest there are gaps in the inspection evidence base, which will cause Ofsted to conclude that the inspection is incomplete. This happened at Tewkesbury School. One of His Majesty's Inspectors returned to the school on 8 December 2022 to gather additional information to secure the evidence base. In such cases, the inspection report is not published until Ofsted is satisfied that the inspection is secure.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and members of the leadership team, including curriculum leaders.
- An inspector held a discussion with governors and a telephone discussion with the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, geography, history, modern foreign languages and mathematics. This meant that, in each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' books.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents who responded to the confidential questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They evaluated the views of staff and pupils from the Ofsted online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Teresa Hill	Ofsted Inspector
John Weeds	Ofsted Inspector
Nic Blunsum	Ofsted Inspector
Frances Bywater	His Majesty's Inspector

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