

Inspection of Sir John Thursby Community College

Eastern Avenue, Burnley, Lancashire BB10 2AT

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this thriving and popular school. They try hard to live up to the school's core values. Pupils, including those with diverse needs and backgrounds, feel a strong sense of belonging to the school community.

Pupils feel safe in school. They appreciate the support that they receive for their well-being. Pupils benefit greatly from a range of leadership opportunities. For example, they act as librarians, prefects and mental health ambassadors. These roles help pupils to make a considerable contribution to the school and wider community.

Leaders expect pupils to aim high across the academic and wider curriculum. Pupils achieve well. They are proud of the rewards that they receive for their academic achievement. Pupils are very well informed about their options when they leave school. Almost all pupils successfully move on to apprenticeships, A levels or other forms of education, employment or training.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Most pupils behave with courtesy and respect. A small cohort of pupils occasionally exhibit challenging behaviour. Staff quickly address and manage this behaviour well.

Staff know pupils very well. They provide high levels of support for many pupils and their families. Occasionally, when bullying occurs or pupils hear derogatory language, staff are quick to address it.

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

The ambitious curriculum provides appropriate breadth and depth so that pupils learn all that they should. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is ordered in a logical way and that teachers have strong subject knowledge.

The vast majority of pupils follow the suite of subjects required for the English Baccalaureate. Pupils also benefit from highly engaging vocational studies, such as construction and hairdressing. Pupils progress well through the curriculum and achieve well in most subjects. Leaders know that last year, in some subjects, pupils did not achieve as well as they should have. As a result, they have made changes to the way teachers deliver the curriculum. Leaders also check the quality of teaching more closely than they did before.

Pupils progress well because they have the essential knowledge that they need for the next topic. However, in a few subjects, leaders' curriculum thinking is less clear. This means that some pupils do not learn the most important knowledge that they need. Consequently, they develop gaps in their learning.

Pupils have many opportunities to recall and revisit what they have learned. This helps them to remember important information over time. Teachers use assessment

information to identify topics that need to be revisited or taught differently because pupils have not fully understood.

Some teachers are not as far ahead as others in using assessment information well. This means that when some pupils have not fully understood what has been taught, the teacher is unaware and does not provide the support that these pupils need. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

There are effective systems in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND benefit from high-quality care and effective support in lessons. These help many pupils with SEND to gain confidence and independence.

A much higher than average proportion of pupils join the school unable to read at the expected level. In addition, many pupils speak English as an additional language. Leaders have a comprehensive programme in place to help pupils catch up with their reading knowledge. Consequently, pupils are able to access the curriculum. They told inspectors that they very much enjoy reading and visiting the library.

Pupils speak confidently about equality. They understand that it is important to respect people who are different from themselves. Most pupils show respect for adults and each other.

Pupils are very positive about the independent careers advice and guidance that they receive. This means that they are well prepared for their next steps in education or training.

Governors provide considerable expertise in their role. They have supported leaders effectively to bring about improvements. Staff are proud to work at the school. Leaders engage with staff. They have taken steps to reduce workload, including changes to the marking policy.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff receive regular training to refresh, enhance and update their knowledge of safeguarding. There are robust systems in place for staff to report concerns about pupils. Leaders deal with concerns about pupils' welfare and safety in a timely manner. Leaders work with a range of agencies and the local authority to provide early help and enhanced support where needed.

Pupils know that they can talk to a range of adults if they have a concern. They know how to keep themselves safe in school and when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The checks that some teachers make on pupils' learning are not as effective as they could be. This means that some teachers do not address pupils' misconceptions or support them to fully understand what has been taught. Leaders should ensure that teachers use agreed assessment strategies consistently well so that they check pupils' understanding more readily.
- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not specified the key knowledge that pupils must learn. This means that some pupils miss out on essential knowledge needed to progress successfully through the curriculum. Leaders should refine their curriculum thinking so that teachers know what should be taught and when this will happen in these subjects.

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	134996
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10255962
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Glenda Brindle
Headteacher	Rob Browning
Website	www.sirjohnthursby.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 and 22 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders make use of three registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement 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 first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders, including those responsible for behaviour, safeguarding, careers and personal development.

- Members of the inspection team met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. They also considered a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and records of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors checked records of actions taken by leaders to keep pupils safe. Inspectors scrutinised the single central record of recruitment checks and looked at records of training for staff.
- Inspectors observed social times and looked at a range of information regarding pupils' behaviour. The views of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View were considered. The views of staff and pupils who completed their respective surveys were also considered.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, English, modern foreign languages, history, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, met with subject leaders and spoke to some pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors also scrutinised the quality of provision for pupils with SEND. They looked at a range of documentation regarding the support that pupils with SEND receive.
- Inspectors spoke with a wide range of pupils and staff about the safeguarding culture in the school. Members of the inspection team also spoke with pupils about their experience in school and their learning.

Inspection team

Sally Kenyon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Paula Crawley	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Yarwood	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Meldrum	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Cox	Ofsted Inspector

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