

# Inspection of a good school: Poynton High School

Yew Tree Lane, Poynton, Stockport, Cheshire SK12 1PU

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Inspection dates:

27 to 29 June 2023

## Outcome

Poynton High School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Staff at Poynton High School have high aspirations for the achievement of pupils and students in the sixth form. They provide effective guidance and support to help pupils to choose suitable courses that match their interests. Most pupils and students achieve highly.

Pupils typically behave well and aspire to live up to the clear behaviour and conduct expectations that are outlined in the student charter. This promotes values of mutual kindness, tolerance and respect, which permeate the school. As a result, most pupils feel happy at school.

Leaders tackle incidents of bullying effectively and staff are vigilant to the signs that a pupil may need additional support. Pupils know that they should report any concerns to staff and are confident that staff will act swiftly to help them. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Students in the sixth form enjoy acting as leaders and mentors for younger pupils. They readily take on roles as representatives of the school council, the eco club, and the pride network, which celebrates diversity and equality. There is a thriving Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, which enables pupils and students to achieve all levels of the award. Pupils enjoy participating in a wide array of clubs including sports and music, as well as book clubs and chess club.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum which explicitly builds on pupils' previous learning. They have organised the curriculum well to enable pupils to develop an increasingly broad and sophisticated body of knowledge from Year 7 to Year 13.

Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subjects that they teach. In the sixth form, teachers deliver subject curriculums that are aspirational and meet the needs

of pupils well. However, in a small number of subjects across key stages 3 and 4, there is more variability in how well teachers deliver the curriculum. From time to time, teachers select activities and resources that do not support pupils to learn the knowledge identified in the curriculum sufficiently well. This limits how deeply some pupils learn.

In most subjects, and particularly in the sixth form, teachers are skilled in checking how well pupils are learning the knowledge in the curriculum. Teachers provide rapid support to address any misconceptions that may arise. However, in a few subjects, teachers do not use assessment strategies as effectively as they should to check on pupils' knowledge. On occasion, some pupils develop gaps in their learning which persist over time. This sometimes hinders these pupils' future learning.

Leaders quickly identify those pupils who find reading more difficult. Expert staff support these pupils to catch up with their peers. Leaders have ambitious plans to help all pupils to maintain a love of reading. While these plans are in the early stages of implementation, many pupils told inspectors that they are reading challenging texts for pleasure as well as through the taught curriculum.

Leaders have acted swiftly to improve their systems to identify and support pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most pupils with SEND achieve as well as their peers. This is because many teachers make appropriate adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum to enable these pupils to succeed.

Leaders have refined their systems to promote positive behaviour in lessons and around school. Teachers feel well supported by leaders to tackle any rare incidents of disruption to learning. Leaders provide effective support to those pupils who find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour.

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, benefit from a well-considered programme to support their wider personal development. They are taught about the importance of physical and mental health, diversity and how to develop healthy relationships. Pupils' learning is enhanced through the wide range of opportunities and experiences that are on offer to them. For example, external speakers such as the police and magistrates helped pupils to learn about personal safety.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn about careers from the very beginning of their time at Poynton High School. Pupils benefit from a rich programme of experiences both within and beyond the taught curriculum. This means that pupils and students are well informed about the choices available to them when they leave the school.

Governors and trustees have the knowledge required to provide effective support and challenge to leaders. Staff have a high level of confidence in leaders. They appreciate leaders' support of their well-being and the opportunities for ongoing professional development.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular and up-to-date safeguarding training so that they are fully equipped to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders have established effective systems for staff to record any concerns that they have about a pupil's welfare. Leaders share information efficiently and effectively. This ensures that vulnerable pupils receive appropriate and timely support.

Leaders have strong relationships with external agencies, which enables them to seek advice and support when needed. They are tenacious in securing the help that pupils and their families need.

Pupils learn about online and personal safety. They have opportunities to talk to adults about their concerns. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about any risks that they may encounter in the local community.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- From time to time, in a small number of subjects, some teachers do not choose appropriate activities to help pupils to learn the knowledge in the curriculum. Occasionally, some pupils do not learn as deeply as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers in these subjects are supported to deliver the curriculum consistently well.
- Some teachers do not use assessment strategies well to check on what pupils have learned. As a result, some pupils develop misconceptions and gaps in their knowledge that are not identified and addressed quickly enough. Leaders should ensure that teachers are equipped well to check on pupils' learning effectively.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, also called Poynton High School, to be good in December 2015.

## 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

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|---|--|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>                    | 146387   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                            | Cheshire East  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                          | 10290343   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                             | Secondary Comprehensive  |
| <b>School category</b>                            | Academy converter  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                        | 11 to 18   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                           | Mixed  |
| <b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>        | 1,456  |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b> | 294  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                      | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                             | Grenville Page   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                                | Matthew Dean   |
| <b>Website</b>                                    | <a href="http://www.phs.cheshire.sch.uk">www.phs.cheshire.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                | Not previously inspected   |

## Information about this school

- Poynton High School converted to become an academy school in December 2018. When the predecessor school, also called Poynton High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school makes use of an off-site facility, run in conjunction with two other local schools, to support a small number of pupils at risk of permanent exclusion.
- 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

- This was the first routine inspection that 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 spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and staff.
- An inspector spoke with members of the local governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.
- An inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils from Years 7 to 12 about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- An inspector visited the off-site provision and spoke with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, art and design, history, languages and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.

## Inspection team

Charlotte Oles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Neil Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

Jenny Jones

His Majesty's Inspector

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