

Inspection of The JCB Academy

Mill Street, Rocester, Staffordshire ST14 5JX

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

The interim principal of this academy is James Bailey. The school is part of The JCB Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Max Jeffery.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending The JCB Academy. They thrive in this caring and supportive environment. Pupils have a 'can do, will do attitude' that reflects fully this important academy value. They relish the opportunities that studying either engineering or business, the academy's two specialisms, gives them. Pupils' learning is enhanced by high-quality facilities. The academy has extremely strong links with high-calibre employers, and these partners offer considerable value to the school's curriculum offer.

Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 and students in key stage 5 study a range of academic subjects alongside their technical and vocational courses. Pupils learn well in most of their academic subjects. Subjects are taught by specialist teachers with a passion for their area. They are experts in their subjects.

Staff build positive relationships with pupils. Pupils know that staff care for them and want them to succeed, both in their academic studies and in life after the academy. Pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous to each other and visitors. Sixth-form students are excellent ambassadors for the academy, often coming back to share their positive experiences of their exciting career pathways and next steps in learning.

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

The school has created an ambitious and flexible curriculum that keeps the academy's specialisms at its heart. For example, students in the sixth form can choose to study A levels, technical qualifications or a combination of the two. Credible industry partners come into the academy to work with teachers to develop and deliver subject content. This enables pupils to see, first hand, how engineering works. Pupils studying engineering, for instance, get the opportunity to visit the London Eye to learn about hydraulics.

In most subjects, leaders have planned carefully what they want pupils to know and do. There has been considerable work, particularly in Year 9, to consider the order in which topics are best taught. However, in some lessons, such as English and mathematics, this is not detailed enough. In addition, teachers' use of assessment to check what pupils know over time is not precise. As a result, gaps in knowledge are not picked up swiftly. Leaders are aware of this and are already putting in place robust plans to address it.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs identified accurately. The school use this information to create 'provision maps'. However, some teachers do not always adapt their lessons to meet pupils' individual needs. The school is addressing this by training staff so that they can adapt their lessons effectively to ensure that all pupils learn well.

The school understands the importance of reading. Teachers support pupils who are in the early stages of reading to help them catch up with their peers. The school encourages wider reading in subjects. However, some initiatives to accelerate pupils' progress in reading are still in their infancy.

The school caters for pupils' personal development in various ways. Pupils are taught about healthy relationships, cultural understanding, and how to stay safe online. The school also responds to topical issues that arise, both nationally and within the local community. At times, the personal development curriculum does not always help pupils to build and develop their understanding of important topics over time as effectively as it should. Leaders ensure that staff are appropriately trained in order to deliver these important topics effectively.

Careers education sits at the heart of the academy. Pupils have high-quality encounters with the world of work. The school works closely with its 'challenge partners' to ensure that pupils compete in competitions linked to areas such as engineering. Pupils in Year 10 and students in Years 12 and 13 all undertake meaningful work experience. This prepares them well for their next steps and helps them to learn about the world of work. Pupils are given a multitude of ways to find out about apprenticeships, which several go on to do when they leave. This means that pupils and students successfully transition to further study or employment.

Trustees know the academy extremely well. Their diverse professional backgrounds and levels of expertise enable them to provide highly effective challenge and support to leaders. Staff enjoy working at the academy and are appreciative of the support for their well-being.

Sixth-form students are excellent ambassadors for the academy. They act as effective role models for younger pupils. They benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities to support their academic and vocational studies. Sixth-form students are effusive about the life chances and opportunities that JCB Academy has given them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, pupils' understanding is not systematically checked. This means that teachers do not always know how securely pupils have grasped key concepts or ideas, and this allows gaps in knowledge to persist. The school should ensure that checks of learning enable teachers to identify and address emerging gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.

- The school has not ensured that the curriculum for pupils' personal development is sufficiently well developed in all areas, and some staff lack the knowledge needed to deliver it effectively. As a result, pupils do not gain a deep understanding of some of the key topics. The school should develop the personal development curriculum and ensure this is delivered well to help pupils build a more secure knowledge of key topics.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139234
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10294589
Type of school	Other secondary
School category	University technical college
Age range of pupils	13 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	812
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	200
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Max Jeffery
Interim Principal	James Bailey
Website	http://www.jcbacademy.com/
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a university technical college. It provides technical education and other academic qualifications for pupils aged 13 to 19.
- The school is sponsored by JCB.
- The school uses one alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the principal and several other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector spoke to representatives from the board of trustees.
- To evaluate the quality of education, deep dives were carried out in engineering, English, mathematics and science. These involved meeting subject leaders, reviewing curriculum plans, visiting lessons, speaking to teachers, talking to pupils about their learning and looking at samples of their work.
- The school's personal development offer was also reviewed by inspectors.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons. They also spoke to pupils to gather their thoughts on pupils' behaviour. Behaviour, bullying and attendance records were reviewed.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector met with an employer link from JCB and held a telephone call with another employer partner from Bosch.

Inspection team

Neil Warner, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ed Leighton	Ofsted Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Epton	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Howes	His Majesty's Inspector

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