

# Inspection of Thomas Knyvett College

Stanwell Road, Ashford, Surrey TW15 3DU

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Inspection dates:

14 and 15 November 2023

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Good

The executive headteacher of this school is Jeanette Cochrane. This school is part of the Howard Partnership Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Louise Lee, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ian Wilson.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils know that expectations of their conduct and what they could achieve have increased. They value the perseverance of staff in helping them understand the importance of learning and how to be a good role model. Some pupils express a frustration about the disrespectful and boisterous behaviour of a smaller number of their peers in corridors during social times. However, pupils recognise that most staff are trying to address this with increasing consistency.

There is an increasing number of opportunities for pupils to offer their views on the school. Pupils can join the school council or the 'Race and Identity' group. However, pupils are not always aware of these groups or how they can have their voice heard. Pupils do appreciate events such as the recent 'Culture Day', where pupils explored each other's cultural heritage. Examples such as these are broadening pupils' understanding of equality and diversity.

The school's curriculum has been reviewed to identify if pupils are learning the knowledge and skills they need. Pupils can describe how they are beginning to feel more confident in explaining what they know and expressing their ideas. However, further improvements are needed to ensure that pupils have the knowledge they need to be ready for the next stage of their education.

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

The school recognises the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic, changes in staffing and challenges in the community have had on the school and its pupils. The school has maintained its strong vision to be a fully inclusive school that 'Brings out the Best' in pupils. Robust plans set out actions that leaders are taking to accelerate progress against school improvement priorities. The school has made significant improvements to increasing the number of pupils attending school regularly. The improved curriculum is designed to build pupils' knowledge over time. A newly strengthened governance arrangement is now in place. Governors check that leaders are taking the right action to improve the educational provision for all pupils.

The uptake of modern foreign languages at key stage 4 is low and shows little sign of increasing. This means the school is not yet realising the government's ambition of the English Baccalaureate being at the heart of the curriculum.

The school has recently reviewed most aspects of the curriculum. The curriculum identifies the knowledge and skills that pupils need to know. Leaders continuously check that this learning is logically ordered. However, the curriculum is not always taught in a way that helps pupils make connections between ideas. For some pupils, lessons can move on too quickly before they have had time to fully understand important concepts. In other lessons, some teachers do not identify the most appropriate activities to help pupils learn effectively. This means pupils cannot

always see connections between new and prior learning and, consequently, they do not make the intended progress.

Staff are quick to identify any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They use assessment information and input from parents and pupils to regularly review the effectiveness of the support in school. Leaders make swift referrals for expert support for pupils who need it. Those who need help to learn to read receive appropriate support.

Not all staff implement the behaviour policy with consistency. Teachers do not always address disruption or disengagement quickly enough. This lack of consistency means that too many pupils refuse the reasonable requests of staff. This can disrupt the learning of others. Some pupils also worry about jostling in the corridor or hearing unkind language during social times.

The school's personal development curriculum has not yet been fully implemented. Leaders have thoughtfully considered what improvements they want to make to the curriculum. These include further promoting the school's values of, for example, respect and unification. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of relationships and consent. A comprehensive careers programme helps them make informed decisions about their future. However, because many aspects of this curriculum are still very new, pupils do not yet learn about different cultural perspectives in enough detail. Opportunities to practise contributing positively to the school and community are not yet fully in place.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Pupils do not study a broad enough curriculum in key stage 4. Not enough pupils go on to study a modern foreign language. The school should review its curriculum offer to ensure that all pupils can access a broad and balanced curriculum that prepares them well for the next stages of education and employment.
- The curriculum is not yet implemented as effectively as leaders intend. This means that some pupils struggle to connect important ideas. Leaders must ensure that teachers implement the curriculum consistently well in all subjects so that pupils are able to know and remember more over time.
- Not all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school during breaktimes. Learning can also be disrupted, meaning pupils do not always learn as much as they could. Leaders must raise expectations of pupils' behaviour and ensure that all staff consistently implement the school's behaviour policy.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136832
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296511
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	736
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Ian Wilson
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Louise Lee
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jeanette Cochrane (Executive headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thomasknyvett.org">www.thomasknyvett.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 June 2018

## Information about this school

- The school is part of The Howard Partnership Trust, a multi-academy trust.
- Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes to the senior leadership of the school.
- The school currently uses six alternative providers of education for a small number of pupils. The school also operates its own internal alternative provision, with spaces for up to 10 pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with the representatives of the interim academy board and the chair of trustees. Inspectors also met with various leaders of the trust, including the CEO.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history, physical education, and art and design. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also looked at the curriculum for modern foreign languages.
- An inspector visited one of the alternative providers of education. Another inspector had a telephone conversation with the other providers. They considered the suitability of the curriculum offer and arrangements to safeguard pupils while attending the provision.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of interim academy board meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.

## Inspection team

Michelle Payne, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Paul McKeown	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Cartwright	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Derry	His Majesty's Inspector
Chris Ellison	His Majesty's Inspector

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