

Inspection of Pershore High School

Station Road, Pershore, Worcestershire WR10 2BX

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
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The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Andrew Nockton. The school is part of Avonreach Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The executive headteacher of this school is Phil Hanson. He is also the chief executive officer for the trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andy Longdon.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Pershore High School are kind and demonstrate an eagerness to learn in lessons. Their behaviour around the school and in lessons is calm and orderly. Pupils move around the school sensibly, following clear routines and expectations. Pupils and staff appreciate the recent changes to the behaviour policy.

Most pupils value their education and want to do well. However, the curriculum is still being developed in many subjects. This means that many pupils do not develop their knowledge well over time. Teaching is not always adapted well to suit the needs of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. As a result, some pupils do not progress as well as they could.

The school has been on a journey of improvement. It has recently introduced changes to the curriculum in some subjects. Some of these changes are starting to have a positive impact.

The 'Pershore promise' is the school's pledge to pupils that they will gain a wide range of experiences and leadership roles. Pupils enhance their school experience with theatre visits, international skiing trips and rewards trips relating to pupils' interests. The school offers a range of extra-curricular clubs and most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) take part in these. Clubs include the school newsletter, the school musical and power league. This helps pupils to develop their talents and interests.

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

The school has planned a curriculum that identifies what pupils will learn and when they will learn it. Teachers use a range of resources to teach the curriculum. However, some learning activities do not help pupils to understand and remember the key concepts. This means that some pupils struggle to build on knowledge over time.

In some subjects, topics are revisited to help pupils remember the knowledge they need to learn. Staff often check what pupils know and can do. However, the information from these checks is not always used to adapt teaching. Pupils who find the work too easy are not given opportunities to deepen their understanding. Furthermore, pupils who find the work too hard, including those who are disadvantaged, are not able to close any gaps in knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.

Pupils with SEND are accurately identified. Pupils, parents, and the SEND team work together to identify strategies that will help pupils access the same curriculum as their peers. This works well for pupils in the 'mainstream autism base', who get the support they need to access the curriculum. However, staff are not always routinely using the strategies from the 'pupil passports.' This means that pupils with SEND who are not part of the 'mainstream autism base' are not always able to access the learning in some subjects.

Pupils who struggle to read get the help they need to catch up. These pupils appreciate the support they get and are becoming fluent readers who have the confidence to read aloud. The school library is a favourite place for many pupils. The books match a range of interests and reading ages. In tutor time, older pupils encourage their younger peers to read for pleasure and mentor them accordingly.

The majority of pupils live up to the high expectations that staff have of them. The 'conduct card' rewards positive behaviours that pupils demonstrate such as 'helpfulness or kindness.' The cards also note if pupils have been unkind or disrespectful. Pupils feel that this initiative has helped to improve most pupils' behaviour across the school. However, a significant minority of pupils' behaviour, including those who are disadvantaged, has not improved over time. For these pupils, the number of suspensions and permanent exclusions remain high.

The personal, social, health education curriculum is clearly mapped out and addresses local issues such as anti-social behaviour and hate crime. Pupils develop a secure understanding of topics such as staying safe online, consent and what makes a healthy relationship.

Pupils receive a well-planned careers programme. They take part in mock interviews and complete work experience placements in Years 10 and 12. Pupils learn about apprenticeships and careers through visiting employers who give talks at the school and through visits to careers fairs and universities. Most pupils secure their first-place choice in further education. All of this prepares pupils well for their next steps.

Leaders are aware of what the school needs to do to be better. However, they do not have a sharp enough focus on reviewing and analysing what is working well and what is not. This means they struggle to identify any patterns that may exist. Subsequently this limits leaders' ability to take swift action. The curriculum is yet to be developed in some areas and the behaviour of a significant minority of pupils is not improving.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not have a sharp enough focus on reviewing, analysing, and identifying any patterns that may exist with their existing policies. This limits their ability to take swift and well-focused action when things are not working well. Leaders should ensure they have a clear vision and strategic oversight so that systems can be adapted and refined in a timelier manner.
- The school has not ensured how best to teach the knowledge set out in their curriculum plans. As a result, some learning activities do not help pupils to understand and remember key concepts. This means that some pupils struggle to build on knowledge over time.
- Too often staff do not adapt the teaching to meet the needs of all pupils. This means that pupils with SEND, those who are disadvantaged, and high and low prior attainers do not make the progress they are capable of. The school should ensure that teachers identify the starting points of each pupil and adapt the teaching to suit the needs of all pupils.
- Too often sanctions such as suspensions are not having the desired impact. This means a significant minority of pupils' behaviour, including those who are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND, is not improving. The school should ensure that the root causes for poor behaviour are established and that they adjust their

actions accordingly so that pupils can get the support they need to improve their behaviour.

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	136925
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10290586
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	1188
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	183
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andy Longdon
Headteacher	Andrew Nockton
Website	http://www.pershore.worcs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 – 3 November 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is one of four schools in Avonreach Academy Trust.
- The school has a specialist autism base for 11 pupils aged 11-16.
- The school uses seven unregistered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider for a small number of 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

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.

- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, head of school, other senior leaders, chair of governors, other governors, and chair of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, art, history, science and languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders of these areas: behaviour, curriculum, attendance, SEND, autism base, personal development, careers, reading, alternative provision, CPD, pupil premium and sixth form.
- Inspectors completed a SEND learning walk, a sixth form learning walk, visited the autism base, met with pupils who had experienced sanctions, met with single sex groups of girls and boys, and met with pupil leaders.
- Inspectors also visited lessons in some other subjects.
- Inspectors also spoke with leaders of alternative provisions.
- 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.

Inspection team

Sultanat Yunus, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Russell Hinton	Ofsted Inspector
Sara Arkle	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqui Swindlehurst	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Epton	Ofsted Inspector

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