

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Thomas Alleyne's High School

Dove Bank, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 8DU

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 January 2025

Outcome

Thomas Alleyne's High School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Julie Rudge. This school is part of the Innovate2Educate Partnership multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Kerry Rochester, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sidney Slater.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils receive a warm welcome from staff every day. They know they can turn to a trusted adult for guidance. This sets a caring tone, where staff ensure that pupils matter.

Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, strive hard to meet the school's high expectations. Most of them succeed. Pupils value the school's behaviour policy because it provides clear boundaries. With few distractions, they are happy because they can remember more and achieve well.

Pupils say that when bullying happens, staff will deal with it effectively. Pupils appreciate the school's concern for their health and well-being. This gives them reassurance if they are worried.

The school offers many extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils can use the school's swimming pool, complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and help at the school's farm. Some will visit Peru this year. Pupils appreciate these opportunities to develop their interests.

The school's values, which include tenacity and mindfulness, give pupils a common purpose. This fosters ambition and motivates them to succeed. As a result, pupils view their achievement at school as an investment in their future.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. It defines the essential knowledge pupils must learn and when. This thoughtful design supports pupils' smooth transition from middle school. It also enables them to build on prior learning. As a result, most pupils achieve well in preparation for their next steps.

The school has taken decisive action to put right the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on pupils' learning where necessary. For instance, it has addressed gaps in pupils' knowledge, particularly for those pupils who are disadvantaged. These pupils now achieve well in their studies. Also, since the pandemic, fewer pupils have opted to study a GCSE modern foreign language, which has led to a reduction in English Baccalaureate entry numbers. The school has implemented a robust and effective plan to increase the uptake of GCSE languages.

Teachers have expert knowledge, which they use well to support pupils in understanding and remembering more over time. In most cases, they check learning carefully, meaning that misconceptions can be identified and addressed quickly. However, at times, pupils are moved on to new learning before they are ready. This means that some pupils' misconceptions persist and gaps in learning emerge.

Teachers use a range of effective teaching techniques so that sixth-form students can master subject-specific knowledge and skills. For example, teachers coach students well to take high-quality notes. These serve as a valuable reference for students when they do independent research. Their teachers give clear feedback to guide improvement. This strengthens students' revision and problem-solving skills. As a result, students are comfortable managing their work when studying for sustained periods of time alone.

The school has clearly identified the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff use this information to make effective adjustments to lesson tasks. This helps these pupils to thrive.

Reading is a top priority. Those pupils who struggle to read receive regular support. This enables them to be fluent and to read a wide range of books with confidence.

Pupils' attitudes and attendance have got better. This improvement is due to the recent introduction of a new behaviour policy. Pupils know there are clear consequences for positive and negative actions. Most staff apply this policy well, which pupils appreciate. However, some staff do not, which pupils notice. As a result, this inconsistent implementation causes disruption to pupils' learning.

Pupils benefit from well-considered opportunities to develop them beyond their academic learning. For example, older pupils learn about the rule of law and gain an appreciation of democracy. This deepens their discussions about food poverty and discrimination. Impartial careers guidance supports them to explore employment, education and training options. Meeting employers and attending university open days enrich these experiences. This helps pupils make informed decisions about their future.

Staff feel valued in a school where leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. Trustees hold the school to account well, knowing the school's strengths and understanding the priorities for improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, staff move on to introduce new learning before pupils are ready. When this happens, pupils develop gaps in their understanding, which limits what they remember. The school should ensure that teachers carefully and consistently check pupils' learning in their lessons.
- Staff are not consistent in their implementation of the school's revised behaviour policy. As a result, the same high expectations for conduct are not embedded across areas of the school, and there is sometimes disruption to learning for some pupils. The school should ensure that staff are supported to implement this behaviour policy consistently to support pupils in behaving well and to learn without interruption.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Thomas Alleyne's High School, to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2016.

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	144002
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10366643
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	13 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,001
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	250
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sidney Slater
CEO of the trust	Kerry Rochester
Headteacher	Julie Rudge
Website	www.thomasalleyne.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has been part of the Innovate2Educate Partnership multi-academy trust since 2017. Pupils join this school in Year 9 from three middle schools, which are also part of this multi-academy trust.
- The school currently uses two alternative provisions, one of which is not registered.
- 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 evaluation about the quality of a school's education.
- 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.
- 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 inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, other staff and pupils. Inspectors also met with the trust's CEO.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees and the chair and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils and sixth-form students about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys, as well as speaking to staff and pupils throughout this inspection.

Inspection team

Antony Edkins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Trudi Young

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