

Inspection of John Kyrle High School and Sixth Form Centre Academy

Ledbury Road, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 7ET

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Julian Morgan. The school is part of the Heart of Mercia trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Peter Cooper, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kenneth Hopkins.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff are justifiably proud of the welcoming and friendly culture at John Kyrle. Pupils get on well with each other and actively demonstrate the school's value of respect in their interactions and conduct. The vast majority meet the school's high expectations of behaviour, moving around the site calmly and requiring minimal supervision at social times. Those who make the wrong choices know that any consequences are fair.

Pupils want to meet the school's high expectations of their learning. They apply themselves well in lessons, especially on independent tasks and opportunities to improve their work. Most achieve well. Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Sixth-form students visibly enjoy their learning and make the most of the many opportunities for high-quality discussion.

The school makes sure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy at an age-appropriate level through the 'respect' curriculum. There are many opportunities for pupils to engage in extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is enhanced by visits and participation in competitions. Many pupils gain important life skills and experiences through their participation in the Duke of Edinburgh programme. Pupils are proud of their charitable activities, including the close links they have with a partner school in Uganda.

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

There have been significant changes and improvements since the previous inspection. The new leadership team have established an ambitious and inclusive vision for the school. There is a clear understanding of what needs to improve. Important changes have been made to improve the quality of education, as well as other areas. However, because these changes are relatively new, they are not yet embedded. Pockets of inconsistency still remain. Leaders at all levels know there is still work to be done before they can be confident the improvements are having an impact.

The school has broadened its curriculum offer at key stages 4 and 5. Pupils can choose from a range of subjects that match their career aspirations, including construction and criminology. The curriculum has been designed in a way to support pupils to build their knowledge over time. However, in some subjects in key stage 3, this sequencing is not as strong. The key knowledge pupils need to learn is not clear. Sometimes, pupils do not understand how they are learning and improving within each subject.

The school believes in inclusion. This is evident in the high-quality support pupils receive in the 'hub' and the 'haven'. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified and mapped in comprehensive plans. However, sometimes the level of detail in these plans means staff are not confident about the specific adaptations they need to make in lessons. There is work underway to ensure that adaptations are consistently made for all pupils who need them. The school has made sure that there is appropriate support in place for pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read.

Pupils benefit from the strong subject expertise of teachers in all subjects. Teachers enthusiastically share their subject knowledge, especially in sixth-form lessons. New knowledge is explained clearly. Teachers check effectively that pupils have understood their learning. There are times, however, when the additional support or adaptation needed by some pupils at the point of learning is not as effective as it should be. Pupils do not always have the opportunity to discuss their learning and organise their thinking before they move on to written tasks.

Pupil outcomes are improving. Most pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well. However, this is not the case for some disadvantaged pupils, especially those who are persistently absent. Students achieve excellent outcomes in a number of key stage 5 subjects. Almost all pupils successfully move into the next stage of education, employment or training, including many who take up apprenticeships. This can be attributed to the strength of the careers guidance and support they receive.

The school's high expectations of behaviour and attendance are understood by all. There has been a reduction in the number of incidents of poor behaviour and attendance has improved. The strength of pastoral support pupils receive is a strength.

Many parents and carers are happy with the care and education their children receive. They support the improvements that have taken place over the last two years. Trust leaders, trustees and local governors work well with school leaders. There is an accurate understanding of what the school does well and any areas that require further strengthening. There is an absolute commitment to seeing the school and its pupils thrive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The key knowledge pupils need to learn is not always made explicitly clear to them. This means pupils do not always understand how their learning is building over time. The school should ensure that the curriculum is implemented in a way that enables all pupils to better understand themselves as learners in each subject.
- There are times when teaching is not adapted well enough to meet the needs of groups of pupils. This can include some disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and those who are persistently absent. Consequently, some of these pupils develop gaps in their knowledge or do not learn and achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that all staff are clear around their role and responsibilities in supporting these pupils to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- There is more to be done to strengthen the school's work on literacy and oracy. Sometimes, pupils do not have opportunities to discuss their learning and practise

using new vocabulary before they move to written work. The school should ensure all staff are consistently following the school's literacy and oracy strategies.

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	136399
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10322822
Type of school	Secondary
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	1298
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	201
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kenneth Hopkins
CEO of the trust	Peter Cooper
Headteacher	Julian Morgan
Website	www.jkhs.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 March 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2022.
- The school joined the Heart of Mercia multi-academy trust in September 2023. The trust comprises five academies.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders, trust leaders, including the chief executive officer, the chair of the trust board, and the chair and vice-chair of the local governing board.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, design technology, English, geography and science. For each deep dive, the 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. The inspectors also visited other lessons.
- 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 considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including comments submitted via the free-text facility, and communications received by Ofsted during the inspection.

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