

Inspection of John Taylor Free School

Branston Road, Tatenhill, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE13 9SA

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff expect all pupils to achieve well at this new school. Pupils usually develop a good understanding of the subjects they study. The number of pupils in the school has grown rapidly since it first opened. Pupils from a broad range of backgrounds and cultures attend the school. It is a diverse and vibrant place to learn.

Pupils attend regularly and most are proud of their school. They usually make the most of opportunities to learn the curriculum and are enthusiastic about the enrichment activities offered. The school provides an attractive and secure environment for pupils. Staff deal with any bullying when it occurs. This helps pupils to feel safe. Most pupils support each other as they learn. Staff accurately identify pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They ensure that pupils with SEND are taught well.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. However, staff absence has led to inconsistency in the way that adults manage pupils' behaviour. As a result, a few pupils do not display the positive behaviour or learning habits that leaders expect. Leaders recognise the concerns that some parents and carers, staff and pupils have about behaviour. They are tackling these concerns with urgency and behaviour is improving.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum that is ambitious, broad and balanced. They have identified what pupils should learn in different subjects and have sequenced it logically. Subject leaders ensure that learning is relevant to pupils' needs and interests. Alongside national curriculum subjects, pupils have access to extensive enrichment opportunities. Pupils with SEND benefit from the same opportunities as other pupils. Adults provide effective support to ensure that all pupils learn well.

Most teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. They teach lessons that are well organised. They often teach specialist vocabulary that deepens pupils' understanding. Staff quickly identify pupils who are not fluent readers and provide them with extra help. In addition, all pupils follow a programme that teaches them study techniques. They learn these techniques in all lessons. Teachers make regular checks on what pupils know and remember. This helps to identify any omissions in pupils' learning. Any gaps are then filled by revisiting work. Together, all this means that pupils usually achieve well.

In some instances, teachers do not apply the school's behaviour management procedures in the way that leaders expect. This leads to variation in how well pupils behave in lessons and around the school. Leaders are taking swift action to address this. They have recently reviewed the way in which adults manage pupils' behaviour. This has led to leaders introducing new guidance and further support for all staff. As

a result, levels of disruption are falling. Pupils attend school regularly and are punctual.

A wide range of opportunities help pupils to develop awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters. A full programme of personal, social, health and economic education, including careers education, is taught in year groups. This is complemented by opportunities for pupils to work in mixed-aged classes. They do this well. Leaders use a programme of assemblies to encourage pupils to think about current affairs.

Pupils enjoy taking part in many educational trips and cultural visits. They take part in sport and societies, including astronomy, volunteering and film studies. There are ample opportunities for pupils to learn about different careers available to them. All this helps pupils to be well prepared for the future, including their next steps in education, employment or training.

Leaders have set ambitious goals for the school, and most are being realised well, including for the quality of education. They acknowledge weaknesses in behaviour as the school grew rapidly following the pandemic. They have acted quickly to introduce a new approach, which is improving behaviour. Leaders are strong advocates of equality, diversity and opportunity. They work hard to ensure that the school is a tolerant and inclusive community. Many Year 11 pupils intend to join the new school sixth form, which opens on 1 September 2023.

The school is well led and managed. An effective programme of professional development supports staff. Most staff enjoy working at the school. Leaders are mindful of staff well-being and workload.

A skilful and experienced local governing board (LGB) supports leaders well. In turn, the LGB enjoys strong support from the trust. The trust ensures that the school meets all statutory requirements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that safeguarding is a key priority. They are vigilant in their work to protect pupils. All staff understand how to identify pupils who may need help or be at risk of potential harm. Pupils know who to speak to if they are worried about a situation. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe. This includes work on preventing sexual harassment, online abuse and violence. Leaders work well with external agencies to make sure that pupils get the support they need. All safeguarding concerns are recorded in a timely manner. Leaders conduct rigorous safeguarding checks when recruiting new staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have set out the basic routines and behaviour they expect to see in classrooms and at social times. However, there is variation in how well staff adhere to these and how effectively they manage pupils' behaviour. Consequently, pupils do not always behave as well as leaders expect. Leaders should continue to support and develop all staff so that they manage pupils' behaviour consistently well.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	145889
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10256825
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	920
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mr Gareth Moss
Headteacher	Ms Susan Plant
Website	www.johntaylorfreeschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the John Taylor Multi-Academy Trust. It opened with a cohort of Year 7 pupils in 2018 and subsequent cohorts have joined each year since then.
- No GCSE or equivalent results are available for this school. Pupils sit GCSE or equivalent examinations for the first time in the summer term 2023. The school sixth form opens on 1 September 2023.
- The school meets the requirement to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school makes use of three registered alternative providers for a very small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders. They spoke with pupils, staff, parents and local authority representatives. They also met with trustees and LGB members.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, mathematics, history, and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of written work.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the arrangements for safeguarding. Throughout the inspection, inspectors considered safeguarding, including when speaking to staff and pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documents. These included the school development plan, leaders' self-evaluation document, attendance information, behaviour and safeguarding logs.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents, staff and carers by reviewing responses to Ofsted surveys.

Inspection team

Mike Cladingbowl, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Josie Leese	Ofsted Inspector
David Hermitt	Ofsted Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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