

Inspection of a good school: John Masefield High School

Mabel's Furlong, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 2HF

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 November 2022

Outcome

John Masefield High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and feel safe at school. This is because staff make time for them and listen to any concerns. On occasions, pupils fall out. When this happens, teachers sort the problem quickly. Pupils can report bullying anonymously using a dedicated app. They appreciate this confidential support. If they see something wrong, they will speak out and be heard.

Pupils behave well. They are polite to teachers and considerate to their peers. Pupils enjoy each other's company. They socialise well together. Some play ball games; others talk with their friends and eat lunch together.

Staff reward pupils' hard work. Parents rate teachers' high expectations because they push pupils to do more. Many say teachers go 'above and beyond' for their children. However, in key stage 4, pupils do not learn enough in information technology.

Pupils can do unusual stuff at this exciting school. Younger pupils learn to make two-tone cupcakes. Year 10 pupils get to pluck a pheasant. Sixth formers go to an 'Escape Room' to practise team building. Some visit Normandy and Berlin. Others go to the theatre in Cardiff. Pupils make the most of these opportunities. They speak highly about the wider benefits of belonging to John Masefield High School.

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

School leaders have constructed a rich and engaging curriculum. They are ambitious that all pupils will access and learn from a broad range of subjects. Currently, most pupils study the suite of subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate. In addition, they can study a wide range of subjects, including dance, drama and psychology. Furthermore, most key stage 4 courses develop pupils' independent study skills. This prepares them well for the next stage in their education.

Subject leaders have designed their curriculum to clearly specify what pupils should know and be able to do at each stage in their learning. This helps teachers to plan well-ordered lessons. Pupils revisit key knowledge often, which most can later recall. Consequently, they have a greater confidence to learn more. However, leaders have not ensured that pupils study information technology in enough depth during key stage 4. This means pupils do not build on the strong foundation that this subject provides in Year 9. Because of this, only those who study GCSE computing increase their digital, media and internet skills. Governors and senior leaders have plans to rectify this.

Leaders have provided teachers with well-structured opportunities to improve their subject knowledge. Teachers relish this and use their knowledge to craft suitable and logical lesson tasks. For instance, in biology, pupils learn first about the components of the human eye. They then research the function of each part of the eye. This helps them to embed correct technical terms in their memories. In addition, they can explain the reasons, and the remedies, for long and short sight. Pupils produce well-structured work, which they say is easy to revise from.

Leaders have developed a strong culture of reading. Every pupil reads a class text in tutor time. This boosts pupils' confidence and fluency. Those who struggle to read receive bespoke support from well-trained staff. Most of these pupils are quick to catch up. They learn to read and understand new, and more complicated, vocabulary.

Leaders provide strong support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is because specialist staff accurately assess and identify their needs. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in adapting tasks for these pupils so that they can keep up with their peers.

All pupils take part in an innovative personal development curriculum. Each year, pupils sign the school's 'Equality Pledge'. Younger pupils encourage one another to be kind and not mean. Older pupils and students have learned how to recognise and challenge negative behaviour. They have the confidence to speak out and reject discrimination.

Leaders have designed an effective careers curriculum. For example, Year 7 pupils learn important employability skills such as managing stress and meeting deadlines. Further advice and guidance are provided through subsequent years to support pupils in making ambitious choices about their future. Pupils and students are then well prepared to go on to higher education, employment or training. For example, as a result of the school's focused work on raising ambition for all, many more female students now opt to study science, mathematics and medicine as undergraduates than ever before.

Staff are effusive in their pride as employees of this school. They say that leaders' work to manage their workload has improved their physical and mental well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding leader (DSL) ensures that staff safeguarding training is refreshed regularly. The DSL and staff understand local community issues and take timely, appropriate action when concerns arise.

Governors know their role in helping to keep children safe. They receive regular reports and visit the school to check on safeguarding matters. The correct checks on adults in school are completed.

Pupils feel safe and trust adults in school. Lessons teach them how to be safe, especially during unsupervised times. They know what healthy relationships should look like and how to avoid situations that do not feel safe. Pupils know how to raise concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Senior leaders have not checked that all pupils in key stage 4 learn enough in information technology. As a result, only pupils studying GCSE computing can learn and develop specific digital and media skills. Leaders should check provision for information technology across key stage 4. They should do this to ensure teachers help pupils to learn and use relevant information technology skills effectively.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 school to be good in November 2013.

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	136803
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10240923
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	889
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	120
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Lucy Potter
Headteacher	Andrew Evans
Website	www.jmhs.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up their post in September 2004.
- No pupils attend alternative provision off-site.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school is a stand-alone academy trust. Its registered name is The John Masefield High School and Sixth Form academy trust.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors met with members of the senior leadership team and members of the governing body, including the chair.

- Inspectors completed deep dives in English, mathematics, science and information technology. In each subject, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and visited lessons. They spoke with subject teachers and met with a selection of pupils.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for personal development. Inspectors talked with pupils in key stages 3 and 4 and sixth-form students. During their discussions, they asked pupils about relationships education, equal opportunities, careers guidance, safety and other matters related to personal development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors checked school policies and the single central record of checks on adults in school. They spoke with the designated safeguarding leader about safeguarding and child protection procedures. They spoke with a range of pupils and discussed safeguarding with staff and governors.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents who completed Ofsted’s online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered responses to Ofsted’s staff and pupil questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including records pertaining to self-evaluation and school improvement. They also considered records relating to bullying, behaviour, pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. They took account of a range of curriculum planning documents, including those related to relationships, sex and health education.

Inspection team

Antony Edkins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Janet Lewis

Ofsted Inspector

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