

# Inspection of Christleton High School

Village Road, Christleton, Chester, Cheshire CH3 7AD

---

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Kevin Smith. This school is part of The Learning 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), Darran Jones, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Euan Imrie.

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 nine years ago and was judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils find where they belong in the cheerful community at Christleton High School. Most pupils are happy and flourish. The five Cs of 'collaborative, committed, creative, caring and cheerful' underpin everything that the school does.

The school has high expectations of pupils' achievement. Pupils benefit from the school's carefully designed curriculum and achieve well.

The school has equipped pupils successfully with 'learning habits'. Typically, pupils behave well. They engage positively in lessons and are enthusiastic about learning. Pupils want to do their best and to succeed academically.

The school's magazine 'The Swan' is crammed full of exciting experiences that pupils have undertaken. These include trips abroad, whole-school musical productions and opportunities to explore subjects further, such as in Science Week. A significant number of pupils take up the Duke of Edinburgh's Award up to the gold level, which helps them to develop into confident young adults. Furthermore, younger pupils also run clubs, such as role-playing games. 'Hot scholars' enthusiastically share their passion for a subject. For instance, English hot scholars recorded readings of war poetry for their peers. Students in the sixth form also benefit from a variety of enrichment opportunities that contribute towards their wider development, such as first aid, model United Nations and mindfulness clubs.

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

Pupils benefit from a broad and ambitious curriculum that allows them to connect new ideas to previous learning. Teachers are clear about what it is that they need to teach and the order in which it should be taught. They are highly knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach.

In many subjects, the curriculum is delivered well. For example, retrieval activities are designed to help pupils to recall their prior learning successfully. Activities are carefully chosen to help pupils to consolidate their knowledge. However, from time to time, there are inconsistencies in how well the curriculum is delivered. For example, some teachers do not routinely check if pupils have understood what they have been taught. As a result, a minority of pupils develop misconceptions of which teachers are not aware.

In the main, pupils' work demonstrates that they know more and remember more. They are confident in recalling their learning over time. Overall, they develop a secure body of knowledge. Students in the sixth form could clearly articulate their understanding of the subjects that they have studied. They reflect well on their work and use the feedback that teachers give them effectively to move their learning on. Consequently, students in the sixth form achieve well.

The school's processes for checking on how well the curriculum is delivered are not used well enough. Some leaders lack the confidence to be able to identify areas of weakness and the specific strategies needed for improvement. This contributes to an over-generous evaluation of the quality of education and hinders how quickly improvements can be made.

At present, the school does not systematically assess all pupils' reading knowledge. This means that some pupils do not receive the help that they need to help them to read confidently and fluently. However, the school has a clear strategy to address this moving forward.

The school identifies pupils' additional needs accurately. The provision for a small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in the nurture class is used effectively. This allows these pupils to access the same curriculum as their peers. Nevertheless, in other subjects across the curriculum, teachers do not adapt teaching as well as they should for pupils with SEND. This means that a minority of pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could.

The school has increased the size and capacity of the pastoral team to meet the increasing challenging needs that a small number of pupils have. Pupils benefit from safe spaces, such as 'The Hive', to help them to manage their emotional well-being. Pupils follow the school's rules. Most pupils show respect towards one another.

There is a very comprehensive programme of careers information and guidance. This includes work experience, meetings with careers advisors and engagement with employers. The school is aspirational for its pupils. Former pupils' progression to university, apprenticeships and employment is celebrated to inspire pupils who are currently in the school. Pupils are provided with high-quality information that empowers them to make ambitious and informed choices about their futures. Pupils understand fundamental British values. They understand and respect the different beliefs and opinions that others may hold.

The governors and trustees work closely with the school to continue to refine the quality of education that the school provides. They offer robust challenge to the school. Staff think that the school is particularly considerate about their well-being. They said that the school listens to them and supports them well. Staff appreciate the generous amount of time that is built into the calendar for their professional development.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are some inconsistencies in teachers' pedagogical choices. As a result, a small number of pupils, including those with SEND, do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers are clear about the most appropriate teaching strategies to employ in their subject and that they are supported to use these well so the curriculum can be delivered as intended.
- The school's systems to check on how well the curriculum is delivered do not identify weaknesses in practice well enough. This slows down the school's work to make improvements to the quality of education. The school should ensure that its processes for monitoring are sharpened so that it can accurately identify and address any specific areas for improvement.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136645
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	10321420
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1391
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	277
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Euan Imrie
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Darran Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kevin Smith
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.christletonhigh.co.uk">www.christletonhigh.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	8 and 9 November 2014 under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school makes use of three registered and three unregistered alternative providers 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: science, mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education, design and technology and history. 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 also visited lessons in some other subjects.
- 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 met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the CEO, representatives of the board of trustees, including the chair, representatives of the governing body, including one of the joint chairs, a representative of the local authority and the school improvement advisor.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 13 about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. There were no responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, the academy development plan, minutes of trustee and governor meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.

### Inspection team

Jenny Jones, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Tuesday Humby	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Lowry	Ofsted Inspector
Geoff Baker	Ofsted Inspector
Craig Yates	Ofsted Inspector
Elaine Mawson	His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2024