

Inspection of Thornhill Community Academy, A Share Academy

Valley Drive, Dewsbury WF12 0HE

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 February 2023

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have an ambitious vision for education at Thornhill Community Academy. A simple message, 'Work hard, be nice', permeates throughout the school. Staff have high expectations for pupils' achievement and behaviour. Pupils have positive relationships with staff and one another. Bullying is rare. There are high levels of mutual respect and tolerance among pupils and staff.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that staff are committed to helping them succeed. Inspectors agree. Staff adapt lessons to meet the needs of all pupils well. They have a good understanding of how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Behaviour is excellent in the majority of lessons. Occasionally, pupils make the wrong choices about their behaviour. However, this happens rarely and, when it does, staff deal with it swiftly and effectively.

Leaders have created a school that serves the community well. An established ethnic minority achievement hub provides language lessons, life skills sessions and support for families. This provision has been transformational for many pupils and parents who have accessed it. Leaders continually seek the views of all stakeholders and act on the feedback they receive. The commitment of leaders and staff to improving the ambitions and life chances for all pupils is a strength of the school.

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

Leaders' values and actions are inspirational for staff who work at the school. Staff report strong support for their well-being. Opportunities for professional development are carefully chosen to meet the needs of the school and staff. Leaders' overview of the strengths and areas for development in the school is precise. The actions of leaders to bring about improvements to the quality of education have been highly effective. However, some work remains to be done to ensure that this is exceptional.

School leaders have developed a curriculum that meets the needs of pupils well. They have carefully considered the important knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn. Subject leaders ensure that lessons develop pupils' life skills as well as a strong subject knowledge. The curriculum is ambitious and broadens pupils' horizons.

Staff are knowledgeable and passionate. They ask meaningful questions to check pupils' understanding. In most cases, pupils respond well to these questions. They enjoy opportunities to debate and discuss their ideas. Pupils' work often reflects the high standards that staff expect. When pupils make mistakes, staff address these quickly.

Assessment is used well. Staff regularly identify what pupils do and do not understand. Staff know why pupils struggle. They reteach important topics so that

pupils do not forget what they have previously learned. Staff ensure pupils can connect different topics together over time. This helps pupils prepare for future learning.

Pupils with SEND who access the additional resourced provision receive specialist teaching as well as regularly attending lessons in the main school. Pupils with SEND are supported by knowledgeable staff with specialist training. The plans to support pupils with SEND are used well in their lessons. All pupils with SEND have access to the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. They achieve well and they successfully go on to further education, employment or training.

Leaders understand the importance of pupils being able to read confidently. Pupils who need additional reading support are identified effectively. These pupils are quickly improving their ability to read. Leaders are focused on developing a love of reading across the school. However, older pupils read less widely and less often. The school library is used well to encourage pupils to read regularly.

The behaviour of many pupils in lessons is excellent. Systems for managing poor behaviour are understood well and used consistently. Pupils' behaviour around school is sometimes less positive. Leaders have quickly addressed this issue. Strong routines have been established to ensure behaviour is calm and purposeful in the corridors. Leaders are clear about their expectations for attendance with pupils and parents. This has led to significant improvements in the rates of attendance over time.

The personal development curriculum at the school is well planned. Pupils understand the important messages they receive about personal safety, healthy relationships, drug abuse and radicalisation. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures are less well developed. Careers advice and guidance is a strength of the school. Pupils receive independent advice about their next steps. Many have ambitious plans for their future education and employment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders, staff and those responsible for governance know the risks to young people well. Leaders take effective action to keep young people safe. They work closely with parents and external agencies to protect vulnerable pupils. Staff report any concerns they might have quickly so that young people are not at risk of harm.

Leaders respond to risks in the local area and nationally. The curriculum is adapted to ensure pupils understand important messages about staying safe in person and online. Pupils' mental health and well-being are a priority for leaders. There is a significant amount of high-quality support available for vulnerable pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils' knowledge of other faiths and cultures is weak. This is because teaching of some aspects in the personal development curriculum is too variable. As a result, pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they might be. Leaders should ensure that ongoing quality assurance accurately identifies variability in teaching the curriculum and that targeted professional development is provided to ensure the curriculum is taught consistently well by all staff.

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	146365
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10255584
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	881
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel Quinn
Headteacher	Matthew Burton
Website	www.thornhillcommunityacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined SHARE Multi-Academy Trust in September 2018. Since then, there have been several changes in senior leadership.
- The school has an additional resourced provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The school makes use of two alternative provisions. Both are registered with the Department for Education.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The 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 leaders and representatives of the trust. Inspectors spoke to teaching and non-teaching staff, in addition to representatives of the local governing body. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer.
- To evaluate the quality of education, deep dives were carried out in mathematics, English, history and computing. Inspectors spoke with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at books and spoke to pupils and staff.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and a sample of pupils' work from modern foreign languages and physical education.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experience in lessons, enrichment opportunities and what it is like to attend the school.
- Inspectors examined the schools' behaviour records, spoke to pupils who had been suspended from school and spoke with providers of alternative education.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator. They looked at a range of documentation, including education, health and care plans and individual learning plans. Inspectors also checked how pupils with SEND are supported in lessons. One inspector visited the additional resourced provision.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including checks made on all adults who come onto the school site. Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff to ensure their understanding of safeguarding procedures. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to check on their work to keep pupils safe in school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

John Linkins, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Steve Willacy	Ofsted Inspector
Garry Stout	Ofsted Inspector
Pritiben Patel	Ofsted Inspector

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