

Inspection of John Port Spencer Academy

Main Street, Etwall, Derby DE65 6LU

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils value the education they receive at John Port Spencer Academy. They benefit from the dedication of staff and leaders who are committed to providing them with a high-quality education.

There are strong relationships between pupils and staff. Most pupils are happy at the school. They know that staff will keep them safe and look after them. Pupils show their appreciation of staff in the way they respectfully respond to them.

Pupils' conduct around the school is worthy of admiration. They are polite, helpful and respectful of each other and adults. They focus on their work in lessons, with very little distraction. Most pupils say that when bullying happens, staff resolve any issues effectively.

Leaders are determined to help all pupils achieve their best. The curriculum is broad. There is a wide range of subjects available for pupils to study, including in key stage 4 and the sixth form. Leaders have focused on improving the quality of education that pupils receive. However, this commitment has not yet extended to the personal development curriculum. Leaders are beginning to take action to ensure that pupils are helped to develop as a whole person.

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

Senior leaders have worked well with subject leaders in the school and with trust leaders to improve the curriculum. They have focused on ensuring that pupils learn from a 'knowledge-rich curriculum'. Subject leaders have thought carefully about what knowledge teachers should teach and when. This enables pupils, including students in the sixth form, to know more and remember more.

The improved support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities means that all pupils build their knowledge over time.

Pupils who need extra help with reading have access to a range of high-quality resources and interventions. This support has helped many catch up with their peers.

Leaders understand the school's strengths and priorities for further development. They have developed subject curriculums that are ambitious. In the sixth form, leaders have built upon the breadth of subjects on offer. The ambitious and demanding curriculum builds to prepare students very well for future learning and their next steps.

In a few subjects, leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is sufficiently ambitious. This is the case for both religious education and personal, social, health and economic education, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Pupils say that not enough time and expertise have been given to this aspect of their education. The content is

not always age-appropriate and when topics are repeated, pupils lose interest. Pupils know very little about different religions and world views. This limits their appreciation of differences and the things people share in common across cultures and communities. Leaders have plans in place to improve this curriculum. They have implemented some changes, such as making use of more visiting speakers to talk to pupils.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of careers. Pupils receive high-quality careers information, advice and guidance. Students in the sixth form have access to a range of work experiences. Other pupils benefit from the close relationship the school has with local businesses, especially those in the engineering industry. Leaders have ensured that a wide range of clubs and activities are available after school and during lunchtimes. Such activities include drama and music clubs, an LGBT+ support club and opportunities for pupils to be involved in local and national competitions.

Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. In most subjects, they use this to question pupils in depth about their learning, including students in the sixth form. In some subjects, assessment is not always well matched to pupils, for example using GCSE questions to test Year 9 pupils. Some teachers do not always use opportunities to correct pupils or further develop their understanding.

Teachers set demanding work which enables pupils to learn key knowledge and develop related skills. They ensure that pupils revisit and build on their previous learning. For example, in modern foreign languages, pupils used their knowledge of verbs to help practise the imperfect tense in French.

Pupils move around the large school site sensibly. They respect the school environment, including at lunchtimes when they queue patiently and without any fuss. Most pupils' attendance is good.

The school is well led and managed. Leaders, including those from the trust, have ensured that the school has made continual progress. Staff say that leaders support them well. Leaders are mindful of staff's workload and have taken steps to reduce this. Staff appreciate the efforts that leaders have made to improve their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. They follow the right steps when they have any concerns about pupils' welfare and well-being. Despite the large numbers of pupils at the school, designated safeguarding leads and pastoral staff know pupils well. They involve the appropriate agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. Leaders follow up on any unexplained absences quickly. The family support worker, for example, provides effective support to any pupils who struggle to attend regularly. Leaders and governors know and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. Pupils are taught how to be safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not assured themselves of the quality of the personal development curriculum. A significant number of pupils feel they have not been taught enough about the important aspects of personal development because there is not enough time given to it. They feel that what they are taught is poor quality and is repeated to the point where it does not interest or challenge them. Some parents and carers feel that this is an area the school needs to address. Leaders need to ensure that the personal development curriculum is suitably ambitious and fully prepares pupils for life in Britain.
- Leaders have not ensured that all teachers use assessment effectively. The assessment that teachers use in some subjects does not always enable them to identify misconceptions or gaps in pupils' knowledge. In these subjects, there is a risk of pupils being moved on to new learning before they have a secure understanding of the current topic. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to use assessment effectively to help pupils embed knowledge so that they build their understanding successfully over time.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	145500
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10227548
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	1,976
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	323
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Donna Kinderman
Principal	Karen Squire
Website	www.johnport.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Spencer Academies Trust, which it joined in 2018.
- The school uses one unregistered provider of alternative provision.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine 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 principal, the vice-principal and most members of the school's senior leadership team.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about religious education, geography and modern foreign languages and visited a sample of lessons.
- Inspectors spoke to the leader of the sixth form and visited the sixth-form provision.
- Inspectors heard pupils read books during intervention sessions.
- Inspectors met with the special education needs coordinator, as well as representatives of the local governing body and the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors considered a wide variety of school documents, including the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors took note of the responses received on Ofsted Parent View and considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors met with several groups of pupils to gather their views.
- To judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors read the school's relevant policies, scrutinised the single central record, checked the school's procedures for the safer recruitment of staff and met with the safeguarding team. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Dave Gilkerson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Burton	Ofsted Inspector
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Sue Vasey	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector

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