

Inspection of Thomas Estley Community College

Station Road, Broughton Astley, Leicester, Leicestershire LE9 6PT

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 October 2024

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

The principal of this school is Mandi Collins. This school is part of Success Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mandi Collins, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Melvyn Booley.

What is it like to attend this school?

The 'Thomas Estley Way' guides pupils to show kindness, respect, courage, perseverance and resilience in classrooms and around the school. This is the foundation for a culture of mutual respect. Pupils are happy. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils benefit from high-quality pastoral guidance. They trust staff to keep them safe.

The school is aspirational for all pupils. There are high expectations for pupils' academic achievements. The majority of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are successful in most subjects.

The school prioritises pupils' wider personal development. There is a well-considered programme that helps pupils develop their character and leadership skills. This includes a wide range of opportunities. For example, pupils can take on roles of responsibility, including as eco- or well-being ambassadors, teaching and learning researchers, or pre-school readers. In the wider community, pupils are involved with charity work and projects in local primary schools. A variety of clubs support the development of pupils' talents and interests in sport, the performing arts and other pursuits. Pupils have access to information about colleges, apprenticeships and employers. They are well informed about their future choices.

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

The school has developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. It is organised in a way that helps pupils build on what they have learned previously. A small number of pupils, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, benefit from personalised learning pathways. Weak readers are identified quickly and get the support they need to improve their reading confidence and fluency. In Years 10 and 11, most pupils study the full range of English Baccalaureate subjects. The curriculum is challenging and prepares pupils well for their next steps.

Teachers are subject experts. They help pupils grasp subject-specific vocabulary. Typically, new learning is explained clearly and this helps pupils link new knowledge to what they know already. Questions are designed carefully to check understanding and challenge pupils to think deeply. Pupils respond well. They try hard in lessons and produce work of a good quality. However, activities do not always help pupils to make connections in their learning. At other times, tasks are not demanding enough. When this happens, pupils become disengaged and do not achieve as well as they could.

The school provides purposeful training to help staff meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff receive detailed information about each of these pupils' needs and the strategies they can use to support them. Most staff check routinely on pupils with SEND. They adapt activities when necessary to make sure that these pupils can be successful. However, this is not consistent across the curriculum. At times, some pupils with SEND are not supported as effectively as they could be.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They understand the consequences of poor behaviour. Staff apply these fairly. Pupils are proud to earn rewards for good conduct and hard work.

Most pupils attend school well. Reducing the number of pupils who are absent too often is a priority for the school. Pastoral staff work closely with these pupils, and their parents and carers. As a result, attendance has improved.

The school is determined that all pupils are well prepared for living in modern Britain. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They consider the importance of respecting diversity and fundamental British values. Visitors to the school help to broaden pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures. Trips and visits further enrich the curriculum.

Most parents are positive about the school. The school strives to communicate with them effectively. Leaders have listened and provided support to help staff manage their workload. Trustees and governors are knowledgeable. They hold school leaders to account and share the school's aspirations.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Planned learning does not always meet pupils' needs closely enough, including some pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils do not always get the necessary support or achieve as well as they might. The school needs to ensure that all teachers make suitable adaptations so that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils.
- On occasion, the curriculum is not planned well enough to encourage pupils to think deeply or make links to what they have learned before. When this happens, pupils become disengaged and do not secure their knowledge. The school needs to ensure that learning activities are designed routinely to build on pupils' prior learning and to deepen their understanding as they progress through the curriculum.

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

Unique reference number	138527
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10347539
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	892
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Melvyn Booley
CEO of the trust	Mandi Collins
Principal	Mandi Collins
Website	www.thomasestley.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with autism, catering for up to 15 pupils.
- The school uses six alternative provisions. One of these provisions is registered and five of them are unregistered.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, vice principals, assistant principals and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees and the local governing body, including the chair of the board of trustees and the chair of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, art and modern foreign languages. 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 and spoke to pupils about their work in a number of 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders and reviewed records relating to attendance, behaviour and personal development.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff, pupils and parents through discussions and using Ofsted’s online surveys.

Inspection team

John Spragg, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Stephen Long	Ofsted Inspector
Mohamed Patel	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Barton	Ofsted Inspector

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