

Inspection of Churchill Academy & Sixth Form

Churchill Green, Churchill, Winscombe, Avon BS25 5QN

Inspection dates:	20 and 21 May 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Chris Hildrew. This school is part of the Lighthouse Schools Partnership Multi-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 (CEO), Gary Lewis, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Adele Haysom.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils gain qualifications that prepare them well for their next stages beyond school. Sixth form students move on to destinations which meet their interests and aspirations. Many go on to university, including the most selective institutions.

Pupils appreciate the raised expectations of behaviour. Most pupils behave well and work hard in lessons. Social times are typically calm and harmonious. Pupils, staff and parents and carers agree that behaviour has improved and that pupils are safe at school.

Opportunities for pupils to develop beyond the academic curriculum are varied and numerous. Pupil leadership makes a tangible contribution to the life of the school. For instance, sixth form students run some of the popular performing arts events that the school runs. The multitude of clubs available to pupils enable them to develop a range of talents and interests, including sporting and musical.

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

Pupils learn a broad and ambitious curriculum that prepares them well for their next steps in learning. The curriculum identifies what pupils are expected to learn at each stage. Teachers check what pupils have learned. They correct errors and misconceptions. Consequently, most pupils build on their learning over time and achieve well.

Teachers use their strong subject knowledge and the whole-school approaches to teaching well. Consequently, lesson activities enable most pupils to gain an in-depth understanding of subjects. The work that pupils complete is well matched to what they already know and can do. However, teaching is not consistently adapted well enough for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This prevents some pupils from achieving as well as they could. The work completed by students in the sixth form is academically rigorous. Published data for the sixth form does not reflect the deep knowledge that current students have. This is because improvements made are coming to fruition and not reflected in published outcomes.

Pupils read often enough to maintain their fluency and confidence. Staff identify promptly any pupils who do not read well enough. Pupils get the support they need to catch up in reading. Sixth form students are expected to read widely, and their lessons help them to continue to develop their vocabulary.

Pupils' attendance has improved. Staff have identified the barriers that prevent some pupils from attending regularly. In many cases, they have removed or reduced these barriers but some pupils, particularly those with SEND or who are otherwise disadvantaged, continue to be absent from school too often. This inhibits their learning and means they do not fully experience the wider personal development opportunities that the school provides.

The school has taken effective action to improve behaviour. Suspensions and other sanctions have reduced because most pupils now behave well. However, some pupils who continue to struggle to meet the school's raised expectations do not receive effective support to make sustained changes to their behaviour. These pupils, many of whom have SEND or are disadvantaged, miss too much learning as a result.

The school has a comprehensive approach to preparing pupils for life beyond school. Pupils discuss views, experiences and beliefs that differ from their own. This helps them to shape and express their own opinions, consider other perspectives, and understand complex issues which they are likely to encounter in their lives beyond school. Despite this, a small number of pupils behave in ways which makes their peers uncomfortable. The school does not tolerate this, but it does not consistently communicate well enough with pupils and parents about the actions taken. This means that sometimes pupils and parents do not have confidence in decisions or actions the school takes.

There is a suitable curriculum for teaching pupils about all aspects of personal, social and health education. The school adapts this curriculum in the light of emerging local and national potential risk factors. This helps pupils to understand how to stay safe, including when online. Careers events and the education, advice and guidance that pupils receive helps them feel well prepared for their next steps.

Those responsible for governance and trust leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This enables them to hold the school to account and also to provide the support necessary to ensure the school improves. For instance, they have provided additional resources to ensure that the school's work with pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged is prioritised. This work is at an early stage and has not had sustained impact.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The support the school provides for some pupils to learn or to improve their behaviour and attendance is not consistently precise enough. This means that some pupils, particularly pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, do not achieve or attend well enough nor improve their behaviour sufficiently. The school and trust need to ensure that pupils consistently get the right support to remove barriers to learning, attending or behaving well.
- Sometimes the school does not communicate well enough with parents and pupils when actions have been taken, or changes are being made. This means that there is sometimes a lack of confidence in what the school has done, including about instances

of bullying. The school and trust need to improve communication with parents and pupils so that families know that their concerns have been dealt with, and understand the reasons for changes that affect them.

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	137000
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	10378923
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	1537
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	287
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Adele Haysom
CEO of the trust	Gary Lewis
Headteacher	Chris Hildrew
Website	www.churchill-academy.org
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 March 2023

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has joined the Lighthouse Schools Partnership Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school uses seven unregistered alternative provisions and three registered alternative provisions.
- 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 (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 second 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- An inspector met with those involved in local governance, the chair of trustees and staff from the multi academy trust, including the CEO.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the views of staff and pupils via Ofsted's online surveys. Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff in meetings and around the school site.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: English, mathematics, technology, performing arts, business studies and economics, and geography.
- 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 discussed the reading curriculum and visited a selection of other lessons including modern foreign languages, reading and PSHE.
- An inspector spoke to some of the alternative providers the school uses, and to pupils who attend them.

Inspection team

Sarah Favager-Dalton, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Parin Gohil	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Thomson	Ofsted Inspector
Sukhbir Farar	Ofsted Inspector
Nazya Ghalib	Ofsted Inspector

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