

King Edwin School

Mill Lane, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees TS20 1LG

Inspection dates

19–21 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Most leaders in school are new to their role since September 2017. They are not being held sufficiently to account for, and therefore are not having enough impact on, school improvement.
- The new principal is putting in place systems to monitor teaching and learning and to hold teachers to account. However, the systems are not currently fully implemented.
- Senior leaders are implementing a new assessment system. This system is not giving clear information to help leaders plan learning and accurately identify areas for improvement.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers are not always successful in using assessment information to plan and adapt learning.
- Some teachers do not ensure that the wide range of academic needs of pupils in the class is taken into account when teaching.
- Although pupils' outcomes have improved, they are not as good as they could be.
- The proprietor has not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

The school has the following strengths

- When pupils join the school, their attendance improves rapidly.
- When pupils join the school, their behaviour quickly improves. Behaviour is good around the school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe.
- Relationships are excellent. A mutual respect for all is quickly established and this helps pupils become more willing to learn.
- The new principal has implemented a curriculum that interests pupils so they engage in learning again.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management so that school improvement happens at a more rapid pace by ensuring that:
 - middle and senior leaders are fully accountable for the responsibilities they have
 - processes for monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are implemented robustly
 - accurate information on pupils' achievement is used to track progress more effectively.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that recent improvements in pupils' outcomes are sustained by ensuring that teachers:
 - have higher expectations of what some pupils can achieve so that they are challenged to work at greater depth
 - plan and adapt teaching to meet the wide range of academic needs in each class
 - take into full account information on pupils' achievement when planning lessons.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- The proprietor must ensure that teaching at the school enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress. He must do this by ensuring that teachers plan lessons well, taking into account assessment information and the needs and prior attainment of the pupils (paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d) and 3(g)).

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- The proprietor must ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities at the school fulfil their responsibilities and demonstrate good skills and knowledge so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b)).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Many senior and middle leaders were new to post in September 2017, with new roles and responsibilities. They are only just beginning to be held accountable for these roles and the part they play in school improvement. The potential of their new roles in bringing about school improvement is as yet not fully realised.
- Leaders have recently introduced a system to monitor the quality of teaching and learning through a performance management strategy. The system is in its embryonic stage and although it has begun to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning, it does not as yet hold teachers to full account for the progress of pupils in their classes.
- Senior leaders recognise that current ways of tracking the progress and attainment of pupils are not accurate enough or useful to the context of King Edwin School. Information on pupils' achievement is not used effectively to support school improvement or to help teachers plan lessons to meet pupils' individual needs.
- The new principal knows the school well. In a short space of time, she has accurately identified and prioritised areas for improvement in a school which, since the last inspection, had experienced a period without a headteacher and with low staff numbers.
- The new principal has introduced a new and varied curriculum, including initiatives such as motor mechanics and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme to meet the needs and interests of the pupils and ensure that they are more engaged in learning. She has also ensured that all paths of study lead to some form of qualification or accreditation.
- The personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are good. This is mainly due to the strong ethos of respect for all. Pupils get the opportunity to discuss and learn about a wide range of issues such as substance abuse, and about those with different lifestyles and faiths.
- Of the 12 staff who responded to the Ofsted staff questionnaire, 10 were new to the school. All responded positively to the questions, as did those whom the inspector consulted during the inspection.
- Parents and carers who were spoken to or responded to a questionnaire were all highly positive about the work the school does with their children. They noted how their child's behaviour and attendance had dramatically improved since attending King Edwin School.

Governance

- The proprietor has not held senior leaders stringently to account. This has led to a deterioration in the quality of teaching, leadership and outcomes for pupils since the last inspection. School improvement has been too slow and some of the independent school standards are not met. However, this weakness has been identified and action taken. A new leadership team is now in place and a new governance structure with a board of governors is planned. Clear roles and responsibilities have been identified so that leaders can robustly challenge and hold leaders and managers to account for the part they play in school improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The safety of pupils is paramount; for example, secure external fencing has been erected since the last inspection.
- All staff are well trained and know what to do and whom to turn to if they have any concerns about a pupil or if they need to manage any erratic behaviour. Adults carry out thorough risk assessments.
- The principal, as the designated safeguarding lead, has ensured that the safeguarding policy, which takes into account current government requirements, is available on the school's website.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe and they know that adults care about their safety. They know that they can discuss sensitive issues with adults and their views will be listened to respectfully.
- Staff's close liaison with outside agencies ensures that meaningful steps are taken for the benefit of pupils and their families. Records are detailed and stored and shared appropriately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although there is an improving picture, too many teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Consequently, pupils are not always challenged to learn at the depth of which they are capable and their progress is not as good as it should be.
- In each class, there is a wide range of different academic needs. Some teachers struggle to ensure that learning is matching all the different levels. This sometimes results in most-able pupils completing work that is too easy.
- Similarly, in lessons, some teachers are not acting quickly enough to meet individual learning needs. As a result, pupils are working on tasks that are too easy or too hard.
- Most teachers use questioning and discussion to help pupils think carefully and learn from each other about a range of topics.
- Teaching assistants are extremely valuable in lessons as they support pupils both emotionally and in learning. Recent training has ensured that their role in the classroom is essential in not only keeping pupils engaged in learning but helping them learn at a greater depth.
- Adults manage pupils' behaviour extremely well. This is largely due to the excellent relationships that quickly develop. Pupils feel secure and well cared for and they say how this helps them to be more ready to learn.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Adults undertake a detailed analysis of new pupils' emotional needs and plan how best to help pupils so that they quickly begin to feel secure and confident in their new environment. This in turn supports a growing confidence in communicating with other adults and their peers and having confidence in their own ability to learn.
- Pupils comment on how comfortable they feel in school and how their peers and adults feel like 'family'. They comment on the excellent relationships they quickly develop after arriving at King Edwin School.
- Pupils re-engage in learning and their improved confidence prepares them well for moving on to the next stage of their education, employment or training. This is done particularly well in the alternative provision the school uses.
- Senior leaders work collaboratively with a local company so that pupils get support and impartial advice about careers opportunities. Pupils speak of realistic and aspirational goals they have for their future. Senior leaders take great care to try and help pupils realise and gain experiences in line with these goals, such as working with the wide range of animals at the school and participating in sporting experiences.
- Pupils have a clear knowledge of what bullying is and say that instances of bullying are rare. Any name-calling or other type of negative, unacceptable or derogatory language is always swiftly dealt with by adults.
- The pastoral leader ensures that a well-planned personal, social and health education curriculum is delivered. Pupils learn through a range of visits and visitors such as the local Preventions Team, who came into school with a mock prison which promoted in-depth conversations and learning.
- Although pupils learn about a range of different religions and cultural customs, they often struggle to recall what they have learned. However, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme includes visits to places of worship so that they can gain first-hand experiences related to their learning of different customs and religions.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Monitoring of behavioural incidents and observations from parents, carers, pupils and staff show how the behaviour of most pupils dramatically improves shortly after joining the school.
- Senior leaders have very recently introduced a new strategy to eliminate or dramatically reduce the number of times pupils are excluded from school due to poor behaviour. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of exclusions from 12 in September 2016 to zero in September 2017.

- Pupils move around the school in a calm and orderly manner. They are respectful to each

other and adults and their manners are impeccable. Even when learning was disrupted by an unexpected fire alarm and immediate evacuation, pupils were calm, safe and orderly in their behaviour. Staff dealt extremely well with the minority of pupils who were initially reluctant to return to lessons immediately.

- Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. Many pupils appreciated the opportunity to tell visitors how much they like their school and how proud they are to be a member of this school.
- Pupils' behaviour in the alternative provision is also good. They are polite and respectful and keen to accept responsibility for their own safety by following safety guidance given by adults.
- Although overall rates of attendance are low and persistent absence high compared with those of mainstream schools nationally, individual rates of attendance for the vast majority of pupils have improved dramatically.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' achievements in English and mathematics, although improving, are not as good as they could be. Progress, particularly in mathematics, has been much slower than in English. However, last year this was largely due to the lack of a specialist mathematics teacher. Very recently, pupils have begun to make better progress as more teachers are becoming more skilled at meeting their needs.
- Although pupils use good phonic skills to help them read, attainment levels are low and comprehension skills are not as good as they could be. The school's information indicates that around half of pupils across the school did not make good progress in reading.
- Of the pupils in Year 11 who left in 2017, of which the majority joined the school in Years 10 or 11, 80% gained some form of qualification or accreditation. However, over 43% remain out of employment, education or training. The school accepts that this was partly due to a lack of a suitable range of subjects that met pupils' interests and led to qualifications or accreditation. The introduction of the new curriculum and improvements in behaviour have meant that pupils are very quickly beginning to make better progress.
- Last year, expectations of what pupils could achieve were raised. Consequently, current Year 11 pupils had in Year 10 gained qualifications or accreditation at entry level 3 in motor vehicle studies and/or GCSE biology to add to functional skills in mathematics and English.

School details

Unique reference number	140272
DfE registration number	808/6004
Inspection number	10040144

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Number of part-time pupils	4
Proprietor	Spark of Genius North East LLP
Headteacher	Lorna McLean
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,995
Telephone number	01642 366610
Website	http://kingedwinschool.zohosites.com
Email address	admin@ne.sparkofgenius.com
Date of previous inspection	14 October 2014

Information about this school

- King Edwin School is registered to accept up to 50 pupils.
- There are currently 38 pupils on roll, all of whom have a disability, a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan in relation to behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.
- The school aims to engage pupils again in full-time education and gain recognised qualifications by the time they leave the school.
- The school operates from one site with extensive outside space. The school uses services at two other provisions in the locality, Phoenix Training and Sowing Seeds Ministries, which specialise in motor vehicle and sports learning.

- The school was last inspected in October 2014, when it was judged to be good.
- A new principal took on the role in April 2016.
- The school is a partnership venture with Stockton local authority. A joint venture board oversees the overall progress of the school but is not involved in daily operational or strategic matters.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over two and a half days by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- The inspector held meetings with the principal, and senior and middle leaders. Telephone conversations were held with the proprietor and with the director of children's services concerning the joint venture initiative. The inspector also spoke to teaching staff.
- Pupils' learning and behaviour were observed throughout the day inside and outside.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and spoke to a number of pupils about their work and their well-being. The work in pupils' books was considered.
- Two responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were not enough to show the results of this questionnaire. The inspector spoke to three parents and carers.
- The inspector also considered 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector toured the school inside and outside to ascertain whether the relevant independent school standards are met and that pupils' welfare is taken into account.
- The inspector examined school documentation, including a range of policies required as part of the independent school standards. Documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and welfare, as well as health and safety documents, were also studied.

Inspection team

Jo Sharpe, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

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 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017