

The King John School

Shipwrights Drive, Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex SS7 1RQ

Inspection dates

26 to 27 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders, including governors and trustees, have not followed statutory guidance for keeping children safe. This means that safeguarding is not effective.
- Leaders have not ensured that some of the most vulnerable pupils, with very complex welfare needs, receive enough support. Procedures introduced to improve this are new and not firmly embedded.
- Leaders, governors and trustees have not ensured that the outstanding quality of education has been maintained since the previous inspection. In key areas, the quality of leadership and governance is not good enough.
- Some senior leaders are overstretched in their workload. This impacts negatively on their capacity to work strategically.
- Leaders have an overinflated view of the school's overall effectiveness. There are weaknesses in leadership that have not been addressed effectively.
- Governance requires improvement. The local governing body does not challenge leaders sufficiently about the school's performance.
- School leaders do not have high enough aspirations for pupils' progress. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils.
- Leaders and governors are not clear enough about the use and impact of additional funding to help pupils catch up.

The school has the following strengths

- Good teaching, learning and assessment enables pupils to achieve well by the end of key stage 4.
- Staff who are new to the profession are supported very well to be successful.
- Most pupils behave well and treat one another with respect. Bullying is rare. Pupils trust staff to deal with their concerns. They say they are well looked after and kept safe.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Large numbers of pupils engage in, and enjoy, a wide range of trips, visits and extra-curricular activities.
- The sixth form is a strength of the school. Students achieve well and go on to appropriate next-step destinations.
- Staff appreciate the trust's investment in their professional development.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the school follows statutory guidance to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils
 - working with the local authority and other agencies to ensure that those pupils with the most complex welfare needs are supported well and evidence of this is recorded
 - developing more effective approaches to self-evaluation so that leaders, governors and trustees have a more precise understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
 - ensuring that all school leaders have high expectations about the progress that all pupils can make
 - making sure that all teaching enables the most able pupils to achieve well
 - reviewing the roles and responsibilities of senior leaders to ensure that they can focus on strategic improvements
 - improving the effectiveness of the local governing body to support and challenge school leaders
 - improving the use, monitoring and impact of the pupil premium and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium.

An external review of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders have not followed essential statutory guidance to safeguard all pupils.
- Leaders are not sufficiently proactive in providing the appropriate level of support for the most vulnerable pupils. For some of these pupils, leaders do not recognise quickly enough where there may be additional, previously unidentified, special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Support for the small group of pupils who have the most complex needs is not effective. The trust has identified this and is acting to improve the provision for these pupils. It is investing heavily in training for staff to support pupils' long-term social, emotional and mental health needs. It is too early to see the impact of this work.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is imprecise. Leaders are not sufficiently curious to investigate thoroughly what their information tells them about the impact of their work, or where there are possible weaknesses in provision. The chief executive officer of the trust acknowledged this weakness in leadership in her meetings with inspectors.
- Leaders, governors and trustees have not ensured that the outstanding standard of education has been maintained since the previous inspection. Their overinflated view of the school's effectiveness has limited their ability to tackle weaknesses.
- Too much accountability falls on the same few senior leaders. This limits leaders' capacity to undertake more strategic work to make necessary improvements.
- Leaders' expectations are not high enough. The majority of pupils start secondary school having attained well in their primary school, and although they go on to attain high standards, too often they do not achieve their full potential by the end of key stage 4.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment ensures that any concerns about teaching are quickly identified and staff are supported to improve their practice. However, some staff do not understand how they can best help pupils to make even better progress.
- Staff recruitment and retention are effectively led and managed. Staff who are new to the profession are supported well. Leaders and the trust place emphasis on 'growing their own' teachers for the future. They make good use of the teaching school alliance to do this.
- Staff appreciate the school's investment in their professional development, especially in relation to curriculum development and their wider knowledge of key stage 4 qualifications. Staff have good subject knowledge which leads to effective teaching, learning and assessment.
- 143 parents and carers responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Most of them are positive about their child's experiences at the school. The school's own surveys also show high levels of satisfaction from parents in the school's provision.
- Pupils' understanding of their roles as responsible citizens in British society is developed

well across a range of subjects. 'Drop down days', skills lessons in Year 7 and 8, and assemblies provide pupils with a range of opportunities to think about vital issues like equality and democracy. Most pupils adhere to positive views of citizenship and cooperate with others well. Some pupils in key stage 4 said that they would like more input on financial planning and life skills.

- There is a well-developed curriculum across both key stages that allows pupils to access a broad balance of technical, academic, creative and physical subjects. Pathways from Year 11 into post-16 education and training are well developed.
- Pupils are very positive about the extra-curricular provision, including after-school clubs, an array of sporting and cultural opportunities, and a vast number of trips and visits. This adds significantly to their enjoyment of school.

Governance of the school

- Governors failed to recognise that leaders did not follow statutory guidance to keep pupils safe. The trust has acted decisively recently to strengthen this aspect of its work by appointing a trust safeguarding and welfare officer.
- Governors do not do enough to check on the effectiveness of the long-term provision for the small number of pupils with the most complex needs.
- Members of the local governing body do not have a thorough understanding of key aspects of the school's work. Governors do not follow through well enough on their challenges to leaders. As a result, they have an overgenerous view of the school's provision and they are not clear about what needs to improve.
- The trust has recognised recently that devolving responsibility to the local governing body is not working as effectively as they had hoped. Trustees are acting to recruit more expertise to the local governing body. They are also providing training to strengthen governance. The trust acknowledges that this work is still in its infancy.
- Governors do not check the impact of additional funding on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils across the school, nor to the pupils in Year 7 who need to catch up in literacy and numeracy. To strengthen this aspect of their work, the trust is working collectively to develop school-to-school support with another school within the trust. The impact of this initiative is not yet evident.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders have not followed statutory guidance to assure pupils' safety and well-being. This serious failure undermines the school's safeguarding culture.
- The single central record of checks on staff is appropriate. The arrangements for appointing staff meet all legal requirements.
- Staff are well-trained and make appropriate referrals to the designated safeguarding leaders.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe through the work they do in lessons, themed days, and in assemblies. Pupils are given helpful guidance about how to keep themselves

safe from dangers online, how to maintain healthy relationships, and about the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. However, almost all pupils who spoke to inspectors had a very limited understanding of the risks attached to county lines, drug dealing and gangs.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Most teachers demonstrate a thorough understanding of their subject, and they have clear expectations about what pupils should know and understand in the different key stages. Teachers use this knowledge well to plan learning and inform their assessments. This enables pupils to develop a wide range of new knowledge, skills and understanding, and to practise and apply them successfully over time.
- Teachers make good use of a range of resources, including online technologies and quality textbooks. Pupils access a varied range of high-quality homework tasks to complement learning in lessons.
- Teachers' questioning challenges pupils to think through their answers and develop their analytical skills. Typically, teachers ensure that pupils add depth to their answers both in class discussions and in their written work.
- Teachers have very positive relationships with pupils, based on mutual respect and learning. Pupils are very clear about what is expected of them. Poor behaviour is rare and is usually managed effectively. Most pupils make the most of their learning time and respond to staff instructions quickly and appropriately.
- Most teachers spot pupils' misconceptions quickly. They use this information to guide pupils so that they can address any errors quickly and move on in their learning.
- Staff who are new to the profession are supported well. They appreciate the support that they receive, particularly to develop effective lesson planning and behaviour management. They are confident in the guidance that they receive, and they teach with increasing effectiveness.
- Learning activities do not inspire the most able pupils well enough to work hard and achieve the highest standards. Some teaching in mathematics and English does not challenge pupils to think deeply, apply new learning or develop new skills at a pace matching their ability.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The school does not do enough to support the small number of pupils who have complex social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and, despite the extensive school site, that teachers and staff are always visible. They say that staff teach them how to stay safe, and that they have confidence in staff to listen and support them if, and when, they need it.

- Most pupils are confident to tell staff how they are feeling. Pupils, including younger ones, say they are comfortable to tell adults if something is worrying them, or if they are concerned about their friends.
- On a day-to-day basis, well trained pastoral year teams and the school's targeted services team support pupils very effectively. They get to know pupils well and go out of their way to meet their day-to-day needs. They use their knowledge of pupils and their backgrounds to provide them with high quality additional support, for example, when pupils fall out with friends, feel sad, or need guidance.
- The school provides carefully considered support for a small group of pupils, including those with SEND, who find the size of the site difficult to manage at breaktimes and lunchtimes. The pupils appreciate and benefit from a more 'nurturing' environment during these times.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show respect and consideration for one another and for adults. As a result, poor behaviour and bullying are rare. Pupils say that where low-level disruptive behaviour or bullying occurs, almost all adults are alert and act quickly and appropriately.
- The school is calm and orderly. Pupils move sensibly around the site and they are clear about staff expectations of their behaviour. Litter and graffiti are virtually non-existent. Pupils look after their school and are proud of their achievements, including the sporting successes celebrated in the school reception.
- Pupils arrive punctually, both to school and to lessons, with positive attitudes. They have the correct equipment and they are ready to learn. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- Most pupils are motivated to do well, show pride in their work, and have high aspirations for their future. Pupils follow instructions well and settle to work quickly.
- The school uses its own internal 'curriculum plus centre' to make provision for pupils who need additional support to manage their own behaviour. The centre also offers a wide range of support, for example in working with pupils to overcome disagreements. The good work undertaken in this provision ensures that fixed-term exclusions are rare.
- Pupils attend school regularly. High levels of attendance reflect how pupils' value their education. Pastoral staff monitor pupils with poor attendance and support families effectively to reduce absence.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Most pupils join the school having attained highly at their primary schools. From their high starting points, most of them have good experiences in a range of subjects and generally progress well.
- In recent years, pupils in Year 11 have made above average progress. However, this was not maintained in 2018. Pupils are making better progress this year, especially

disadvantaged pupils and those in Year 9 and 10.

- The proportion of key stage 4 pupils entered for the English baccalaureate suite of subjects is high. Leaders are ensuring that the proportion of pupils entering these subjects is increasing so that the school will meet the target set by the Department for Education for 2022.
- The curriculum for a minority of pupils is not appropriate. Leaders have recognised this. Plans are in place to provide the pupils with more vocational learning within school. This work is at an early stage of development.
- Pupils achieve well in key stage 3 because of effective teaching. However, the most able pupils, of which there are a large proportion, are not routinely challenged to attain the very highest standards of which they are capable. While they are learning well, they are not making the outstanding progress that leaders think they are.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND generally attain well and make progress that is broadly in line with pupils with similar starting points nationally. However, the most able of these pupils do not attain the very highest standards or make the most rapid progress.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education, training or employment. This is because they attain well by the end of key stage 4. Pupils receive helpful advice about the different opportunities available to them, including advice about technical qualifications, colleges and apprenticeships. A high proportion of pupils go on to appropriate next steps to successfully complete their studies, including in the school's sixth form.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Students' progress in A-Level programmes has remained high for the last two years. Students achieve well in most subjects. They consistently perform very well in mathematics, media studies, biology and business studies.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are securely good. Teachers know their subject content and examination specifications well. They plan learning which ensures that students deepen their knowledge and apply it in a variety of ways.
- The school's dedicated time for additional study works very effectively. All students access this programme during free time. Students make good use of this time to deepen their understanding by completing independent study tasks. They take the provision seriously, and this impacts positively on their preparation for their next lessons.
- Information, advice and guidance about post-18 provision meets the needs of students. Most students going on to university, employment or further training access the correct courses and succeed in their next steps.
- The small proportion of students who resit GCSE English and mathematics are given access to regular timetabled lessons with subject specialist staff. This helps many students to improve their grades in these subjects. In 2018, the proportion of students who improved their grade in English was above average.
- The curriculum meets the needs of students well. Students wishing to enter the sixth

form must meet the school's high entry requirements. Therefore, leaders have matched the curriculum to a highly academic cohort. This works well. However, leaders have identified that a minority of students would benefit from more opportunities to pursue Level 2 awards.

- Increasing numbers of students access work experience and/or work-related learning which is appropriate to their courses and aspirations. Not all students gain from these opportunities.
- Personal development and welfare in the sixth form are good. Students feel well supported and cared for. They take on roles of responsibility in the school, such as leading the 'buddy' programme with new Year 7 pupils. They are taught how to stay safe in the community, online, and in the wider world. These articulate, confident and caring young people are very well prepared to make positive contributions to life in Britain.

School details

Unique reference number	136577
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10097304

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same act.

Type of school	Other secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2138
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	434
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Stewart Taylor
Headteacher	Melanie McGauley
Telephone number	01702 558 284
Website	www.thekjs.essex.sch.uk
Email address	kjs@thekjs.com
Date of previous inspection	19 to 20 September 2013

Information about this school

- Inspectors undertook learning walks and reviewed pupils' work, alongside senior leaders in the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with trustees, members of the local governing body, the chief executive officer (CEO), the headteacher, other leaders and staff. They held a meeting with a group of staff who are new to the teaching profession.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, health and safety, welfare, achievement, attendance and behaviour at the school.

- Inspectors reviewed the 148 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors spoke to school staff throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with three groups of pupils. All inspectors spoke with many pupils in lessons, and at breaktime and lunchtime on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors observed pupils' conduct at breaktimes and lunchtimes, as well as between lessons.

Information about this inspection

- The King John School is a much larger-than-average secondary academy.
- It became the lead school in the Zenith Multi-Academy Trust on 1 December 2017. Responsibility for the school's performance lies with the trust board. There is representation from the trust board on the school's local governing body. There are currently two other schools in the trust.
- The headteacher took on the permanent role as headteacher from January 2019. Prior to this, she had been the interim head of school since December 2017.
- The CEO was the headteacher of the school at the previous inspection. She took the role of CEO from 1 December 2017 but remained as headteacher until September 2018 to support the interim head of school.
- The school is part of the Benfleet Teaching School Alliance.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND, including those in receipt of an education, health and care plan, is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is lower than the national average.
- The school uses a small proportion of alternative providers to teach pupils off-site. This includes the Children's Support Service in Basildon and Basildon Education Partnership.
- This inspection began as a No Formal Designation inspection under Section 8 of the Education Act as a result of qualifying complaints and concerns about the leadership and management of safeguarding and welfare.

Inspection team

Kim Pigram, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Mitcheson	Her Majesty's Inspector
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John Daniell	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Carpenter	Ofsted Inspector
David Turner	Ofsted Inspector
David Hutton	Ofsted Inspector
Diana Fletcher	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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