

# Inspection of a good school: King Charles I School

Hill Grove House, Comberton Road, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY10 1XA

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Inspection dates: 28–29 January 2020

## Outcome

King Charles I School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

## What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where some relationships have broken down. A significant number of pupils and parents are not happy with school. This is because of the way behaviour is managed. Almost all pupils behave well, but they feel like they are not trusted. Parents have raised concerns that the system is too strict and is having a detrimental impact on children's well-being. At times, behaviour is controlled to such an extent that it is not making pupils' self-discipline better and does not create an environment in school that is conducive to learning. Not all sanctions are proportionate to the infringements committed. As a result, relationships between staff and pupils are not as positive as they could be.

Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. Bullying is not an issue. When any occurs, staff quickly deal with it. Pupils told us that their school may not be a happy place, but it is a safe place to be.

Leaders believe that all pupils can accomplish academic success. They have planned a curriculum that focuses on pupils achieving highly. This and the strong careers advice mean that pupils leave school well-prepared for their future.

Leaders know that some families sometimes need help to access a range of enrichment activities. Pupils benefit from many varied learning opportunities outside of the classroom. Trips and residentials are popular and accessible to all pupils.

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

Senior leaders have thought carefully about what pupils should learn. They have planned an ambitious curriculum that focuses on the English baccalaureate subjects at key stage 4. Almost all pupils study a language and history or geography to GCSE level. Senior leaders have ensured that all subject leaders plan the learning in their subjects so that pupils make strong gains in their knowledge and skills. Pupils' learning is sequenced to

build up their understanding over time, and this is successful. For example, in mathematics and English pupils learn the knowledge they need to apply this in future topics. Pupils' work in most subjects is of good quality.

Teaching does not always make adequate provision for the learning and behaviour needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In some lessons, pupils with SEND do not receive the support they need. Equally, higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough to deepen their learning. Pupils with SEND can also become distracted.

Almost all pupils behave well, but a minority do not. Leaders have implemented a behaviour management policy that many pupils and parents are not happy about. Some sanctions appear disproportionate to the infringements committed by pupils. Pupils told us that they feel like staff do not trust them to behave. Parents are worried about the impact this is having on their children's well-being. Consequently, some relationships at the school are not positive. Senior leaders have introduced this behaviour policy because of low-level disruption caused by a minority of pupils. But as well as feeling 'too strict' to pupils who generally behave well, the system is also not effective in improving the behaviour of this minority. These pupils, most of whom are either disadvantaged or pupils with SEND, spend a disproportionate of time in the isolation room. While there, they miss out on their learning.

Pupils' personal development is carefully planned. Leaders have included religious education in pupils' personal, social and health education lessons. They learn about current topics, their country, region and community as well as the wider world. Many topics cover their personal safety and interests. Pupils understand different religions, beliefs and faiths and are well prepared for life in our society.

The sixth-form provision is strong. Leaders have created an inclusive sixth form. They ensured that all pupils can experience post-16 learning by introducing a transition year. In this year, students can try out the sixth form to see if it suits their needs. Leaders planned the curriculum well. Learning builds on students' knowledge effectively in order to extend it further. Students enjoy their lessons and would recommend the provision to their younger peers. Students receive good advice about future career paths.

Senior leaders take staff well-being and workload into account when they make decisions and changes. All staff have told us that they enjoy working at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive the training they need to spot any signs that a child may need help. All staff know how and to whom to refer any issues. They know about potential risks in their local and regional community. Leaders work well with outside agencies. Staff seek help and advice to ensure that pupils are safe. Staff work well together to ensure that pupils at the school are safe.

Leaders have not ensured that systems to record information about the actions they are taking is sufficiently detailed and accurate. Although this does not put pupils at risk of harm, it also does not ensure that senior leaders have a clear oversight.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Teachers' plans to implement the curriculum do not take enough account of pupils with SEND, and higher attaining pupils do not always receive the support and challenge they need. Leaders need to ensure that teachers routinely adapt their planning and teaching so that these pupils' needs are met effectively.
- Leaders have introduced a behaviour system whereby pupils' behaviour is extensively controlled. Some sanctions imposed on pupils appear disproportionate to the infringements. The system is not working for pupils whose behaviour is not good enough, because these pupils continue to reoffend and often spend time being isolated from lessons. This slows their learning. Leaders need to ensure that the behaviour policy addresses effectively the behaviour issues of those pupils who fall short of leaders' high expectations, while not disadvantaging those who generally behave well.
- Some relationships at school are not positive. As a result, a significant number of parents have raised concerns. This has led to those parents losing faith in school leaders. Leaders need to ensure that they improve relationships between staff, pupils and parents.
- Current records about safeguarding actions lack detail and accuracy. As a result, leaders do not have a clear oversight of this important work of the school. Although this does not place pupils at risk, leaders should review current safeguarding recording systems to ensure sufficient details are recorded precisely.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, King Charles I School, to be good in October 2011.

## 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138032
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122548
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1054
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	101
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sue Fowler
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Brownlow
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.kingcharlesschool.co.uk">www.kingcharlesschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 May 2016

## Information about this school

- King Charles I School is a founding member of The Four Stones Multi-Academy Trust. There is one other secondary school in the trust.
- The previous headteacher of the school is now the executive headteacher of the trust. The school has an associate headteacher, who took up his post in January 2020. He is responsible for the daily running of the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, subject and middle leaders, teachers and pupils. They scrutinised school documents, including curriculum plans and school development plans.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and documentation, including the single central record. They met with the designated safeguarding lead

and special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors spoke with many staff about safeguarding.

- Inspectors evaluated records about pupils' attendance and behaviour as well as records about pupils who have left the school roll.
- The lead inspector met with two governors and representatives of the board of trustees, including the chair.
- Inspectors visited both sites of the school and visited the school's internal isolation room.
- Inspectors analysed 224 responses from parents to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, including 223 free-text comments. They evaluated 169 responses from pupils and 118 from staff to their respective Ofsted surveys.
- Inspectors completed various inspection activities to gather evidence on the quality of education. These included lesson visits, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors spoke to many pupils about their experience at school during the two days of the inspection.
- The inspection focused on English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and history. Other subjects were considered as part of the inspection.
- The school offers full- and part-time alternative provision for 16 pupils at ContinU Plus Academy, Abberley Care Farm, Crownsmill Craft Centre and the Medical Education Centre.

## **Inspection team**

Bianka Zemke, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ian Tustian

Her Majesty's Inspector

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