

Inspection of The King John School

Shipwrights Drive, Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex SS7 1RQ

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 July 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their studies at The King John School. They are incredibly positive about the school and attend regularly. Those who are new to the school settle in very quickly. Leaders and teachers have the same high expectations for all pupils. They encourage every pupil to do their absolute best.

The school is a happy place. Pupils get on well with each other and adults. They say, and know, that it is 'OK to be different'. Pupils are confident that staff take good care of them. Pupils behave well in lessons and say staff are 'good at shutting down nonsense' so they can learn.

Behaviour around the school is calm and orderly. All the pupils that inspectors spoke to said that they feel safe at school and that bullying is rare. Pupils said that they have 'bully busters' that help them and that staff are quick to deal with bullying, should it occur.

Students in the sixth form are happy that they have chosen to continue their studies in the school. Leaders support them well in their learning. Most students move onto highly appropriate next steps when they leave the school, continuing with their studies in higher education or moving on to training or employment.

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

This school has improved considerably since it was last inspected. The new headteacher's inspiring vision for an education that prepares pupils for life is entirely shared by his staff. Leaders and trustees of the multi-academy trust have taken swift action to focus on making it the best school it can be. School improvement has been embedded in fundamental changes to safeguarding procedures and developing the quality of education. Leaders have a precise understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that still need to be improved.

Staff are proud of their school. They say that the school is well led and managed, and that leaders are supportive and considerate of staff's workload and well-being. Staff appreciate the training opportunities that help them to develop their subject knowledge further. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. As one parent commented, 'The school has gone above and beyond our expectations. My child has been very happy, felt valued, has received excellent teaching. The pastoral care at the school has been second to none.'

Faculty directors have designed and planned the curriculum well in a wide range of subjects. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use this to good effect to plan learning activities. Teachers make sure that they teach subjects in a logical order. They identify the most important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn. Pupils told us their subject knowledge builds up from lesson to lesson. The

curriculum is not yet securely embedded across the school for all subjects. Not all assessments, across key stage 3 subjects, align completely with curriculum plans.

Leaders think carefully about what they teach to all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged. All pupils are keen learners in lessons. They produce work of a good quality. As a result, they achieve well.

Staff are ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are well supported. Teachers use the information about pupils with SEND to plan activities that help pupils make good progress.

Leaders have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils respond positively to teachers' requests. This is because most teachers manage pupils' behaviour in a positive way. This helps learning to flow smoothly. The school uses its own internal 'curriculum plus centre' to support pupils who need help to manage their own behaviour. The centre also offers a wide range of support, including helping pupils to resolve disagreements.

The promotion of pupils' personal development is a notable strength. The curriculum includes a range of topics, such as the dangers of drugs and gang culture and how to keep safe. Topics are repeated as pupils progress through the school, so that they revisit them in an age-appropriate manner. The pastoral team sensitively enables pupils to overcome difficulties, including those relating to mental health. They work with the local authority and other agencies to ensure that those pupils with the most complex welfare needs are supported well.

Students in the school's large sixth form benefit from high-quality teaching, care and support. Students enjoy, and show a high level of commitment to, their studies. Strong specialist teaching ensures that students achieve highly. Students are proud of their school and many make a positive contribution to the school community. Leaders provide students with high-quality careers advice and guidance, guiding and supporting their decisions about next steps after the sixth form.

Trustees have recruited more expertise to the local governing body. Governors have a thorough understanding of key aspects of the school's work. They play an active role in the life of the school. The governors are well informed and hold the headteacher and leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe. They are taught how to keep safe and are supported to resist 'peer group' pressure. They know they have adults to talk to in school if they are worried about something.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the culture of safeguarding is strong. They are acutely aware of the contextual dangers, such as county lines drug and gang-

related criminal activity and are proactive in protecting pupils from potential harm. Leaders follow statutory guidance to promote pupils' safety and well-being. They follow up concerns about pupils' welfare in a timely fashion. Leaders work appropriately with a range of external agencies. They provide support to those who need it. The school's own pastoral systems support pupils who need help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have redesigned the curriculum to enhance the quality of delivery. However, the implementation of the planned curriculum and assessment is further advanced and more consistent in some subjects than in others. Leaders need to make sure that the curriculum is delivered with equal rigour across all subjects and that the recently appointed faculty directors receive the necessary training so that they can ensure this happens.

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 [here](#).

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

Unique reference number	136577
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10184564
Type of school	Other secondary
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	2,121
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	430
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stewart Taylor
Headteacher	Daniel Steel
Website	www.thekjs.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 and 27 February 2019

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up his post in January 2021. There have been senior leadership changes, governor changes and staff changes since the previous inspection.
- The school uses the Children’s Support Service in Hadleigh for alternative provision for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, faculty directors, teachers, learning support assistants, pupils and parents. They also met with the chief executive officer, the chair of trustees, a member of the board of trustees and the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors did deep dives in English, mathematics, science, history and physical education. This involved discussions with the faculty directors, visits to lessons and talking with pupils and teachers. They looked at work in pupils' books and reviewed relevant curriculum documentation.
- Inspectors analysed the 90 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They viewed the 27 free-text responses. They considered the views of staff from the 123 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors inspected the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing leaders' recruitment checks on staff. They held a meeting with the leader who holds responsibility for child protection. They checked policies and procedures. They took account of the views of parents, pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Damian Loneragan	Her Majesty's Inspector
Georgina Atkinson	Ofsted Inspector
Gerard Batty	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Smith	Her Majesty's Inspector

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