

# Inspection of King Edwin School

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

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Inspection dates: 1 to 3 December 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

'My son has thrived since starting this school. All the staff go above and beyond to make sure he is well cared for in all aspects of development. It most definitely meets all his needs.' These comments from one parent represent the views of others. Pupils who have not been able to manage in mainstream education cope well in King Edwin's School. The staff are patient and caring. They provide highly effective pastoral support and encouragement. Pupils who were disaffected start to enjoy learning.

The school provides a broad and ambitious curriculum. Pupils are expected to learn the knowledge set out in the national curriculum. Pupils take part eagerly in lessons. They are keen to participate. Some are now requesting homework. There is an extensive wider curriculum designed to develop pupils' personal and social skills. This includes activities such as going shopping, ice-skating or visiting the park. These experiences are very much a planned part of the school day.

Pupils behave well. They are polite to the staff and one another. Most improve their behaviour and attendance. Pupils like the small and personal nature of the school. They feel safe. The respectful relationships across the school allow pupils to feel calm and ready to learn.

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

Leaders have improved many aspects of the school since it was last inspected. They have fostered a positive team culture. All adults who work in the school are strongly committed to meeting every pupil's needs. They all made admirable efforts to check on the welfare of pupils and their families across the pandemic.

Leaders have improved the curriculum, particularly in English, mathematics and science. In these subjects, pupils are making impressive progress. The content taught is ambitious. Topics have been thoughtfully sequenced to build pupils' understanding. Teachers break the knowledge down into small steps and check that pupils understand it as lessons progress. Teachers design learning activities that pupils enjoy. They often make lessons practical and hands-on. Teachers are well supported by other adults in the classroom. They ensure that each pupil gets lots of very personal support in order to help them to learn. Most pupils sit several GCSE examinations in key stage 4.

Leaders have wanted to improve their planning for other subjects but responding to COVID-19 has slowed them down. In subjects such as history, pupils produce some lively work, but topics are taught in isolation. Key themes, such as 'power' or 'conflict' in history, are not developed or built on. This is because there is not a clear curriculum plan across the age range. This means that pupils' knowledge in some subjects is more superficial.

Most pupils join the school having experienced considerable disruption to their education. Some are in the early stages of learning to read. The school assesses them quickly. Teachers provide daily phonics teaching. Pupils engage well and make progress. Pupils read to an adult every day. However, the school has a limited range of books from different phonics programmes. The books given to pupils do not always match the sounds they have learned. Leaders have made sure reading is a priority. All pupils read every day. They grow in confidence as they get older and enjoy reading aloud to their class.

Provision for pupils' personal development is outstanding. The school has a well-planned personal, social and health education programme. Pupils are taught how to stay safe. They are knowledgeable about radicalisation and extremism and online safety. They are taught about sex and relationships including LGBT relationships. They enjoy very practical learning about how to travel independently, shopping for ingredients, cooking and managing money. They have regular visits to places of cultural interest, such as regional museums, and have opportunities to work with animals at a farm. Pupils said this school has helped them to make friends. There is comprehensive careers guidance, including good opportunities to meet employers and to visit colleges. There are clubs for pupils to attend on a Saturday and across school holidays. Leaders listen carefully to what pupils want and do their best to make it happen. These are carefully planned opportunities designed to re-engage pupils and build their character.

Pupils' behaviour tends to improve at King Edwin's School. There are relatively few incidents of poor behaviour because pupils build strong, trusting relationships with adults. Adults are all trained in restraint, but physical restraint is rarely used. Teachers and support staff are skilled in managing pupils who become tense or upset. They skilfully use humour and other strategies to diffuse tension. Pupils trust adults to address any incidents of bullying. Attendance varies considerably from pupil to pupil. A sizeable proportion of pupils miss school regularly. But attendance data shows that many pupils improve their attendance over time because of the extensive efforts made to draw them back into education.

Senior leaders, the proprietor and the governors make regular checks on the independent school standards. They ensure that the premises are fit for purpose. Policies are systematically reviewed and kept up to date. Leaders make sure they are open to external scrutiny. The governing body has grown in strength since the last inspection. Knowledgeable governors are bringing greater scrutiny and accountability. Collectively, leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Thorough checks are made on all adults who work in or visit the school. Rigorous checks are also made on the safeguarding arrangements at the alternative education providers used by the school. All adults are well trained in safeguarding. They follow

well-developed procedures to report any concerns they identify. The designated safeguarding lead works effectively in partnership with external agencies to protect pupils at risk of harm. Record-keeping is thorough. Leaders have ensured that all groups with protected characteristics are treated fairly. All pupils know that sexual harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

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

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Some pupils join the school in the early stages of learning to read and without a secure grasp of phonics. These pupils are quickly identified and are taught phonics daily. However, resources are limited. Pupils are not always given decodable books that match their phonics knowledge. This is slowing their reading development. Leaders should ensure that pupils have access to a better resourced and more comprehensive systematic synthetic phonics programme.
- In English, mathematics and science, the curriculum is well planned and implemented. In some other subjects, the pandemic has slowed down the improvements that leaders had planned to make. In these subjects, topics tend to be taught in isolation, and important themes or concepts are not developed as well as they should be. Leaders should complete their review of curriculum planning and train the staff so that they can implement new planning effectively.

## **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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140272
<b>DfE registration number</b>	808/6004
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	10203307
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	6 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	78
<b>Proprietor</b>	Stephen McGhee
<b>Chair</b>	Daniel Johnson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lorna McLean
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£49,500
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 366 610
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://kingedwin.zohosites.com">http://kingedwin.zohosites.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@ne.sparkofgenius.com">admin@ne.sparkofgenius.com</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	5 to 7 June 2019

## Information about this school

- The last standard independent school inspection took place in June 2019.
- Since the last standard inspection, the school has increased its age range so that it can now admit pupils from six to 18 years of age. Currently, there are no students over 16 years of age.
- The school places a number of pupils with alternative education providers on a part-time basis. Two of these providers are registered with Ofsted. The other four are unregistered providers.
- The school caters for pupils from a range of backgrounds and with a range of learning needs, all of whom have either social, emotional or mental health needs, and/or autism spectrum disorder. All pupils who attend the school have an education, health and care plan.

## Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met the proprietor, the principal, vice-principal and other senior leaders. Inspectors also met the chair and other members of the governing body and a representative of Stockton-on-Tees local authority via Teams.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, English and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also scrutinised curriculum planning and samples of pupils' books in art and history.
- Inspectors toured the school site to check whether the premises met the requirements of the independent school standards.
- Inspectors checked the quality of the school's systems for vetting adults who work in or visit the school. Inspectors also met with the school safeguarding lead and spoke to staff to explore their understanding of their role in safeguarding pupils.

- An inspector visited Phoenix Youth Training, one of the unregistered alternative education providers used by the school.
- Inspectors looked at the responses to Ofsted’s online survey for parents, Parent View, and the responses to the questionnaire for staff.

### **Inspection team**

Chris Smith, lead inspector

Moira Banks

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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