

Inspection of a good school: Kingfisher School

Clifton Close, Matchborough, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 0HF

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 February 2022

Outcome

Kingfisher School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Before attending Kingfisher, pupils have often had prolonged periods out of education and negative experiences of school. In all subjects and activities, staff have high expectations of pupils. They ensure that they understand pupils' needs and learning styles, and then tailor learning carefully to meet them. This successfully re-engages pupils in education and helps them to achieve well academically.

Staff also understand pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. They support pupils exceptionally well to help them manage their feelings and emotions. The sensory room, mentors and Ginny and Rocco, the school dogs, all contribute to the school's highly effective pastoral support. Over time, pupils' behaviour improves significantly. Staff spot quickly when pupils' emotions begin to change. They intervene swiftly to help pupils to calm themselves. This means that any potential issues, including any bullying, are minimised and pupils can continue learning in a calm environment.

Pupils appreciate the care and support that staff give them and feel safe and secure in school. They also appreciate the wider opportunities the school provides, such as trips to Barry Island, residential visits and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award activities. The wider curriculum experiences enhance pupils' enjoyment of, and engagement in, school.

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

Many pupils have significant gaps in their learning due to prolonged periods out of education before joining Kingfisher. When pupils join the school, staff carry out comprehensive assessments of pupils' learning and pastoral needs. This enables staff to adapt the curriculum planning to meet each pupil's specific needs. Because the curriculum is precisely matched to pupils' needs, they are able to build successfully on their prior knowledge and skills over time. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in all subjects. Staff model subject-specific language well. They introduce and explain new words precisely, which supports and extends pupils' vocabulary and understanding.

Teachers encourage pupils to explain their learning and thoughts. This helps pupils to remember new learning.

The teaching of phonics and early reading across the school is helping pupils to access the wider curriculum successfully. Teachers model reading well, using great expression. This captures pupils' attention and helps them to remain engaged in the stories. Staff provide pupils with a wide range of reading materials, including magazines, web pages and audio books. Teachers' enthusiasm for reading, and the creative ways they share texts and information, is helping pupils to see reading as a positive experience and successfully develops their love of reading.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of therapeutic support. For example, they access music, speech and language and play therapies. The mentoring programme develops pupils' resilience and helps them to manage their emotions. This support, along with the carefully structured curriculum, enables pupils to gain confidence in their abilities and achieve a range of qualifications by the end of key stage 4.

In September 2021, the school opened the sixth-form provision. Students joined this provision from a range of schools, as well as Kingfisher. At this point, leaders did not have the breadth of information, or time, needed to prepare fully for the range of qualifications and courses to meet all students' needs. While students in the sixth form are receiving an effective education to enable them to achieve a range of qualifications, leaders know that the choice of subjects is not yet as wide as it could be. Plans are already in place to develop the breadth of the sixth-form curriculum from September 2022.

Leaders have developed a specialist curriculum, 'The Kingfisher Exceptional Education Programme'. Pupils on this curriculum pathway access a range of different educational experiences through, for example, farm work and tutoring off site. Each pupil has a programme that is planned around their very specific needs. This programme is enabling pupils who previously had no academic or wider provision to remain in education. This programme is a particular strength of the school.

The wider curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to experience challenging activities to support their personal development. For example, enterprise events help to prepare pupils for the world of work. Pupils made furniture and craft items to sell in a pop-up shop. They ran the shop, including managing the money and budgets for the materials. In addition to this, pupils have had the opportunity to serve lunches to older people. This helps them to develop social skills within the wider community. Staff's work to provide pupils with a wide range of activities and experiences in the community is successfully developing their social skills, confidence and resilience.

The whole-school community works together as a supportive team. The trust and local governing body make sure that leaders' actions improve outcomes for pupils. They also check that staff's well-being is being supported. Staff appreciate the support they receive. As a result of this effective teamwork, the school is continuing to develop and improve pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are mindful of pupils' past experiences when teaching them how to keep safe. They help pupils to understand when a situation is unsafe and how to protect themselves. They approach this in a sensitive way to protect pupils' mental health needs. Staff utilise specialist support to teach pupils about the dangers of knife crime, drugs and exploitation.

Staff know and understand pupils' vulnerabilities in detail. This enables them to quickly spot any signs that pupils may be suffering harm. Leaders respond rapidly to find support to help pupils keep safe, and they challenge external agencies robustly when it is not provided.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's sixth-form provision opened in September 2021. Leaders had limited time to ensure that the curriculum would fully meet all students' needs. As a result, some students are not yet following all the courses they want to. Leaders should continue to implement their plans to expand the sixth-form provision so that all students can access the courses they need to progress on to their chosen employment, apprenticeships or college courses after leaving school.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 15 December 2016.

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 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

Unique reference number	140404
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10205162
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	14
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Robert Turton
Headteacher	Jay Hart
Website	www.kingfisherschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses eight unregistered alternative providers.
- Since the last inspection, the school has joined the Central Learning Partnership Trust.
- In September 2021, the school increased its capacity to 140 and opened the sixth-form provision.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan for social, emotional and mental health conditions. A number of pupils have autism spectrum disorder.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy and assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, the reading, mathematics and physical education (PE) leaders, the outreach leader and teachers.
- The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair of governors. She also met with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects. They also visited history, information technology, personal, social, health and economic education and catering lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy, spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at how pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. The lead inspector spoke to the safeguarding leader about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents.
- One inspector visited three of the unregistered alternative provisions with the outreach leader.
- Inspectors took account of the free-text comments, the responses on Ofsted Parent View and the responses to the survey for staff.

Inspection team

Ann Pritchard, lead inspector

Russell Hinton

Janet Lewis

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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