

Inspection of an outstanding school: King Edward VI Handsworth Grammar School for Boys

Grove Lane, Handsworth, Birmingham, West Midlands B21 9ET

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 March 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils have a keen desire to do well. Pupils are inquisitive learners and thrive on the knowledge they gain from their lessons. They enjoy school and wear their uniform with pride. Staff are committed to ensuring all pupils are successful. Pupils achieve extremely well across a broad range of subjects.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. In lessons, they are highly attentive and engage fully with their learning. At social times, pupils play together sensibly on the school's AstroTurf pitch or enjoy a game of table tennis with their friends. Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare and dealt with quickly by staff.

The school's curriculum is strong. Pupils study a broad range of subjects at key stage 3 and can take many different GCSE subjects at key stage 4. Most pupils opt to stay on in the school's sixth form and deepen their knowledge of subjects they enjoy.

Staff provide a range of opportunities for pupils beyond their academic studies. There are many different extra-curricular activities, such as after-school sports clubs. Pupils are also keen to take up leadership roles, such as a school prefect or house captain. Year 7 pupils enjoy a residential trip to 'Whitemoor Lakes' to participate in team building activities.

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

The school curriculum is planned and sequenced effectively. Middle leaders have carefully considered the order in which topics are taught, so that pupils are able to build on their prior knowledge. Teachers understand where pupils need to be in their learning by the end of each year and how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or

disabilities. There is a clear sense of how the curriculum connects across key stages, so that pupils are well prepared to meet the demands of external examinations. As a result, pupils make strong progress in many subjects.

Teachers are highly adept at delivering the curriculum. Alongside strong subject knowledge, teachers present new ideas or concepts well, so that pupils are clear about what they are learning. Teachers use questioning extremely effectively to check what pupils know and remember. This helps to identify errors and misconceptions, so that these can be addressed quickly. Pupils value the feedback they receive from their teachers and the opportunity to reflect on their work.

Leaders recognise that the uptake of modern foreign languages (MFL) at key stage 4 has been lower than they would like. In the last two years, they have made changes to the curriculum at key stage 3, so that pupils are able to spend more time studying one language. Leaders have also adjusted the MFL curriculum, so that pupils are deepening their knowledge of grammar, phonics and cultural influences. This is proving successful. Leaders have further plans to help increase the uptake of MFL at key stage 4.

Leaders have carefully considered the curriculum for pupils' wider personal development. There are various experiences that are planned throughout the year in form times, assemblies and 'Enrichment Days'. Pupils learn about relationships, sex and health education across all year groups in an age-appropriate way, including on topics such as consent.

Leaders have a clear careers programme in place. They have ensured that pupils receive information and guidance on careers from Year 8 through to Year 13. Pupils learn about their potential next steps through talks from local apprenticeship providers and visits to universities. Pupils in the sixth form are provided with effective support when completing UCAS applications. Many pupils benefit from the opportunity to engage with employers and get first-hand experiences of the workplace. However, there is work to do to strengthen this aspect for all pupils.

Trustees and governors provide effective support and challenge to leaders. Governors are clear as to their delegated roles and responsibilities from the trust and provide regular feedback to the trust board about the school's performance. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and are keen to ensure it builds on its strong position.

Staff are extremely positive about leaders' approach to managing workload. Many staff say that leaders have taken effective steps to ensure teachers can focus on supporting pupils and developing their own teaching practice. The overwhelming majority of staff say that leaders are considerate of their well-being and that they enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There are clear processes in place to help safeguard pupils. Leaders carry out appropriate checks on staff and ensure all records are kept up to date. All staff have received annual safeguarding training and complete a series of supplementary modules throughout the school year. Staff are clear about what they should do if they have a concern about a child and where this should be recorded. Leaders ensure that pupils who need support receive it in a timely way and are persistent if concerns need to be followed up with external agencies. Pupils learn to keep themselves safe through the school's personal development curriculum, including topics such as online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At present, the number of pupils opting to study a language at key stage 4 remains relatively low. This means that the proportion of pupils completing the suite of subjects which makes up the English Baccalaureate (Ebacc) remains below the government's national ambition. Leaders should continue with their current plans, so that the number of pupils taking languages increases and the Ebacc sits at the heart of the curriculum for key stage 4.
- Pupils' encounters with future employers are not as strong as they could be. Not all pupils, including those in the sixth form, consistently benefit from first-hand experience of the workplace. Leaders should strengthen their careers programme by ensuring all pupils have consistent opportunities to encounter the world of work.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 predecessor school, Handsworth Grammar School, to be outstanding in January 2017.

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	143562
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10212537
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1053
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	298
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sharon Roberts
Headteacher	Simon Bird
Website	http://www.handsworth.bham.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the King Edward VI Academy Trust Birmingham in September 2017.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

- Inspectors focused on the following subjects: English, science, modern foreign languages and history. Inspectors examined leaders' plans, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum and improvement planning. The school website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also asked how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with the chair of the trust, chief executive officer, chair of the local governing body, headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Mark Howes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gwen Onyon

Ofsted Inspector

Mark Sims

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022