

Inspection of a good school: The King's Academy

Stainton Way, Coulby Newham, Middlesbrough TS8 0GA

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 March 2022

Outcome

The King's Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The King's Academy is a highly inclusive community built on respectful relationships. The school has a religious character that is underpinned by a number of core virtues, including courage, integrity and fairness. Pupils and staff are encouraged to live out these virtues every day. The King's Academy caters for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including specialist provision for hearing and visually impaired pupils. Pupils with SEND participate fully in the life of the school. Pupils explain that everyone is treated equally and valued. They feel safe and happy in school.

There is a positive atmosphere around school and pupils behave well. Strong relationships are evident between staff and pupils in classrooms. Leaders and staff know their pupils well. Leaders have established an anti-bullying culture in school. Pupils understand what bullying is and explain that it is taken seriously in school. They explain different ways that they can report it and agree that staff deal with it effectively if it happens. Detailed records show the school's firm response to any bullying. The majority of pupils, staff and parents feel that bullying does not happen in school.

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

Leaders are ambitious for what they want pupils to learn and experience. Leaders have ensured that performing arts subjects have high status in the school to help build pupils' self-confidence and broaden their experiences. For example, all pupils in Year 7 are learning the violin during their music lessons as part of a national project. Pupils enjoy being involved in the annual school musical productions.

Subject leaders have carefully thought about how to build pupils' knowledge over time. Leaders have set out in detail what they want pupils to learn. Teachers have well-established systems in place to help pupils remember what they have learned. Teachers ensure that pupils regularly recall their learning through quizzes and questioning. Pupils throughout the school explain how much this has helped them to build up their knowledge over time.

Staff are well trained to ensure that all pupils are effectively supported to achieve their potential. Staff use a wide range of specialised resources to support all pupils with SEND to access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Leaders have designed assessments that carefully match what pupils have learned. Teachers use assessment information to pinpoint what knowledge they need to revisit. Teachers ensure that lessons are not disrupted by a lack of focus. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct.

Leaders have ensured that reading has a high priority across the school. Pupils have time set aside to read daily. There is also a weekly group reading session in tutor groups. Additionally, younger pupils have library lessons where staff guide them to choose books they would enjoy.

Leaders have recognised the increasing need for strong mental health provision for pupils. Pupils at the school have access to mental health counsellors and emotional literacy support assistants. Leaders ensure that pupils who are struggling are able to access the support that they need. Pupils who find it difficult to manage their emotions are provided with a range of support to help them make better choices.

Careers education and guidance is valued. Pupils throughout the school are introduced to the wide range of options available to them in the future. Pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 talk about the range of jobs available and visits from local businesses. Older pupils appreciate individual guidance interviews.

Pupils appreciate their new relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) lessons. They talk maturely about healthy relationships, equality and diversity. Leaders have thought carefully about how to make sure that the content is taught in an age-appropriate way and is relevant to the local community. Pupils take online quizzes to make sure they have understood the important content that is delivered in their RSHE lessons. Staff follow up with pupils if they have misunderstood key messages.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. They explain that they feel valued and that they are listened to. Staff feel their workload is considered. They describe the school as a 'close community' and a 'strong team'. Teachers who are new to the profession talk enthusiastically about how welcomed they have felt.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders responsible for safeguarding invest much time in ensuring that staff are clear about what signs to look out for to keep pupils safe. Leaders have designed robust systems to ensure that pupils are well supported and kept safe. Staff record any concerns or worries about pupils' welfare and leaders follow these up quickly. Leaders ensure that staff are particularly aware of more vulnerable pupils and put extra support in place for these pupils.

Pupils are taught age-appropriate messages about how to keep themselves safe. Younger pupils learn about online privacy and issues related to social media. Older students learn about road safety as new drivers and the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The new RSHE curriculum is still in development. This means that pupils have not learned about some important topics that will prepare them for life in modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that this new curriculum is embedded across all year groups to ensure that these messages are effectively delivered to pupils.

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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2013.

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

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| Unique reference number | 134223 |
| Local authority | Middlesbrough |
| Inspection number | 10200496 |
| Type of school | 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 | 1,308 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 155 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Stewart McKinlay |
| Principal | David Dawes |
| Website | http://www.thekingsacademy.org.uk/ |
| Date of previous inspection | 15 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- This school has three on-site specialist SEND provisions: a vision impairment additionally resourced provision; a hearing impairment additionally resourced provision; and a higher learning needs support unit.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school uses four unregistered alternative providers.
- The school has a Christian ethos.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal and other members of the senior management team. They also met with the chief executive officer of the trust and the link governor for curriculum. They met with leaders responsible for careers education, literacy and RSHE.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, art, English and geography. 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 looked at curriculum plans for other subjects.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for SEND provision. They looked at examples of statements of need for individual pupils and visited pupils with SEND in lessons. They also visited the higher learning needs base.
- Inspectors visited two alternative providers: Connect 2 Education and Lingfield Choosing Pathways.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including: the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plan, minutes of governors' meetings, behaviour and suspension data, education, health and care plans and destinations data for pupils.
- While inspecting safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record and documentation regarding pre-employment checks. They met with leaders responsible for safeguarding and scrutinised documentation around actions taken by leaders to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors considered the 97 free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View and additional communications from parents. Inspectors also considered the 629 responses to the pupil survey and the 110 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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