

Inspection of King Henry School

Avenue Road, Erith, Kent DA8 3BN

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have low expectations of pupils' behaviour. A significant minority of pupils frequently do not attend lessons. Leaders cannot account for where all pupils are during the school day. This means that they do not safeguard these pupils in school. During break and lunchtime, the behaviour of many pupils is poor and, at times, unsafe. Instances of bullying are frequent and not dealt with effectively to get them resolved. Leaders are not doing enough to improve the behaviour of pupils and attendance to lessons.

Pupils study a full range of subjects. Leaders have thought about the key knowledge they want pupils to learn. However, leaders do not do enough to support pupils with weak literacy to develop reading fluency. This prevents those who are weak readers from accessing the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not having their needs met. Leaders do not have high enough expectations for these pupils.

Leaders support the personal development of pupils through the 21C and outdoor-learning curriculums. The school's football-academy partnership provides pupils with a strong source of sports/football enrichment activities. Students in the sixth form learn more of the taught curriculum than younger pupils because behaviour in class is better. From Year 8 onwards, pupils receive appropriate careers guidance to help them make choices for their next steps in education, employment or training.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Subject leaders have thought carefully about the order in which pupils learn knowledge. However, leaders are not ambitious for more pupils to study the English Baccalaureate choice of subjects. In the sixth form, leaders provide a range of academic and vocational subjects. These suit the needs and aspirations of students.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They explain new ideas clearly. Teachers plan regular opportunities for pupils to revise their learning. However, they do not help pupils routinely to know and remember key vocabulary. Pupils struggle to explain what they have learned previously.

Teachers use assessment at key points in the year to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. This is consistent across subjects. During lessons, teachers do not routinely check pupils' understanding. They do not identify where pupils lack knowledge or have misconceptions. As a result, pupils typically struggle to complete harder work.

The curriculum is poorly adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. These pupils do not receive specific or targeted support to access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders have made efforts to improve the identification and assessment

of pupils with SEND but the impact of this work is too slow. Teachers do not have the necessary knowledge to provide the support or resources needed to enable these pupils to keep up with the others.

Leaders do not prioritise reading and do not encourage pupils to read for pleasure. Leaders and staff do not provide effective support for pupils who need help to improve their reading confidence and fluency. These pupils struggle to take advantage of their education more generally in class because they are not fluent readers. Truancy from lessons results in these pupils falling further behind their peers. Leaders have not done enough to ensure that pupils with SEND and those who are weak readers receive a good-quality education.

Too many pupils show poor attitudes to learning and are frequently absent from lessons. They do not follow the instructions of staff and show a lack of respect to other members of the school community. This is often unchallenged by staff. Pupils' lack of engagement with learning stems from poor provision in the classroom.

Other pupils in the school show positive attitudes, but their learning is frequently disrupted by the behaviour of others. Support for pupils' behaviour in lessons is not effective. Teachers do not use a consistent approach to managing pupil behaviour. Disruption to learning is commonplace.

Pupils who do not attend lessons often behave poorly in corridors and cause additional disruption to the learning of others. Many pupils have been conditioned to expect poor behaviour and bullying and they seldom report it. Pupils have little confidence in the school to address their concerns. Where staff manage pupils' behaviour well, such as in physical education, pupils' learning and participation is much stronger.

Students in the sixth form receive a better quality of education. They show more positive attitudes to their learning than pupils in younger years and are more attentive in class. As a result, sixth-form lessons are more purposeful, and students learn and remember more. Students in the sixth form who have not achieved a pass grade for GCSE mathematics and/or English receive lessons to gain this qualification. However, here too, attendance at these lessons is not as regular as it should be.

Pupils are taught about relationships and sex education, and health education. They are encouraged to appreciate societal values and the importance of respecting those with different viewpoints.

Leaders ensure that pupils receive unbiased advice about the future pathways open to them. The school has a football academy, which is popular with sixth-form students. Many of these students apply to university for courses in sports coaching and leadership. Apart from sports clubs, enrichment opportunities for pupils outside the taught curriculum are limited. Leaders have been slow to resume clubs and outings, following the earlier restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leaders and governors show a strong commitment to the school. However, leaders have struggled to implement measures that would improve the behaviour of pupils. Instability in leadership has led to inconsistency. Those responsible for governance of the school do not have sufficient strategic oversight of key areas of weakness. They lack the knowledge and skills to support leaders in school improvement.

Staff do not feel supported by leaders to manage the behaviour of pupils. Many staff feel frustrated at the slow pace with which new initiatives have been introduced and their lack of impact. Staff feel supported by leaders to manage their workload. They appreciate changes made to reduce unnecessary burdens around assessment. Staff feel their well-being has been negatively impacted by the challenges they face managing the behaviour of pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The poor behaviour of pupils at break and lunchtimes makes other pupils feel unsafe. Pupils are frequently missing from lessons for parts of the school day. Leaders are not sure of the whereabouts of pupils who are in school but not in lessons and therefore unsupervised and unregistered during the school day. This puts the safety of these pupils at risk.

Leaders ensure that the procedures and policies for identifying pupils who are vulnerable to dangers outside of school are robust. Staff know how to report concerns and do so when necessary. Those responsible for safeguarding draw on a range of appropriate outside agencies to make sure that vulnerable pupils and their families get the help they need. Leaders ensure the safe recruitment of staff.

Through the school's 21C curriculum, pupils receive age-appropriate information on issues such as sexual harassment, the significance of consent, and how to maintain online safety. However, pupils do not have a secure understanding of safe behaviour.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Poor behaviour at breaktimes means that some pupils feel unsafe in school. Staff do not feel supported by leaders to manage behaviour around the school. Leaders must ensure they have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Systems to address pupils' behaviour must be clear and consistently implemented.
- Too many pupils are missing from lessons during the school day. These pupils are not accurately registered and are unsupervised. This compromises the safety of pupils. Leaders must ensure that all pupils attend lessons and are supervised and registered during the school day. They must take steps to improve pupils' attitudes to learning and address lesson truancy.

- Members of the governing body and trustees do not have sufficient expertise to support leaders in school improvement. They are unable to sufficiently challenge leaders. Governors and trustees should broaden the expertise of their members, particularly regarding school improvement.
- The needs of pupils with SEND are not met. Identification and assessment of pupils with SEND is slow. Pupils do not receive the support to which they are entitled. Leaders should ensure that staff are given appropriate strategies, training and resources to adequately support pupils with SEND so that these pupils can take full advantage of their education.
- Pupils with weak literacy are not receiving the support they need to develop their reading fluency. The weakest readers are not able to access the curriculum in lessons. They are not prepared for their next steps in education. Leaders should ensure appropriate support is in place to help pupils with weak literacy to catch up. They should ensure that staff are given appropriate training to support weak readers.
- Reading is not prioritised by leaders. Pupils have little structured reading time and few pupils read for pleasure. Leaders should ensure they support the literacy of all pupils by prioritising reading.
- Teachers do not check that pupils understand key knowledge in lessons before they move on. Key vocabulary is not embedded and pupils struggle to access more-complex learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers systematically check the understanding of pupils before they move on. They should ensure that all teachers support pupils to embed their knowledge in their long-term memory.
- Leaders have been slow to reintroduce enrichment and extra-curricular clubs and trips following the earlier restrictions during COVID-19 pandemic. Outside of sports, few pupils are taking part in learning opportunities that extend beyond the taught curriculum. Leaders should ensure a wider curriculum is on offer for pupils.

Having considered the evidence, I strongly recommend that leaders and those responsible for governance do not seek to appoint early career teachers.

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	146378
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10200599
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,550
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	170
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Aamer Safdar
Headteacher	Hayley Gibbs (Acting Headteacher) Desmond Deehan (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.kinghenry.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This academy is part of the Odyssey Trust for Education. It opened in September 2018. When the predecessor academy school, Erith School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to require improvement overall.
- In March 2022, the school appointed a new acting headteacher.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- 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

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the acting headteacher, the chief executive officer and the director of education for the trust. They also met with the chair of trustees and the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, science, computer science, physical education and history. They met with curriculum leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited a sample of tutor sessions and personal development activities. They also visited outdoor education lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including the written records of meetings of the governing body, school policies and improvement plans.
- Inspectors looked at records related to safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, and pupil movement.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders responsible for safeguarding and checked the single central record. They also reviewed safeguarding documentation and spoke to pupils and staff about the safety of pupils in school.
- Inspectors spoke to staff at the alternative provision used by the school.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through the Ofsted online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered responses to the online staff survey, and responses to Ofsted's survey of pupils' views.

Inspection team

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