

# Inspection of a good school: King Edward VI School

Upper St John Street, Lichfield, Staffordshire WS14 9EE

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Inspection dates:

18 and 19 October 2022

## **Outcome**

King Edward VI School continues to be a good school.

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

Leaders have high expectations for pupils and staff at King Edward VI School. Their ambition is that all pupils will thrive academically and succeed as global citizens in the world around them. Values of well-being, collaboration and aspiration underpin the community.

This is a school of many pupils where the focus is the individual child. Staff get to know the pupils well and all are welcome and included. Most pupils feel that staff help them to do their best and listen to what they have to say in lessons. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is particularly good.

Behaviour in class and around the school is very strong. Pupils feel that staff work hard to help them to do their best. Most pupils enjoy their time at school. Consequently, they attend well, are punctual to lessons and work hard. Reported bullying incidents are quickly investigated, and staff will intervene when needed.

Leaders and staff begin to prepare pupils for successful employment, training or education after school from Year 7 onwards. An impressive range of clubs and opportunities inspire pupils to develop their own interests and hobbies. Music lessons, bands and ensembles encourage creativity and the arts. Sports clubs and teams promote healthy lifestyles and competition.

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

Across all subjects, leaders and teachers have high expectations. They are committed to ensuring that all pupils build knowledge well across all the subjects they study. Lessons are carefully sequenced to build pupils' understanding over time. Teachers use skilled questioning to ensure that pupils remember what they have learned over time. In subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT), pupils are encouraged to apply their knowledge to projects or challenges.

Leaders know that pupils start in Year 7 with differing knowledge and skills. In subjects such as English and mathematics, interventions are well timed to help pupils if they fall behind. For those who need additional support with reading, teachers organise support quickly, so that all pupils become confident readers who develop a love of reading. Outcomes in the sixth form are particularly strong. This is because staff in the sixth form prioritise preparing students for life as independent lifelong learners and safe and responsible citizens. Students successfully move on to higher education or apprenticeships.

Pupils feel safe in school. Assemblies, lessons and tutor sessions raise the profile of bullying and make it clear that bullying is not tolerated. Leaders are committed to ensuring that all pupils feel confident reporting any perceived bullying so they can act swiftly and to making sure that all pupils are fully aware of the school's systems for letting staff know when things are worrying them. The existing provision for student support is currently being extended as the school grows to provide more spaces where pupils can go to access support. The pupil survey suggested that some students are not confident that all bullying concerns are fully resolved. However, inspectors found that when bullying is reported, it is always investigated, and appropriate action is taken by the staff.

Leaders are especially ambitious for those pupils with SEND. Carefully designed support means that these pupils thrive alongside their peers. The SEND department clearly understands the needs of the pupils they work with. SEND staff work with subject teachers to ensure that they consider the pupils' needs when planning and delivering lessons. Assessment of pupils' needs is thorough, which allows the SEND team to work out what provision is needed to best meet those needs.

The school uses alternative provision for pupils who need specific help with their learning. In some cases, this provides vocational opportunities, such as vehicle maintenance. Leaders are currently refining their processes for planning and monitoring these placements to ensure that pupils always get the very best from their time at these providers. In all cases, staff work hard to ensure that pupils are safe at this provision.

The school's work to prepare pupils for the world around them is a strength. Lessons develop mental health and well-being skills, citizenship and financial capability. An impressive range of clubs generate opportunities such as music, sport, debate, coding and film. Concerts at Lichfield Cathedral or summer festivals provide opportunities for pupils to perform. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the National Citizenship Scheme or the World Challenge encourage students to contribute to the world around them. All pupils access independent careers advice and support. Helping pupils access future careers is prioritised. Former students return to inspire others with stories of their own career journeys.

Training for all staff is frequent and focused and develops strength in subject expertise and helping pupils to get the best from school. Staff feel well supported by a leadership team that encourages them to be creative and innovative. Staff feel that the school is well led and managed by caring and supportive leaders.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's culture is focused on keeping pupils safe. Teachers take every opportunity to reinforce messages about how pupils can keep themselves safe through different lessons. Leaders have rightly high expectations that staff will act on the broad range of safeguarding training they receive. An ongoing safeguarding training programme and strong staff knowledge demonstrate this shared commitment.

When there are reported incidents of pupils potentially being at risk, leaders act quickly to ensure that the proper support is put in place for the child and the family. Records are detailed and demonstrate this team approach to keeping pupils safe.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Processes for commissioning and monitoring alternative provision placements are not yet robust enough. This means that, although pupils are safe and often benefit from the provision, leaders cannot always assure themselves that all pupils get the very best outcomes from their time at the alternative provision. Leaders should sharpen their commissioning arrangements so that the support provided by alternative providers is tailored more carefully to pupils' unique needs in the most timely manner.

## 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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2014.

## 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.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124408
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240970
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1613
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	378
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Helen Coulthard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Rutherford
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.keslichfield.org.uk">www.keslichfield.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this 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.
- The school uses four registered alternative provisions for a small number of pupils at the school.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the school's first routine inspection since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and staff from the SEND department. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff, such as staff from the sixth form.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body. Meetings were also held with the school improvement partner and local authority representative.
- Inspectors visited one of the alternative provisions that the school uses.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography, science and ICT. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 to keep themselves safe. The lead inspector spoke to the safeguarding leader about reporting and recording any safeguarding incidents.
- Inspectors took account of parents' and carers' free-text comments and the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. Inspectors also considered the answers to the pupil and staff surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Caroline Hoddinott

Ofsted Inspector

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