

# Inspection of King Charles I School

Hill Grove House, Comberton Road, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY10 1XA

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Inspection dates: 2 and 3 March 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

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

Pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum for all, centred on the study of a humanities subject and a modern foreign language at key stage 4. Leaders prioritise the development of reading. Pupils learn what leaders intend because teachers plan their lessons effectively. Teachers help pupils to remember in the long term what they have learned. Pupils achieve well.

Leaders have addressed the issues identified in the previous inspection report. They continue to set high expectations for staff and pupils alike. Staff generally implement the behaviour policy fairly, although some inconsistencies remain. Pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. They take a positive approach to their studies. Staff resolve any bullying incidents. Pupils know who to turn to, and they feel safe.

Pupils' mental health is supported effectively. In many cases, the support precisely meets their needs. Pupils respect others, including those different from themselves. They take part in a range of extra-curricular activities, including competitive sports and cadets. Staff prepare pupils, including those in the sixth form, well for the next stage in their education.

Students enjoy life in the sixth form and achieve well.

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

Leaders have planned a broad and ambitious curriculum across the school. They make sure that pupils' learning builds upon what they already know. The large majority of pupils at key stage 4 follow a programme that includes English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, humanities and science. Pupils can choose from a wide range of other subjects.

Teachers are knowledgeable. They use technical vocabulary to good effect to explain new learning. They think hard about the curriculum and put it into practice well. Teachers plan lessons so that pupils add to their knowledge in manageable steps. They check on how well pupils are learning by, for example, using mini whiteboards. Teachers address any gaps in pupils' knowledge and support pupils to remember in the longer term what they have learned by, for example, asking questions at the start of each lesson.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn well. Leaders identify their additional needs accurately and make sure that staff understand how best to meet them. Warm relationships with staff help pupils from the resourced provision, The Communications Centre, to thrive.

Leaders take effective steps to develop pupils' reading skills. During tutor time, all pupils benefit from reading together a planned sequence of texts linked to different

subjects. Pupils who join the school as weaker readers receive helpful additional support and catch up quickly.

Leaders set high expectations for pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils are attentive in lessons and work hard. Disruption to learning is rare. Pupils behave responsibly at social times, and both school sites are calm and orderly. Leaders expect staff to implement the school's behaviour policy fairly and constructively. Most staff do so. As a result, relationships between staff, pupils and their parents and carers are strong. However, where this is not the case, pupils perceive it as unfair.

Pupils develop a good understanding of personal safety, relationships and social issues as part of a well-planned programme. They are taught to respect each other's views through discussion and debate. Pupils benefit from trips to enrich their studies, such as to London art galleries or to Germany. Students in the sixth form enjoy a particularly varied enrichment programme. Leaders are raising the profile of the school's values by, for example, relating them to pupils' rewards. Leaders use alternative provision with deep care and consideration. They are determined that pupils will be placed in the best provision to get the help and support they deserve and need. This is successful.

The careers programme is a strength of the school. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, receive wide-ranging and impartial advice. They are well prepared for the next stage in their lives. Staff provide additional careers opportunities for pupils with SEND.

The rate of pupils' attendance fell following the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff have used a wide range of strategies in conjunction with other agencies to encourage regular attendance. These strategies have met with some success, but there remains a group of pupils who are absent too often. Because they do not attend regularly, they sometimes struggle to behave well. These pupils miss important learning, which restricts their academic achievement.

Leaders have ensured that staff receive relevant training. For example, they have been trained in the skills needed to teach reading or to provide mental health support. Less experienced staff receive effective training when they join the school. Staff believe that leaders take their workload into consideration.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn about the risks they may face, including those originating online. Leaders make sure that staff are well trained in safeguarding so that they know how to identify pupils who may be at risk. They keep staff updated about issues that might pose a threat. Leaders support those who are vulnerable with sensitivity and tenacity.

The school maintains the necessary safeguarding records. Leaders make the right checks on the staff who join the school.

Pupils feel safe. They appreciate the opportunity to raise concerns in a confidential way.

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

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

- A few staff do not implement the school's behaviour policy with the consistency and good judgement that leaders seek. As a result, pupils sometimes feel unsure about what sanction they can expect and think that they may have been treated unfairly. Leaders should ensure that all staff comply with their expectations and provide additional training for those who would benefit from it.
- A few pupils, many of whom are disadvantaged, do not attend school regularly. Their academic progress suffers as a result, and their behaviour often falls below the standards expected of the school. Leaders should embed their current strategies to engage these hard-to-reach pupils and their families with a view to improving their attendance, behaviour and outcomes.

## **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>	138032
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256839
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<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>	1,089
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	105
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sue Muggeridge
<b>Headteacher</b>	James Butler
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.kingcharlesschool.co.uk">www.kingcharlesschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 and 29 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The King Charles I School is one of three secondary schools that comprise the Four Stones Multi-Academy Trust (MAT).
- The school has a specially resourced provision for 28 pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties or autistic spectrum disorder.
- The school provides full-time and part-time alternative provision for 21 pupils at five providers, two of which are registered and three of which are unregistered.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

- A few post-16 students follow one of their courses at one of the other schools in the MAT. A few students from this other school follow a course at King Charles I School.

## Information about this inspection

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

- 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 and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff, including early career teachers. The lead inspector met with trustees of the MAT, including the chair, and representatives of the school's local governing board (LGB), to which the MAT delegates oversight of some aspects of the school's work.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils at social times and with groups of pupils more formally.
- When inspecting safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's procedures for recruiting and checking on staff. They also considered the effectiveness of staff training and the procedures to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' plans to improve the school, records of LGB meetings, and the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspection team took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered correspondence and responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, art, computing and modern foreign languages. In these subjects, inspectors considered the curriculum, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors also met with pupils and with teachers to discuss learning in these subjects. An inspector also scrutinised the work of some disadvantaged pupils and spoke to them about their work.
- An inspector visited one of the unregistered providers used by the school.

## Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Gwen Onyon

Ofsted Inspector

Sukhbir Farar

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Clare Considine

Ofsted Inspector

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