

Inspection of a good school: The Knights Templar School

Park Street, Baldock, Hertfordshire SG7 6DZ

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 April 2023

Outcome

The Knights Templar School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy, feel safe and are safe. They are kind to one another. Social times are calm and orderly where pupils enjoy chatting with one another or attending a lunch time club. Pupils respond quickly to any adult instructions. The relationship between staff and pupils is positive.

Pupils want to succeed. They work hard in lessons and enjoy their subjects. They learn and achieve well. This includes the older students in the sixth form.

Bullying does not happen often. Pupils say that when bullying happens, adults deal with it well and take their concerns seriously. Most pupils are confident to report any worries they have.

Many pupils enjoy the activities available during the school day, at lunchtime and after school. Such opportunities are a strong feature of the school. There are a variety of trips, visits and after-school and enrichment activities available, including a heavily subscribed Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

As pupils get older, they enjoy opportunities for responsibility, including in the sixth form where students act as role models for younger pupils.

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

Leaders have created a curriculum that is well planned and sequenced. It is broad and balanced. The curriculum enables pupils to develop sufficient knowledge and skills to support further study. This is shown in pupils' performance in key stage 4 examinations. Staff have good subject knowledge and are appropriately trained to deliver the curriculum effectively.

Reading is a priority. Assessments are undertaken when pupils enter the school in Year 7. This enables leaders to ensure that the weakest readers receive additional support to

catch up. This support includes having trained older pupils to act as 'reading leaders'. Leaders are addressing the support for the weakest readers to ensure a sharper focus on ensuring all pupils are able to read fluently to support them to access the rest of the curriculum.

Leaders plan opportunities to assess pupils' progress in the curriculum. In most subjects, teachers successfully identify what pupils know and can do. In some subjects, this is less well developed. Where this happens, teachers do not identify misconceptions or gaps in pupils' learning. As a result, some pupils do not learn as well as they should.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. Leaders ensure that pupils' needs are identified, and strategies are in place to support pupils in lessons and around the school. Adults use this information to adapt their planning and teaching to ensure that pupils with SEND learn as effectively as their classmates.

Similarly to the curriculum across the school, the wider development curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 11 is well considered and planned. This supports pupils' personal development effectively. In Year 7, pupils learn about challenging negative behaviours and attitudes. In Year 11, pupils understand their protections and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. However, leaders' consideration of the sixth form's wider development programme is not as well thought through. While this is the case, students are very well supported in terms of careers and higher education provision across the school.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage behaviour well. As a result, the school is a calm and orderly environment. This includes social times, where staff and pupils interact positively. Most pupils attend school and enjoy their learning. Older pupils appreciate the respect that is shown and say that the school values of 'courage and courtesy' are a part of their everyday school life.

School leaders and trustees share a sense of community about the school. Staff appreciate that workload is addressed by leaders, and value engagement by leaders at all levels. Leaders recognise the strengths of the school and act decisively to address areas for development. Most parents would recommend the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established clear and rigorous systems for reporting safeguarding concerns. Staff are effectively trained and know when and where to log concerns. Where serious safeguarding issues are identified, leaders act promptly. Leaders work effectively with the local authority and external agencies to provide ongoing support for pupils.

Leaders carry out the appropriate safeguarding checks for adults before they join the school. Leaders are addressing the way they monitor the administration of the single central record and recording of safeguarding training. Minor administrative errors were found. These were amended during the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders and teachers do not routinely use assessment well to identify what pupils know and can do. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are well trained to identify what pupils know and where they need additional help, so that teaching can be adapted to support pupils effectively.
- Leaders have not created a fully coherent programme of wider personal development at key stage 5. As a result, students do not have sufficient opportunities to learn about relevant information relating to life skills. Leaders should prioritise the planning and implementation of a rigorous key stage 5 wider development programme.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 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.

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	136608
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10255166
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	1,332
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	303
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sue Welch
Headteacher	Edward Hutchings
Website	www.kts.school
Date of previous inspection	13 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Knights Templar School is a single academy trust.
- The school makes use of both unregistered and registered 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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and representatives from the trust board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: history, design technology, mathematics, English and science. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject

leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspection team spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed safeguarding records. The inspector also reviewed the single central record of pre-employment checks made on staff and reviewed information about the safer recruitment of staff.
- The inspection team met with pupils from different year groups to talk about their learning and experiences at school. Inspectors also reviewed 229 responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents provided by the school. These included the school improvement plan, curriculum documentation and school policies.
- Inspectors considered 275 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View. This included 160 comments from parents and carers in the free-text facility. Inspectors also considered the 75 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jonathan Rockey, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Michael Skelly

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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