

Inspection of a good school: King's Leadership Academy, Liverpool

Dingle Vale, Liverpool, Merseyside L8 9SJ

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 2023

Outcome

King's Leadership Academy, Liverpool continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Scott Cordon. This school is part of The Great Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Shane Ierston, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Joseph Spencer.

What is it like to attend this school?

King's Leadership Academy is an ambitious place for pupils to learn in. The school's vision to raise aspirations for all pupils, regardless of their background or circumstance, is at the heart of every aspect of school life. Pupils develop a strong sense of character, self-belief and determination to succeed.

There is a purposeful atmosphere around the school. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and respectful. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe. Typically, pupils greet visitors to the school with a handshake. They are confident, well mannered and eager to share their opinions. Pupils usually behave well. They focus on learning in lessons.

The school has high expectations of pupils' learning. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are gaining from a bold curriculum that reflects the school's local context. Increasingly, pupils benefit from the school and the trust's raised expectations of what they can achieve academically.

The school offers a thoughtful choice of extra-curricular activities and wider experiences. Activities such as the combined cadet force, outdoor pursuits and residential visits develop pupils' self-confidence and resilience.

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

The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and challenging. Many pupils study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. All pupils have access to the same curriculum, including those with SEND. Since the last inspection, there has been a strong focus on curriculum refinement. Consequently, the most important knowledge that pupils should know and

remember has been mapped out. Across subjects, topics are covered that are relevant to the backgrounds of pupils, as well as the life skills that are essential to their success. As a result, pupils value the experiences they have in lessons.

The school is highly inclusive and serves a diverse and sometimes transient school community. Since the last inspection, the number of pupils on roll has significantly increased. This means that there are many pupils, especially in key stage 4, who did not begin their secondary education at the school. Although some pupils in Year 11 in 2022 did not achieve outcomes in line with their peers nationally in external examinations, these results do not reflect the progress of current pupils through the curriculum.

The trust has supported teachers well so that they gain the expertise to deliver learning effectively. Mostly, teachers select appropriate activities to deliver the curriculum as the school intends. However, in some subjects, teachers do not use the school's assessment strategies well to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and to reshape learning. This means that some teachers move on before pupils are ready. Consequently, a few pupils, including some of those with SEND, do not achieve as well as they could.

The school uses effective strategies to address the deficits in pupils' reading knowledge. For example, in all year groups, there is curriculum time dedicated to improving pupils' reading skills. Pupils who find reading more difficult are supported to catch up quickly so that they can access the full curriculum.

The school swiftly identifies pupils with SEND. Teachers are provided with up-to-date information on the additional learning needs of individual pupils. Increasingly, this information is used to ensure that pupils are well supported to access the curriculum.

The school has embedded clear routines for behaviour. Classrooms are calm and orderly. Pupils rarely disrupt lessons with off-task behaviour. The school ensures that rules are fair and consistently applied.

Pupils' personal development is a high priority in this school. Learning activities relating to pupils' cultural and moral development are a particular strength. Pupils have a clear understanding and appreciation for different faiths, cultures and beliefs. They learn about issues relevant to relationships and sex education. The school has engaged with community faith leaders, parents and carers on important issues to ensure that pupils are fully prepared for life growing up in modern Britain.

The school has recently developed opportunities for pupils in Year 10 to complete work experience. However, some pupils do not receive enough high-quality careers guidance and information on potential next steps. This means that some pupils do not have the knowledge they need to make informed choices about their next steps in education, training or employment.

The trust invests in staff development and staff well-being. This means that staff feel valued and are proud to work at the school. The trust acts decisively to address the school's priorities. Trust members have a strong understanding of the school's work and use their knowledge to provide timely and effective support and challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not use the school's assessment strategies well to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and reshape learning. This means that some teachers move on before pupils are ready. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers know how to adapt the delivery of the curriculum to address these misunderstandings.
- Some pupils do not receive enough information about the next steps in their education or the future career paths that they may take. This means some pupils do not have the knowledge they need to make informed choices. The school should ensure that these pupils receive appropriate careers advice and guidance.

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 April 2018.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and](#)

[protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137675
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10278558
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	887
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joseph Spencer
Principal	Scott Cordon
Website	www.kingsliverpool.com
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 April 2018

Information about this school

- The school joined The Great Schools Trust in November 2015.
- The school appointed the acting principal in June 2023.
- Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll has increased from 460 to 887.
- The proportion of pupils joining the school at times other than the normal point in the school year is much higher than average.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers and one unregistered alternative provider for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- 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 spoke with the principal, other senior leaders, subject leaders and other members of staff. They also spoke with members of the trust, the local governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the single central record. They met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, mathematics, art, and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

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