

Inspection of King's Leadership Academy Hawthornes

Fernhill Road, Bootle, Merseyside L20 6AQ

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires Improvement

The principal of this school is Peter Gaul. 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 (CEO), Shane Ierston, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Joseph Spencer.

What is it like to attend this school?

More and more pupils are joining this school as a result of its increasingly good reputation in the local community. Pupils embrace the school's ASPIRE values and ethos.

Many pupils join the school part way through their education. They settle in quickly. They follow school routines and get on well together. They are happy to come to school. Most attend well.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. It has put the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects at the heart of its ambitious curriculum. The achievement of pupils in many subjects, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), has improved considerably.

Pupils behave well. They know what is expected of them and respond quickly and politely to teachers' requests. For the most part, lessons are free from interruption.

Pupils enjoy many opportunities for personal development. The enrichment programme enables them to develop their talents and interests. For example, they participate eagerly in debating, documentary and baking clubs. They take on positions of responsibility and leadership through becoming members of the Combined Cadet Force and as prefects.

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

The school has focused, in recent years, on improving the quality of education that it provides for pupils. It has worked in collaboration with the trust to put a curriculum in place that now meets the requirements of the national curriculum for all year groups. This curriculum identifies the crucial knowledge and the key vocabulary that pupils need to acquire and remember. Staff implement the curriculum in a logical order that enables pupils to make connections in their learning. These improvements in the design and delivery of the curriculum have resulted in improved outcomes for pupils in national tests in many subjects.

Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding and recall. In most subjects, they use the information that they gain to identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, in a few subjects, teachers do not use this information well enough to adapt future teaching to enable them to embed missing knowledge. Consequently, in these subjects, pupils cannot build successfully on what they have learned before and struggle to remember their learning over time.

There is a high proportion of pupils with SEND in the school. They follow the same curriculum as their peers. Staff support these pupils well in engaging with the curriculum and in obtaining the qualifications that they require when they move to the next stage in their education or training.

The school recognises that enabling pupils to read well is crucial to their academic success. To this end, it quickly identifies and supports pupils who are at an earlier stage of reading to help them to read more fluently. Pupils have opportunities to read across the curriculum.

Teachers deal effectively with any low-level disruption that occurs. Staff communicate expectations of pupils' behaviour clearly and frequently. Pupils move calmly and purposefully in the corridors. Older pupils say that behaviour has improved significantly in recent years. Pupil attendance has also improved. However, despite the best efforts of staff, there are still some pupils who do not attend regularly.

The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. They know what makes a healthy relationship. The school has ensured that well-trained staff raise pupils' awareness of sensitive topics. Pupils learn to respect others through their study of different cultures and beliefs. The school provides a well-considered careers programme to inform pupils and their parents about the range of courses and careers available. As a result, increasing numbers of pupils are continuing their studies after they leave school.

The school engages well with parents and carers. For example, it consulted parents about the enrichment programme to ascertain which activities would be beneficial for their children.

Staff feel valued and listened to. They appreciate leaders' recent changes to assessment practices that have reduced their workload. The school, supported by the trust, has a rigorous approach to staff training. Teachers make the most of frequent opportunities to develop their subject knowledge and teaching expertise. As a result, teachers' subject knowledge is now strong.

The local academy council members and trustees are well informed about what the school needs to do to enhance further the quality of education that it provides.

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 assessment information well enough to adapt future teaching to enable them to embed missing knowledge. This means that some pupils struggle to remember what they have learned. The school should ensure that teachers use their knowledge of gaps in learning to design activities that help pupils to know and remember more over time.

- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This means that some do not have access to the full curriculum. The school should ensure that it strengthens its work with pupils and their parents to increase rates of attendance.

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	138260
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10290203
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	637
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joseph Spencer
CEO of the Trust	Shane Ierston
Principal	Peter Gaul
Website	www.kingshawthornes.com/
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 January 2020

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Great Schools Trust.
- The school uses five registered and one unregistered alternative education providers for 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.
- The number of pupils on roll at this school has increased considerably in recent years.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with the CEO, chief operating officer and the director of education of the trust. She met with members of the trust board, including the chair. She also met with members of the local academy council, including the chair.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, design and technology, geography, mathematics, science and Spanish. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at the curriculum in other subject areas.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture of safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 11 about their experience of school and their perceptions of behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, in the corridors and at lunchtimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, school development plans, minutes of trustee and governor meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text responses. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Niamh Howlett, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Joe Barker	Ofsted Inspector
Jamie Jardine	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Veitch	Ofsted Inspector

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