

Inspection of Kenilworth School and Sixth Form

Glasshouse Lane, Kenilworth CV8 2AL

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Darren Nicholas. This school is part of Kenilworth Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Hayden Abbott, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Shirley Whiting.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is a centre of excellence for the community of Kenilworth. Pupils do exceptionally well here. They develop a profound knowledge of the subjects they are taught and grow into reflective, resourceful and responsible young adults. Students in the sixth form are true ambassadors for the school.

The passion that pupils show for their learning is admirable. In lessons, they focus on the task at hand, and many, particularly students in the sixth form, make the most of free time to further their studies. Pupils' behaviour is praiseworthy. Around the new school site, they move calmly and with purpose, with little need for any intervention from staff.

There is a clear culture of mutual respect between all members of the school community. Leaders have worked hard to nurture and maintain this following the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils feel safe here. If they have any concerns, no matter how small, these are acted on swiftly and quickly resolved.

Personal growth is central to leaders' ambitions for pupils. The school's curriculum extends far beyond the academic. For example, through the school's 'green team', pupils have played a central role in designing sustainable elements of the new school building. This work has had a clear impact on pupils and helped to shape their career aspirations.

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

There is a calm and purposeful culture here. Leaders are determined to ensure that pupils receive an education that supports both their academic and personal growth. Staff share the headteacher's enthusiasm and work relentlessly to ensure that pupils receive the highest quality of education possible. Staff, pupils, and parents and carers share a strong sense of pride in belonging to this school's community.

The school has created a challenging and engaging curriculum. Leaders have been careful to ensure that the curriculum sets out the precise knowledge that pupils need in order to be successful. This knowledge is ordered well, so that the small steps pupils take build sensibly on the things they have already been taught. This helps pupils to make sense of their learning, and they make exceptional progress. For example, in modern foreign languages, pupils quickly develop a secure knowledge of the grammatical rules of the languages they study. Students in the sixth form speak fluently and with great confidence in French, Spanish and German. Younger pupils soon develop a passion for the subject.

Teachers' use of assessment is skilful. They are methodical in their approach and quickly spot when errors have been made. Teachers rapidly adjust their teaching to fill any gaps in pupils' knowledge or to correct misconceptions that appear as they arise. This stops pupils from falling behind.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are very well supported here. Leaders work with a range of external agencies to identify pupils' individual needs quickly. Consequently, leaders know their pupils very well. Staff are highly skilled and expertly and unobtrusively adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND make strong progress throughout their time at the school.

Reading is a focal point of the school's work. Pupils have a love of reading. If pupils struggle to read, skilled staff provide effective support. These pupils quickly learn to read more confidently and fluently.

Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are incredibly high. Staff model the positive interactions they expect from pupils at every opportunity. Consequently, pupils consistently behave well. If pupils do misbehave, leaders are quick to understand the reasons for this and provide effective support to improve pupils' behaviour. Leaders' work to ensure that pupils who have struggled to attend school following the COVID-19 pandemic is notable. Leaders work closely with families and external agencies to overcome the barriers to good attendance. They have devoted time and resources to the development of a new personalised learning centre to support this. Consequently, leaders rapidly re-engage pupils in their education wherever necessary.

The school's work to develop pupils' character is extraordinary. It is engrained in every aspect of school life. For example, many students in the sixth form act as mentors to younger pupils, supporting their reading and offering subject-specific guidance. Pupils frequently lead fundraising activities to provide support for communities in need. For example, pupils recently raised funds to provide bicycles to a small rural community in Tanzania. This work has ensured that all young people in the community have a bicycle, which is enabling them to access education. Pupils' understanding of their social and moral responsibility to their community and beyond is impressive. There is a broad range of opportunities for pupils to develop their passions outside the classroom. Pupils regularly attend a range of sports clubs, such as for cross-country and orienteering, as well as a debating group and a string orchestra club. Leaders are rightfully proud of this work. Leaders have made sure that pupils, including students in the sixth form, receive high-quality information about the world of work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	146697
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10290658
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,854
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	457
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Shirley Whiting
CEO of the trust	Hayden Abbott
Headteacher	Darren Nicholas
Website	www.ksn.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has recently moved into a new, purpose-built building. The new school site is situated on the outskirts of Kenilworth.
- The current headteacher took up the post in September 2023.
- The school makes use of two alternative education providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school is one of two schools that comprise Kenilworth Multi Academy Trust.
- 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

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 had 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.
- 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 around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, modern foreign languages, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors 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 met with members of staff and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points during the inspection. The inspectors considered responses to pupil and staff surveys and to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Alexander Laney, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Antony Edkins	Ofsted Inspector
Dan Robinson	Ofsted Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Todd	Ofsted Inspector

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