

Inspection of a good school: Kingstone High School

Kingstone, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 9HJ

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 February 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Lee Butler. This school is part of the Kingstone 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 (CEO), Elissa Vigus, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by James Duncan Wright.

What is it like to attend this school?

Kingstone High School provides a supportive and caring environment for all pupils. Staff know every pupil by name in this small and inclusive school. Pupils feel safe and know that they matter. Most have high levels of attendance.

The school has high expectations of pupils, which most pupils live up to. A few pupils show a lack of respect for their teachers and peers. This distracts pupils from their learning. Recently, the school has changed its approach to managing pupils' conduct. As a result of these changes, pupils' behaviour has started to improve.

In the past, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have not learned as well as they should. This has affected their performance in public examinations. The school has started to put this right, which is helping these pupils to remember more.

Staff have developed positive relationships between home and school. Parents say that the school deals with any concerns straight away. They know that their child can speak with a trusted and supportive adult when needed.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of personal development activities. For example, they can take part in team-building activities, visit theatres and experience lambing in nearby farms. These opportunities enrich and widen their horizons.

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

The school and the trust have taken decisive action to address a decline in standards of behaviour since the last inspection. They have put in place clear systems to deal with unacceptable conduct. Their tireless work has improved pupils' behaviour. However, a few pupils continue to misbehave and are not currently getting the support they need to help regulate their behaviour.

Until recently, outcomes for specific pupil groups in published examinations were low. Last year, no disadvantaged pupil was entered for the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). The school has taken action to address this. As part of their work, the school has simplified the key stage 4 options process, making it easier for pupils to study a range of subjects, including those that form the EBacc. Subsequently, take up of the EBacc has increased and entry figures are set to rise.

The school curriculum aims to ignite pupils' aspirations and inspire their futures. The school has developed and relaunched the curriculum this year. Subject curriculums are now designed to build pupils' knowledge logically over time.

Most teachers have strong subject knowledge, which they use well to decide which topics are taught and when. Teachers' well-sequenced tasks help to deepen pupils' understanding. Teachers ask questions often to check pupils' learning. However, this checking of pupils' knowledge is inconsistent across subjects. This means teachers are not always alert to when pupils are stuck or need more help. In addition, opportunities to consolidate learning are missed and some pupils develop misconceptions. Consequently, this hampers pupils' recall of key knowledge in these subjects.

In some subjects, teachers use pupils' individual SEND profiles well to craft tasks for pupils with SEND. However, in some lessons, tasks are not adapted well enough to meet the needs of all pupils. This means some pupils with SEND struggle with their work. When this happens, it causes some pupils to lose focus and become distracted.

Reading is a priority at Kingstone. Staff identify any gaps in pupils' reading knowledge with precision. These pupils receive focused help and, as a result of effective support, can now read fluently for sustained periods. The school promotes reading across the curriculum well. For example, every pupil reads a novel in tutor time and reads suitably engaging extracts in lessons. This has improved pupils' confidence in reading.

Pupils follow a well-constructed personal development curriculum. Older pupils are challenged to think about their careers and next steps. For instance, visiting employers encourage pupils to take part in problem-solving activities to develop key workplace skills. Pupils use these opportunities well. Some have written statements for college and apprenticeship places that help them stand out from the crowd. Younger pupils, including those with complex needs, learn important life skills, such as basic first aid and meditation. These diverse experiences help pupils to make informed choices about their next steps.

Staff appreciate the school's strategic oversight of what is working well and what needs to change. In particular, staff value the school's determination to improve the curriculum and behaviour. This has bolstered staff well-being. Staff enjoy working here.

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 adapt tasks for pupils with SEND well enough. This slows some pupils' progress. The school should ensure that staff receive appropriate information and support to adapt the curriculum for these pupils.
- In some subjects, teachers do not check pupils' understanding within lessons well enough. This means teachers do not always know when pupils are stuck or are ready for the next stage of learning. The school should ensure that effective assessment strategies are used in lessons. These strategies should check pupils' understanding before introducing new knowledge.
- A small number of pupils do not live up to the school's behaviour expectations. This disrupts their learning and the learning of others. The school should ensure that staff receive training to use behaviour systems consistently and that pupils get the help they need.

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 December 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	137073
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10322827
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	608
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	James Duncan Wright
CEO of the trust	Elissa Vigus
Headteacher	Lee Butler
Website	www.kingstoneacademytrust.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 July 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Kingstone Academy Trust, a multi-academy trust.
- The school uses two registered and four unregistered alternative providers.
- 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the CEO of the trust, trustees and other senior leaders, including the deputy headteacher and the coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in five subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, history and geography. 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 groups of pupils from a range of year groups, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, to talk about their experiences in school. They spoke with pupils informally and observed the behaviour of pupils during social times.
- The lead inspector met with the deputy headteacher to review the alternative providers used by the school. The lead inspector also met with senior leaders to discuss the school's personal development curriculum and careers programme.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector: 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 reviewed responses to Ofsted Parent View, responses to the staff survey and responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents relating to the school.

Inspection team

Antony Edkins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Huw Bishop

Ofsted Inspector

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