

Inspection of Katherine Warington School

Lower Luton Road, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 5FH

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is David Martin. This school is part of Harpenden Secondary Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, David Martin, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jenny Howarth.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They flourish in the school's ethos of achievement and learning. Throughout the school day, pupils strive to live up to the school's expectations. They know that learning is important and approach their studies with genuine determination to do their best. When faced with challenge, pupils support each other well within this strong learning community. Pupils have high aspirations for themselves and their peers. They take pleasure in each other's success.

Pupils benefit from the school's impressive character development programme. They take up the extensive opportunities to learn about 'mind, body and soul' with great enthusiasm. Pupils demonstrate exceptional sensitivity when discussing people's different lifestyles and beliefs. They understand complex social issues within contemporary society, including the challenge of 'micro-aggressions' in everyday language. Pupils have also learned the importance of honouring difference in others. This ensures that pupils learn to work and play harmoniously.

Positive relationships are in place between pupils and their peers, as well as with staff. Pupils feel safe at school and are taught how to make safe choices in their lives. They work hard and concentrate on learning in lessons. They are kind and look out for each other during social times.

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

The school's innovative and ambitious curriculum is well designed to ensure pupils learn knowledge in clearly measured steps. The curriculum provides teachers with clarity about the exact knowledge pupils know. Teachers deliver the curriculum effectively. They routinely check what pupils have learned. When pupils have not learned something, teachers provide timely support so that pupils do not fall behind.

The school has in place a range of effective strategies to encourage pupils to enjoy reading. Many pupils enjoy the range of texts available at the school, including in the well-stocked library. The school quickly identifies pupils who are at an early stage of reading. Staff provide effective support, which helps these pupils to learn what they need to read confidently and fluently.

Overall, staff provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn and achieve. Leaders provide helpful guidance about the needs of these pupils and how teachers can support them. However, in some areas of the curriculum, some teachers do not provide support within lessons that addresses the exact challenges some pupils with SEND face. When this happens, these pupils do not learn as well as they could. Similarly, for some pupils with SEND, staff provide small-group support out of lessons. While these small groups are effective in helping pupils learn to read, pupils who have these interventions occasionally miss out on key areas of the curriculum.

The school has established expectations and routines to support positive behaviour. When a pupil demonstrates unacceptable behaviour, teachers consistently use the behaviour policy, and it stops.

The school's exceptional provision for personal development ensures that pupils leave school ready for life in modern Britain. It is successfully woven into everyday life at the school and across the curriculum. As a result, pupils develop sophisticated understanding about how to stay physically and mentally healthy. They thrive in the many high-quality opportunities for them to develop artistically and musically. Pupils show impressive understanding of the richness of human cultures. They also benefit from exploring career opportunities across the curriculum. Pupils develop their career ideas and build networks of opportunities through careers lessons, work experience, career-oriented trips and external speakers visiting the school.

Leaders show a firm commitment towards providing high-quality education. They have collaborated effectively with local schools and partner organisations to create a successful school. Trustees have high expectations of the school. They support and challenge leaders effectively.

Staff and parents have confidence in leaders' work and are positive about the school. Staff appreciate leaders' support in maintaining reasonable workload, even during the school's current period of substantial growth.

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 areas of the curriculum, some teachers do not provide the exact support that some pupils with SEND need. Alongside this, some pupils with SEND are removed from certain lessons to receive small-group support. After these small groups, there is no systematic support to help these pupils catch up on what they missed in class. The school needs to ensure that teachers are supported so they are confident to provide the exact support these pupils need within lessons. Where pupils come out of lessons to work in small groups, the school must develop effective means to enable these pupils to keep up with any learning missed.

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	145890
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10295104
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	923
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jenny Howarth
Headteacher	David Martin
Website	www.kwschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school was opened by the Harpenden Secondary Education Trust in September 2019.
- The headteacher took up his post in February 2024.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school plans to open sixth-form provision in September 2024.
- 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 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 spoke with trustees, the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, teachers, members of support staff, and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, geography, history, mathematics, and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum, looked at samples of pupils' work and considered planning documents in some other subjects.
- 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 observed the behaviour of pupils in lessons and during social time.
- Inspectors looked at relevant documents, considered pupils' work and held discussions with leaders, staff and pupils about the provision for pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors considered the responses of 84 staff, 225 pupils and 410 parents to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Al Mistrano, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Caren Earp	Ofsted Inspector
James Fuller	Ofsted Inspector
Jess Pearce	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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