

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: King Edward VI Northfield School for Girls

Turves Green, Northfield, Birmingham, West Midlands B31 4BP

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 November 2024

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that aspects of the school's work may not be as strong as at the time of the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Neil Jones. This school is part of King Edward VI Academy Trust Birmingham, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Jodh Dhesi, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sharon Roberts. There is also a cluster lead (south), Becky Elcocks, who is responsible for this school and three others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils respond very well to the school's high expectations of them. This is evident in the improvement in many pupils' attendance and their strong behaviour. They enjoy being rewarded for their positive conduct. Pupils get along well. Positive relationships make this school a productive and inclusive place of learning.

The school has high ambitions for every pupil, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In the past, the school did not always act effectively enough to support pupils' achievements. As a result, outcomes for pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, have declined. New leaders and the trust have introduced many strategies to stem this decline. While these are effective, they have not been in place long enough to show a sustained, positive impact on pupils' achievements.

Pupils experience excellent provision to enhance their personal and character development. They benefit from activities including leadership roles, trips, visits and a plethora of after-school clubs that they keenly attend. They learn important lessons on possible career paths, healthy relationships, strong mental health and personal safety.

Pupils hugely value the many opportunities that they otherwise may not have. Therefore, pupils are very well prepared for later life.

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

The school drives its ambitions for all pupils, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, through a broad curriculum. Improvement strategies to the teaching of this curriculum have recently been implemented. These strategies are effective and are beginning to improve pupils' learning. However, staff do not always deploy them consistently well. Additionally, they have not been in place long enough to sustainably improve pupils' achievements, especially for disadvantaged pupils. This is evident in the national assessment scores pupils acquire by the time they leave school.

Some pupils have gaps in their learning, especially older pupils. Work is underway to address these gaps. While staff generally use checks on what pupils can do well, this is not consistent. At times, teachers do not know what gaps persist. Consequently, they are then not able to adapt their teaching to fill these gaps. As a result, for some pupils, learning gaps are not addressed quickly enough.

The school has clearly laid-out processes to provide support for pupils with SEND. It swiftly identifies any pupils who may need extra help. Staff know pupils well and receive information and helpful strategies to meet each pupil's needs in lessons. Targeted interventions help pupils to catch up. As a result, many pupils with SEND overcome their barriers to learning.

Reading is a high priority across the school. The school knows that many pupils arrive with low literacy levels. Staff spot pupils who need extra help and provide them with targeted support. Pupils learn reading skills and have many opportunities to practise these skills across the curriculum. As a result, they quickly gain the knowledge and skills needed to become confident, fluent readers.

The school works hard to address poor attendance. It knows of the challenges that some pupils face in attending regularly. Key staff work closely with these pupils and their families to overcome any barriers. This work is effective and attendance has improved.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is very strong. Pupils learn important knowledge about positive mental health and well-being. The school's curriculum to develop pupils' personal, social, health and economic education is highly effective. Pupils talk knowledgeably about kindness, tolerance and respect. The programme to inform and advise pupils on possible career choices helps them to make informed decisions about their next steps in education, employment or training. As a result, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life after school.

Trust and local governance provide the school with the challenge, support and resources to deliver its inclusive vision. The school has recently developed a programme of staff training. This provides teachers with the knowledge to carry out their roles well. Staff are

complimentary about leaders and say that they are considerate of their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not consistently deliver the curriculum as leaders intend. As a result, the curriculum is not yet sustainably improving pupils' achievements, especially for disadvantaged pupils. The school should ensure that staff receive the support they need to deliver the curriculum equally well so that all pupils make strong progress.
- Some staff do not use formative assessment well enough to check on what pupils can do and have learned. They do not always spot the gaps in learning pupils have. Consequently, staff then do not routinely adapt their teaching to fill these gaps. This slows the learning of these pupils. The school should ensure that all staff have the expertise to support pupils' learning effectively.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Turves Green Girls' School, to be good for overall effectiveness in April 2013.

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	148684
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10344182
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	743
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sharon Roberts
CEO of the trust	Jodh Dhesi
Headteacher	Neil Jones
Website	www.nsg.kevibham.org
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- King Edward VI Northfield School for Girls converted to become an academy school in September 2021. When its predecessor school, Turves Green Girls' School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- In September 2021, the school joined the King Edward VI Academy Trust Birmingham.
- The school is a smaller than average-size secondary school.
- There have been a number of changes to senior leaders since the last inspection.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative providers for a small number of its 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 evaluation 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 deputy headteachers, the assistant headteachers and other senior leaders. The lead inspector held a meeting with the local governing body, including the chair and the vice-chair. Meetings were held with representatives from the multi-academy trust, including the chair of the board, the CEO, the director of education and the cluster lead (south). The lead inspector held a telephone meeting with the school's improvement adviser. Inspectors met with curriculum leaders, early career teachers and teaching staff.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector visited the school's early reading and phonics intervention class.
- 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 pupils' behaviour and interactions during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes and spoke to many pupils during the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of parents' free-text comments and the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. Inspectors also considered the responses to the pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Bianka Zemke, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Grady

Ofsted Inspector

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