

Inspection of The King Edward VI School

Cottingwood Lane, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 1DN

Inspection dates:	5 and 6 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Clare Savage. This school is part of the Cheviot Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Alice Witherow, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Carvin.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since April 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

The King Edward VI School pupils benefit from a highly inclusive atmosphere and a good quality of education. The school's underlying principle is that 'everyone will act with courtesy and consideration at all times'. This shines through in the way that pupils conduct themselves and in the strong relationships that pupils share with staff. Pupils are very positive about their experience of school. They really enjoy being at the school and feel valued as part of the caring environment.

The school is a place where pupils can be themselves. In lessons and in corridors, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. There is a sense of mutual respect between teachers and pupils. In the sixth form, students are highly motivated and independent learners. The school has a clear focus on high expectations of learning and pupils rise to these standards.

The range of extra-curricular enrichment available to pupils is vast. Pupils benefit from a carefully considered enrichment week that opens them up to a huge variety of trips, visits and experiences. These motivate pupils and deepen their interests. This includes international visits to experiencing local art, history and culture. Pupils and students are given many opportunities to help them learn about the world around them.

The school works closely with its feeder schools to ensure that the transition between Year 8 and Year 9 is successful. Staff know pupils well, and what they are capable of, before they arrive at the school.

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

The school has created a highly ambitious curriculum for its pupils, including those with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It has a relentless approach to supporting staff to develop and increase their knowledge and expertise. This helps teachers to deliver lessons that successfully identify the important knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which it needs to be taught. As a result, pupils achieve well.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and are skilled at explaining the most complex concepts to pupils in a highly effective manner. In the sixth form, the quality of delivery is consistently excellent. The school supports pupils with SEND effectively. Pupils who need additional help are supported by skilled staff so that they can access their learning successfully. Staff make necessary adaptations to help pupils with SEND achieve well. This means that students benefit from the highest-quality provision. However, sometimes, in key stage 3 and 4, teachers do not consistently check that pupils have secured the understanding of key concepts before they move on with learning. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

The school's values of creating respectful, responsible, caring, curious, motivated and resilient pupils are clear to see. Pupils manage themselves well and self-regulate their behaviour. Students in the sixth form act as mentors to younger pupils. The views of pupils and students are listened to and acted on by leaders. Pupils and students read widely and often.

While many pupils attend well, the school's strategies to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils are less successful. Such absence is having a negative impact on how well disadvantaged pupils achieve overall.

The school's personal development curriculum is exemplary. Careers provision is highly effective, particularly for those in sixth form, where students complete their studies with considerable success. Students go on to a large range of high-quality destinations, including Oxbridge and Ivy League universities. Pupils are taught how to be respectful and responsible citizens. The opportunities for pupils to excel are huge. This helps students to mature into well-rounded, informed individuals.

Trustees and those responsible for governance of the school have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas of development. They carry out their responsibilities effectively. They take careful consideration of staff well-being. They are passionate about the success of the school. They hold the school to account and this is having a positive impact on the quality of education for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's strategies for improving the attendance of some pupils are not sufficiently impactful, particularly those pupils who are disadvantaged. This means that some pupils miss out on aspects of their learning. The school should improve its attendance strategies so that the absence of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, is better addressed.
- On occasions, teaching does not check that pupils have secured the understanding of key concepts before they move on with their learning. This means that some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The school should support teachers to better check pupils' understanding before moving on to new knowledge.

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	137746
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10346431
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	13 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,373
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	363
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Carvin
CEO of the trust	Alice Witherow
Headteacher	Clare Savage
Website	www.kevi.info
Dates of previous inspection	30 April and 1 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school uses four registered providers of alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Year 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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 it into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and staff.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives of the trust and of the local governing board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history, business studies and modern foreign languages. 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.
- 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 spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views of behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including minutes of local governing board meetings.

Inspection team

Marc Doyle, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Bernard Clark	Ofsted Inspector
Alexandra Hook	Ofsted Inspector
John Downs	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Laidler	Ofsted Inspector

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