

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Kings of Wessex Academy

Station Road, Cheddar, Somerset BS27 3AQ

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 November 2024

Outcome

The Kings of Wessex Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is David Wiltshire. This school is part of the Wessex Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Gavin Ball, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Jacobs.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff are proud to be members of the Kings of Wessex Academy community. The school aims for all pupils to achieve well academically and develop a rich set of wider skills. This aspirational ethos is leading to improvements in outcomes for all pupils, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils and staff have positive and respectful relationships built on mutual respect. The recent changes to the behaviour and reward systems have been appreciated by pupils. They agree that systems are fair and consistently applied. This means they feel safe and learning takes place without disruption.

Pupils are proud to represent their house. Avalon, Camelot, Lyonesse and Tintagel enjoy good natured competition to win the annual prize. The school have a wide range of extra-curricular clubs including, chess and the Kings Sixth debating group. School productions and musical events develop pupils' talents. Pupils are keen to volunteer and take on leadership roles such as being sports coaches and anti-bullying ambassadors. Sixth-form senior students lead the school council and mentor pupils, for example as 'maths buddies'. They are positive role models for younger pupils.

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

The curriculum is ambitious and prepares pupils and sixth-form students for future study. In many subjects pupils develop an impressive depth of knowledge and understanding. They talk with confidence about their work. However, this is not universally the case. In some areas of the curriculum pupils are not given work that challenges them and adults do not have high enough expectations of what they can do. The school has already taken steps to raise expectations for sixth-form students. The impact of this is evident in the standard of students' work.

Subjects provide opportunities for pupils to revisit and build on prior learning. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and the requirements of different examination courses. However, the methods teachers use to check that pupils understand do not always accurately identify what pupils know or can do. This means that teachers can not then adapt the curriculum to help pupils to correct mistakes. Conversely, pupils may repeat work that they have already grasped.

The school quickly identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff use the information they receive to make adaptations to the curriculum. This supports pupils to learn as well as their peers. Individuals are supported to engage with the wider life of the school and sixth form.

Reading is encouraged at this school. The school has deliberately chosen class reading books that explore different cultures and themes. School events such as author visits engage pupils. Sixth-form students act as peer readers to share their love of reading with younger pupils. The weakest readers are supported to build their confidence and fluency.

The school has brought together all the elements of personal development and citizenship into the 'I curriculum'. This focuses on providing pupils with the skills and experiences they need to become responsible, respectful and active citizens. Pupils receive age-appropriate sex and relationships education. They learn how to keep themselves safe as well as physically and mentally well. Pupils understand fundamental British Values and can reflect on what they mean in their own lives. Pupils learn about different world religions. They have opportunities to reflect on faith and moral dilemmas. As a result, pupils learn the importance of tolerance and inclusion, so bullying is rare.

The school works closely with local middle schools, colleges and employers to deliver an ambitious careers education programme. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to engage with employers through careers café events and careers fairs. Pupils value opportunities to put their skills into practice, for example through enterprise events and volunteering. Pupils are well supported to consider their individual future steps in employment, training or education.

The school and trust have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Those responsible for governance both support leaders and hold them to account. The school is considerate of the workload and well-being of the staff. It provides the training they need to be successful in their roles. The school and trust are

increasingly engaging with parents and the wider community to make them part of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, assessment is not used effectively to check pupils' current knowledge and understanding. Consequently, some pupils are not supported to resolve misconceptions and gaps in their understanding. Equally, others are not moved on to more challenging work swiftly enough. The school should ensure that the checks teachers make are used to inform adjustments to the curriculum and its delivery, so pupils achieve well.
- Some areas of the curriculum are not as ambitious as others about what all pupils can achieve. This means that some pupils are not introduced to challenging concepts and ideas early enough. The school should ensure that all areas of the curriculum are ambitious for all pupils to know more and remember more.

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 school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2015.

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	136783
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10344609
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1054
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	234
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Jacobs
CEO of the trust	Gavin Ball
Headteacher	David Wiltshire
Website	www.kowessex.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Wessex Learning Trust.
- This school is a Church of England School in the Diocese of Bath and Wells. A Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools was carried out in March 2020. Inspections are normally carried out every five years.
- 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.
- The school uses one registered and two unregistered alternative provisions.

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 held discussions with school leaders at all levels. Inspectors also spoke with teaching staff, support staff, trust executive leaders, local partnership board members and a representative of the trust board.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, including representatives from the pupil leadership group.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors viewed a range of school documentation, including the minutes of governance meetings, the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the view 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 considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to the staff survey and pupil survey.

Inspection team

Sara Berry, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Simon Tong

Ofsted Inspector

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