

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

Pimm Road, Paignton, Devon TQ3 3XA

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 December 2024

Outcome

Kings Ash Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The head of school is Rob Fitzsimmons. This school is part of The Thinking Schools 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), Stuart Gardner, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gerard Newman. There is also an executive headteacher, Jessica Humphrey, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school for all. It has a 'no excuses' culture. The school's high expectations permeate its work. Its strong relationships are key to its enduring success. Staff work closely with parents and carers so that pupils receive the best possible support. The school has a high number of pupils who join partway through their education. Staff get to know them quickly. As a result, these pupils settle well.

The school has recently renewed its behaviour systems. It has supported staff to ensure they have a shared understanding of these. Consequently, staff treat pupils fairly and consistently. Pupils know the behaviour that is expected of them. In lessons, pupils listen well. A few pupils find their behaviour difficult to manage. Staff work sensitively and skilfully with them to help them manage their emotions. If bullying does occur, staff deal with it promptly. Pupils have a high degree of confidence that staff will resolve any issues that occur.

Pupils enjoy a range of clubs, such as choir and basketball, in which to further develop their interests. The school ensures that cost is not a barrier. Consequently, a high number of pupils participate in them.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has overhauled its curriculum. It has set out clearly the knowledge pupils should know and in what order. The head of school has led these changes with drive and determination. This work ensures that it continues to sustain its performance since the last inspection. The school makes sure that teachers' workload is not impacted negatively when changes are made.

The school continues to improve its curriculum. For example, pupils now use their reasoning and problem-solving skills well in mathematics. This helps to deepen their knowledge extensively. In the early years, the outdoor provision has been revamped to better promote children's physical development. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a strength. Staff identify pupils' needs early and adapt the provision effectively.

Reading is a high priority. Staff implement the reading curriculum well. They identify pupils' reading gaps swiftly and help pupils to catch up through targeted support. The impact of this work is strong. In 2024, reading outcomes for the high standard in the key stage 2 national curriculum tests were significantly above the national average.

However, key stage 2 writing outcomes were lower. The school has identified the weaknesses in the curriculum which led to this. Historically, younger pupils moved on to new work too quickly and did not embed new knowledge securely. The school now makes sure that mark making and writing are key focus points in the early years and key stage 1. The school has also broken the teaching of writing down into smaller parts. Pupils are now building on prior learning well. However, it is too soon to be seen in improved outcomes.

Typically, teachers explain new concepts effectively. For example, in English and mathematics, they have a high ambition of what pupils learn. However, on some occasions in the wider subjects, teachers provide work that does not expect enough of pupils. It does not match the high ambition of the curriculum. Where this happens, it limits how well pupils learn.

The school's systems for checking how much pupils have learned is at an early stage in some subjects. This means the school does not know when pupils have gaps in knowledge. Consequently, it is not able to address them effectively.

Pupils learn about important social and moral issues through assemblies. They develop their independence through residential trips. Pupils learn to show their consideration of others through raising donations for charity. The school council gives pupils a strong experience of the impact of using their democratic voice.

The school ensures that attendance is a high priority. Consequently, pupils' attendance, while still below national averages, is improving year-on-year. Staff ensure that any patterns in absence are analysed carefully. It puts in swift and decisive action to tackle any concerns in attendance.

While most pupils' behaviour in class and social times is positive, suspensions remain high. However, they have started to fall recently. The school only uses these as a last resort. The trust and governors check these to ensure they are used appropriately.

The transition into the new trust has been managed smoothly. The trust and governors use external checks, as well as their own, to review the school's work effectively. They have an accurate view of the school's performance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On some occasions, in the wider subjects, teachers give work to pupils that does not support them to learn the intended curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not secure the knowledge they need or develop a sufficient depth of understanding. The trust needs to ensure that teachers are supported to give work to pupils that supports them to achieve the knowledge and skills outlined in the school's curriculum.
- In some wider curriculum subjects, the school's systems for checking what pupils have learned are at an early stage of implementation. Consequently, the school does not have oversight of how well pupils are learning these subjects. The trust should ensure that checks across all subjects are effective, and staff address any gaps in pupils' learning accordingly.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2021.

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	138773
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	10344645
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	320
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gerard Newman
CEO of the trust	Stuart Gardner
Headteacher	Jessica Humphrey (Executive Headteacher) Rob Fitzsimmons (Head of School)
Website	www.kingsashacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 May 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Thinking Schools Academy Trust. It transferred from its previous trust in September 2023.
- The head of school took up his post in September 2022.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school provision.
- The school uses two unregistered providers of alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, groups of staff, the chair of the trust, a trust executive leader, the CEO and member of the regional

assurance board and governing body. The inspector also held telephone calls with the two alternative provisions.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The inspector also considered responses to the staff survey and responses to the survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Jason Edge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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