

Inspection of Kingsmead Academy

Wiveliscombe, Taunton, Somerset TA4 2NE

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 December 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is John Eddy. This school is a single academy trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees chaired by Nicholas Laphorn.

What is it like to attend this school?

After a period of leadership turbulence, the school now has a clear vision of how it will provide a broad and ambitious education for pupils. Leaders have begun to make improvements, but some of these changes are recent and are not fully embedded. Currently, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in all areas of the curriculum. The school is focused on providing pupils with the support they need to reach their potential and further raise examination outcomes.

The school has significantly raised expectations for pupils' behaviour. There are clear rewards and consequences that are used fairly to reinforce what is acceptable. While suspensions have been high, they are falling dramatically as pupils are better supported to manage their behaviour. Pupils appreciate that their lessons now take place without disruption. They have positive relationships with adults and feel happy and safe.

Pupils are keen to take on additional responsibilities. They work alongside staff to run 'The Old Railway Farm' at the school. Pupils enjoy attending clubs and visits. They take part in sport, drama and music performances to showcase their talents. Older pupils act as role models through the subject ambassador scheme and by reading with younger pupils. The student council shares pupils' views with leaders so that they can work together to improve the school.

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

The school has revised the curriculum to make sure that pupils study a broad range of subjects. However, in some subjects, the school has not set out precisely what knowledge pupils will gain and in which order. Sometimes pupils are repeating work that they have already covered rather than deepening their understanding further.

The checks that teachers make to see if pupils understand what they have learned do not accurately identify what pupils know and can do. This means that the work pupils are given is not closely matched to their starting points. Sometimes pupils do not understand what is being asked of them which means that they find it difficult to engage positively with their work. However, when adults have high expectations of what pupils can do, pupils rise to meet these expectations.

The school has increased the importance of reading within the curriculum. The weakest readers are quickly identified. They receive the support they need to improve their fluency and comprehension. Pupils share stories as a class and this is beginning to encourage more pupils to enjoy reading.

The school accurately identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils learn the full curriculum while also accessing additional support as appropriate. However, pupils with SEND experience the same weaknesses in the curriculum as their peers. This hinders how successfully they learn.

The school actively promotes the importance of high attendance. It closely monitors and tracks pupils' attendance. Support is provided to pupils and their families to reduce absence levels. For example, through the 're-engagement room' and well-being support. Consequently, the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school is falling.

The school's personal development programme has been carefully designed to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils value tolerance and have many opportunities to discuss moral dilemmas. They are prepared to report incidents of bullying because they understand that 'it's not ok@kingsmead' to behave in that way. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy, both physically and mentally.

The careers programme includes events for pupils to engage with the world of work through guest speakers and visits. The school is particularly committed to providing support for Year 11 pupils to make informed choices for their next steps in education or training.

Recently, the school has accurately highlighted priorities for improvement. It has sought the views of staff, pupils and parents to guide decisions. This includes being considerate of staff workload and well-being. The impact of changes in some areas, such as behaviour, are clear. In other areas, changes are only just beginning to secure improvements. There are limited systems in place to provide the school with a clear understanding of what is working well and where further improvements will be needed. This hinders the ability of those responsible for governance to maintain a clear oversight 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)

- In some subjects the school has not considered with sufficient precision what pupils will learn and in what order. This leads to inconsistencies in how well the curriculum is delivered. The school should ensure that the curriculum is clearly defined in all subjects so that it is ambitious for all learners.
- Assessment within the classroom does not help adults accurately identify pupils' starting points or gaps in their knowledge and understanding. This hampers teachers in designing learning activities that take pupils' starting points into account. The school should make sure that routine checks for understanding inform adaptations to the curriculum to help pupils achieve more highly.
- The school currently does not have sufficient systems in place to accurately monitor and review the quality of education it provides. This means that this school is unclear of what is working well and where further improvements may be needed. The school should ensure that leaders at all levels, including governance, can accurately evaluate

the quality of education provided so that appropriate support and challenge can be given to improve.

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	136639
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10344602
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	880
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nicholas Laphorn
Headteacher	John Eddy
Website	www.kingsmead-school.com
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 June 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is a single academy trust.
- 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 2 registered and twelve unregistered alternative provisions.
- There have been significant changes in senior leadership in the last two years. The current headteacher took up post in January 2023.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued 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, and representatives of the trust board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: science, history, art and design, religious education and computing. 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at lunchtime and breaktimes.
- Inspectors viewed a range of school documentation, including the minutes of trustee meetings and 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 and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

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