

Inspection of The King's School

Mill Hill Lane, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 4JF

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 October 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils who attend The King's School receive a broad and ambitious education that prepares them well for their future. Pupils' academic success and personal development are of equal importance at the school. Each pupil is recognised as an individual. Staff identify pupils' potential, support their ambitions and help them to succeed. There are high aspirations for all. Pupils are resilient and hardworking.

The arrangements to safeguard pupils are strong. Pupils' well-being is a priority for all staff. There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour across the school. Lessons are rarely disrupted. Pupils are polite, respectful and accept each other's differences. Bullying is uncommon. There is a warm and friendly atmosphere around the school. Staff listen to pupils and take action when they have a concern.

Leaders ensure that pupils have the opportunity to follow their interests and develop new talents. Pupils of all ages and abilities benefit from a considerable number of enrichment activities. These include a wide range of sports, clubs and study support run before and after school. Leaders ensure that all pupils have the chance to take part. They listen and respond when pupils suggest new activities.

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

The curriculum in place across the school is ambitious and well planned. Leaders have a strong understanding of what pupils know and can do when they arrive at secondary school. They use this information to plan lessons that are challenging and prepare pupils well for their next stage in education. Staff understand the topics that pupils find most difficult. Leaders plan opportunities to revisit this information often so that pupils remember it.

Staff are passionate and knowledgeable. They teach lessons that are exciting and engage pupils. Staff use questioning skilfully to check pupils' understanding. Leaders have planned assessments that identify any gaps that exist in pupils' knowledge. Staff use this information to reteach challenging topics. This means that most pupils develop a secure understanding of what they have been taught. Sometimes, however, staff do not check that pupils have understood new learning before moving on in lessons. This leaves gaps in some pupils' understanding of more complex topics.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support and thrive in the majority of their lessons. Staff with specialist training work alongside pupils with SEND in the school community. Plans are in place that identify the extra help some pupils require. However, some of these plans lack clarity. As a result, pupils do not always get the most effective support possible in lessons.

Pupils who need help to improve their reading are quickly identified by leaders. Staff with specialist training support these pupils. Pupils' progress is regularly checked.

Weaker readers improve quickly. Teachers understand the importance of literacy for all pupils. Teachers read aloud in lessons and explain new words. Pupils use this new, challenging vocabulary in their own writing.

Strong relationships between staff and pupils create a positive learning environment at the school. Pupils' enthusiasm and good conduct are regularly rewarded. Leaders keep records and look for patterns of poor behaviour across the school. However, these records sometimes lack specific detail. This means leaders cannot consistently support pupils who do not meet behaviour expectations.

Pupils' personal development is a priority for leaders. They have planned a curriculum that prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. This includes important messages about healthy relationships, personal safety, substance misuse and citizenship. Ethics and character lessons, form time sessions, assemblies and enrichment days are used to help pupils learn this important knowledge. However, some pupils do not have a strong understanding of other faiths and cultures, fundamental British values or the protected characteristics. While these topics are covered in lessons and pupils know how important they are, they do not remember what they have been taught confidently.

Staff share leaders' ambition for an exceptional education for all pupils. Staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey said they were proud to work at the school. Staff receive training linked closely to school improvement aims. Staff value the opportunity to work with nearby schools and share new ideas. Leaders are considerate of staff workload and well-being when making changes at the school. Those responsible for governance support and challenge school leaders. They make decisions in the best interests of the pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a highly effective culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff are confident to report any safeguarding concerns they have. They know leaders will act on this information swiftly. Leaders provide regular training so that staff understand the specific risks pupils face. Pupils are educated about potential risks at school and in the community. They understand how to stay safe in person and online.

Staff with specific responsibility for safeguarding at the school are highly experienced, knowledgeable and passionate about their work. They are committed to pupils' well-being. Their records show actions are taken quickly to protect pupils from harm. Work with parents, the local authority and other organisations is highly effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' records and analysis of information related to pupils' behaviour sometimes lack detail. This means that leaders are not consistently able to identify patterns of poor behaviour. As a result, they cannot take appropriate action to further improve the behaviour of some pupils. Leaders should ensure that pupils identified by their analysis are supported consistently so that they meet behaviour expectations at the school.
- Pupils' understanding of British values, protected characteristics and other faiths and cultures is too variable. This means that a minority of pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to revisit important content within the personal development curriculum so that it becomes embedded over time.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	139500
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10250470
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	1039
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip Jones
Headteacher	Dominic Pinto
Website	http://kings.patrust.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses two alternative providers. Wakefield College and Keats Engineering and Education Ltd, both of which are registered with the Department for Education.
- Through its careers programme, the school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and a representative of the trust. Inspectors spoke to teaching and non-teaching staff, in addition to

representatives of the local governing body and trust board. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust.

- To evaluate the quality of education, deep dives were carried out in English, mathematics, science, history and physical education. Inspectors spoke with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at books and spoke to both pupils and staff. Aspects of other subjects, including geography, art and design and information communication technology, were also reviewed.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including checks made on all adults who come on to the school site. Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff to ensure their understanding of safeguarding procedures. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to check on their work to keep pupils safe in school.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils who attend alternative provision. One inspector spoke to leaders at the alternative provision to review the support being provided to pupils who attended this setting.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

John Linkins, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
John Downs	Ofsted Inspector
Gillian Hemming	Ofsted Inspector
Geoff Lumsdon	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Wren	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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