

Inspection of King Edward VII Academy

Gaywood Road, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 2QB

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Darren Hollingsworth. This school is part of Inspiration 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) Gareth Stevens, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lord Theodore Agnew.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school expects high standards of pupils' work and behaviour. It reminds pupils that every minute counts in meeting these standards. Pupils are rising to this challenge. They know that they attend an inclusive school that has improved rapidly. In the past, academic outcomes have been low. Now, however, the sense of ambition is abundantly clear. Lessons are engaging and focused. Pupils learn well.

Pupils enjoy attending this school. They fully understand the new expectations for behaviour and attendance. In response, they behave well and treat others with respect. Pupils move around the school calmly. They feel safe in school because they know that staff will act if they raise concerns. All have a trusted adult to whom they can talk. The action the school has taken to improve attendance is having an early impact.

The school goes out of its way to develop pupils' character and interests. Pupils and students in the sixth form are taught how to lead healthy and fulfilling lives. They are well-prepared for life in modern Britain. The house system instils a sense of motivating competition. All pupils can participate in the wide range of sporting clubs and other activities on offer. Increasingly, they can take on leadership responsibilities.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious. It ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the curriculum alongside their peers. The curriculum sets out what pupils will learn and the correct order in which it is taught. High-quality training and support from the trust have led to precise teaching. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to present new concepts clearly. They skilfully check pupils' work in lessons to spot gaps in learning. They address misunderstandings as they arise. As a result, pupils progress well in a range of subjects.

At key stage 4, the proportion of pupils studying subjects that contribute to the English Baccalaureate is increasing. This is in line with the government's national ambition. Careers education is strong. Pupils are well-informed about their future opportunities. Students in the sixth form achieve the grades they need to follow their chosen pathways.

The school has tackled the need to improve pupils' reading with urgency and to great effect. The trust has supported this work well. Reading has become a central focus of school life. Pupils read for pleasure every day. Staff provide pupils who find reading more of a challenge with skilled and effective support. This helps them to keep up and become more confident and fluent readers.

Support for pupils with SEND is improving. Teachers have recently received effective training. However, leaders know that they still have work to do. This is because the plans written to support some pupils with SEND are not specific enough. Consequently, pupils with SEND do not always progress as well as they should.

In the past, pupils did not achieve strong results in national examinations. Poor behaviour and low attendance contributed to this. Staff and pupils welcome the way in which the school has firmly tackled these previous issues. The school has established clear expectations for behaviour. Staff apply them consistently. Pupils now have positive attitudes to their learning and behave well. The number of suspensions and removals from lessons has fallen considerably. Attendance has also improved, including in the sixth form. However, some pupils still do not attend regularly enough. Through their absence, these pupils do not benefit from the school's strong academic and pastoral support. The school, with support from the trust, has robust plans to improve this. These plans are in the early stages of being implemented.

Pupils take part in a wide range of enrichment activities. Students in the sixth form take on active leadership roles, including in house competitions. They help pupils in the lower school with their reading. The relationships and sex education curriculum enables pupils to understand the personal decisions they make in an age-appropriate way. The school develops pupils' character well. Pupils learn about the importance of staying safe. They know to respect and value people's differences. They welcome the opportunities offered to make a positive contribution to society.

Trust and school leaders set an ambitious pace for change. They build well on strengths and address weaknesses at speed. The academy committee and trustees have considerable expertise. They have supported the rapid improvement in the school. Leaders work hard to communicate with parents and the local community. Parental engagement and confidence are growing fast.

Staff are invested in the school and the community. They feel well supported by leaders who manage their workload with sensitivity. They want the very best for pupils and are proud to work at 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)

- At times, the school does not identify clearly enough the specific needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, the adaptations made by teachers sometimes do not help pupils with SEND to achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are accurately identified and that teachers use this information well to support learning.
- In the past, pupils' outcomes have been much lower than the national average. In part, this is because some pupils did not attend school regularly enough. Some pupils still do not. With trust support, the school should prioritise and implement the actions they have planned to improve the attendance for all pupils who need it.

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	148826
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10318649
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,189
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	197
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lord Theodore Agnew
CEO of the trust	Gareth Stevens
Principal	Darren Hollingsworth
Website	www.kesacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The principal joined the school in January 2024.
- King Edward VII Academy converted to become an academy in August 2021. When its predecessor school, also named King Edward VII Academy, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged as requires improvement for overall effectiveness.
- The school uses three unregistered providers of alternative provision.
- 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.

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 that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met the principal, vice principals and assistant principals. The lead inspector met members of the academy committee. He also spoke to the chair of the trust, its CEO and met other trust leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, design and technology and physical education. 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 also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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 met with leaders to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND, behaviour and attendance, careers information and guidance, pupils' personal development and bullying.
- Inspectors met with pupil groups to discuss behaviour, bullying and pupils' wider development.
- Inspectors reviewed the 147 responses and 110 free-text comments to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also reviewed the 305 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and 96 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Peter Whear, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Carol Dallas	Ofsted Inspector
Aron Whiles	Ofsted Inspector

Catherine Wilson

Ofsted Inspector

James Fuller

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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