

The Kingsway School

Address: Foxland Road, Cheadle, Cheshire, SK8 4QX

Unique reference number (URN): 142509

Inspection report: 24 February 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), progress steadily through the curriculum in key stages 3 and 4. Over time, pupils typically build knowledge securely in each subject. The vast majority of pupils successfully progress to post-16 destinations that are well matched to their ambitions and aspirations when they leave in Year 11.

Published results of national assessments are broadly in line with national averages across the range of subjects offered. Most pupils achieve well from their starting points, and disadvantaged pupils have made notable gains in English and mathematics. Pupils with SEND also achieve well. Leaders recognise that the attainment of pupils who are high prior attainers has not been in line with their expectations. They have strengthened support and provision for this group. As a result, gaps between high prior attainers and their peers are narrowing.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Attendance has been prioritised. Leaders have implemented a strategic approach that has led to sustained improvement. Staff work closely with families, carers and external agencies to promote regular attendance. Pupils' attendance, including for disadvantaged pupils, is in line with the national average. Attendance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities continues to improve. Persistent absence has reduced year-on-year. Pupils understand the importance of regular attendance and typically enjoy coming to school. They value the rewards for high attendance.

Pupils' experience of school has been transformed since the last inspection. Pupils and staff value highly the positive shift in culture that is fostered across all areas of school life. Leaders have implemented a split campus model and rapidly embedded approaches to strengthen inclusivity and tackle any discrimination. As a result, they have created a school that is typically harmonious and where pupils respect each other's differences. The school has a unified approach to supporting positive behaviour. Its behaviour policy is widely understood and implemented well. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful. Pupils are confident that staff will challenge any unkind behaviour successfully. In recent times, the number of suspensions has reduced significantly.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Since the previous inspection, changes have been made to the range of academic and vocational subjects offered at key stage 4. This has supported leaders in designing a broad and balanced curriculum across key stages. The curriculum is logically ordered and sets out the building blocks of knowledge that pupils will learn over time.

Leaders support teachers well so that they gain the expertise to deliver learning effectively. Typically, teachers have secure subject knowledge. They choose activities that help most pupils to learn the curriculum well. However, sometimes, teachers do not use the school's

assessment methods to pinpoint some of the gaps in pupils' subject knowledge. Occasionally, this means that teachers move on to new learning before pupils are ready. Consequently, some pupils do not learn the curriculum as securely as they could.

Teachers know their pupils and any additional needs or barriers to learning they may have. Generally, they adapt their teaching appropriately to support these pupils well. Since the last inspection, the school has prioritised and strengthened the support that is given to pupils to secure their knowledge and skills in reading, writing, oracy and mathematics. Pupils who join the school behind their peers in reading benefit from targeted support to help them catch up.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders foster an inclusive culture and prioritise support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils and those known to children's social care. They use a consistent assessment cycle to identify pupils' needs swiftly and accurately, ensuring that staff provide the right support at the right time. Early transition arrangements with feeder primary schools enable staff to understand pupils' needs quickly and reduce barriers to learning. Staff receive appropriate training and use what they know about pupils' learning needs to provide effective support in the classroom.

The school builds secure relationships with families, professionals and external agencies. This joint working enhances pupils' experiences and strengthens the support they receive. For example, leaders involved parents and carers of pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND in shaping the key stage 3 curriculum.

Leaders regularly review pupils' progress through the curriculum. They use this information to plan support that improves pupils' learning and wellbeing. They use additional funding purposefully so disadvantaged pupils can access the same opportunities as their peers. The school's use of alternative provision is carefully considered to ensure that it matches pupils' needs. Pupils who attend the specially resourced provision are fully included in all aspects of school life.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Since the last inspection, trust and school leaders have acted decisively to reset the culture and ethos of the school. They use detailed analysis well to drive sustained improvement and have prioritised the right things at the right time. Areas for improvement have been swiftly and effectively addressed. In safeguarding and behaviour in particular, purposeful steps have been taken to improve the experiences of pupils. This positive transformation is recognised by staff, parents, carers and older pupils alike.

Leaders have accurately identified the areas of the school that need more attention. Their actions are suitably focused on these. For example, extra training is in place so staff can strengthen their use of adaptive teaching to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other disadvantaged pupils achieve in line with their peers. Leaders keep these pupils at the front of their mind when making significant decisions about school improvement.

Staff, including early career teachers, benefit from research-led professional learning that equips them with the knowledge and skills to help pupils succeed. Staff, including teaching and support staff, know that their wellbeing and workload are a priority. Leaders routinely take staff workload into account when introducing any new initiative. Staff are proud to work at the school and are committed to driving further improvements.

Leaders have strengthened their work with parents. Staff and parents report positively about the communication and support they receive from the school. Governors receive accurate information about the school's performance and regularly check its progress to hold leaders to account and ensure that statutory duties are met.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders' actions have created a culture where personal development sits at the heart of the school's work. Leaders have designed a responsive personal development programme that equips pupils to become respectful, thoughtful members of the school community. Through this, pupils learn important lessons that prepare them well for life in modern Britain. Typically, they develop an understanding of key topics, including healthy relationships, consent and online risks, such as the pitfalls posed by artificial intelligence. Cultural and charitable opportunities further support pupils in contributing positively to their local communities. These experiences help pupils appreciate cultural diversity and foster their understanding of fundamental British values.

Pupils experience various leadership opportunities. For example, they act as primary ambassadors, student leaders and anti-bullying ambassadors. Pupils relish these roles and recognise how they help develop their character and leadership skills. Pupils know they have a voice here and they appreciate how they can shape improvements in the school.

The school has a comprehensive careers programme in place that supports pupils to make well-informed decisions about their next steps in education or training. Pupils experience a variety of encounters with employers, universities and apprenticeship providers. Increasingly, the school develops creative and innovative means to support pupils in accessing work experience, for example through online access to employers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities develop the skills they need for adult life.

Pupils access well-considered pastoral care. Year group leaders and specialist staff build trusting relationships and provide effective support. Interventions such as 'rapid response' lessons and counselling help pupils navigate their emotions and handle difficult life circumstances.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Since this school's previous inspection, it has been on a rapid journey of improvement. This positive transformation is evident across every aspect of the school's provision. Leaders' decisive actions to improve the school are underpinned by a clear commitment to lifting pupils' ambitions and fostering a strong sense of belonging. They have cultivated a kind and

compassionate school community where pupils know they have a voice. Pupils feel happy, settled and safe.

Pupils' behaviour has improved over time. Incidents of discriminatory language and other poor behaviour occur relatively rarely. This is reflected in the continuing reduction in sanctions, such as suspensions, that the school uses. Bullying occurs rarely. Pupils trust staff to keep them safe. They report any worries confidently. Staff track any unkind behaviour or concerns about pupils' wellbeing. These are acted upon quickly and effectively.

Pupils benefit from the improvements that leaders have made to the quality of the curriculum and of teaching. As a result, pupils enjoy learning. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to teachers' instructions and work hard. They speak confidently about what they know and can do. Staff know the individual needs of pupils. They use this knowledge to provide pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, with the support they need to reduce barriers to learning.

Many pupils benefit from a plethora of opportunities to experience new things and develop new skills. Pupils enjoy attending sports activities, creative clubs and educational visits. They embrace opportunities to represent the school through activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, charity work and the school's cultural diploma. These help build pupils' leadership skills and prepare them to be active citizens beyond the school gates.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff design activities that help pupils to develop sufficient depth of knowledge and understanding in their learning.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff make effective use of the information that they have about the gaps that some pupils have in their knowledge and understanding to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they should.
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About this inspection

This school is part of the Education 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 (CEO), Vanessa McManus, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen White.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of the local authority, a group of trustees and local governors, including the chair of the board of trustees, the CEO and other trust leaders.

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 makes use of 6 alternative provisions, including one that is unregistered.

The school operates a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This provision caters for pupils with severe learning difficulties from Year 7 to Year 11. There are currently 28 pupils accessing this provision. All these pupils have an education, health and care plan. Places are commissioned through the local authority.

Headteacher: Anna Fowler

Lead inspector:

Kate Bowker, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Stephanie Gill, Ofsted Inspector

Paul Rigby, Ofsted Inspector

Marc Heron, Ofsted Inspector

Louise McComas, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 24 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,292

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,570

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

26.47%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

4.02%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

15.79%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

Resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SLD - Severe Learning Difficulty

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	50.6%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	42.0%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	43.8%	45.3%	Close to average

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	46.5	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	45.0	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	46.9	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.26	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.06	-0.03	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	35.6%	25.8%	Above
2023/24 (final)	29.2%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	20.3%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	40.1	34.9	Above
2023/24 (final)	37.0	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	38.0	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.69	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.38	-0.57	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	35.6%	53.1%	-17.5 pp
2023/24 (final)	29.2%	53.1%	-23.9 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	20.3%	52.4%	-32.2 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	40.1	50.4	-10.3
2023/24 (final)	37.0	50.0	-13.0
2022/23 (final)	38.0	50.3	-12.3

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-0.69	0.16	-0.85
2022/23 (final)	-0.38	0.17	-0.54

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	93%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	94%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	94%	94%	Average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	8.5%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.0%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	10.1%	9.0%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	22.8%	21.9%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	30.6%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	31.7%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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