

King's Leadership Academy Warrington

Hillock Lane, Woolston, Warrington, Cheshire WA1 4PF

Inspection dates

10–11 July 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher, trustees and other senior leaders share a clear vision, focusing on pupils' character and academic achievement. Staff implement the vision very effectively, and pupils receive an outstanding education.
- Leaders know the school very well. They know what works well and are ambitious for even better provision.
- Governors and trustees provide leaders with very effective support and challenge. This ensures that the school continues to improve.
- Pupils benefit from excellent teaching across all subjects and year groups. The staff training programme which leaders provide is carefully planned, well resourced and fully effective.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They use this knowledge skilfully to assess, secure and extend pupils' learning.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This supports pupils' excellent attitudes to learning.
- The curriculum meets pupils' interests and needs. Pupils consistently benefit from stretch and challenge through deeper thinking.
- Pupils make excellent progress. They reach high standards in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Leaders are committed to equality. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported very well.
- The management of the additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils is excellent. These pupils make very strong progress.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is orderly and sensible. Pupils respond positively to the systems in place, which ensures that they behave exceptionally well.
- Pupils' attendance is excellent.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils respect themselves and others.
- A strong culture of safeguarding exists throughout the school. Pupils say staff know them and care about their well-being.
- The sixth form opened in 2017. It is well led. The students with whom inspectors spoke had only good things to say about it.
- Leaders have high expectations for students. Every current Year 13 student has been accepted on to the next step of their choice.
- Students achieve well in the sixth form overall. However, despite a rapid and secure improvement in Year 12, students' progress does not consistently match the higher standard seen in the rest of the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance sixth-form provision and ensure that students' progress is well above average in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher, trustees and other leaders share a powerful commitment to securing their ambitious vision for all pupils' lives. Leaders are determined to provide a first-class and all-round education, giving each pupil the qualifications and character to enable them to excel in their lives.
- The headteacher, trustees and other leaders have secured a positive and aspirational culture, where pupils and staff feel important and successful. Leaders ensure that each person at the school is well known, all personalities are valued, and all are given opportunities to flourish as individuals.
- Senior leaders have a clear and precise understanding of the school's effectiveness. They have an unwavering focus on continuous improvement. Leaders accurately and routinely monitor, evaluate and refine the actions they take, to improve the school further.
- The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is very strong. Leaders provide staff with the time and opportunity to think about and improve their teaching. Staff greatly value this investment. The training programme has resulted in strong teaching across the school.
- The pupil premium funding is managed very well and has great impact. Disadvantaged pupils are successful at the school. They attend regularly and make excellent progress.
- Pupils with SEND are supported well. Leaders provide staff with timely and high-quality information, so they know these pupils well. Leaders prioritise and monitor the well-being and progress of pupils with SEND, which supports their success at the school.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum meets pupils' needs. They listen carefully and respond to pupils' views. Far more pupils follow the English Baccalaureate suite of academic qualifications at key stage 4 than is the case nationally, as this matches pupils' requirements. Pupils also follow a range of arts-based, sporting and technology subjects, including vocational courses which match pupils' interests.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides meaningful opportunities for each pupil to strengthen his or her character. This involves courses and activities in school time and beyond. All pupils follow the Duke of Edinburgh's bronze award as part of their curriculum. Pupils are extremely positive about the extra-curricular opportunities provided, and many attend a multitude of clubs. Pupil said that these activities match their wider academic, cultural, artistic and sporting interests.
- Leaders support pupils' transition from primary school well. They take the time to provide Year 6 pupils and their parents and carers with opportunities to understand fully the school's culture and systems when they are making their choice of secondary school. Leaders make very effective use of information provided by primary schools to support pupils to settle in Year 7.
- The careers guidance programme works well. Pupils receive useful information, including independent advice, throughout key stages 3 and 4. In 2018, all pupils moved on to appropriate next steps in education, training or employment.

Governance of the school

- Governors, trustees and the chief executive officer have made a telling contribution in securing the outstanding quality of education provided at the school. They know the school very well and are passionate about securing pupils' success.
- Governors and trustees take their responsibilities seriously and are fully equipped to fulfil them effectively. They bring a balance of relevant educational, financial, personnel and business skills. This enables governors to provide proportionate and well-informed challenge and support to leaders.
- Governors and trustees are fully effective in promoting the school's key values of character-led education. They check these values are understood and upheld by leaders and staff at the school.
- Governors and trustees are determined to secure equality of opportunity at the school. Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND benefit from a high quality of education that has helped secure these pupils' excellent life chances.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders maintain effective safeguarding records. They have systematic procedures for checking the backgrounds of staff when they are appointed.
- Leaders are aware of the risks pupils face, including outside the school. Staff are trained to identify potential risks to pupils, including the risks of gang-related crime, child sexual exploitation and radicalisation.
- Staff take seriously their responsibility to support an effective culture of safeguarding. They take the time to know pupils well, to support better their safety and well-being.
- Leaders' work with external agencies and parents is effective. Leaders act swiftly, when required, to contact external agencies to secure pupils' safety and well-being.
- Pupils understand the risks which might affect them and how to keep safe, including when online and using mobile devices.
- Pupils know to whom they should report concerns and how to do this. They said that they feel safe at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Leaders' actions have been fully effective in overcoming the small number of weaker aspects noted at the previous inspection. Pupils now benefit from teaching of a consistently high quality, across all subjects and year groups. This has resulted in pupils' excellent progress.
- Teachers use very well the assessment information available about pupils' learning. They set pupils challenging and interesting work, which matches their needs and abilities. Pupils are inspired by numerous opportunities to grapple with and grasp complex ideas, and to think deeply and creatively, so they excel in learning.

- Leaders place great emphasis on ensuring teachers' strong subject knowledge, in all year groups and subjects. Teachers are seen to be experts in their subjects. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge supports the high standard of questioning across subjects. Pupils are given time to think about the questions which teachers ask, enabling them to respond to a high standard.
- Teachers make the most of the opportunities in their subject to develop pupils' literacy skills. Pupils of all abilities, including disadvantaged pupils, regularly practise and strengthen their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Pupils are given time to read and enjoy the books they borrow from the school or bring from home. They also benefit from the challenging texts provided across a range of subjects. Pupils speak and write with accuracy, fluency and confidence.
- Teachers support pupils' high standards and excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils are highly motivated and learn with great enthusiasm. They complete the activities set with care and precision. Pupils make the most of the time provided to consider and act upon teachers' assessments of their work, so they overcome misconceptions and learn well.
- Pupils with SEND are taught very well. Teachers and other staff take full account of the information leaders provide to plan activities which support and challenge these pupils.
- Homework is well planned and managed. It provides pupils with time to learn and think more deeply about topics which interest them and supports them in strengthening any weaknesses in their subject knowledge or understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are sociable, kind and confident. They respect their teachers and one another. These positive relationships support pupils' personal development.
- Pupils said that bullying is very rare, including racist and homophobic bullying. Pupils were adamant that they respect and value people's differences, other faiths and cultures. They said that the few cases of bullying are always reported to staff and are dealt with quickly and well. School records show that any incidents of bullying are followed up and resolved effectively.
- Pupils' well-being is taken seriously by school leaders. They take care to listen to pupils and provide them with the support services which meet their requirements. Pupils say staff are considerate of their emotional and physical well-being.
- Leaders have fully embedded a strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum. They provide a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their ambition and character and to understand and secure fundamental British values. Pupils share their views about the school and listen to those of others in the pupil parliament. They learn to value and care about themselves and others. Leaders successfully secure pupils' mature approach to relationships, their responsibilities and role in modern Britain.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- There have been no instances of pupils being permanently excluded from the school. Pupils value the culture of high expectations and respect which is embedded at the school. They feel listened to and respected, so behave well.
- Pupils listen to teachers and one another in lessons. Their conduct in class is exemplary. Pupils take great pride in their work, which they complete to a high standard.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is excellent. They move around the school with care and consideration for others at breaktime, lunchtime and at the change of lessons.
- Pupils treat the school environment with respect. There is no graffiti. Pupils do not leave litter lying around.
- Pupils attend school regularly and arrive on time for lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress across the subjects which they study, including English and mathematics, and in all year groups. Pupils get off to a flying start in Year 7, because of the high quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and this is sustained through to Year 11. For the pupils who took their GCSE examinations in 2018, this led to results across a range of subjects which were more than two thirds of a grade higher than other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Evidence from pupils' work demonstrates that pupils from all starting points make excellent progress. The most able make very strong progress, supported by the high levels of challenge provided by teachers. Year 7 pupils with low starting points benefit from the catch-up support provided. These pupils' effective levels of literacy and numeracy then help them succeed in the interesting and thought-provoking activities they are set across the curriculum.
- Disadvantaged pupils make excellent progress across all subjects and year groups. The attention which leaders and teachers give to provide these pupils with an outstanding education is highly effective.
- Leaders and teachers have high aspirations for pupils with SEND. They support and challenge these pupils with high levels of care and expertise. This leads to the strong progress of pupils with SEND.
- A very high proportion of pupils move on to and stay in aspirational courses of their choice after Year 11, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Most pupils move on to A-level courses, with a growing number joining the school's own sixth form.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The sixth form opened in September 2017, providing A-level courses for just over 30 students. Leaders have since extended the range of courses on offer, including some

vocational courses. The sixth form is an increasingly popular choice with students and parents, and the number of applicants has increased year on year, including students from other schools.

- Overall, the sixth form provides a good quality of education. Current students make good progress across the academic and vocational courses which they follow. Teaching, learning and assessment are good.
- Senior leaders, including trustees, have an accurate view of the current strengths of the sixth form and those aspects where recent strengthening requires to be embedded. They are taking the rapid and secure action required to ensure that the quality of education provided by the sixth form routinely matches the outstanding standard seen elsewhere in the school.
- The leadership of the sixth form has been strengthened this year and now demonstrates the capacity to provide an outstanding quality of education. Leaders' actions have led to students' higher rates of progress across the full range of subjects, especially for those students currently in Year 12. In part, this is because of the training which sixth-form staff have undertaken this year to secure consistently strong teaching in A-level and level 3 vocational courses.
- Teachers assess, monitor and evaluate students' learning accurately and regularly. They spot any cases where students make slower progress than they should and take effective action to support these students in catching up.
- Disadvantaged students and those with SEND are well supported. They make good progress.
- Currently, there are no students who need to resit GCSE examinations in English or mathematics. Since 2017, students who have required to resit these subjects have all gained the required GCSE.
- Students' personal development and the work-related curriculum are effective. Students enjoy and benefit from the activities provided. These include team-building events, fund-raising and the Duke of Edinburgh's gold award. Students are clear about the positive impact of these events on their preparedness for life in and beyond the sixth form.
- Leaders provide students with appropriate information and guidance regarding their next steps in education or training. The first group of students to complete Year 13, in summer 2019, have all secured suitable and ambitious next steps. Most students have been offered places on their first choice of university courses.
- The students with whom inspectors spoke had only good things to say about their experience in the sixth form. They said that it lives up to their high expectations and would recommend it to others. Students have completed the courses they started.
- Safeguarding is effective. Students are well prepared for adulthood. Students' behaviour and attendance are very strong. They are confident and capable in looking after their own welfare.

School details

Unique reference number	138562
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10091026

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	684
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	78
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Joseph Spencer
Principal	Shane Ierston
Telephone number	01925 817 939
Website	www.kingswarrington.com
Email address	info@kingswarrington.com
Date of previous inspection	15 November 2018

Information about this school

- The school is an academy within The Great Schools Trust. The Great Schools Trust comprises three schools, with a fourth school opening in September 2019. The board of trustees is accountable for the school and a clear scheme of delegation exists between trustees and the local governing body. The chair of the local governing body meets regularly with the chief executive officer and the trust.
- The school started to enrol students into its sixth form from September 2017. There are now 78 students in Year 12 and Year 13.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their home language.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The school does not currently use alternative providers for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings took place with school leaders, teachers, governors, trustees and the chief executive officer of the Great Schools Trust. A telephone conversation took place with the chief director of the Great Schools Trust.
- Discussions were held with pupils to gather their views on a variety of issues, including safeguarding, well-being, bullying, behaviour, teaching and the curriculum.
- Inspectors examined a range of the school's documentation, including the self-evaluation and improvement plan, assessment information, the pupil premium plan, attendance, bullying and behaviour records, and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of 29 staff survey responses, 37 responses to the pupils' survey, 137 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire Parent View, and 12 written responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text facility.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school and scrutinised pupils' work in a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by school leaders to scrutinise pupils' work.

Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Wood	Ofsted Inspector

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