

Inspection of a good school: The King's CofE Academy

First Avenue, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST7 1DP

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 March 2024

Outcome

The King's CofE Academy continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Will Wilson. This school is part of the Three Spires 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), Emily Verow, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Lee.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring school with a strong sense of community. Positive relationships underpin all aspects of the school's work. Staff know their pupils well. Pupils trust staff to help them if they have a problem. Bullying is rare. If it does occur, staff deal with it well. As a result, pupils feel happy and safe here.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils consistently live up to these expectations. In lessons, pupils behave well and work hard. Around the school, the atmosphere is calm and orderly.

The school offers pupils a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. Examples include music, sports, coding and engineering clubs. Attendance at these enrichment activities is flourishing. For example, over 50 pupils enjoy regular lunchtime dance sessions, while a further 60 pupils attended the Duke of Edinburgh's Award sessions after school.

Parents praise the range of subjects on offer and high expectations set. The majority say they would recommend the school. Many say that their children do well here. Inspectors agree. One parent summed up the views of several stating, 'The school has always dealt with my child in a patient and loving way. Staff know and care for my child very well.'

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

The school has been challenged by the persistent absence rates of some pupils over the last two years. Staff are working hard to improve the situation. Attendance is monitored and all absence is quickly followed up. Extensive work has been done with pupils and

their families to support improved attendance. This work is paying off. The current academic year has seen significant reduction in persistent absence. However, attendance still prevents all pupils from achieving their full potential.

The published outcomes last year are not a reflection of the good quality of education that current pupils receive. The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Lessons are well planned around clear routines. Teachers revisit prior learning through 'do now' tasks before introducing new learning. Pupils then complete independent tasks. Teachers check understanding, using questioning skilfully and circulate to support and challenge pupils. These routines help pupils to remember and apply what has been taught. Teachers regularly assess pupils' work and give useful feedback. Most pupils make use of feedback to improve their work. However, a few pupils are not sufficiently given the opportunity to do this as effectively, leaving gaps in their learning.

The number of pupils who study the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is currently low. This is because of the low numbers studying a language. The school is aware of this and has introduced extra curriculum time and a second language at key stage 3 to encourage uptake at key stage 4.

Sixth-form students have access to a range of A-level, T-level and Applied General qualifications. The school works alongside students to ensure that they make the right post-16 qualification choices for their future. Students also take advantage of a wide range of extended opportunities. All students complete first-aid, food safety and health and safety qualifications. They also take on roles to support other pupils and the wider community. For example, students act as 'well-being ambassadors' for younger pupils and volunteer at a local food bank.

The school ensures that the needs of pupils with SEND are quickly identified. Information on how best to support pupils in lessons is shared with staff. Staff make use of this information to adapt lessons effectively. This enables pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum.

Pupils read regularly, in tutor periods and as part of the English curriculum. Pupils who struggle to read are quickly identified. The school has a range of reading support programmes in place. These programmes are well planned and delivered, helping pupils to develop a wider vocabulary and read with increasing fluency. As a result, pupils are able to access the full curriculum.

Pupils' wider development is given a high priority. There is a well-planned relationship, social and health education (RSHE) programme in place for Years 7 to 13. Pupils learn about a wide range of issues, such as keeping safe, diversity and healthy relationships. Careers education is an integral part of the RSHE curriculum. Extensive support is given to pupils when making decisions about their next steps at each key stage. In Year 10 and Year 12, pupils participate in work experience, giving them insight into the world of work. This comprehensive programme prepares pupils well for their future.

Staff are proud to work in the school. They say that it is well led and managed and that

leaders trust them. They feel that leaders consider their workload when planning improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The absence rates of some pupils are too high. This means that these pupils miss important learning and do not make the progress they should. The school should continue to work alongside pupils and their families to improve attendance as a basis for improving achievement.
- The number of pupils pursuing a language option at key stage 4 is low. As a result, few pupils currently study the full range of EBacc subjects. The school should continue to implement its plans to develop the language curriculum at key stage 3 to encourage increasing the uptake at key stage 4.
- A small number of pupils do not use teachers' feedback to improve their work. Where this is the case, pupils are not making the progress they are capable of. The school should ensure that pupils have the opportunity to respond to feedback given and that teachers check pupils' responses carefully.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2017

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	148402
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10294715
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	766
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	64
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Lee
CEO of the trust	Emily Verow
Principal	Will Wilson
Website	www.thekingscofeacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The King's CofE Academy joined the Three Spires Trust in April 2021. When its predecessor school, The King's CofE (VA) School, was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2017, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school uses two registered alternative provisions and one unregistered 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 technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The King's Church of England Academy is a Church of England school. Its last section 48 inspection took place in February 2018. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the previous section 48 inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the principal, other leaders, those responsible for governance, trustees and the CEO of the trust.
- Inspectors met with the principal, other leaders, staff and pupils. They met with governors and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, geography and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited lessons in a range of other subjects.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and spoke to them about the support they receive.
- Inspectors spoke to representatives of the alternative provision used by the school.
- Years 12 and 13 students were spoken to about their experiences in the sixth form.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

Inspection team

Eddie Wilkes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Liz Todd

Ofsted Inspector

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