

Inspection of The King's (The Cathedral) School

Park Road, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE1 2UE

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is John Harrison. This school is a single-academy trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Kevin Palmer.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since March 2013.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school provides the fertile ground in which pupils can grow in intellect and develop strength of character. Staff and pupils aim for excellence. They achieve it. Pupils achieve highly in all areas of education. This includes musical, cultural and sporting achievements which pupils and the school are rightly proud of.

Lessons focus pupils' minds on important and interesting knowledge. Pupils engage in insightful conversation with staff. Pupils can add detail to their writing and their artwork is bold and technically accomplished. Staff model the joys and benefits of wider reading. Pupils keenly follow their good example, learning more about the topics they study.

Pupils learn and demonstrate politeness and acts of kindness. They are respectful towards one another and with staff. As a result, the school is a calm, safe and friendly place to be. The school facilitates an abundance of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents, interests and leadership skills. For example, all pupils can perform in the school's 'House Music' event. Students in the sixth form are proud to lead assemblies, give talks and mentor younger pupils.

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

The curriculum in many subjects goes well beyond the national curriculum requirements. Key to pupils' and sixth-form students' success is the way in which teachers expertly teach new knowledge. Teachers bring the well-sequenced curriculum to life through careful explanation and apt questioning. They ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise. This means that pupils are less likely to forget what they have learned. Teachers regularly check how well pupils are learning the curriculum. They use this information to adapt lessons. As a result, pupils and students typically achieve very well in their end of key stage tests and in their GCSE and A level examinations.

Staff use a well-sequenced programme to teach the small number of pupils who need to catch up with reading. These pupils quickly catch up. Pupils enjoy participating in wider reading opportunities in class. Teachers introduce pupils to stimulating and informative books. This inspires pupils to choose similar books to read at home. By the time pupils are ready to study set texts at GCSE, they have already encountered a large range of poetry, fiction and plays.

Staff are highly skilled at supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The SEND team know pupils with SEND well. They regularly communicate with parents about how best to support pupils with SEND. Staff work closely with subject teachers to help pupils with SEND access the full school curriculum. Pupils with SEND successfully overcome their barriers to learning, such as with reading, and achieve well.

The school culture places great emphasis on calm, orderly and respectful behaviour. Staff know that, to maintain this culture, everyone needs to share the same high expectations. As a result, pupils listen carefully in lessons and are calm when moving around the school. Pupils are polite to one another and with staff. The school regularly checks how well pupils are behaving in lessons. The school has a range of strategies to encourage good attendance among pupils. For example, a well-designed transition programme to promote the schools' values and expectations for new pupils.

Pupils of all ages access a broad range of personal development opportunities. This includes opportunities linked to the curriculum, such as trips to learn about art movements and notable artists. These opportunities are highly memorable and often open pupils' eyes to different career opportunities. The school ensures that pupils and sixth-form students make well-informed decisions about their futures. For example, through facilitating careers fairs and inviting alumni to talk to pupils about their experiences. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures. Their understanding of equality and acceptance is very much rooted in the school's ethos of 'family'.

The school equips students in the sixth form with social and cultural capital. To develop their leadership skills and to contribute positively to the school, they can become mentors for younger pupils. Students participate in and lead a range of societies. They also learn about philosophy, religion, arts, essay writing and financial skills as part of their 'research studies'. This means students continue to have academic interests beyond their chosen courses.

School and trust leaders are attuned to changes within the education landscape and within the school. For example, increasing numbers of pupils who need additional educational support. The school has a positive reputation among parents and the local community. Leaders' decisions are always in the best interests of pupils and students. Their aim is for the school to continue to build on its rich history and traditions in a positive way. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and wellbeing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	136398
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10318600
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1250
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	380
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kevin Palmer
Headteacher	John Harrison
Website	www.kings.peterborough.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 and 21 March 2013

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up the post in September 2021.
- The school uses the services of one registered alternative provider of education.
- The school is a Church of England school. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in January 2018. The next section 48 inspection will be within 8 years of this date.
- 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.

- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, early reading, mathematics, geography, art and French. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector/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.
- The inspectors met and spoke with the headteacher and senior leaders. The lead inspector met with governors and trustees, including the chair of the trust board.
- The inspectors observed pupils' and students' behaviour around the school and during breaktimes.
- The lead inspector considered 299 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, including 237 free text responses. Inspectors gathered pupils' views during the inspection. The lead inspector also considered 212 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and 118 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mark Sim	Ofsted Inspector
Gareth Cross	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Scott	Ofsted Inspector

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