

# Inspection of King's Leadership Academy Hawthornes

Fernhill Road, Bootle, Merseyside L20 6AQ

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Inspection dates: 14–15 January 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Since the last inspection, leaders have made subject curriculums more challenging for pupils. Staff have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve. That said, pupils do not benefit from an overall good quality of education. This is because, in some subjects, weaknesses remain in how well the curriculum is delivered.

Pupils told us that they feel safe in the school and that, if they have worries or problems, adults are 'there for you'. Many pupils join this school part way through their secondary education. Most of these pupils settle in well, improve their behaviour and receive lots of help, especially to improve their reading and writing.

Older pupils told us that behaviour is now much better. During lessons, most pupils listen politely and follow teachers' instructions. Pupils told us that staff deal well with poor behaviour and bullying, should it happen. Younger pupils told us that: 'we will not tolerate bullying'. Pupils also said that they rarely hear racist and homophobic language.

Pupils benefit from a range of clubs, such as badminton, basketball, Mandarin and French. Younger pupils enjoy outdoor pursuits and residential trips in Cumbria. Many pupils are members of the Combined Cadet Force. All pupils are encouraged to work towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

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

Staff ensure that the many pupils who join the school part way through their secondary education settle well. This includes those pupils who speak English as an additional language. It also includes a number of pupils who have struggled with their behaviour and attendance at their previous schools. For these reasons, published GCSE information does not paint the full picture about how well pupils achieve. However, since the last inspection, leaders have secured some positive improvements in the quality of education. As a result, pupils' achievement is improving in many subjects, including in English and mathematics.

Staff are positive about the improvements that senior leaders have made since the last inspection. They said that leaders consider their well-being and their workload.

Leaders have designed the curriculum so that, where appropriate, pupils study the English Baccalaureate. With support from the trust, subject leaders have ensured that subject curriculums are as demanding as the national curriculum. For example, in Year 7 English, pupils study texts by Geoffrey Chaucer. However, in some subjects, such as geography, pupils have been unable to benefit from a more challenging and well-planned curriculum until more recently. This is because of weaknesses in the leadership of these subjects.

Where carefully planned subject curriculums are delivered well, pupils achieve well. For instance, in Spanish, pupils apply their existing knowledge of grammar confidently to more difficult learning. More than half of all key stage 4 pupils choose to study a modern foreign language. These pupils achieve well in languages.

In those subjects that are well planned and delivered, teachers ensure that pupils frequently revisit earlier learning. This helps pupils to remember the knowledge that is the most important. For example, in mathematics, teachers check that older pupils have a secure understanding of fractions. However, some subject curriculums are still not delivered consistently well. In these subjects, some pupils do not have a secure understanding of important concepts that they have covered. For instance, in science, older pupils are unable to apply earlier learning about electrons and protons to more difficult tasks.

Through the trust, leaders ensure that teachers can benefit from subject-specific training. Many teachers have an expert knowledge of their subject and they use this to provide clear explanations for pupils. Pupils appreciate the help that they receive. However, some subject leaders have not focused enough on developing teachers' knowledge of how best to deliver key concepts over time. In these subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) study a broad curriculum. They benefit from excellent pastoral support. However, the academic support that pupils with SEND receive across subjects differs in its quality. For instance, in English, Spanish and art, teachers adapt the curriculum well for pupils with SEND. However, in some other subjects, teachers do not use information about the needs of this group of pupils to adapt the curriculum successfully.

Respectful relationships exist between staff and pupils. In most lessons, pupils can focus on their learning. Those pupils who struggle to manage their conduct receive effective support. Pupils' behaviour around the school is typically calm. The proportion of pupils excluded from the school for poor behaviour has reduced dramatically. More pupils attend the school regularly than in the past. This is also the case for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND.

Lots of other opportunities for pupils complement the curriculum well. For example, pupils enjoy the chance to play chess, attend drama clubs and bake. Pupils also benefit from trips to theatres and museums. Through the curriculum, pupils learn about the importance of respect for others. They also learn how to look after their own physical and mental health. For instance, pupils learn about the benefits of healthy eating.

Pupils benefit from a well-designed careers programme. Older pupils have meaningful experiences to encounter the world of work. This helps to prepare them for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils told us that they learn about the dangers of knife crime, drug and alcohol misuse, and criminal gangs.

Leaders ensure that all the required appointment checks are completed before new staff start work at the school.

Staff receive suitable safeguarding training. For instance, they receive regular training to keep their knowledge about the potential signs of radicalisation up to date. Staff understand what they must do if they have concerns about a pupil.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders have not concentrated enough on developing teachers' knowledge of how best to teach subject-specific content over time. As a result, pupils have underachieved. Subject leaders must ensure that teachers understand how to better deliver subject content over time.
- Leaders have not ensured that some teachers adapt the curriculum effectively enough for pupils with SEND. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not achieve well across the curriculum. Leaders must ensure that teachers use the information provided about the needs of this group of pupils to adapt the curriculum well for pupils with SEND.
- Some subject leaders do not ensure that the more challenging curriculums are delivered consistently well. In these subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Subject leaders must ensure that teachers implement the curriculum consistently well, so that pupils know and remember more.

## 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138260
<b>Local authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10121990
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	324
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Joseph Spencer
<b>Principal</b>	Peter Gaul
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.kingshawthornes.com/">http://www.kingshawthornes.com/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 April 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school is part of the Great Schools Trust.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has increased considerably since the previous inspection.
- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils at: Impact, The Aspire Centre, Educ8 and the Oakfield Pupil Referral Unit.

## Information about this inspection

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

- During the inspection, we had meetings with pupils, staff, teachers, subject leaders and senior leaders. As the lead inspector, I spoke with the chair of the academy council, the trust's chief executive officer, the trust's chief strategy officer and the chair of the trust board.
- The inspection focused deeply on English, mathematics, Spanish and science. We met with pupils, teaching staff and subject leaders. We checked on pupils' work

and visited lessons. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.

- We considered a range of school documents, including leaders' assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses. We also considered documentation relating to school governance and leaders' information about pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- We spoke with representatives of two of the alternative providers used by the school. We checked on safeguarding documentation, including leaders' appointment checks on staff.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's questionnaire from staff or pupils. We considered the views expressed by parents in the 16 responses to Ofsted's online survey Parent View, including the comments received via Ofsted's free-text facility.

### **Inspection team**

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