

Inspection of King Edward VI Handsworth School

Rose Hill Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B21 9AR

Inspection dates:	17 and 18 December 2024
The quality of education	Good
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 David Goodwin. This school is part of the King Edward VI Academy Trust Birmingham, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jodh Dhesi, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sharon Roberts. There is also a trust cluster lead, Matthew Brady, who has responsibility for this school and three others.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness 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 February 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils thrive because of the school's high expectations of their academic and personal development. Pupils rise to this challenge, determined to achieve their high aspirations. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve excellent outcomes in their GCSE and A-level examinations and are set up well for future success in their chosen careers.

The school's culture of mutual respect is deeply embedded. This respect is demonstrated in how pupils conduct themselves. They support each other's learning and do not disrupt lessons. Staff rarely need to remind pupils of the school's expectations because pupils manage themselves so well. When the school raises the bar in its expectations, for example the recent focus on punctuality, pupils respond well to meet this.

Pupils are rightly proud of how their diversity is valued and celebrated. For example, the 'out of the box' pupil team helps to educate the community about neurodiversity. Pupils appreciate the many and varied extra-curricular opportunities available to them, including many led by sixth-form students. They make the most of the visits on offer, including trips abroad and activities that support their learning in curriculum subjects.

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

The school has a broad curriculum, designed to enable pupils to fulfil their academic potential. Subject curriculums are carefully sequenced to ensure pupils achieve well and are fully prepared for success in their examinations. This is why they are so successful.

Teachers demonstrate impressive subject knowledge when delivering the curriculum. This helps pupils, as they progress through the school, to develop an increasing sense of personal enthusiasm for learning and a desire to explore their subjects beyond the taught curriculum. This is palpable in the sixth form, where students are keen to explore complex ideas and concepts, sometimes with a degree of intellectual independence akin to undergraduate learning.

The school has worked on improving how well the curriculum is implemented. Some of this work is embedded and reflected in consistently strong practice, for example in how well pupils learn to recall and consolidate previous learning. However, there are some subjects where the school's chosen strategies are not as secure as they are elsewhere, for example the informal checking of learning 'in the moment'. The school has started to address these small areas of inconsistency. Checks on how well pupils have understood their learning, via their formal assessments, are strong. This results in pupils having a clear understanding of what they need to work on to improve their marks. In some lessons, especially in the sixth form, pupils have regular opportunities to discuss their learning in a way that deepens their thinking and understanding, as well as develop important oracy skills. However, this is not always the case.

The school ensures that pupils know the value of reading, both for pleasure and for academic development. Pupils make great use of the well-resourced library and appreciate the carefully chosen diverse range of texts available to them.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs expertly identified. Staff know how to support them in lessons, making appropriate adaptations to ensure they are enabled to learn and achieve well. Pupils with SEND and their parents and carers appreciate the support they receive.

Pupils' attendance is high. They conduct themselves with maturity and show respect for others. They benefit from excellent advice and guidance around careers and their next steps. They are well supported with applications for university and apprenticeships. The exceptional quality of the school's work on personal and character development is visible in how pupils treat each other and care for the school community and beyond. Kindness and service to others are praised through the 'cheers for peers' and 'gratitude' cards they send to each other and staff. Pupils enjoy taking on the myriad of leadership roles available to them because they want to make a positive contribution to the school community. However, the school is not resting on its laurels. It continues to develop this area so that all pupils become well-rounded, socially responsible individuals.

The trust successfully ensures that the school is meeting its responsibilities. Staff benefit from excellent professional development at school and trust level. The culture of care shown to pupils is also felt by staff. Recent changes in leadership have brought about several changes at the school. Many of these changes are already starting to show positive impact on the school's provision. Many parents shared their support for these changes and how they are enabling the school, and their children, to flourish.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not designed in a way that ensures pupils have meaningful opportunities to discuss their learning. This means that pupils are not always enabled to deepen their understanding, explore different ideas or develop their oracy skills through their learning. The school should ensure that there is a strategy in place to support the effective development of oracy across the curriculum.

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	137047
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10343956
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,335
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	374
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sharon Roberts
CEO of the trust	Jodh Dhesi
Headteacher	David Goodwin
Website	www.kingedwardvi.bham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2014

Information about this school

- The headteacher, along with two other senior leaders, took up post in September 2024.
- The school is one of 12 schools in the King Edward VI Academy Trust Birmingham.
- The school is not using alternative 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 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders, trust leaders, including the chief executive officer, the chair of the trust board, the chair of the local governing body and others responsible for governance.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art and design, English, history, biology and religious education. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also visited other lessons, including in the sixth form.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- Inspectors held formal and informal discussions with pupils, including at social times.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including comments submitted via the free-text facility, and communications received by Ofsted during the inspection.

Inspection team

Nicola Beech, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Will Keddie	Ofsted Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Hickerton	Ofsted Inspector
Gail Brindley	Ofsted Inspector

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