

Inspection of King Edward VI Handsworth Wood Girls' Academy

Church Lane, Handsworth, Birmingham, West Midlands B20 2HL

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 March 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Kiran Takhar. 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 (CEO), Jodh Dhesi, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sharon Roberts. There is also a Cluster Lead - North, Matthew Brady, who is responsible 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 May 2014. The school received an urgent inspection under section 8 of the Act on 22 October 2019. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

King Edward VI Handsworth Wood Girls' Academy sits firmly at the heart of its community. Adults have high expectations for pupils. These are often achieved because staff support pupils in reaching their potential. Consequently, girls flourish and achieve strong outcomes. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The school is an inclusive community where all pupils are nurtured and cared for. In return, pupils show strong behaviour and maintain high attendance. Warm and respectful relationships between adults and pupils are common and a pleasure to observe. Pupils are friendly and courteous. They work hard in lessons and enjoy learning. Pupils trust that adults will address any concerns they may have quickly and fairly.

The school's efforts to enhance pupils' character and personal development are strong. Activities on offer include leadership roles, trips, residential and after-school or lunchtime clubs. Pupils learn important life lessons about respect for others, maintaining healthy relationships, and personal safety, including how to be safe online. They also receive clear information about possible future career paths. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for later life and move on to suitable destinations.

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

The school sets ambitious goals for every pupil and student. The main tool for achieving these goals is the school's curriculum, which has recently been strengthened. It outlines the knowledge and skills pupils should learn over time, including in the sixth form. Learning builds in a logical order. This helps pupils to achieve very well.

Generally, pupils enjoy reading and do so daily in timetabled reading sessions. However, the school's work to help pupils at the early stages of learning to read is not as well developed as it could be. Currently, there is no consistent approach to ensuring that all pupils become fluent readers. As a result, some pupils do not develop the necessary skills quickly enough to read with confidence.

Pupils with SEND are supported very well. They receive targeted help at every stage. This includes in their lessons and in individual intervention sessions. Staff are highly skilled at identifying pupils' educational needs, and leaders ensure pupils get the help they need quickly. All of this means that pupils with SEND overcome their learning barriers, flourish and do well.

Staff have strong subject knowledge. Most pupils receive work that is well matched to their needs. Staff can spot when someone is stuck and needs help. However, there exists some confusion about how staff check what pupils have learned and can do. This then leads to a lack of adjustments in teaching to identify pupils' misconceptions or address gaps in learning. When this happens, it limits pupils' ability to build on prior knowledge and develop a secure understanding of new concepts.

Pupils conduct themselves in line with the school's high behaviour expectations, which are understood by all. Strong relationships between adults and pupils underpin this work effectively. Where pupils need help, the school acts swiftly to provide support. Because of this, the school is a calm and orderly environment.

Students in the sixth form are a delight. They are ambassadors for the school and act as role models to younger peers. Recent improvements in the sixth-form offer mean that students are now on the right courses, achieve well and move on to their chosen career paths, including apprenticeships and employment.

The school's work to promote personal development is strong. The aim to ensure all girls leave the school as confident, well-rounded young women is realised through the effective personal, social and health curriculum. It ensures that pupils gain an age-appropriate understanding of topics such as health and sex education. Pupils talk knowledgeably about values such as respect and equality. All pupils receive targeted and impartial information about possible career choices, including in the sixth form. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for their next steps in life and education.

The trust and leaders have a forensic understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be better. Leaders, together with the trust, quickly and effectively address any identified areas for improvement. Staff speak highly of the training they receive and are complimentary about leaders' consideration of their well-being and workload. Staff are proud to work here.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's approach to supporting pupils in becoming fluent and proficient readers is not well developed. As a result, pupils do not consistently receive the help they need to improve their reading accuracy and fluency. This impacts their ability to develop confidence in their learning. The school should ensure that all pupils receive the necessary support to become proficient and fluent readers.
- Some staff are not clear on the checks they should complete on what pupils know and can do. This means they do not routinely adapt their teaching to ensure misconceptions are identified or gaps in learning are addressed. This slows pupils' learning. The school should ensure that all staff have the expertise to support pupils' learning effectively.

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	138937
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10343992
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
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	1,062
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	205
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sharon Roberts
CEO of the trust	Jodh Dhesi
Headteacher	Kiran Takhar
Website	www.hwga.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 and 23 May 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school is part of the King Edward VI Academy Trust Birmingham. It is an average-size secondary school. Around half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and just over half of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The headteacher commenced her role in September 2024. There have been several changes to the senior leadership team in recent times.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative provisions for a few of its pupils.
- The school runs a daily morning club where it provides free breakfast for its pupils.
- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers and other senior leaders. The lead inspector held a meeting with the vice-chair of the local governing body. Meetings were held with representatives from the multi-academy trust, including the chair of the board, the CEO, the director of education and the cluster lead - north. Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator, the leader for pupils who speak English as an additional language, curriculum leaders, early career teachers, teaching and support staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, languages, psychology, law and art and design. For each deep dive, 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. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour and interactions during lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes and spoke to many pupils during the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of parents' free-text comments and responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. Inspectors also considered the responses to the pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Bianka Zemke, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Thomas Walton	Ofsted Inspector
Natasha Rancins	Ofsted Inspector
Niall Gallagher	Ofsted Inspector

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