

Inspection of a good school: The Kingsmead School

56 Cedar Street, Derby DE22 1GE

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

The Kingsmead School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Everyone at Kingsmead School is committed to the school's mission to 're-engage young people'. Pupils speak highly of the guiding principle that 'every day is a fresh start'. They say this enables them to set aside any previous negative experiences of education. Pupils say that they will be welcomed and supported, even if they are 'having a bad day'. As a result, pupils' attendance typically improves during their time at the school.

The school's core value of 'respect' is evident in all aspects of the provision. It can be seen in pupils' calm and orderly behaviour in lessons and at social times. Positive, respectful relationships between adults and pupils ensure that lessons are purposeful. Pupils who may have been out of education for long periods of time can resume their studies and begin to fulfil their potential.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They trust and admire the adults who care for them. Pupils understand potential risks such as bullying, online danger and unhealthy relationships. They display a deep, genuine respect for each other's challenges and differences. Pupils feel safe to express their emotions and beliefs, sometimes for the first time at a school.

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

Since the last inspection, leaders have redesigned the curriculum so that it is coherently sequenced, taking into account all pupils' needs. Leaders have prioritised English, mathematics, and a range of other subjects. They ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with a meaningful route towards their future education, training or employment. Pupils can attend a range of off-site alternative provisions. This helps them to develop valuable skills and to experience a positive workplace environment.

Leaders are currently revising the existing curriculum, in view of the school's changing circumstances. Leaders recognise that the proposed expansion programme will enable them to offer a broader range of subjects and GCSE options. Leaders wish to ensure that

the revised curriculum is sufficiently broad and deep, and ambitious enough for all pupils to realise their full potential. This work is not yet complete.

There is a strong focus on the well-developed personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. This is the bedrock of the school. Pupils highly value the PSHE lessons. These lessons have a positive impact on pupils' mental health and well-being, which can be fragile. Pupils learn through themes such as 'health and well-being' and 'living in the wider world'. Through these lessons, assemblies, and related discussions, pupils are well prepared to take their place in society.

Leaders and staff assess pupils' needs and abilities on admission to the school. This enables them to gain a rounded view of pupils' academic and social and emotional needs. Leaders consult effectively with parents and carers, and commissioners, such as pupils' 'home schools' or the local authority. Regular checks ensure that staff continually adapt their teaching to accommodate pupils' needs.

Leaders quickly identify any pupils who are not fully fluent or confident in reading. They ensure that those pupils receive appropriate support. Many pupils are avid readers who relish books. Pupils flourish in English lessons, where they study and discuss a range of high-quality literature. The school library is a welcoming space that is designed to encourage a love of reading.

Other curriculum areas, such as mathematics and art, are strong. Pupils receive expert teaching and support to develop secure knowledge and skills in these subjects. Teachers set clear goals for pupils to achieve, so that pupils understand how well they are progressing. This ensures that pupils know and remember more over time.

Governors provide strong challenge and support for the school. They share leaders' ambitious vision for pupils to achieve the best possible outcomes. Governors say that staff's well-being is at the heart of their work. Staff say that they are happy in their roles. They feel part of a close, supportive team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff recognise that pupils who attend this provision have significant and complex vulnerabilities. This means that pupils may have an increased safeguarding risk. Leaders have established a culture of awareness that is evident across the school. Staff receive a thorough induction into the school's safeguarding procedures. Training is regularly updated through the '39 weeks of safeguarding' programme. Records confirm that staff log concerns immediately. Leaders respond promptly and appropriately.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through the PSHE curriculum. They express confidence in the school's staff to protect them from harm.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In response to the school's changing circumstances, and the proposed increase to the number of pupils on roll, leaders are in the process of reviewing and strengthening the curriculum. This involves enhancing the breadth and depth of the curriculum and increasing the scope of academic and vocational qualifications and accreditations available for pupils. Leaders have devised a plan to implement the necessary changes systematically, over time. Leaders should ensure that they establish and embed a well planned and sequenced broad and balanced curriculum that meets all pupils' needs, starting points and aspirations for the future.

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 May 2016.

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](#)' 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

Unique reference number	132133
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10227030
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sandra Fletcher
Headteacher	Michael Pride (Executive Headteacher)
Website	http://www.kingsmead-derby.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	5 and 6 May 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes at the school since the last inspection, and more are planned. The leadership team has been restructured. The school relocated to its current premises in October 2022.
- At the time of the inspection, leaders were consulting with all stakeholders regarding a proposed expansion to the school's premises. This would double the school's intake of pupils from September 2023. The proposals also include a change of name from The Kingsmead School to Castle School.
- The school forms part of a wider group of schools located across Derby, managed under one governing body.
- The school currently caters for 34 pupils who have significant social, emotional and mental health difficulties, and/or medical needs. Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have education, health and care plans.
- Some pupils have been permanently excluded from their previous settings. All have had a disrupted education and have missed a considerable amount of schooling. Some pupils have received in-patient hospital treatment for their additional needs. Pupils typically join the school at any point during the academic year. They may attend full time or be dual registered with their 'home school'.

- The school uses the services of three unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher and other senior and curriculum leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and other members of the governing body, as well as holding a remote meeting with representatives of the local authority. The lead inspector held telephone discussions with some commissioning schools and parents.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English and reading; mathematics; art and design; and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss 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 lead inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and reviewed curriculum planning in a range of other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks and holding discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Christine Horrocks

Ofsted Inspector

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