

King Edwin School

Mill Lane, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees TS20 1LG

Inspection dates

5–7 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal has a strong vision for the school to help change the lives of the pupils and their families for the better.
- The proprietor, principal and governors have high expectations and aspirations for both pupils and staff. They are committed to securing the best possible education for the pupils. They have ensured that all of the independent school standards are now met.
- The principal and proprietor have worked effectively to address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. As a consequence, all aspects of the school are now good.
- Teaching is strong, because teachers have a good understanding of how to plan lessons to meet each pupil's individual needs.
- The highly personalised curriculum is tailored to meet each pupil's needs. It provides pupils with the skills to be prepared for further learning when they leave the school.
- The effective staff team builds strong and caring relationships with the pupils, which enable pupils to thrive and achieve more than they thought possible.
- All pupils make good progress from their low starting points. Some pupils achieve GCSE passes in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' emotional well-being is central to the school's work. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning improve significantly over time.
- Leaders' work to promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding and their appreciation of British values is good.
- Leaders' determined focus on improving attendance has reduced pupils' absence and persistent absence. However, this continues to be a priority.
- The relatively new governing body is beginning to monitor the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve the performance of the school.
- Pupils' progress in reading is not as strong as in other areas of learning, because there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the new governing body uses its evaluation of performance to challenge leaders to bring about further improvement.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - ensuring that arrangements for monitoring attendance are further refined, so that absence and persistent absence continue to reduce.
- Improve pupil outcomes by:
 - ensuring that pupils have greater opportunities to practise and refine their reading skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal has created a culture of high ambition and expectation of how well pupils achieve and behave while they are at the school. Consequently, the leadership team and staff share the same commitment to improving standards.
- The very capable senior leadership team has worked effectively in supporting the principal to address the areas for improvement which were identified in the previous inspection. Middle leaders are taking increasing responsibility for driving forwards improvements in the subjects and areas for which they are responsible.
- Staff are highly motivated, and morale is high. Of those who completed the staff questionnaire during the inspection, the vast majority were highly positive about all aspects of the leadership of the school and school life. They indicated that they feel well supported, and one member of staff said: 'This school has provided the most training opportunities and best support.'
- The curriculum has been successfully designed to provide a programme that is personalised to each pupil's needs. On entry to the school, each pupil has a carefully planned pathway which helps to prepare them to achieve their aspirations. The curriculum is wide ranging and offers both academic and vocational strands. It contributes positively to pupils' mental health, behaviour and academic progress. However, insufficient emphasis is given to the improvement of reading skills.
- All pupils have an education health and care plan. Senior leaders and staff are familiar with each pupil's academic, behaviour, attendance and personal development targets. Targets are incorporated into teachers' planning and, as a result, they are consistently met.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff have encouraged pupils to have a deep sense of respect for other people. Pupils have a good understanding of the rights of groups with protected characteristics and they feel safe to express their opinions on sexual orientation and discrimination. Pupils are kind to each other and care about how their actions might impact on their friends. Classroom rules, consequences, expectations and membership of the student council, provide a sense of right and wrong. Pupils understand world religions through their work on Buddhism, Sikhism and Islam.
- Pupils have a selfless insight into the needs of others and have raised money for a variety of good causes and charities. Pupils held a sleepover at school to raise money for a homeless charity.
- The school offers a range of enriching additional activities and events. These include forest schools, cleaning plastics from Whitby beach during a beach schools visit and caring for the school's animals. All pupils participate in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and have the opportunity to take part in a residential experience.
- Leaders' self-evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is accurate. They have introduced wide-ranging and systematic checks and evaluations of the provision, so that they can identify quickly what needs to improve.

- The proprietor, governors and senior leadership team welcome advice and support from external sources. They have used the advice from the school's independent consultant effectively to raise standards and address the areas for improvement from the previous inspection report.
- Parents and carers responding to the parent questionnaire during the inspection were overwhelming positive about the difference that the school has made to their children. One parent said: 'The teachers are all very supportive and patient. They work with and understand our child's complex needs.'

Governance

- The proprietor and principal have worked effectively together to put in place a new governance structure, since the previous inspection.
- The proprietor and principal have ensured that the independent school standards are now met and that the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection have been successfully addressed.
- The principal reports termly to a joint venture board, which has been set up in partnership with Stockton local authority.
- The new chair of governors meets regularly on an informal and formal basis with the principal. As he has a close association with the school as a leader in the organisation, he has a comprehensive understanding of the school's challenges and successes.
- Governors receive reports from the principal on a range of matters. These include school improvement visits, teaching and learning updates, behaviour updates, and post-16 destinations.
- Minutes of governors' meetings show that governors are beginning to challenge and hold leaders to account. Governors have made some visits to gain a first-hand understanding of the work of the school.
- New members of the governing body are currently being recruited to two vacancies. The chair of governors has rightly identified that, while processes are now in place to monitor the school's performance and hold leaders to account, the governing body is still developing these skills.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safety and well-being of the pupils are threaded across all aspects of school life. Daily safeguarding meetings monitor pupils closely. Staff understand the pupils so well that they are alert to the smallest concern and can address issues quickly so that they do not escalate.
- The school's safeguarding policy is available on the website and reflects the most recent government guidance. The policy provides clear guidance to staff on their roles and responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Staff receive regular training and they know how to recognise signs of abuse and who to report any concerns to.
- There is a vigilant culture of keeping pupils safe through detailed and comprehensive risk assessments which identify and minimise barriers. Each pupil is risk assessed to

enable them to participate fully in school life. Activities in the school and visits out into the community are carefully considered for any potential risks that they might pose.

- All pupils spoken with said that they felt safe at the school because of the support provided by staff. Parents who made their views known were overwhelmingly positive about their child's safety, and one said: 'For the first time in his life, he feels safe and happy.'
- Health and safety policies are of a high quality and reflect the thorough practice and regular checks that take place to ensure the safety of the pupils and staff.
- Leaders have effective procedures in place to ensure that new staff recruited to the organisation are suitable to work with children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is strong and continues to improve. This is because of the effective monitoring of teaching and learning which takes place on a half-termly basis. Action points and professional development provide expectations to teachers of how to improve their practice.
- Well-planned lessons are tailored to meet pupils' abilities and aptitudes. Teachers have a comprehensive understanding of the barriers to each pupil's learning and they are skilled at overcoming them.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. They are highly skilled at providing timely support to clarify misconceptions and knowing when to withdraw. This develops pupils' confidence in tackling unfamiliar work, as they know that staff will be there to support them.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are a great strength and contribute significantly to the progress that pupils make in all aspects of their school life. Pupils say that they trust and respect staff, and this enables them to feel confident in joining in class discussions and answering questions.
- Expectations of what pupils can do are high. This impacts positively on pupils, as they concentrate for prolonged periods and work hard.
- A new assessment system has been introduced which identifies pupils' starting points and the progress that they make in all subjects. Teachers can now plan more effectively for pupils to make good progress, and pupils are more aware of what they need to do to meet their targets.
- Work set is appropriately challenging. For example, challenging texts were chosen for key stage 4 pupils in an English lesson, where they were comparing and contrasting the powerful language in two poems. Younger pupils participate with enthusiasm in a spelling test of frequently used words. However, although pupils listen to the story that follows, they are not reading the text and, as a consequence, miss out on an opportunity to practise the fluency of their reading.
- Effective teaching and planning help to ensure that pupils are equipped with the practical skills and knowledge that they will need when they leave the school. For example, pupils learn about healthy eating, how to cook independently and how to keep themselves safe when using social media.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good
- The ethos of the school is based around staff creating strong, trusting and supportive relationships with the pupils from the moment they join the school. This successful culture permeates the whole school with positivity and kindness. This helps pupils to build their confidence, because they know that staff will be there to support them.
- Pupils' well-being is a high priority. In the past, pupils have often experienced failure and disappointment. When they join King Edwin's, they begin to learn from their mistakes and build their resilience to overcome setbacks and to keep trying.
- Opportunities for pupils to build their self-esteem are threaded throughout the curriculum. For example, pupils feel a sense of pride from participating in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. Pupils enjoy the responsibility involved in taking care of the many animals around the school.
- Pupils have high aspirations about their futures. One pupil explained how he is considering joining the army and another how he would like to become a mechanic.
- Pupils say that they feel safe because they trust the staff and they know that they will be there for them. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe when using social media and explain how to be safe from the sun and when around water.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and well-mannered and articulately express their views.
- Pupils' behaviour improves significantly over time. This is because the reflective and supportive environment encourages pupils to understand and manage their emotions. One pupil said: 'The school teaches me about how not to get angry all the time and be happy' and another said: 'This school has helped me out so much.'
- All pupils have a tutor and a teaching assistant as a constant source of support. These staff understand the needs of their pupils exceptionally well and can help to de-escalate potentially difficult situations before they arise.
- Pupils talk about how much they respect the staff and each other. They explain that behaviour around the school is good, because the pupils know that they will upset their friends if there is an incident. Similarly, pupils say that there is no bullying in the school, because of the respect that they have for each other. Pupils describe the school as a 'family'.
- Behaviour management is consistent and effective throughout the school. Pupils have a good understanding of the school's behaviour policy. They describe how behaviour is assessed daily and monetary rewards can be achieved on a weekly basis. Pupils say that the policy encourages them to behave well.
- Leaders monitor behaviour incidents on a weekly basis. They are responsive to pupils' needs and focus on providing solutions when pupils struggle with their behaviour.

- The academic and emotional progress of pupils who follow individual timetables and attend alternative provisions is monitored closely.
- The attendance of pupils with previously high rates of absence has significantly improved, because pupils begin to enjoy being at the school. However, despite the efforts of leaders, absence and persistent absence still remain high.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress from their low starting points. Many pupils have experienced difficulties in attending school regularly in the past and join the school with skills and knowledge below what is typical for their age. However, pupils make rapid progress over time, and an increasing proportion are working at standards appropriate to their age, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Most groups of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), children looked after and disadvantaged pupils, make equally strong progress across the curriculum. However, a number of pupils on individual timetables do not make as much progress, because of the barriers that they face with their attendance.
- Pupils make progress and follow personalised pathways to achieve a variety of accredited outcomes. They attain GCSE qualifications in subjects such as English and mathematics. They acquire functional skills in English, mathematics and science at entry level, Northern Council for Further Education qualifications in sport and art, and National Open College Network accreditation in employment training, personal development, personal, social, health and economic education and motor vehicle studies.
- Leaders make regular checks on pupils' progress. They meet with teachers to discuss pupils who are falling behind in their learning. They provide swift and specific support to enable these pupils to catch up, and, as a consequence, pupils make good progress over time.
- Pupils' work in books shows that, in key stage 3, they make good progress, although at below national expectations, in handwriting, spelling, grammar and sentence construction over time. Mathematics books show high productivity and good progress in place value, fractions and number fluency.
- At key stage 4, pupils' work in books shows that they make good progress in English. Pupils use abstract nouns and simple, compound and complex clauses. They use drafting processes to improve their writing and to write at length. In mathematics pupils study geometry, vectors and fractions. They are provided with regular opportunities to practise their problem-solving, rapid-recall and number-fluency skills.
- Younger pupils enjoy reading age-appropriate texts to adults. However, they struggle to read fluently and with expression. As a result, their understanding of the meaning of words and the sense of the text is underdeveloped.
- Pupils are well prepared to make a successful transition into learning and employment when they leave the school. They benefit from careers advice, visits to local colleges and opportunities to undertake work experience and participate in enterprise projects. Pupils recently sold healthy biscuits and cakes at Stockton market, which they had baked with the school cook.

School details

Unique reference number	140272
DfE registration number	808/6004
Inspection number	10093651

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Zak McIlhargey
Chair	Steven McGill
Headteacher	Lorna McLean
Annual fees (day pupils)	£39,995
Telephone number	01642 366 610
Website	http://kingedwinschool.zohosites.com
Email address	admin@ne.sparkofgenius.com
Date of previous inspection	19–21 September 2017

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a governing body.
- The school received a standard inspection in September 2017 and an additional inspection in February 2019.
- The school is a partnership venture with Stockton local authority. A joint venture board oversees the overall progress of the school but is not involved in daily operational matters.

- The school operates on one site. Some pupils attend alternative provision at Field House farm and Daisy Chain, as part of their overall programme.
- The school has a collection of animals, including rabbits, reptiles, alpacas, goats, chickens and a pony.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over two-and-a-half days.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior and middle leaders, the chair of governors and the proprietor's representative. Telephone conversations were held with the school improvement partner and the SEND officer from Stockton.
- Pupils' learning and behaviour were observed throughout the day inside and outside classrooms.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and spoke to a number of pupils about their work and well-being. The work in pupils' books was scrutinised.
- Inspectors considered five responses to Ofsted's questionnaire Parent View. The inspectors spoke to two parents.
- Inspectors considered 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors examined school documentation, including a range of policies required as part of the independent school standards. Documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and welfare, and health and safety were also studied.

Inspection team

Suzette Garland-Grimes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Norton Foulger	Ofsted Inspector

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