

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Kingsthorpe College

Boughton Green Road, Kingsthorpe, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN2 7HR

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 March 2025

Outcome

Kingsthorpe College has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Sharan Matharu. This school is part of Orbis Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Stephanie Roberts, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christopher Drake.

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils enjoy attending this welcoming school. The school has high expectations of pupils. In most subjects, pupils progress well through the curriculum.

The school has raised its expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils understand these expectations. Most behave well in lessons, during breaks and at lunchtimes. The school is generally calm and orderly. Most pupils said that teachers are fair when dealing with any conduct issues. Pupils feel safe in school. They know they have many staff members to talk to if they have any concerns.

Pupils who attend this school come from a range of backgrounds and cultures. The school ensures that all pupils feel part of it. For example, it has a 'culture day', where staff and pupils celebrate the different cultures in the school.

Every week, pupils take part in an 'enrichment' lesson where they do activities that develop their interests. Pupils participate in activities such as 'girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics', animal science, 'eco club', crochet and cross-country running. They also have opportunities to develop their leadership and character. Many pupils enjoy taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the combined cadet force and the student council.

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

The school and the trust have worked hard to improve the curriculum and its delivery. This means pupils have an ambitious curriculum offer. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), experience a broad curriculum. The number of pupils taking the full range of English Baccalaureate subjects at key stage 4 has increased. Pupils achieve well in most subjects. Students in the sixth form benefit from a range of academic and vocational courses that meet their needs. Most students progress well through the curriculum.

The school has constructed a curriculum that sets out what pupils will learn and when. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Most teachers explain new learning clearly and check pupils' understanding well. However, some teachers do not do this consistently well in some subjects. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their learning or misconceptions that are unaddressed, and they do not learn as well as they could. In the sixth form, teachers provide students with clear feedback that helps them to improve their work.

The school has prioritised developing pupils' reading skills. Pupils have regular reading sessions that develop their vocabulary and comprehension. The school accurately identifies pupils who need extra support to read well. These pupils get well-thought-out support that builds their skills and confidence in reading.

The school accurately identifies the needs of pupils with SEND and provides teachers with detailed information about how to meet these needs. Most teachers use this well to support these pupils to access the curriculum. Pupils with more complex needs get effective support. They have individualised support and an adapted curriculum that meets their needs. This has helped these pupils to improve their attendance, engage better with learning and achieve well.

Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and engage well with learning activities. Pupils know to be respectful to other pupils and staff, and most are. The school has prioritised improving attendance. Staff work well with pupils to identify and provide support that helps to improve their attendance. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is improving. However, some of these pupils still miss out on too much learning. The school knows there is more to do to build on these improvements to ensure they are fully embedded and sustainable.

The school caters well for pupils' broader development. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when online and in the community. They learn about different world religions and fundamental British values. This helps them to understand the importance of respecting differences between others and being tolerant and respectful. Pupils also learn about healthy lifestyles and relationships. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

There is a well-designed careers programme in place that supports pupils' learning about further and higher education and different careers. Pupils enjoy trips to learn about careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Students in the sixth form

visit a range of different universities to learn about higher education. This supports them well in making informed choices about their next steps.

School and trust leaders are determined to continue to improve the school. They have managed a period of turbulence in staffing well. The actions they have taken have improved the school. Those responsible for governance ensure that leaders are supported and challenged effectively. Staff are well supported by leaders. There is an effective programme of professional development that supports staff to improve how they teach the curriculum.

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, some teachers do not implement the curriculum consistently well. This means some pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that teachers present subject matter clearly and check pupils' understanding systematically so that gaps in learning and misconceptions are addressed.
- The attendance of some disadvantaged pupils is still too low. They miss out on too much learning. The school should ensure that it has a precise understanding of which strategies are most effective in improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils so that these strategies can be employed to best effect.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in December 2019.

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	138932
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10347550
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,397
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	120
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christopher Drake
CEO of the trust	Stephanie Roberts
Headteacher	Sharan Matharu
Website	www.kingsthorpecollege.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 December 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined Orbis Education Trust in September 2021.
- The headteacher was appointed in July 2023.
- The school uses three unregistered and five registered alternative provisions.
- 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

- 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to the headteacher, the deputy headteachers and other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector met with a trustee and the CEO of the trust.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 considered the responses to Ofsted's Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors spoke with a range of staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed their behaviour during lessons and at social times.

Inspection team

Paul Halcro, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alison Davies

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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