

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: King's Leadership Academy Warrington

Hillock Lane, Woolston, Warrington, Cheshire WA1 4PF

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 February 2025

Outcome

King's Leadership Academy Warrington has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Umar Hussain. This school is part of Great Schools 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), Shane Ierston, and overseen by a board of trustees, co-chaired by Joanne Hornby and John Rigby.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are empowered to make the right decisions about their behaviour. Corridors are silent, save for polite greetings to staff. Pupils move about the building with purpose. They are happy to attend school each day.

Through character and leadership lessons, pupils are equipped with the knowledge and skills that they need to be active citizens. Leadership opportunities abound. For instance, there are mantra leaders, class leaders and duty leaders. Pupils contribute wholeheartedly to the school community.

Pupils are inducted to the school with a three-day bootcamp that helps them to understand the school's vision. The school's 'ASPIRE' values are woven through everything that the school does. These are revisited frequently with all pupils, and staff. The school assists pupils to understand the 'why' behind the values. This helps them to embrace and embody them. Pupils confidently articulate each value and know how it is preparing them for future success.

Teachers have the highest expectations of pupils. Teachers instil self-belief in pupils. Peer support, the school's routines and strong relationships with teachers help pupils to do their best. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve exceptionally well.

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

Reading underpins the high quality of education in this school. Pupils who struggle with reading catch up very quickly with their peers through targeted support. A culture of reading is well established. For instance, pupils make the most of silent reading each morning.

Pupils experience a broad and ambitious curriculum. Teachers, experts in their subjects, deliver the curriculum consistently well. They check for pupils' understanding and address any misconceptions or gaps in knowledge quickly. This allows pupils to consolidate their knowledge successfully. Pupils confidently articulate their understanding, using subject-specific terminology correctly. Over time, they secure a deep body of knowledge across the curriculum.

The school identifies pupils' additional needs quickly and accurately. Teachers use excellent strategies to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They adapt learning to help these pupils to access the curriculum well. Pupils with SEND achieve successfully alongside their peers.

Pupils' engagement in lessons is first-class. Consistent classroom routines, especially at the start of each lesson, help them to focus their minds. Pupils act professionally. For instance, they shake hands with the teacher when they enter the classroom. Their behaviour is exemplary. Teachers know pupils well. They recognise and reward pupils' endeavours. Pupils feel safe in the learning environment. They take responsibility for their own learning. Classrooms are hives of learning and enquiry, without any low-level disruption.

The school carefully considers pupils' wider development. Pupils enthusiastically embrace the range of opportunities to enrich their learning. For example, they enjoy learning British Sign Language, fencing and ju-jitsu. Residential trips afford pupils the chance to develop life skills, such as resilience, independence and self-leadership. The school equips pupils with the knowledge of how to keep healthy, both physically and mentally. Pupils know how to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships. Pupils value that they are being prepared well for their futures, not just academically, but as well-rounded citizens. The comprehensive careers programme, that begins in Year 7, helps to raise pupils' aspirations and lays out a myriad of options.

The school is unwavering in its mission to transform the life chances of pupils, and it does. There are no excuses allowed. Members of the trust board and local academy council support the school effectively in its relentless focus on continual improvement. Leadership, at all levels, including within the pupil body, is strong. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working in the school. They are proud to be a part of it. The school places high importance on staff workload and well-being. For example, staff are equipped and empowered to carry out their roles effectively with highly effective professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 outstanding 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 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'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 outstanding for overall effectiveness in July 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

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| Unique reference number | 138562 |
| Local authority | Warrington |
| Inspection number | 10337693 |
| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Academy free school |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 807 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chairs of trust | John Rigby and Joanne Hornby |
| CEO of the trust | Shane Ierston |
| Principal | Umar Hussain |
| Website | www.kingswarrington.com |
| Dates of previous inspection | 10 and 11 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Great Schools Trust.
- At the time of the inspection there were no pupils in the sixth form at this school.
- The school makes use of one registered 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

- 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 spoke to the principal, senior leaders and other members of staff.
- Inspectors met with trust staff, including the CEO and directors of education.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the trust board and local academy council.
- The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed breaktime and family dining time.
- 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 considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and transition times.

Inspection team

Jenny Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Scott Maclean

Ofsted Inspector

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