

Inspection of King Edward VI Handsworth Grammar School for Boys

Grove Lane, Handsworth, Birmingham, West Midlands B21 9ET

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of the school is Tim Johnson. This school is part of the King Edward VI Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jodh Dhesi, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sharon Roberts.

What is it like to attend this school?

Caring and supportive relationships are at the heart of King Edward VI Handsworth Grammar School for Boys (HGS). As one pupil said, 'I feel part of a family here.' Pupils are happy in school. All pupils who spoke to inspectors understand the 'CARES' values. These include aspiration, respect and endeavour. Pupils are safe, and they say that poor behaviour is rare. A typical parent comment is: 'Brilliant school. Great nurturing environment.'

There is a purposeful atmosphere around HGS. The majority of pupils show respectful and positive behaviours during structured lesson times. During unstructured times, such as breaktimes and lunchtimes, most pupils behave sensibly. When pupils' behaviour is not acceptable, staff speak with these pupils to explain the school's high expectations to maintain the positive behaviours around the school.

HGS places an exceptionally strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. Pupils can explain clearly their understanding of fundamental British values such as democracy. Pupil leadership includes mental health ambassadors. The extra-curricular programme is rich and diverse. The majority of pupils take part in an extensive range of high-quality enrichment activities. Debating, guitar ensemble and ceramics clubs enhance pupils' wider experiences.

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

The school has designed a highly ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and students in the sixth form. The school has set very high expectations for pupils' future academic achievements. Staff relentlessly focus on helping pupils to meet these high standards. Remembering key knowledge is a focus in every subject. As a result, pupils achieve exceptionally well through their learning at key stage 4. However, the school is aware that current achievements in the sixth form are not to the same high standards as the rest of the school. The school knows the areas that need more development and is taking effective action to further develop the provision.

The school ensures that pupils' work is highly ambitious and that they receive significantly challenging work from Year 7. Pupils welcome this and enjoy the opportunities to 'go beyond' the curriculum. Teachers routinely check what pupils know and ensure that pupils understand what they have to do well. Pupils confidently talk about what they have learned in a range of subjects. For example, in mathematics, Year 11 pupils could recall their knowledge of velocity from Year 10 to help them in their current work.

The school identifies pupils with SEND exceptionally well. Key information provides staff with the precise knowledge about pupils' individual needs. Teachers use this information very effectively to adapt their teaching. Leaders ensure that all pupils access the same, ambitious curriculum, adapting it to meet pupils' needs. This

means that pupils with SEND successfully access learning and achieve exceptionally well alongside all other pupils.

The majority of pupils display excellent self-control and highly positive attitudes to learning. Staff and pupils share highly respectful relationships. This creates an open and encouraging culture where everyone is equally valued. However, a few pupils do not always focus on their learning well enough. In a small number of cases, pupils behave inappropriately within the school setting. The school acts swiftly to address the occasions when this happens, which helps to maintain the high standards of behaviour generally seen. School attendance is high, with robust systems in place to support absent pupils to catch up on their work quickly. The school communicates well with parents and carers about the importance of their children being in school.

The school ensures that pupils' personal development is a high priority. An extensive personal development curriculum promotes the development of pupils' character and interests exceptionally well. All pupils spoken to have a detailed understanding of fundamental British values, healthy relationships and respecting the views of others. Pupils' well-being is at the forefront of leaders' vision, including promoting pupils' positive mental health. All pupils and sixth-form students receive unbiased information on potential next steps and high-quality careers guidance. This prepares them extremely well for the next stages of their lives.

Governors and trustees do not know their school in precise enough detail. This limits their ability to support and challenge leaders effectively to hold them to account for the areas which need further development. However, governors do have a secure awareness of safeguarding and the quality of SEND provision. The school has implemented a well-thought-out professional development programme for staff. The school consults staff about policy changes and carefully considers staff's workload, which staff are appreciative of.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is some variability in the extent to which leaders at all levels assure themselves about standards in the school. Consequently, sixth-form provision and pupils' behaviour and attitudes are not quite as well developed as other aspects of the school. The school should ensure that leaders, including those responsible for governance, check all aspects of the school's work precisely, so that those less well-developed aspects can be improved swiftly and 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	143562
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10256853
Type of school	Grammar (selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,047
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	297
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sharon Roberts
Headteacher	Tim Johnson
Website	www.handsworth.bham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 March 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed from 8 April 2024.
- The school is part of the King Edward VI Academy Trust, which contains 14 schools.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors focused on the following deep dives: English, mathematics, French, history and music. The inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning. The inspectors also looked at the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- 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.
- The inspectors observed informal times of the day as part of their evaluation of safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors held meetings with the chief executive officer and director of education of the trust, the chair of the trust, the chair of the local governing board and other governors, the headteacher and other senior leaders, teachers, support staff and pupils. The inspectors also talked informally to pupils, staff, parents and carers to gather information about school life.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ian Beardmore	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Cladingbowl	Ofsted Inspector
Hayley Clarke	Ofsted Inspector

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