

Inspection of King Edward VI Aston School

Frederick Road, Aston, Birmingham, West Midlands B6 6DJ

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy coming to school. They enjoy their learning, especially in mathematics and science. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They are taught to keep themselves safe. If they are worried or experience any of the rare instances of bullying, they know they can speak to someone. 'Adults listen to us', they say. Pupils appreciate the system which allows them to report incidents confidentially.

Parents and pupils who responded to inspectors all agreed that teachers challenge all pupils, whatever their circumstances, to do as well as they can. The school is highly successful in ensuring all pupils are successful in their outcomes.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They get on very well with each other and respect those with different backgrounds and lifestyles. They have the chance to take responsibilities. Leaders respond very well to pupils' views expressed through surveys.

Pupils have a very extensive range of sporting, musical and other cultural opportunities. Those who recently visited Italy on a geography trip were enthusiastic about their experience. They have a very wide choice of GCSE subjects, including Mandarin. The collaboration in the sixth form, with three other schools, allows students to take their chosen A-level courses.

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

Leaders have designed a highly ambitious curriculum. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and for disadvantaged pupils. No one is left out. Most pupils take a humanity subject and a modern foreign language at GCSE. This is in addition to English, mathematics and all three sciences. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the additional photography and food technology courses.

The planning of the curriculum enables pupils to build on what they have learned previously, for example 'bonds' in Year 9 chemistry. In the sixth-form curriculum, planning is equally very strong. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge enables them to respond to pupils' thoughtful questions, for example, in sixth-form politics lessons on world events.

Leaders think carefully about how lessons are sequenced so that learning is cumulative. For example, in mathematics, teachers check not only pupils' most recent learning but work they have learned previously. Teachers check pupils' understanding in lessons skilfully. Lessons characteristically start with recapping previous learning.

All pupils, including those with SEND, have full access to all subjects. Teachers make suitable adaptations to learning activities for individuals as required. Disadvantaged

pupils and those with SEND achieve at least as well as their peers in all subjects. This includes in modern foreign languages.

Pupils develop their reading in other subjects as well as in English. Reading aloud is a regular feature of lessons. Texts are challenging and varied to promote creativity, critical thinking and debate. Those who need help with reading receive additional high-quality support. The regular 'drop everything and read' sessions promote a love of reading.

Pupils have highly positive attitudes to their learning. This is reflected in lessons free of any low-level disruptive behaviour. Pupils' behaviour and conduct around the school are exemplary. They are polite, courteous and well presented. Attendance levels are very high. Pupils confirmed that bullying, harassment and violence are never tolerated. They have a very strong understanding of what constitutes offensive and unacceptable racist and homophobic language and terminology.

Leaders place an equal emphasis on pupils' personal development and well-being as on their academic achievement. Pupils benefit from a highly effective personal, social, health and economic education programme. It covers mental health and preparing for the financial skills pupils need for the future. The house system strongly encourages pupils to collaborate and compete. The school council enables pupils to feed back their views, which has led to increase in additional activities and equipment. There is a very extensive range of after-school activities. These include the Islamic and African-Caribbean societies.

Pupils receive appropriate advice on their next steps and future careers. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. Sixth formers are extremely well prepared for life beyond school. In the words of students, there is 'a stupendous enrichment programme'. Opportunities for work experience are closely linked to their future destinations.

Leaders are very mindful of workload in their planning. Teachers appreciate how leaders listen to them and respond, for example on the approach to marking pupils' work. Leaders ensure staff are very well trained, including in equalities, diversity and inclusion. Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is bespoke for every pupil.

Trustees and governors know the school very well and share leaders' ambitions to attract more pupils from the local community. They hold leaders closely to account for safeguarding and SEND.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are trained well to identify pupils who need early help. The culture is 'report everything. It could happen here'. This includes looking for signs of pupils at risk of

child sexual exploitation. Where pupils need help or external support, leaders respond appropriately. Referrals are made in a timely manner.

Leaders are trained well to manage the safe recruitment of new staff and, if necessary, allegations against staff.

Pupils are taught through the curriculum to keep themselves safe. This includes gang violence and safe use of the internet, for example when making online payments.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	137043
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10229063
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	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	990
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	292
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Roberts
Headteacher	Matthew Brady
Website	www.keaston.bham.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their roles in September 2021. There has been a reorganisation of the responsibilities of members of the senior leadership team.
- The school joined the King Edward VI Academy Trust in 2011.
- There are no pupils in alternative provision.
- The sixth form is part of a collaboration with the four schools in the trust based in the Aston and Handsworth areas of Birmingham.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, the coordinators for SEND and pupil premium funding, and other members of staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and students, including representatives of the school council.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the governing body and one other governor, and with four governors remotely. They also met with the chief executive of the trust and the chair of the academy board.
- Inspectors met with the school's improvement partner.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View free-text service and responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered responses to the Ofsted pupil and staff surveys.
- Inspectors considered information on behaviour, personal development, safeguarding and child protection.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English (including early reading), design and technology, mathematics, and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed pupils' work in a range of other subjects with leaders.

Inspection team

Mark Sims, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Considine	Ofsted Inspector

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