

Inspection of King Edwin School

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

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 January 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

King Edwin School is a happy place. Pupils feel safe. They know who to go to if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils and staff are proud of the supportive learning environment it provides. Most pupils settle well in school. They are supported by caring staff who know each pupil well. This helps pupils to quickly learn school routines and focus on learning.

All pupils attending the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan to support their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils of primary and secondary school-age quickly learn to understand the school's high expectations. This ensures that they conduct themselves in a positive manner. Pupils are supportive of one another. They recognise each other's differences and celebrate the school's diversity.

The school is ambitious for pupils. Pupils receive a broad education that meets their academic and personal development needs well. This includes a range of learning experiences that effectively prepare pupils for life after school. Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils access a wide range of opportunities to develop themselves as individuals. These experiences improve pupils' personal and social skills well. As a result, pupils are prepared well for independence and adulthood.

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

The school has implemented a broad curriculum that matches the ambition of the national curriculum. It provides pupils with a rich academic experience across age ranges. Staff deliver learning with a focus on developing pupils' comprehension and spoken language. Pupils pursue appropriate accreditation and qualifications that meets their SEND needs well. Most pupils achieve well from their starting points. Generally, the curriculum is delivered consistently well. However, there are times when the implementation of the curriculum does not meet the ambition of the curriculum. Some pupils experience variability in the way the curriculum is delivered across the school.

The school has ensured that the curriculum is well organised. Pupils are supported effectively to develop knowledge and understanding in a logical way. The school makes well-considered adaptations to ensure pupils' individual SEND needs are well met. Reading is prioritised. Pupils are supported well to improve their reading and speaking skills. They receive effective support to strengthen their understanding of spoken language. Pupils who need help to develop their phonics knowledge receive daily personalised support. This strengthens their confidence and improves their reading fluency. However, the school does not give enough attention to the technical aspects of writing. As a result, some pupils are not able to write with accuracy.

The school ensures that pupils are supported to learn effectively. Pupils' EHC plan targets are comprehensively included in support plans. Staff follow detailed support

plans that carefully outline each pupil's individual needs. This includes pupils' specific SEND.

Support for pupils' personal development is a notable strength of the school's work. Most pupils build their resilience and develop their independence consistently well. They are welcoming of visitors and speak confidently about their school experience. The school has implemented the statutory guidance on relationships and sex education (RSE). As a result, pupils receive relationships education that is appropriate for their age and stage of development. RSE is effectively delivered as part of the school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. PSHE underpins the school curriculum and is embedded across all subjects and school life. It is delivered through dedicated lessons and tutor time. PSHE lessons include discussion activities that encourage reflection and deeper understanding. For example, lessons cover people's differences by comparing politicians and characters from books. This prompts pupils to explore their own characteristics while building their vocabulary.

The school is well resourced. The outside areas of the school allow pupils to experience nature and play sports together. The school has a variety of farm animals and pets that pupils care for. These experiences successfully develop pupils' social and teamwork skills. The inside areas of the school are well maintained. Different school spaces are mostly quiet and well lit. Pupils access dedicated areas to receive therapies and develop their sensory awareness. These school resources positively contribute to pupils' personal development. Pupils receive independent careers advice. This allows them to explore the variety of jobs and careers available to them. This prepares them effectively for their next steps in education or employment. As a result, the school successfully supports most pupils into further education, employment or training.

The school supportively engages with staff. Their workload is carefully managed and their well-being is prioritised. Staff enjoy working at the school. They recognise the positive contribution that the school makes to pupils' lives. The school engages with parents and carers with compassion and understanding. Most parents and carers appreciate the support that the school provides to them and their children. The proprietor is actively involved in school life. They closely monitor the school to ensure that the independent school standards (the standards) and the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010 are met consistently.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, the implementation of the curriculum does not meet the ambition of the curriculum. This means that pupils experience variability in the

way the curriculum is delivered across the school. The school should ensure that all subject leaders have the expertise to check that the curriculum is being delivered as they intend and to support staff development where required.

- For some pupils, the school does not give enough attention to the technical aspects of writing. This includes spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting. As a result, these pupils are not able to write with accuracy. The school should ensure that the curriculum for writing gives sufficient attention to building pupils' fluency in the basic skills of writing so that they are able to write independently across all areas of the curriculum.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	140272
DfE registration number	808/6004
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10342090
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Number of part-time pupils	5
Proprietor	Stephen McGhee
Chair	Jacky Duncan
Headteacher	Lorna McLean
Annual fees (day pupils)	£53,700
Telephone number	01642 366610
Website	kingedwin.zohosites.com
Email address	admin@ne.sparkofgenius.com
Dates of previous inspection	1 to 3 December 2021

Information about this school

- King Edwin School is an independent special school for pupils aged between 6 and 18 years. At the time of this inspection, the school had three post-16 students on roll.
- Most pupils have a primary SEND need of social, emotional and mental health. Some pupils have further SEND, such as autism. All pupils who attend the school have an EHC plan.
- The school is a joint business venture between Spark of Genius and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. The business is called Spark of Genius North East. Spark of Genius North East is owned by CareTech Holdings.
- The school uses five unregistered alternative education provisions.
- The school has a standard fee of £53,700 and an enhanced fee of £82,200. The enhanced fee includes additional teaching assistant support.

Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the second 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 met with the principal, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs leader, curriculum leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the proprietor and the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including those relating to the standards and the curriculum.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including early reading, mathematics, and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The provision for teaching humanities was also closely scrutinised.
- An inspector listened to pupils from different year groups reading to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors also considered the curriculum and experiences of pupils attending the school's nurture provision, called 'the house'.
- 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.
- An inspector held a discussion, by telephone, with representatives from two unregistered alternative provision providers used by the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses from the Ofsted survey for staff.
- There were no responses from the Ofsted survey for pupils. However, inspectors spoke to a range of pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

David Mills, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Beaumont

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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