

Inspection of King's Oak Academy

Parkway, Gaywood, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 4QJ

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including the youngest children in early years, do not access a well-taught curriculum. They do not make the progress of which they are capable. In particular, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not receive effective teaching and support that help them to learn well.

Pupils are happy at King's Oak. They enjoy playing in the spacious grounds. They have lots of opportunities to make friends. They develop team skills by working together on large-scale construction in play. Adults make sure that they understand the importance of being kind to each other.

Some pupils do not behave well in lessons and are not supported to improve their behaviour. Lessons in early years and Year 1 are often disrupted by pupils who find it hard to listen.

There is very little bullying. Pupils have positive relationships with the adults who care for them and are confident that they will sort out any friendship problems.

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

Leaders have not made reading a high priority. Teachers have not been well trained in how to teach early reading to pupils using the school's chosen programme. Over time, pupils experience a disjointed approach to the teaching of reading. The books that they receive do not match closely the sounds that they are learning. Pupils do not become fluent readers quickly enough. Leaders do not ensure that pupils have frequent opportunities to engage with high-quality reading books that inspire a love of reading.

Pupils with SEND are not given the support they need. Pupils' individual learning plans are not clear enough on what pupils' needs are. These plans are often incomplete, and many do not consider the views of the child or their parents or carers. Teachers are not planning for the specific needs of pupils with SEND. Often, the planning and delivery of provision for pupils with SEND are delegated to support staff who are not well trained to meet these pupils' needs. Leaders' monitoring of how well pupils with SEND are faring in the curriculum is underdeveloped.

The school introduced a new curriculum in September 2020, including new schemes for the teaching of mathematics and phonics. Curriculum plans identify how pupils will learn by building on their prior knowledge and skills over time. However, leaders have not provided teachers with the support and guidance to deliver this curriculum as intended.

Where staff have had training, for example in art and developing writing, teachers plan opportunities that help pupils to learn effectively. However, in significant areas of the curriculum, teachers are not confident in how to deliver the intended

curriculum content well. For example, in mathematics, teachers do not understand how to use the appropriate teaching methods and resources.

Children in early years settle and make friends quickly. However, leaders and staff do not ensure that children have meaningful and purposeful learning opportunities. Children do not access well-thought-through opportunities to learn new things, or practise new skills. Staff are not using play opportunities to develop children's learning, including in areas such as speech, vocabulary, writing or early number skills. Children are not getting a good start to their education.

Most pupils try hard to behave well. However, a minority of pupils find it much harder and do not receive enough support to improve their behaviour. Staff do not have high enough expectations or strategies to support pupils in developing good behaviours independently. This includes in early years.

Pupils like being at school. They are welcoming and interested in talking to visitors. The planned curriculum has lots of opportunities for them to learn about the world beyond King's Lynn. They visit the seaside and local castles. They learn about different countries and cultures.

Leaders have a generous view of the quality of education in the school. They have not prioritised staff training to deliver their intended curriculum. They have not ensured that the quality of provision for pupils with SEND is effective.

The school transferred to the current multi-academy trust in July 2021. The trust has been too slow to act to address the weaknesses in curriculum provision. Some of its work has been hampered by staffing absence. Trustees have increased governance capacity by establishing a new academy review committee, but this committee has only recently started its work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and other staff know the pupils well, and as a result recognise quickly when they might be at risk. Records are detailed. Senior leaders and the parent support worker work closely together to ensure that families are well supported.

Staff have had specific safeguarding training. Some of leaders' recruitment training is out of date, but they are booked in to renew this.

The checks made on adults in the school are accurate and comprehensive. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent across the school. Different methods and approaches lead to many pupils not being well supported. The books that pupils read are not always matched to their reading ability. As a result, too many pupils do not learn to read quickly and fluently. Leaders need to ensure that a consistent approach to phonics teaching and reading practice is adopted and that staff are well trained in using these approaches.
- Pupils with SEND receive a poor-quality education. Plans and provision for these pupils do not meet their individual needs or ensure that they can access the curriculum effectively. Leaders need to ensure that the provision for pupils with SEND in and out of class is well planned, delivered and monitored.
- Teachers have not had enough training to knowledgeably deliver a well-planned curriculum. As a result, the delivery of the intended curriculum is weak in several areas. Leaders need to make sure that teachers have the training and support needed to deliver the curriculum effectively to pupils.
- Some pupils struggle to manage their behaviour and staff do not have the strategies to support them. The youngest children are not reminded to develop positive learning behaviours. Leaders need to ensure that all staff have appropriate training to identify and develop good learning behaviours for pupils right from the start of school.
- In early years, adults have not been given the necessary guidance and training to support children to learn effectively and develop essential knowledge and skills. As a result, children do not get a good start to their education. Leaders need to ensure that the intended curriculum is fully delivered and that adults are knowledgeable and skilled in how to help the youngest children learn.

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	145534
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10226850
Type of school	Infant and nursery
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	158
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Edward Colman
Headteacher	Ann De'Ath
Website	https://kingsoakacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than average. There is a Nursery class, which admits children on both a part-time and full-time basis. Each other year group has two classes.
- The school converted to become an academy in March 2018. It was part of the KWEST Multi Academy Trust. This trust was merged into the Unity Education Trust in July 2021.
- When the predecessor school, Howard Infant and Nursery School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school has its own breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons

responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, art and design and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons where possible, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of individual learning plans for pupils with SEND.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record and a sample of safeguarding records. They spoke to staff, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors met with members of the leadership team, teachers, other staff, multi-academy trust leaders, representatives of the academy review committee and trustees.
- Inspectors spent time observing playtimes.
- Inspectors considered the 19 responses to Ofsted Parent View and 16 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tim McLoughlin

Ofsted Inspector

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