

Inspection of KWS Milton Keynes

R2D, 1-9 Barton Road, Bletchley MK2 3HU

Inspection dates: 28 to 30 June 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils love this school. Those that attend have often previously had unhappy experiences of school. Some speak movingly about the difference this school has made. They feel understood and, because the school wants the very best for them, pupils start to do better personally and academically.

Pupils know they are at school to learn. Adults are good at helping pupils do this, supporting them to build their stamina and resilience. Pupils are given time to think and process information. They work hard to remember and recall what they have learned. Pupils are rightly proud of their achievements and mostly keen to do well.

For some pupils, this school provides social opportunities they have previously been denied. Pupils become active members of the community, for example through using the library, litter picking and holding charity cake sales. Many pupils experience a number of 'firsts', such as going to a theatre or restaurant.

Pupils are confident they have an adult in school to go to with any worries. Any hint of bullying is tackled head-on. Staff are sensitive that sometimes pupils' words and actions can seem to mean something pupils do not intend. Adults explore these issues openly with pupils.

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

Leaders and staff have worked quickly and reflectively to establish an effective school already, despite its short life. There is a happy and united staff team who work together towards the same goals in a manageable way with pupils' best interests at heart.

Adults constantly seek solutions to overcome obstacles that may prevent pupils doing well. They focus strongly on pupils' individual needs and how they can help pupils access an ambitious curriculum. Leaders know there is more to do in some subjects, but are rightly proud of what they have already achieved.

Teachers carefully and regularly check what pupils know and can do so that they can teach the right things next, or revisit what pupils have not remembered. They take a systematic approach, prioritising the most important things to help pupils move on.

Teachers are ambitious about what pupils can achieve. For example, English lessons play their part in developing pupils' cultural capital through encouraging reading, accessing Shakespeare, or learning through literature about the First World War. When pupils struggle to understand what they read, they listen carefully to the teacher's careful explanations, or think hard about the probing questions that help make things clearer.

Leaders are determined that pupils will learn to read fluently. Teaching phonics is central to the approach for those who need this level of support. However, these

important sessions are not as frequent as they could be to help pupils catch up as quickly as they could. Pupils are keen to join in with them and engage with enthusiasm.

Teachers make important learning points clear. They give precise explanations and examples for pupils to copy then repeat. Adults gradually remove the various support mechanisms to increase pupils' independence and fluency. Staff are patient and give pupils vital time to process their thoughts to answer questions. Consequently, pupils are often successful.

Pupils' reported love for the school is reflected in their regular attendance. This is something of which the whole-school community should feel proud.

The school is successful in preventing and reducing disruptions caused by pupils struggling to regulate their behaviour. Staff work carefully, steadily and successfully to increase demands on individual pupils, securing improvements in a calm and constructive manner. Teachers are realistic that behaviour is something that everyone has to work very hard at. This school experiences real success where previously others have failed.

The successful promotion of pupils' personal development is central to the school's academic success. There is a rightful strong focus on developing pupils' understanding of risk and safety, including and especially online. Similarly, education about relationships, sex and health meets requirements and topics are taught sensitively and effectively.

During key-work time, pupils take part in meaningful discussions about important issues such as respect. Teachers help pupils to understand by making sure that concepts are explicit, giving examples of what particular qualities and values might look like in their conduct and everyday lives. Pupils report that these sessions have made a big difference for them, improving how they get along with each other.

Pupils receive helpful advice and guidance about their future options, including from an external specialist careers adviser. This support explores each pupil's current situation, future goals, possible obstacles and challenges, and leads to a personal action plan.

The undeniable drive and passion demonstrated by the headteacher is shared by the small family proprietor body. All of the independent school standards are met and required statutory documentation is in place. The essence of policy documents is largely grounded in the school's specific context, but sometimes the detail is not. The school's culture around promoting equal access for all is strong and the school's accessibility plan covers all required elements. However, it does not include information about things such as timeframes and costings to know if plans are on track and making difference. The lack of strong external governance reduces potential opportunities for greater constructive support and challenge for the headteacher around these sorts of issues.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture of safeguarding is strong. Staff are well trained, vigilant and understand the school's particular context well. There are detailed records of all matters which may affect or have an impact on pupils' safety. The school's safeguarding policy is available on request and refers to relevant guidance. In this very small school, the policy makes clear a range of suitable outside agencies that can be contacted with any concerns. While there is scope for the written policy to be more unequivocal, staff are clear about who to go to should they have any concerns about the headteacher or trustees.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The teaching of phonics and early reading for those pupils who still need this help is not as frequent as it could be. Although pupils engage well in the sessions provided, and their reading is improving, they are not catching up following previous lost learning as quickly as they could. Leaders should seize on pupils' positive attitudes to learning to read by prioritising more frequent time to ensure pupils learn to read fluently as quickly as possible.
- Leaders and staff are understandably continuing to establish and embed some aspects of the curriculum in this new school. Aiming for a consistently positive experience for pupils, leaders have already made important changes in response to their own evaluations of how things are working. They should build on this positive start to secure a high quality, well-structured and ambitious curriculum across all subjects.
- Governance is not as strong as it could be. Statutory documents are not always precise enough and/or reflective of current practice. The proprietor body is made up of three members of the same family, including the headteacher. The headteacher already has plans to recruit external trustees. The proprietor should strengthen governance to provide constructive challenge and support for the headteacher in their shared drive for improvement.

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

School details

Unique reference number	148420
DfE registration number	826/6019
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10232331
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Proprietor	KWS Educational
Chair	Karl Weaver/Magdalena Nichols
Headteacher	Sarah Nichols-Weaver
Annual fees (day pupils)	£30,368
Telephone number	0787 206 7991
Website	None
Email address	admin@kwseducation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- KWS Milton Keynes was registered by the Department for Education on 21 July 2021. This was the school's first full standard inspection.
- KWS provides full-time education for pupils who have identified social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have education, health and care (EHC) plan and are placed by a local authority.
- The school uses one alternative provider which is not registered as an independent school.

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.

This school has opened since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- Throughout the inspection, the inspector held extensive discussions with the headteacher who is also part of the proprietor body. He also spoke with the chair of the proprietor body and met with the deputy headteacher.
- To help understand the quality of education provided, the inspector carried out focused activities in relation to certain subjects (deep dives). The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, music and personal, social, health and citizenship education. For each deep dive, he discussed the curriculum with the subject leader/teacher, visited lessons, spoke with pupils and looked at their work.
- Through sampling, the inspector also reviewed how the school is providing for what is set out in pupils' EHC plans.
- The inspector examined a wide range of documents and records relating to the independent school standards. He particularly scrutinised those relating to safeguarding. He also explored the school's work to keep pupils safe with leaders and staff, and spoke by telephone with the manager of the alternative provider.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were taken into account, including their responses through Ofsted's online surveys. The inspector also met with a former pupil who has very recently left the school.

Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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