

Inspection of Kingsbrook School

Kingsbrook School, Pittocks Lane, Southborough, Thetford, Norfolk, Norfolk IP25 7TJ

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 July 2021

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Kingsbrook provides a safe haven for the pupils who attend it. It gives pupils the chance to succeed academically and supports their mental health and well-being positively.

The head of school and her team care deeply about each individual pupil. Leaders provide extensive and effective support for pupils and their families

Pupils work hard and can gain a range of qualifications. Each pupil's curriculum is tailored to meet their individual needs and interests.

Class teachers and support staff build strong relationships with their small classes. All pupils access additional therapy, which builds on the nurturing environment. They enjoy spending time in the spacious rural grounds and with the school animals.

Behaviour is good. There is no bullying. Staff are skilled at supporting pupils when they are anxious or otherwise emotionally not ready to learn.

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

The school curriculum is broad and balanced. Each pupil has a bespoke offer based around well-thought-out curriculum plans. For younger pupils, this is closely matched to the national curriculum. Older pupils work towards various qualifications as appropriate to their needs.

The curriculum includes on-site learning about animal care and horticulture. All pupils can follow additional learning linked to their interests. Leaders consider pupils' long-term aspirations and ensure that they develop the knowledge and skills they need to achieve them.

The school admitted its first Year 7 pupils this year. There is some further work to do as they move through key stage 3, to ensure that what pupils learn builds on what they already know and can do.

Staff use different ways to check on pupils' mental health, how far they are engaging with their work, and what they have learned. They use these to check what has been successful and what needs revisiting in a different way or at a different time. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. This is because the curriculum is personalised so that it meets the needs of each individual pupil.

All pupils start at the school having already learned to read. Staff encourage reading for enjoyment and strive to develop pupils' fluency by providing a wide range of materials and activities. In written work, pupils complete a range of open-ended and independent activities. However, sometimes an over-reliance on worksheets restricts

pupils' ability to work independently and provide open-ended responses to questions or tasks.

Pupils receive careers guidance that helps them to make informed decisions. Where appropriate, they attend other settings, supported by staff, to gain work experience and gain qualifications, for example in animal care and construction.

Strong pastoral support is key to what this school does. Regular briefings keep staff well informed about how to support individuals with rapidly changing needs.

Pupils learn about different cultures and reflect positively on others' ways of life. They have begun to go on trips again after the restrictions caused by COVID-19 (coronavirus). Pupils are very respectful of their peers and each other's life choices, including around gender and sexuality.

The proprietor gains oversight of the school from an operations manager and a governing body. Their overview of the strategic development of the school is not as strong as it could be. Documents and discussions show that the head of school has a very clear understanding of the quality of the school's work. However, the proprietor is not monitoring the progress towards the school's development plan priorities carefully enough. Development plans do not have planned monitoring opportunities for the proprietor to action so that they understand the school's effectiveness.

Leaders have improved the school since the last inspection. The impact of staff training and development can be seen in the quality of the work pupils produce. Staff feel well supported by leaders.

Despite being regularly serviced and checked, the boiler sometimes emits unpleasant smells, which means that windows have to remain closed. This can be a problem in warm weather.

The school has all appropriate information, including a safeguarding policy, published on its website. The school has improved since its last monitoring visit, when there were unmet standards, mainly relating to curriculum and teaching.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The members of the staff team know every pupil extremely well. They know what each individual needs to protect them from risks such as self-harm. They work very closely with parents and carers to know where pupils might be more at risk. The provision of additional therapy for individuals helps pupils to deal with previous traumatic experiences. It also builds pupils' confidence and supports their mental health needs.

All appropriate checks are made on members of staff before they start working in the school. Staff have comprehensive training on all aspects of safeguarding. Records are comprehensive and detailed. Leaders work closely with a wide range of external agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Until now, what is studied in key stage 3 has been selected from a choice of units each term, based on pupils' prior knowledge and learning from other settings. As pupils move through the full three years of key stage 3 for the first time, consideration needs to be made of the sequence of topics studied to ensure that pupils can build on previous learning.
- Sometimes, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to work independently or complete open-ended work when that would be appropriate. Teachers need to ensure that the balance of worksheets and other activities is suitable in delivering the intended curriculum.
- The proprietor is not monitoring the progress towards the aims set out in the school's development plan closely enough. This means the proprietor's understanding of the school's strategic development is unclear. Leaders need to work with the proprietor to ensure their monitoring of the school's work is regular and systematic.
- Current problems with an unpleasant smell from the boiler mean that windows have to remain closed. This needs to be resolved so that classrooms can be appropriately ventilated when necessary.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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	145159
DfE registration number	926/6017
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10195805
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	The Priory Group
Chair	Chris Strong
Headteacher	Ursula Castillo
Annual fees (day pupils)	£62,000 to £93,500
Telephone number	01953 852 303
Website	www.priorychildrensservices.co.uk/find-a-location/kingsbrook-school-norfolk/
Email address	kingsbrookscool@priorygroup.com
Dates of previous inspection	8 to 10 January 2019

Information about this school

- Kingsbrook provides schooling for up to 15 pupils aged 11 to 18 years who have complex social, emotional and mental health needs. All of them have an education, health and care plan. Most pupils arrive having missed long periods of schooling.
- At the time of the inspection, the proprietor was The Priory Group. The Priory Group's Education and Children's Services division transferred to a new company, ASPRIS, under the same overall ownership on 12 July 2021.
- There is a children's home on the same site, separately registered and inspected by Ofsted, but operated by the same proprietor. A small number of the school pupils live there. Some services, such as maintenance, are shared between the home and the school.

Information about this inspection

We 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.

- We met with the head of school, the proprietor's operations manager and other members of staff.
- We did deep dives into these subjects: mathematics, English, history and personal, social and health education. These consisted of discussions with members of staff, lesson visits and work scrutiny.
- We spoke to all pupils who were on site during the inspection.
- We checked the single central record and sampled a range of safeguarding records.
- We undertook a site tour and scrutinized a wide range of policies and documents to ensure compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Mitcheson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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