

Report summary for parents and carers on King Henry VIII 3-19 School

Date of inspection: 02/02/2026

Summary

Since its opening in September 2023, leaders and staff at King Henry VIII 3-19 School have collaborated effectively to establish the new all-age school. Senior leaders initially focussed on key areas requiring immediate improvement such as supporting pupils' well-being and improving the quality of teaching. As a result of a purposeful and sharp initial development plan, there have been clear improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning and in the progress they make in learning. There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school and effective systems to support pupils' emotional and social development which means that most pupils feel safe and well cared for. Whilst whole-school attendance rates have improved, the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals remains too low.

Many pupils enter the school with below-expected literacy, numeracy and communication skills but make suitable progress over time, with a few achieving strong outcomes. Most pupils engage positively in learning, are respectful and collaborate well with peers and staff. Many teachers plan well-structured sessions which build on pupils' prior learning. They maintain productive working relationships with their pupils and use effective questioning to engage them in learning. However, in a few cases, there are weaknesses in teaching, such as poor planning, inadequate challenge for more able pupils and variation in the quality of feedback.

Support for pupils with additional learning needs is a strength which leads to many of these pupils making secure progress against their social and learning objectives. The school hosts a specialist resource base (SRB) which provides classes for pupils with autistic spectrum conditions. Pupils from across the age range who attend this facility make good progress in social and communication skills over time.

Overall pupils' literacy skills are developing suitably, supported by the development of a positive reading culture. However, there is a lack of clear strategy to develop pupils' numeracy, digital and Welsh language skills across the curriculum and opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing across subjects are inconsistent.

The curriculum is broadly suitable and meets most older pupils' needs. There are valuable wide-ranging extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to learn outside the classroom. However, pedagogical and curriculum arrangements for pupils in Years 5 and 6 are not always suitable for their developmental stage. Leaders are beginning to provide a few worthwhile opportunities for staff from different phases to collaborate to plan the curriculum and learning but this is not consistent across areas of learning. There are inconsistent opportunities across phases for pupils to learn about and explore Welsh culture in depth.

Senior leaders ensure that line management arrangements are coherent and consistent across the phases. There are regular opportunities for leaders at all levels to evaluate the effectiveness of their work through a suitable range of quality assurance activities. However, consideration of the impact of provision and leadership on pupils' standards and progress over time is at an early stage. Governors support the headteacher well, monitor budgets closely and challenge leaders to make improvements.

Recommendations and next steps

We have made five recommendation to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Strengthen the strategic planning for the progressive development of pupils' numeracy, digital and Welsh language skills
- R2 Ensure that pedagogy and learning experiences are appropriate to pupils' stage of development
- R3 Improve the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals
- R4 Ensure self-evaluation and improvement processes focus sharply on the impact of provision on pupils' standards and progress over time
- R5 Continue to develop the all-age ethos by providing opportunities for staff to collaborate across phases and make a valuable contribution to the strategic direction of the school

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Full Report

If you would like to read more about Estyn's evaluation of the school, please follow this link to the [full report](#).

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