

King's Lynn Academy

Address: Queen Mary Road, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 4QG

Unique reference number (URN): 136202

Inspection report: 2 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. Leaders track trends and patterns in attendance. They swiftly intervene when pupils miss school. Leaders provide bespoke support to those pupils who find it difficult to attend school. This helps those with the lowest attendance return to school. As a result, the attendance of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, is close to national averages.

Leaders have established high expectations for how pupils behave. Pupils understand these expectations and routinely meet them. Staff adapt their behaviour approaches to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils are polite and respectful. They are keen to learn. In general, learning is rarely disrupted by pupils' behaviour. In the rare cases where this happens, teachers intervene. However, when teachers are less familiar with the school's approaches, these interventions are sometimes inconsistent. Around school, pupils move about sensibly. They are considerate of others around them. Bullying is rare. Pupils and staff share the view that unkind behaviour is not acceptable.

In the past, pupils in 'Forward Step', the school's specialist resource base, have found it difficult to manage their emotions. Many were on the verge of permanent exclusion. Expert staff help them to overcome these challenges. The warm, positive culture helps pupils engage with school. Their attendance improves and they learn how to behave well. Consequently, pupils in this provision thrive. They make a positive contribution to the ethos and culture of the school.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed an ambitious and broad curriculum. Subject experts have logically ordered what pupils are taught and when. This means that teaching builds new knowledge on what pupils already know. Generally, the curriculum is taught well. Teachers use their subject knowledge to explain new ideas clearly. They use well-considered models to support pupils to structure their responses. Teachers translate the information about the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities into successful adaptations. Teachers check what pupils have understood. However, newly introduced approaches are not embedded. As a result, sometimes, the checks do not accurately identify what pupils know. This means that some pupils are not moved on to more challenging work when they are ready. Others wait for support to access learning activities.

Reading, writing and mathematics form the spine of the curriculum. Teaching supports pupils to develop these key foundational aspects. Staff support pupils at the earliest stages of reading well to catch up. However, sometimes, teaching does not support pupils to strengthen key aspects of reading, writing and communication. For example, supporting pupils to read accurately at speed. In some subjects, opportunities are missed to help pupils write in depth about their learning.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the curriculum. They know

where teachers need to develop their expertise. They use this information to construct a well-considered professional development programme.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have a rich understanding of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders accurately diagnose the specific barriers that hinder pupils with SEND in their learning. Expert staff develop strategies that support these pupils to overcome their challenges. Leaders ensure that teachers and other key staff understand pupils' individual needs. Leaders ensure staff have the expertise to adapt teaching to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. This helps pupils with SEND access the curriculum. They progress well from their starting points.

'Forward Step' is a specially resourced base. It supports pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, often on the verge of permanent exclusion from school. Staff expertly help pupils who struggle to manage their emotions. The individualised support helps these pupils attend school and re-engage with education. This provision is impressively successful at supporting these pupils to achieve well. Many achieve formal qualifications.

Leaders maintain close links with external agencies, such as the virtual school. This helps vulnerable pupils, including looked after pupils, to thrive.

Leaders identify the needs of disadvantaged pupils with increasing accuracy. Historically, leaders' use of the pupil premium grant to support these pupils has been broad and generic. As a result, disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well. This is changing, but it is too early to determine the impact of leaders' actions.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have taken decisive actions to improve many aspects of the school. Since the last inspection, they have improved the design of the curriculum. Actions to increase attendance, in particular of disadvantaged pupils, have been successful. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is more effective. This includes the specialist resource base. This successfully supports pupils at risk of permanent exclusion to thrive and achieve. Teachers understand how to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. They routinely do so. However, leaders understand that their actions to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils are at a much earlier stage. While there are signs of improvement, there remains much to do. Leaders, including those at trust level, quality assure the impact of their actions. However, sometimes, this monitoring lacks precision. As a result, it is difficult for leaders to determine how to strengthen or change approaches. This slows the pace of improvement.

Trustees and local governors have responded to a surprising dip in outcomes in 2025. They have increased the rigour of their challenge to leaders. Trustees work with the trust executive and external experts to test out leaders' assertions. Increased expertise on the trust board provides a more forensic approach to oversight. Trustees and local governors meet their statutory responsibilities.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel valued and respected. Staff feel that leaders consider their workload when implementing new strategies. Teachers, including those at the start of their careers, feel supported. Staff place high value on the professional development programme. They see how this has improved their teaching.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school has designed an extensive personal development offer. Pupils are positive about this offer and the difference it makes to their lives. Specialist staff teach pupils about sensitive and complex topics, such as consent, at an age-appropriate level. Over time, pupils learn about the importance of fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law. Pupils learn about beliefs, faiths and cultures different to their own. Pupils approach their learning with maturity. They engage in debate and discussion, mindful of each other's feelings. Pupils understand the importance of positive relationships and how these grow into strong friendships. The careers programme is developing. It provides pupils with the key information they need to make informed choices about their futures.

The pastoral support provided to pupils is impressive. Pastoral staff know pupils extremely well. It starts with a thoughtful transition programme where pupils and parents are welcomed to the school. Pupils value their twice-a-year, one-to-one discussion with their head of year. This helps pupils feel a sense of belonging and value.

There is an impressive extra-curricular offer. Pupils take up this offer with enthusiasm. Pupils are proud to showcase their sporting or artistic prowess. There is a plethora of sports teams, many of which achieve competition success. The annual school musical is a high-profile, highly anticipated event. It provides budding actors, dancers, musicians or technicians with the stage to highlight their talent. Alongside this, there are many other clubs that pupils enjoy. Crafts, gaming, special interest and arts clubs help pupils find new hobbies and friends. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are encouraged to take up the offer. However, leaders do not track the impact of participation in these activities with enough precision.

Trips are carefully planned to enrich the curriculum and raise aspiration. Visits to a war museum support pupils' learning in history. A visit to a nuclear power station helps pupils understand physics in real life.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Published outcomes show that over time, pupils have not achieved as well as they should. Too many pupils do not achieve the qualifications they need. Many disadvantaged pupils do not secure key foundational knowledge in English and mathematics. Consequently, pupils are not well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training.

However, changes to the curriculum and improvements to teaching mean that pupils are now learning well. Younger pupils in particular are now progressing through the curriculum

as leaders expect. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well from their starting points. Gaps in disadvantaged pupils' knowledge are closing.

Pupils read well. Those at the earliest stages of reading catch up. Pupils' written work is of a reasonable standard although, sometimes, pupils' writing lacks substance. This means pupils' work does not always reflect the depth of their understanding. Pupils use their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. They structure well-crafted responses to questions.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils enjoy coming to this friendly, caring school. They know that they will receive a warm welcome each morning. Pupils respect that the staff take time to know them as individuals. This helps pupils to develop a sense of security and belonging. There remains a family feel to this growing school. Positive relationships between pupils and staff are abundant. These are forged from before pupils transition into the school in Year 7 and grow from then on.

Pupils can see how the standard of teaching has improved. Pupils respond to this increased level of expectation with a keenness to learn. While pupils know that there remains variability across different subjects, this is reducing. Most pupils work hard. They want to succeed and are determined to exceed their teachers' high aspirations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. They flourish with the support they receive in class and in specialist spaces. Pupils who attend the specialist resource base thrive. Many of these pupils have struggled with education in the past. However, they now enjoy support and a curriculum that re-engages their excitement for learning. Pupils are securing key knowledge well. However, published outcomes show that in recent years pupils have not achieved as well as they could. While the situation is improving, historically the school has failed to help pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve the qualifications they need.

Pupils behave well. Learning mostly proceeds without disruption. Around the site, impacted by extensive building work, pupils move sensibly and with purpose. Bullying is rare. Pupils have confidence that staff will deal with any incidents swiftly.

The extensive personal development programme helps pupils to understand their local community. They develop key characteristics, such as respect and tolerance. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils value the wide offer to broaden their experiences. An offer of arts and crafts, sport, theatrical performance and general interest clubs is enthusiastically taken up.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers have the expertise to strengthen pupils' knowledge of reading, writing and communication, in order to support them to achieve more highly.

- Leaders should ensure that they continue to improve the provision for disadvantaged pupils and use the pupil premium grant with more precision to help these pupils achieve well.
 - Leaders should ensure that staff have the knowledge to accurately check what pupils have understood and use this to provide necessary support or move pupils on when they are ready.
 - Leaders should ensure that their quality assurance checks provide precise and detailed information that can be used to secure rapid and sustainable improvement.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Eastern Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Paul Shanks, and overseen by a board of trustees, co-chaired by Graham Pearson and David Wilde.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the principal, vice principals, the special educational needs coordinator, other senior leaders, the CEO of the trust, representatives of the trust board and local academy committee, and a representative of the local authority during the inspection. Inspectors also met with staff and talked to pupils about their learning and what it is like to be a pupil at this school.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently makes use of 3 alternative provisions, including 2 that are unregistered.

Alan Fletcher: Principal

Lead inspector:

Dave Gibson, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

John Harrison, Ofsted Inspector

Daniel Short, His Majesty's Inspector

Jennifer Brassington, Ofsted Inspector

Clare Gammons, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 2 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

952

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,100

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

28.57%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

6.09%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

15.44%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	33.7%	45.4%	Below
2023/24 (final)	36.9%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	30.0%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	39.1	46.1	Below
2023/24 (final)	38.9	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	36.2	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.64	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.49	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	13.3%	25.8%	Below
2023/24 (final)	15.2%	25.8%	Below
2022/23 (final)	8.0%	25.2%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	27.9	34.9	Below
2023/24 (final)	28.6	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	20.5	35.0	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.25	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.41	-0.57	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	13.3%	53.1%	-39.8 pp
2023/24 (final)	15.2%	53.1%	-37.9 pp
2022/23 (final)	8.0%	52.4%	-44.4 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	27.9	50.4	-22.5
2023/24 (final)	28.6	50.0	-21.4
2022/23 (final)	20.5	50.3	-29.8

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.25	0.16	-1.42
2022/23 (final)	-1.41	0.17	-1.58

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	88%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	89%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	88%	94%	Below

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	9.4%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	10.1%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	11.5%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	25.8%	23.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	30.4%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	35.4%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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