

The King John School

Address: Shipwrights Drive, Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex, SS7 1RQ

Unique reference number (URN): 136577

Inspection report: 20 January 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.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Pupils revel coming to school and, consequently, attend very well. The attendance of all groups of pupils is above the national average. Staff take great care to identify and address any barriers to attendance. They work closely with parents and carers to break down these barriers. The school's 'Pride Centre' is highly successful in helping pupils improve their attendance and feel part of the school community.

Pupils embody the school's 'Pride' values extremely well. They have highly positive attitudes towards their work and achieve highly. Pupils are respectful of others. They strive to gain a range of rewards that celebrate their positive behaviour and conduct. These have been developed in consultation with pupils. Older pupils and students in the sixth form are excellent role models. Staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct. These are well understood and consistently followed. Pupils are engaged fully in their learning. Incidents of disruptive behaviour are rare and are quickly stopped. Pupils treat others with respect and courtesy. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and supportive. This helps pupils feel safe. Pupils know that if they have a concern, it will be dealt with effectively. Pupils say any issues, such as bullying, are swiftly dealt with. Suspensions are used sparingly. If pupils need support to improve their conduct, they receive it. This successfully helps them engage with their learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have, over time, ensured that the curriculum is broad, relevant, ambitious for all and engaging. The curriculum is expertly planned so that pupils gain the detailed and secure knowledge they need. Staff skilfully build in opportunities to revisit previous learning so that pupils can remember more.

Leaders' ongoing work has ensured that the curriculum is now taught consistently well. Teachers have expert subject knowledge. They use this to clearly present new information. Teachers rigorously check pupils' learning and ensure that pupils embed their thinking. They know how well pupils are learning the curriculum. Teachers routinely identify gaps and misunderstandings. They skilfully adjust the curriculum and teaching to address these promptly. As a result, pupils develop a deep body of knowledge in all subjects they study.

Staff know the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), very well. They adapt the curriculum with precision, so that pupils with SEND can access their learning successfully.

Reading is a high priority here. Pupils have many opportunities to read across the curriculum and for pleasure. When pupils need help to improve their reading, they receive it. Consequently, they improve their knowledge. Leaders are developing the teaching of writing across the curriculum to further improve pupils' confidence and expertise.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

The King John School is a highly inclusive place where every pupil's academic success and wellbeing is a priority. Leaders swiftly identify pupils' individual needs and accurately address any barriers which affect their learning. They take prompt, highly effective action to put well-considered plans in place to help pupils learn and achieve well. For example, they arrange, when needed, additional support for pupils, such as around their mental health. Leaders also work very effectively, for instance, with primary schools, virtual heads and providers of alternative provision to understand pupils' specific needs. In school, pastoral leaders, and those with responsibilities around attendance and special educational needs and/or disabilities, work together to make sure that support for individual pupils fully meets their needs. Together, they track pupils' progress and attendance efficiently. They use information from these checks to skilfully adjust the support pupils may require.

Staff are fully informed of pupils' specific learning and wider needs. They receive highly effective professional training to develop their skills in this area. When needed, specific additional strategies, such as support to improve reading, take place. Consequently, all pupils access the curriculum successfully. Most progress very well from their individual starting points. Pupils make full use of the vast range of opportunities such as trips and clubs, such as the 'Cool Club'.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Staff and leaders at all levels are wholly committed to improving the life chances of pupils at The King John School. The key 'Pride' values of the school underpin the work of staff and the conduct of pupils. Staff are tireless and highly effective in their work to overcome pupils' barriers to learning. They ensure that pupils are safe, happy and typically achieve well. Pupils leave school confident and well-rounded citizens with bright futures.

Trustees and governors are very knowledgeable. They are dedicated to their vision to provide the very best for the school community. Leaders know the school's many strengths. They have clear plans to further improve aspects of its excellent provision to further improve outcomes, such as pupils' writing. Trustees check the progress of the school, meticulously examining pupils' progress. This ensures, for example, that safeguarding procedures are rigorous and effective. Leaders ensure that pupils have a stake and voice in how the school is led.

Staff are wholly supported to carry out their roles and responsibilities. The trust and school provide an extensive range of professional development. This has, for instance, strengthened the quality of the curriculum and teaching. There are frequent opportunities to gain knowledge of, develop and share best practice. Staff are therefore wholly positive about working here. Staff retention is consequently very high. The school has rightly developed a strong reputation and trusting relationships with the local community.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

The school's excellent personal development programme helps pupils flourish. They become active and positive citizens who are fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils participate in a vast range of clubs, trips and opportunities. At the start of the school year, sixth-form students run a 'freshers' fayre', when pupils can choose clubs to attend. If pupils want a club, they suggest and frequently run them. This broadens pupils' interests across areas such as the arts, technology and sports. Leaders carefully track and promote participation in clubs and trips. This means that all groups attend widely, including pupils who are disadvantaged and/or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Extensive opportunities for student leadership, including 'eco' and LGBTQ+ committees, promote equality and diversity, boost pupils' confidence and develop their character. Pupils, including students in the sixth form, contribute actively to the school and wider community.

The careers information and guidance programme is highly comprehensive. In all key stages, pupils have multiple high-quality encounters with employers, apprenticeship providers and educators. Pupils are highly knowledgeable, for instance, about the labour market, and have first-hand experience of the world of work. Pupils get tailored guidance to help them make informed choices. Pupils therefore go on to a range of ambitious and appropriate next steps, including high-performing universities.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is carefully designed and well delivered. Visitors are carefully chosen to enhance pupils' knowledge of topics such as how to be a young man in modern Britain. As a result, pupils consistently show a confident and often detailed knowledge of a range of topics, such as fundamental British values including democracy, healthy relationships and personal safety.

The work of pastoral leaders has a significant positive impact on pupils' wellbeing. Leaders work closely with pupils, parents and carers to identify and address barriers to learning to ensure pupils achieve well and become resilient.

Post 16 provision

Strong standard 

Students in the sixth form prosper in an inclusive and positive environment. Students make a genuinely positive contribution to the school community. In their free time, many students run clubs. Students chair leadership committees and they help pupils improve their reading. They are first-rate role models for younger pupils.

The extensive personal development programme fully prepares students for life after school. Students learn how to study and how to manage their time successfully. They learn about topics including personal finance and consent. They have myriad high-quality encounters with, and experiences of, the world of work. Staff provide excellent pastoral support. As with the rest of the school, staff work tirelessly to help students overcome any barriers to learning. Because this support is highly successful, students attend regularly, participate in school life and achieve highly.

Students benefit from highly effective teaching. Staff are experts in their fields. They know the important knowledge and skills that pupils need to succeed. They check how well students learn and give them clear feedback on how to improve. As a result, students, including those who are disadvantaged, progress very well from their starting points. They frequently go on to prestigious universities and successful careers.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Pupils' achievement in key stage 4 is broadly in line with national averages for published outcomes. Some pupils achieve very highly. The sixth form here is highly inclusive so that students make above-average progress from their starting points. Pupils in all key stages move securely on to their next steps.

Leaders have rightly made significant improvements to the curriculum and teaching in recent years. As a result, pupils learn important knowledge well across the curriculum. They confidently apply what they have learned to a range of tasks and activities. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, typically produce high-quality work. Pupils accurately recall previous learning and discuss their ideas with knowledge and understanding. Pupils read confidently and widely. They increasingly write well, although, as leaders know, some pupils find it hard to communicate their ideas on paper as expertly as their peers.

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

The King John School is a very happy school and pupils relish coming here. They make full use of the plethora of clubs, trips and opportunities on offer. There are clubs for every interest, most of which are set up and run by pupils themselves. Programmes such as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme are very well attended. These opportunities develop pupils' character and broaden their interests. They are very well prepared for their next steps. Pupils encounter a vast range of employers and apprenticeship and education providers. This enables them to make informed choices about their next steps. Leaders ensure that pupils also have many ways to share their views and contribute to the leadership of the school.

The school is resolute in its aspiration for every pupil to achieve, belong and flourish. Despite the number of pupils on roll at the school, staff know pupils very well. They leave no stone unturned in their efforts to identify and address any barriers to learning. This work helps pupils attend very well. They enjoy learning at this excellent school and aim to be the best they can be. Pupils rise to meet the high expectations of them and engage positively in lessons. They treat each other and adults with courtesy and respect. If pupils need support and help to improve their attitudes to learning or attendance, staff act expertly and supportively to help them improve. Pupils understand the importance of diversity and equality. They demonstrate this in their conduct around school. Pupils look out for, and after, each other. Older students mentor and support younger pupils with their reading. Pupils feel safe and valued.

Pupils benefit from an ambitious and consistently well-taught curriculum. They read often and read well. Pupils typically achieve well. They usually make secure progress from their starting points, particularly students in the sixth form.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue their work to further develop the teaching of writing across the school so that pupils communicate their ideas consistently well and achieve highly.
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About this inspection

The King John School is a member of the Zenith Multi-Academy Trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stewart Taylor. The chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust is Andy Hodgkinson.

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.

The inspection team spoke with school and trust leaders, including the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. The lead inspector also held discussions with representatives of the trust board, members of the local governing board and the CEO. Inspectors also spoke to leaders at other provisions who work with the school's looked-after pupils and those attending alternative provision.

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 school makes use of 2 alternative provisions, both of which are unregistered.

Headteacher: Daniel Steel

Lead inspector:

Steve Woodley, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Susan Sutton, Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Robinson, Ofsted Inspector

Garry Trott, Ofsted Inspector

Teri-Leigh Jones, Ofsted Inspector

Sharon Pritchard, 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 20 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

2,108

Well above 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

2,000

Well above 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: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

15.98%

Below 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

1.19%

Below 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

13.76%

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).

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 (provisional)	49.2%	45.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	55.7%	45.9%	Above
2022/23 (final)	54.7%	45.3%	Above

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 (provisional)	49.1	45.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	51.3	45.9	Above
2022/23 (final)	51.8	46.3	Above

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)	0.19	-0.03	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	0.15	-0.03	Close to average

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 (provisional)	27.8%	25.6%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	25.7%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	40.0%	25.2%	Above

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 (provisional)	38.9	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	40.4	34.6	Above
2022/23 (final)	45.6	35.0	Above

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)	-0.32	-0.57	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	-0.09	-0.57	Above

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 (provisional)	27.8%	52.8%	-25.1 pp
2023/24 (final)	25.7%	53.1%	-27.4 pp
2022/23 (final)	40.0%	52.4%	-12.4 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 (provisional)	38.9	50.3	-11.4
2023/24 (final)	40.4	50.0	-9.7
2022/23 (final)	45.6	50.3	-4.7

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)	-0.32	0.16	-0.49
2022/23 (final)	-0.09	0.17	-0.25

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 (provisional)	92%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	95%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	96%	94%	Average

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	37.58	34.99	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	34.38	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	34.28	34.16	Close to average

A-level value added

A score showing students' progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	0.2	0.0	Above
2023/24 (revised)	0.1	0.0	Close to average

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 (2 term)	5.9%	8.1%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	6.1%	8.9%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.9%	9.0%	Below

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 (2 term)	13.5%	21.9%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	14.7%	25.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	12.7%	26.5%	Below

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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