

A report on

Kings Monkton School

**6 West Grove
Cardiff
CF24 3XL**

Date of inspection: June 2025

by

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

About Kings Monkton School

Name of provider	Kings Monkton School
Proprietor status	KINGS MONKTON SCHOOL LIMITED (11676081)
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Independent special
Residential provision?	No
Number of pupils on roll	293
Pupils of statutory school age	234
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	{PreviousInspectionDate}
Start date of inspection	10/06/2025

School context:

Kings Monkton is an independent day school located near the centre of Cardiff. The school caters for boys and girls aged from 3 to 18 years. The school has provision for pupils with additional learning needs including autistic spectrum condition, dyslexia and medical needs.

There are currently 293 pupils in the school. This includes 60 pupils in the primary section of the school and 233 in the senior section of the school, including 56 in the sixth form.

Pupils come from a wide geographic area that includes Llantwit Major, Tonyrefail and Merthyr Tydfil, although the majority live within the Cardiff area. There are 65 pupils with an Individual Development Plan (IDP).

The school's last core inspection was in October 2023, at which time the current headteacher was in post.

Summary

Kings Monkton School provides a respectful, calm, and inclusive learning environment that promotes curiosity, critical thinking, and diversity of thought. Nearly all teachers are highly skilled, knowledgeable practitioners who know their pupils well. High-quality teaching is characterised by purposeful activities, challenge, and constructive feedback. Learning support assistants play a key role, offering well-balanced support without doing the work for pupils.

Nearly all pupils are confident, articulate, and eager to engage, unafraid to share ideas or to make mistakes. Throughout the school, they demonstrate strong reasoning and communication skills for their age and stage, with many older pupils frequently engaging in meaningful discussions. This fosters not just academic growth, but also the development of thoughtful, self-aware individuals.

A strong culture of inclusivity means that nearly all pupils feel safe, valued, and develop a sense of belonging quickly, especially important for those who have experienced attendance difficulties in previous settings. Pupils display a strong ethos of mutual support and leadership, with many older pupils mentoring their younger peers to build confidence and well-being.

Leaders have made significant improvements to their quality assurance work since the last inspection. A revised school improvement programme now follows a structured annual cycle of evaluation, target setting, and focused improvement work. It incorporates broad evidence sources such as lesson observations, pupil feedback, and academic data. Collaborative professional dialogue ensures consistency and fosters a sense of ownership among staff. A focus on identifying effective practices at individual and departmental levels allows for autonomy, accountability, and continual refinement of teaching methods, all geared towards improving pupil outcomes.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

Independent school inspections are governed by the Education Act 2002 and related regulations: the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. These regulations require an independent school to meet an appropriate standard in the following areas:

The quality of education provided by the school

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The suitability of proprietors and staff

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Premises of and boarding accommodation at schools

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The provision of information

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

The manner in which complaints are to be handled

On the basis of this visit, there is no evidence to indicate that the school does not meet the regulatory requirements for this standard.

Recommendations

We have made one recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1. Continue to work towards the few key priority areas of development identified in the school improvement plan

What happens next

Estyn advises the proprietor to amend its current development plan to show what actions the school intends to take in response to the recommendations. It is also advisable to circulate this plan, or a summary of it, to all parents/carers at the school.

Main evaluation

Throughout Kings Monkton School, learning takes place within a respectful, calm, purposeful environment where reflection and diversity of thought is encouraged. Nearly all teachers are confident in their craft, know their pupils extremely well, have strong subject knowledge and allow pupils time for reflection and thinking. Teachers model curiosity and ambition, are expert at developing effective learning habits, and work hard to empower pupils to be the very best that they can be.

Highly effective teaching is frequently introduced with clear learning intentions that are well understood by pupils. Teachers have a strong appreciation of the level of understanding of their pupils through prior assessments and/or open questioning, and work effectively to develop this further. These lessons contain a range of interesting activities that build upon each other in terms of depth and/or breadth. Teachers have a well understood approach to challenge that is consistently applied across the school. Often, learning goes beyond that required for a specific age or stage, for example when explaining linguistic terminology in French lessons. Swift and pertinent feedback provides pupils with clear guidance about how to make further progress. In addition, the role of the learning support assistants) is well understood. These staff ensure that pupils are supported in their learning. They are highly skilled at helping pupils to make progress, using a well-judged balance of challenge and support. Further, the online teaching platform enables pupils to continue their learning journey when the school day is over.

Nearly all pupils display high levels of trust in teachers. As a result of the consistent highly effective teaching, pupils develop as confident learners. They feel safe to take intellectual risks, leading them to become confident, resilient learners unafraid of making mistakes and are happy to express their thoughts and opinions freely. This mutual respect and openness significantly enhance pupils' ability to learn collaboratively and independently.

Pupils are highly articulate and keen to engage with staff, peers and visitors. For example, younger pupils clearly explain why they should eat more of some foods and less of others. In the senior school, many pupils use their oracy skills to convey complex, evidence-based assessments of problems and challenges, such as explaining why aluminium is a suitable material for food containers but has significant environmental impacts relating to extraction. Pupils are used to participating in productive, nuanced discussion. They are encouraged to think and reason, and to be unafraid to explore ideas. Pupils don't aspire to just 'be right', they want to be interested and interesting.

Provision for those pupils with additional learning needs (ALN), particularly at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, is characterised by highly bespoke timetables that adapt to the individual needs of the pupils. These adaptations are to address both pupils' well-being and academic needs.

Kings Monkton is a highly inclusive school, with pupils' well-being at the heart of its work. As a result, nearly all pupils feel safe and happy. When joining the school, they rapidly develop a secure sense of belonging. This is a particularly effective in supporting pupils who have previously found attendance challenging.

Nearly all pupils at the school place a great importance on being helpful and supportive of one another. Pupils with leadership roles are proud to represent their peers and the school. They feel empowered to be drive positive change, and to be role models for others. For example, senior pupils spend time with their younger peers enhancing their confidence and wellbeing.

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous inspection

R1.Refine quality assurance activities to ensure a sharper focus on the impact of school practice on pupil progress

In the time since the last inspection, the school has made substantive changes to this area of practice, and as a result, has made significant progress towards meeting this recommendation. Leadership time and resources have been allocated to a complete overhaul of quality assurance and improvement work. This has included the secondment of a Head of Faculty to the leadership team, to work alongside the Assistant Head in developing new practice and processes.

The school's new quality assurance and improvement programmes are tied to a yearly cycle of evaluation, target setting and improvement work. Reviews of teaching and learning are informed by a wide range of appropriate, first-hand evidence, including learning walks, book-looks, pupil voice, staff feedback, and analysis of academic assessment results. Identification of best practice is squarely focused on teaching and learning that gets the best outcomes for pupils.

Effective professional dialogue between staff at all levels, and moderation of evaluative work between senior leaders, ensures consistency of judgements and facilitates involvement in quality assurance processes by staff at all levels. Staff understand what good progress looks like for their pupils and have a clear idea of how this is supported and driven by effective practice.

Due to a highly collegiate approach to school improvement, leaders have fostered a sense of ownership and agency among staff. Teachers recognise that collaborative work to identify and develop best practice has been securely focused on improving pupil outcomes. As a result, nearly all staff are readily and actively involved in evaluating the quality of education at the school.

R2.Ensure that leaders robustly analyse quality assurance information to accurately identify the few areas for improvement

A strength of the newly established quality assurance and improvement programme is the ease with which senior and middle leaders can interrogate its outcomes to determine development priorities.

The focus on evaluation of a few, collaboratively established key areas of practice, together with consistent processes for observation and recording, has allowed leaders to develop a clear, accurate picture of the relative strengths and priority areas for development in teaching across the school.

These priority development targets are addressed through an appropriate range of actions, including sharing of best practice; targeted CPD and training; individual appraisal targets; and faculty-level target setting.

At individual teacher and faculty levels, the focus on what works best for pupils in specific subjects, at specific stages has also resulted in an effective balance of autonomy and accountability. Nearly all staff feel that they are able to adapt their teaching to suit their classes, and that leaders will evaluate their practice with reference to pupil outcomes, rather than mandated ways of working.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from parent/carers and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and support staff through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors/proprietor(s), leaders and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit lessons and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school had taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body (where appropriate), information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. '*most pupils...*' or '*very few pupils...*'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (<http://www.estyn.gov.wales/>)

The report was produced in accordance with section 163 of the Education Act 2002. The main purpose of inspection under this section is to report on compliance with the Independent Schools Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024. In schools that provide non-maintained nursery education, this report also satisfies the requirements of Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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