

# Kettering Science Academy

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135967
<b>Local Authority</b>	N/A
<b>Inspection number</b>	381990
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Janet Thompson HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1486
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	139
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alan Short
<b>Headteacher</b>	Martin Campbell and Anne O'Neill (Principals)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
<b>School address</b>	Deeble Road Kettering NN15 7AA
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They observed 53 lessons and part of lessons, and 50 teachers were seen. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body, and spoke informally to parents and carers collecting their children after school. They observed the academy's work, and examined progress tracking information and development plans as well as a range of policies, including those for managing behaviour and child protection. Inspectors also scrutinised staff and pupil questionnaires and 342 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the academy's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well recent changes in the teaching of mathematics have helped to increase progress, particularly for lower-attaining pupils in the secondary phase and across all groups in the primary phase.
- The actions taken by the primary phase to help improve writing and language and communication skills, particularly of younger pupils.
- The impact of improvements in the quality of teaching on pupils' motivation, engagement and progress in the secondary phase and sixth form.
- The impact of pastoral support, including links with families in the primary phase and vertical tutoring and mentoring in the secondary phase, on improving attendance and behaviour.
- The speed with which information from regular tracking of pupils' performance informs practice to ensure swift improvements across all aspects of the academy.

## Information about the school

This large academy opened in September 2009 and is sponsored by the Brooke Weston Partnership. It operates in two distinct phases; the secondary phase has a sixth form and the primary phase has a nursery. Each phase has its own Principal. The academy runs specially resourced provision for special educational needs in the nursery, attended by seven pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. The majority of pupils are White British and the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is smaller than the national figure. A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language, and a few of them are at the early stages of English language acquisition. A few pupils at the academy are looked after, including refugees and asylum seekers. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average and there are more boys than girls in the secondary phase. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. The new secondary phase academy building is due to be completed by 2012.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

The academy provides a satisfactory and improving quality of education in all phases. Partnerships with other schools and training organisations such as the local further education college are a growing strength, particularly in the sixth form. There are some growing strengths within the academy and, although attainment is still low, the progress pupils are making is satisfactory and improving securely and quickly. In the secondary phase the proportion of pupils gaining higher-level GCSEs including English and mathematics has increased and the level of qualifications gained by all pupils has also improved. Similarly, in the primary phase more pupils are gaining the expected levels in both English and mathematics. In some subjects the progress made by the vast majority of pupils is good, most notably in reading in the primary phase and science in the secondary phase, and most children in the specially resourced nursery provision make good progress. Good leaders across the academy have established a clear drive for improvement and in most areas this has helped to improve provision quickly and outcomes for pupils are improving as a result. With robust self-evaluation and good challenge from the governing body, the academy has a good capacity to improve.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is some variation between subjects as well as across age groups, although inadequate teaching is rare. Where the curriculum is interesting and teaching is strong, pupils are motivated and engaged and their good behaviour contributes to their ability to learn. In the secondary phase the science faculty is helping to lead improvements in the use of effective assessment to inform interesting teaching. This has helped to raise students' attainment at all levels of ability, including for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The use of ongoing assessment during lessons is variable, and at times the lack of checking of pupils' understanding contributes to slower progress. Results in English are improving across the academy, but inconsistent development of language and literacy skills across subjects and age groups is slowing the progress pupils can make in other areas.

Most pupils enjoy attending the academy and those spoken to by inspectors talked about a growing sense of community and pride in belonging to it. Behaviour is satisfactory and improving. The actions taken by staff have also ensured that pupils feel safe at the academy. A concerted effort by leaders in the secondary phase has helped to significantly reduce permanent exclusions and planned admissions to and from other schools over the last year. In this phase, robust evaluation of behaviour, including exclusions, has also led to good changes being made to the curriculum so

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that pupils who struggle to behave appropriately are more engaged and motivated. This is also beginning to help some pupils to attend more frequently, but attendance remains low in both phases. The tracking of behaviour and the range of responses to help pupils struggling with their behaviours are not as well developed in the primary phase, as in the secondary phase.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by:
  - improving provision for literacy across the curriculum
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to articulate their thinking
  - ensuring that pupils provide extended responses, both orally and when writing
  - ensuring that the academy's detailed monitoring always results in swift action when any dips in performance emerge.
- Increase pupils' progress in lessons by:
  - ensuring that staff have good skills to interpret and use the wealth of assessment information available to them when planning lessons
  - using teachers skilled in using assessment to model good practice in checking pupils' understanding throughout lessons.
- Work across both phases to establish more consistent systems and develop a wider range of curriculum and pastoral initiatives to:
  - increase pupils' attendance in both phases
  - support pupils in the primary phase with emotional and behavioural needs and reduce the use of exclusions.

### Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

During the inspection, the progress made by pupils in lessons was variable across subjects and year groups and this mirrors progress made over time by different groups of pupils. In the vast majority of lessons teachers ensured all pupils made at least satisfactory progress and there were stronger examples in both phases, including some outstanding progress being made in music in the secondary phase. The new scheme for teaching reading and writing in the primary phase was being taught effectively and consistently, and pupils made good progress in these lessons. Pupils' work shows there are frequent opportunities to write and the interesting work of the international primary curriculum has also provided good motivation for pupils. Expectations of the amount and quality of writing are inconsistent across the academy and are not always high enough. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is at least satisfactory, and in some subjects it is

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good. The achievement of other groups, such as those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who speak English as an additional language, is variable across phases and subjects and is very dependent on the quality of teaching and how well teachers check pupils’ understanding during the lesson. In the secondary phase, lower-attaining pupils, including some with a range of additional needs, are taught in small classes that provide more opportunities to engage with the teacher and increase their understanding.

Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, although there are missed opportunities to promote spiritual development. During the inspection, behaviour in lessons was consistently at least satisfactory. Where teaching was good or better, pupils responded enthusiastically and showed positive attitudes towards their learning. Where teachers asked them to work in pairs or groups they cooperated well with each other. This corresponds with the academy’s own evidence about behaviour in lessons in the secondary phase, and pupils’ own views. Pupils move around the building sensibly, although they are not always aware of others’ personal space. Pupils emphasised to inspectors that bullying has decreased significantly and that they feel confident that if they are bullied, swift and effective action will be taken. This makes a strong contribution to pupils feeling safe. In the primary phase pupils cooperate well together during break and lunchtimes. Although pupils receive various forms of support to help to improve their behaviour, this is not sufficiently widespread or tailored to the pupils’ needs.

A high proportion of pupils are involved in additional activities and many of these contribute to them adopting healthy lifestyles. Pupils take on suitable a range of responsibilities across the academy, including older pupils acting as role models and supporting the learning of younger pupils. The house system across the two phases helps the links, but the possible benefits of working as one academy are not fully realised.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Pupils learn best when teachers are skilled at interpreting assessment information to help plan lessons, and also regularly check pupils' understanding as the lesson progresses. In the secondary phase the more successful faculties have strong, interesting teaching in the majority of lessons. In these faculties staff communicate clearly and make suitable adaptations for pupils who have difficulties in understanding complex instructions and who need time to process information. Pupils are given time to think and discuss ideas before offering a response that is written or verbal. This style helps pupils develop their oral language and literacy skills for explanation and problem solving. In the primary phase, where there is less frequent checking of work or pupils' understanding, there were examples where pupils stopped working for parts of the lesson or where mistakes were being reinforced. This was most evident with lower-attaining pupils.

The curriculum in both phases of the academy is good. There is a good range of interesting enrichment activities, both during the school day and after school. The international primary curriculum provides access to a wider range of experiences and enables pupils to gain a good understanding of different cultures. Additional interventions are reasonably well managed and are helping many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to improve the progress they make. In the secondary phase the careful adaptation of the curriculum to ensure pupils can gain a greater range of qualifications has considerably enhanced pupils' opportunities for success. The strong partnerships with other providers enable a greater breadth of courses to be available.

Some aspects of care, guidance and support are very good, for example the vertical tutoring system in the secondary phase and the work with partners to support some pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. However, there is not enough specific provision to effectively support pupils with emotional and behaviour difficulties in the primary phase. Similarly, across the academy the range of actions taken to help increase attendance has very recently changed and is not yet proving to be fully effective.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where</b>	<b>2</b>

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<b>relevant, through partnerships</b>	
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders communicate a strong commitment to ensuring success for all pupils across the academy. Many of the actions taken make this commitment a reality and have resulted in significant improvements in teaching and in the progress pupils make. Very detailed monitoring and evaluation provide a good range of information which has enabled actions to be prioritised effectively and directed towards improving weaker practice. The governing body plays an important and effective role in ensuring that progress and outcomes are challenged. Members of the governing body have a good grasp on the strengths and issues facing the academy and help to promote the drive and ambition for improvement. The commitment given to the role of safeguarding coordinator has ensured good safeguarding arrangements are in place and there is diligent follow up to any concerns that are raised. Partner services and parents and carers also appreciate the single point of contact. There are a few areas where monitoring and evaluation are not as robust, including the tracking of pupils’ behaviour in the primary phase. Unlike the secondary phase, this lack of detail means that staff have not always intervened as swiftly as they need to when patterns of poor behaviour begin to emerge.

The academy analyses information about the outcomes for individual pupils and groups of pupils carefully. By establishing where improvement in provision has led to academic success, leaders have given considerable attention to ensuring equality of opportunity. They have given less attention to considering patterns in the way individuals and different groups of pupils are involved in the wider opportunities offered, including clubs and taking on responsibilities within the academy. The school promotes community cohesion in a satisfactory way. There are more strengths in work about promoting cohesion in the local and global communities than across the United Kingdom.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>



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<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in this stage with skills that are frequently below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. They make satisfactory progress across the areas of learning. No particular group makes better progress than another, although most children attending the designated special provision in the nursery make good progress. This is partly due to the effective partnership work with other professionals, the specific interventions the children receive and skills of the staff in promoting communication and language with this group. During the inspection children in the Early Years Foundation Stage had only recently been attending for a full week. In both the morning nursery and reception classes, children had settled well and were already becoming familiar with many of the routines. Most were confident to take part in a range of activities although a few needed more encouragement. The activities encouraged children to play together, including those attending the designated special provision.

Children are given a suitable range of learning activities to help them make progress and all classes created some opportunities for learning outside, but this was not available throughout the sessions. Inspectors observed staff using careful discussion to enhance pupils’ use of language and help them build a wider vocabulary. For example, children were very interested in the discussion about the guinea pigs and their food. Children were bringing their own experience to the discussion and the member of staff was skilled in prompting them to give more information and increase the range of words being used. Leadership of this phase has very recently changed and leaders have a suitable understanding of the developments needed to help support academy-wide improvements.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Sixth form

The sixth form is increasingly popular. Although students start with levels of attainment below national averages, their progress is satisfactory and improving. In

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the last year, results were similar to those found nationally but there is inconsistency across subjects and courses. There has been underachievement in some subjects, most notably geography, history, government and politics but progress students are making is improving. In many cases within the lessons observed students made good progress. Improvements in guidance and available programmes have helped to ensure students are following courses that are well matched to their skills and abilities. These improvements have enhanced provision which is now good and this is helping outcomes to improve quickly. Most students now progress to university and nearly all others into other education, training or employment. Attendance is also above national averages.

Teaching is good based on effective working relationships and an emphasis on developing independence within a supportive environment. Many lessons are engaging and well resourced, enabling students to make good progress. However, some lessons are too teacher led and not sufficiently planned to meet the needs of the full range of students. Targets are set and regularly monitored with good feedback to students on how to improve. A wide range of courses are available through the three Pathways offered, and are now well matched to students’ needs and aspirations. There is a growing range of level 3 vocational and applied courses and the curriculum is supported by an extensive range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities. Students make a strong contribution to the life of the academy and the wider community. For example, many students support learning through peer mentoring, reading scheme support and work within the primary phase.

Good systems for monitoring and evaluating provision, including regular questionnaires from students on the quality of teaching and learning, are helping to inform actions to improve provision and outcomes. However, the development plan covers too wide a range of actions to achieve measureable success in improving standards.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for pupils in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are mostly supportive of the academy. A very large majority believe their child enjoys school and that the academy keeps their child safe. A few parents do not think the academy helps them to support their child’s learning sufficiently nor do they think the academy deals effectively with behaviour. Inspectors found a wide range of responses to help pupils behave more appropriately in the secondary phase but found this to be less of the case in the primary phase. A

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few parents and carers of secondary phase pupils also commented that they felt it is inappropriate that pupils are not able to go outside during the day except for specific lessons. Pupils also raised this as a concern. Inspectors found that, although there are presently no outdoor areas accessible for secondary pupils, lunch time and morning breaks were pleasant and calm occasions. The new secondary building plan has accessible outdoor spaces.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kettering Science Academy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 342 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1486 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	123	36	200	58	12	4	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	114	33	213	62	10	3	1	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	107	31	191	56	24	7	4	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	97	28	195	57	23	7	5	1
The teaching is good at this school	108	32	192	56	17	5	3	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	100	29	186	54	38	11	4	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	71	21	220	64	30	9	5	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	98	29	195	57	14	4	2	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	82	24	215	63	21	6	5	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	89	26	175	51	37	11	13	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	67	20	194	57	25	7	10	3
The school is led and managed effectively	112	33	177	52	20	6	6	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	133	39	179	52	17	5	7	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 8 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.



30 September 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Kettering Science Academy, Kettering, NN15 7AA**

Thank you for welcoming me and my colleagues to your academy. It provides a satisfactory quality of education, and provision in the sixth form is good.

Although not all of you gain the levels and qualifications that I believe you are capable of, the progress you make is satisfactory and improving. An interesting curriculum across the academy, supported by effective partnerships in the secondary phase and sixth form, provides suitable routes for your future ambitions and helps to keep you interested in learning. In some subjects the majority of you make good progress: this is most evident when lessons are interesting and teachers have a clear picture of what you know already. In these lessons teachers also make sure you understand anything new they introduce. We have asked teachers who do this well to support others who do not always check your understanding frequently enough. We have also asked that you be given more help and opportunities to develop higher level language and literacy skills, that are relevant for your different age groups, across subjects.

Good leaders across the academy have helped to drive improvement and many of you have helped these improvements by working harder and making sure you voice your opinions in a respectful way. Many of you talked about a growing sense of community and took pride in belonging to the academy. We found the house system to be effective in encouraging this. You also told us you feel safe at school. Behaviour is satisfactory and although improving there are a few of you who could help by responding more positively in a range of situations and find better ways of expressing your concerns. We found that the secondary phase had looked carefully at ensuring the curriculum and other support was flexible to meet your needs but sometimes the primary phase had a limited range of ways to help some of you behave appropriately more frequently. To help with this we have asked that the academy establishes more systems that are consistent between the secondary and primary phases.

I wish you all the very best for the future and hope you will continue to support staff in helping the academy to improve.

Yours sincerely

Janet Thompson  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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