

# Kettering Science Academy

Deeble Road, Kettering, NN15 7AA

**Inspection dates** 18–19 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- In past years, not enough pupils have made the progress they are capable of and results have been low.
- The development of writing still needs improvement.
- Pupils do not use their writing skills enough in different subjects or numeracy skills enough in real-life contexts.
- Teaching is not consistently good, and a little is still inadequate. It sometimes lacks challenge or is pitched at too high a level for pupils to understand, because teachers are not all sure what level pupils are at.
- Teachers do not all check closely enough how well pupils are getting on in lessons.
- Sometimes time is wasted in lessons and pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are not always as good as they should be.
- Attendance is improving but is below average.
- Until recently, improvement was not quick enough because steps taken by leaders to improve teaching and achievement lacked sufficient impact. There is ground to make up.
- Not all subjects are yet led well. Subject targets are not all realistic.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Results are not high enough to represent good progress in A and AS levels.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' achievement is improving quickly, especially in the secondary phase. Standards have risen in both English and mathematics.
- Teaching is improving quickly because of careful checking and support from leaders.
- Behaviour is much improved.
- Children in the resource base learn well.
- Science and history are often taught well.
- Determined, thoughtful leadership from the current Principal, senior staff and the academy trust has resulted in firm improvement since 2012.
- Governors are able and caring. They now know how well the academy is doing and challenge leaders to do better.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 49 lessons, of which 15 were seen jointly with the Principal or senior leaders. Inspectors also made short visits to lessons and classrooms and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited the specially resourced provision on the site, which is managed by the academy.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents and information about pupils' progress, attainment, behaviour and attendance. In addition, they studied development plans, the academy's self-evaluation documents, assessment records, records of checks on the quality of teaching and documentation relating to safeguarding.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body, the chief executive of the sponsoring academy trust and members of staff who lead different subjects or areas of the academy's work.
- Meetings were held with pupils from each year group on the first day of the inspection. On the second day, groups of pupils met with inspectors to discuss their progress and the quality of their work.
- Inspectors took account of the 40 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own surveys of parental opinion. They also considered responses from the 128 members of staff who completed a questionnaire. Inspectors also received telephone contact from two parents.

## Inspection team

David Turner, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christopher Crouch	Additional Inspector
Christine Murrell	Additional Inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional Inspector
John Greevy	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an above-average-sized all-through academy for pupils aged from 3 to 19.
- The academy is part of the Brooke Weston Trust, which is a sponsoring chain of academy schools.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority and for whom the academy receives the pupil premium (additional government funding) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special education needs is also below average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for children with special educational needs in the nursery phase. There are eight pupils and all have speech and language needs. All are part-time and are on the roll of the Kettering Science Academy.
- Currently, 25 students attend alternative provision to support their achievement in a range of applied and work-related studies, on a full and part-time basis. They study at The Complementary Education Academy, Youth Works Kettering, Kettering Borough Training, Torch Learning Centre and Moulton College, Northampton.
- The government's floor standards set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school did not meet the standards for Year 11 in 2012, but met the standards for Year 6.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to good within three academic terms and rapidly eradicate any remaining inadequate teaching by making sure that:
  - all lesson plans take into account pupils' current standards, so work and learning activities are sufficiently demanding and matched to the pupils' ability
  - work and activities are explained as carefully as possible to help all pupils understand what they are required to do
  - teachers check during lessons how well pupils are understanding
  - teachers make good use of time, so pupils use their knowledge, learning and skills more quickly and independently
  - teachers use questioning better, so pupils are required to give extended answers and fully explain their reasoning.
- Ensure that all year groups make good progress and current Year 6 and Year 11 pupils reach national average standards by summer 2014 by:
  - giving high priority to the improvement of writing, including writing at length, across all subjects and stages, so it matches the quality of pupils' speaking skills.
  - planning more real-life use of numeracy in lessons.
- Improve behaviour and safety by:
  - making consistent use of the behaviour policy to improve behaviour within the academy and further reduce exclusion rates
  - raising attendance to national average within four academic terms by consistent use of

existing policies.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
    - ensuring all subject leaders focus on raising standards, improving teaching and pupils' engagement in lessons
    - ensuring that target-setting takes into account the quality of pupils' writing skills
    - strengthening approaches to assessment and tracking so that all staff know the current attainment of their pupils as well as their targets.
-

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Kettering Science Academy opened in September 2009 with 15 different year groups across the primary and secondary stages. Information provided to inspectors shows pupils have entered the academy at a range of very different starting points, with standards in the different year groups at least below and often well below average on entry.
- In the past, pupils have not learned as well or as quickly as they should have done, especially in English, reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects, including humanities. Results in tests and examinations have risen slowly and have been lower than national results.
- Results for Year 11 students fell sharply in 2012 and the proportion of students achieving five or more good grades at GCSE including English and mathematics was 33%. However, in 2013, results rose quickly; 50% of Year 11 students achieved this standard and they performed better in both English and mathematics GCSEs.
- Results for Year 6 and Year 2 have also been below average in past years, particularly in reading and writing. Recent achievement has been much better. Reliable information about the 2013 results seen during the inspection shows improvements in the progress of Year 6 and Year 2 pupils. They made similar gains in understanding to other pupils nationally.
- When children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills and knowledge are well below age-related expectations. However, they make progress which is at least as expected and later results in Year 1 and Year 2 indicate they are learning more quickly as a result of the support they receive when they join the academy.
- Across the academy, pupils' achievement in speaking, listening and reading is higher than in writing. This is because of the support they receive to develop their knowledge of the sounds that words and letters make (phonics) in Year 1 and the more frequent opportunities they have to talk and discuss their learning across the academy. As a result, pupils' spoken knowledge and understanding is more developed than they express in writing, and in some subjects, including English, sciences and history, it is good.
- The development of secure and confident written skills has been slower across the academy, owing to pupils' lower starting points. In previous years, attainment was also depressed because of slower progress in the earlier years and Key Stage 2. Pupils have not developed sufficient skills in writing by the time they join the secondary phase and this shows across Year 7 and up to Year 11. In recent years, teaching across the subjects has not concentrated hard enough on driving up the quality of structured writing and this has had a strong impact on results. However, Year 11 English standards rose in 2013 and progress in writing is now closer to the national expectation in other year groups.
- Pupils' numeracy skills and knowledge have improved more quickly than literacy; standards in Year 2 and Year 6 rose to average in 2013. Attainment also rose in Year 11 in 2013. These improvements result from teaching basic skills in the earlier years and across Years 1 and 2 which support children as they learn to count, measure and understand shapes. However, they have fewer opportunities to apply their calculation skills to real life, and this is something which affected results in 2012. Current progress in calculation is higher than in the past owing to the quality of teaching in the secondary stage, which has allowed more opportunities for pupils to secure their skills.

- In recent years, the academy has entered many students early for GCSE mathematics. Students entered early have made similar, and sometimes better progress than their peers.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to that of others across the academy. Their achievement is improving owing to more regular checks on the quality of support and their progress. The achievement of children in the specialist resource base is good because of the effective support they receive, including individual or group teaching which is closely matched to their needs. They are supported to participate in sessions with children in the main school in addition to the resource base, and this helps them narrow attainment gaps.
- The attainment of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is rapidly improving because they are making quicker progress. In 2012, these students were more than a grade behind their classmates in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11, while at the end of Year 6 they were the equivalent of one year behind in English and two-and-a-half terms behind in mathematics. In 2013, the gap has closed to half a grade behind in English and mathematics in Year 11 and one term behind in Year 6. The gap is closing at the same rate in other year groups across the academy.
- Progress of Year 7 students eligible for additional help with reading as part of the government's catch-up premium is similar to that of other students and good in some cases. Effective teaching helps them use phonics (the sounds that letters and words make) correctly and they read and comprehend with more confidence as a result.
- The academy has significantly reduced the numbers of pupils educated off site since its last inspection. The achievement of pupils educated off site is similar to other pupils and sometimes better. Their attendance, progress and welfare are carefully monitored.
- The achievement of primary-phase pupils in physical education is improving quickly because of the effective use the academy makes of funding for the promotion of physical sports and healthy lifestyles.
- The attainment and progress of students in the sixth form has improved following a fall in 2012, particularly across the more academic A levels. Though progress still requires improvement in some subjects, progress has improved overall and the numbers on roll have increased. This is because of careful guidance and a wider choice of courses for students to follow which are better suited to their needs.

### **The quality of teaching**

### **requires improvement**

- Over time, teaching has lacked the consistency needed to ensure good progress across the different stages of the academy, especially in the development of writing. There have also been significant changes to staffing in the last two years. Staffing is now more stable, and teaching has improved, but too much still requires improvement and there remains a little teaching that is inadequate.
- Teaching is not consistently well matched to the different abilities of pupils. Many have joined the academy with standards which are below average and teachers' explanations are not always clear enough to make sure these pupils understand what is required of them. Work is sometimes too hard for these pupils, including in some sessions in the Early Years Foundation Stage, or too easy for the more-able pupils.

- This is because the use of assessment information to plan lessons is not always effective. Teachers sometimes set work that is too hard because they assume that a level a pupil has been set as a target is the level they are already at, rather than something they are aiming for. As a result, teaching sometimes fails to engage pupils' interest and the commitment of pupils to learning is not consistently good.
- In some lessons, learning slows because time is not used well. Some pupils then lose attention. When teachers' lesson introductions are long, pupils are not involved enough to stimulate their interest. Work is often pitched at the same level for all. Insufficient independent work in some lessons reduces the opportunities for all pupils, but especially the most able, to take their learning further.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding of their work and this reduces the amount of learning when pupils are moved on too quickly without securing the earlier steps.
- The use of questioning and discussion is not consistently good across the academy. Frequently, pupils are asked to recall what they have been recently told rather than use their learning or apply it. However, inspectors observed some effective questioning which encouraged detailed and well-reasoned answers. One example was in a Year 8 history lesson about the slave trade, where well-planned questions supported pupils to draw out opinions from a wide range of sources.
- Where teaching is most successful, teachers use their subject knowledge and assessment information to plan lessons that carefully meet the needs of all pupils and capture their attention and interest, particularly in the development of secure writing skills. These lessons support pupils to use their learning with increasing confidence and tackle difficult work. A good example was in a GCSE English lesson, when students created highly effective written characterisations of Edward Hyde based on an image shown to them by their teacher
- There are some consistent strengths seen in the teaching of science subjects and history because of the effective use of assessment information by teachers and because imaginative resources and activities provoke pupils to think deeply and become closely involved in their learning.
- Half of teaching is considered to be good and quickly improving by the academy's leaders and inspectors agree with this view.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Pupils' attitudes towards learning vary across the academy in line with the quality of teaching. There are examples of pupils being passive and dependent on their teachers' leadership of the lesson. Sometimes they lose attention. Sometimes teachers do not insist on high levels of concentration, or apply the behaviour policy with full consistency. However, when lessons are demanding, engaging and well-planned, pupils are committed and manage themselves well.
- Attendance is still below average. However, it has risen since the last inspection. The academy has made some effective use of information about the attendance of different pupils and groups in order to support and challenge pupils to improve their attendance. This is not yet fully consistent across all year groups.
- Around the school and between lessons, a calmer and more settled atmosphere has been established since the last inspection. Pupils are generally polite to each other, staff and visitors.

Movement between lessons is sensible with fewer examples of behaviour which is not acceptable. Pupils are more supportive of the school uniform and other rules than was the case in the past. One example is the agreement of the vast majority of pupils not to use mobile telephones during the school day and to store them in lockers.

- Pupils believe they are safe and agree that relationship difficulties and bullying of all types have much reduced since the previous inspection. All pupils who met with inspectors were confident that there was an adult they could turn to in the event of a problem. They believe bullying is now less common and have confidence in their teachers to resolve problems quickly. One reason for this improvement is the tutor system, which brings pupils of different ages together in order to reduce barriers between them.
- Since the last inspection, the use of exclusion has been eliminated in the primary stage but has remained broadly the same in the secondary stage. However, the number of exclusions for disabled pupils and those who have special educational need has fallen. Equally, the use of off-site, alternative provision has been greatly reduced in the secondary stage and more students are remaining on roll, on site and in lessons as a result.
- Parents are generally supportive of the academy's policies on behaviour and safety. Evidence from Parent View, combined with academy information, shows their confidence levels are improving over time.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Over recent years, there has been considerable variation in the quality of leadership at this academy and significant changes to staffing at different levels. As a result, following the last inspection, there was a period of low results and a decline in pupils' achievement until Summer 2012. In the last 15 months, many senior leaders and subject leaders, led by a new Principal who shows high levels of capability and determination, have secured much-needed improvements.
- Not all subject leaders are providing good leadership. Not all are closely enough focused on raising achievement and improving behaviour, and the better teaching that is necessary to do so in their subjects. They do not all give close enough attention to these things when evaluating their departments. Some subject targets are unrealistic, given pupils' writing abilities.
- In the last 15 months, an influx of new leaders has helped the academy improve. Evaluation has become very accurate and straightforward, and improvement plans have quickly led to better results for the pupils in 2013 because they have focused on a small number of important targets.
- When evaluating lessons, senior leaders and the new Principal are highly effective in linking teaching seen to achievement across the academy. As a result, the quality of performance management and holding teachers to account is now more rigorous and there is a clear link between pupils' achievement, teaching quality and pay. Equally, professional development targets and training offered to teachers are both closely linked to key academy targets for improving pupils' achievement, including the development of writing skills.
- The wider range of subjects and courses offered to them within the academy supports pupils' better achievement. Far fewer are sent away to study than was the case and far more of them are now being entered for a full range of qualifications that prepare them well for the next stages of their employment, education or training. Pupils enjoy the range of clubs and after-school activities on offer, particularly in sports and sciences.

- Parents are generally supportive of the school and staff questionnaires are positive about the important improvements taking place across the academy.
- Safeguarding arrangements are well established and comply fully with all requirements. The academy takes the protection of its pupils very seriously.
- The academy is part of the sponsoring Brooke Weston Trust and has received careful support and challenge from its 'family' of schools in the last 15 months as well as working closely with the Department for Education. This work and the appointment of capable leaders at the primary and secondary phase have supported the recent improvements seen.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - In the past, leaders' inaccurate evaluation has prevented governors fully challenging the school. Governors are now accurately informed of the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils. As a result, they are able to fully hold the academy's leaders and staff to account for their performance. Governors play a full role in the direction of the academy and bring a wealth of experience to their work. They are now closely involved in checking on the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of improvement work. They understand performance data and they are aware of how the academy tackles underperformance and rewards good-quality teaching. They understand how the pupil premium is spent and the impact on achievement for those pupils for whom it is intended.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135967
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	425060

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

<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1562
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	129
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Barton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Davies
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 September 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01536 532700
<b>Fax number</b>	01536 532709
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@ketteringscienceacademy.org

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

