

King's Leadership Academy Warrington

Seymour Drive, Warrington, Cheshire, WA1 3TT

Inspection dates 28–29 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Teaching is good over time and often outstanding. Students are taught and expected to think for themselves.
- Students achieve well across academic subjects and a very creative curriculum. Their oracy and confidence in public speaking are strong.
- The school community is built upon firm values and principles, resulting in outstanding behaviour. Integrity, respect and endeavour have become learnt behaviours, leading to a strong and intrinsic motivation to succeed.
- Students are encouraged to focus on their future career aspirations right from the start. Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is exceptional.
- Leaders, managers and governors' relentless drive to provide a high-quality education for young people is becoming a reality. The curriculum is innovative and promotes achievements beyond academic measures.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students who are less able and those who are disabled or have special educational needs do not make consistently good progress.
- Standards in writing are not consistently high across a range of subjects.
- Teaching, assessment and marking are not of a consistently high quality in all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors took account of the 50 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- The inspection team observed 13 part lessons and made a series of short visits to seven other lessons. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders, over fifty students and over twenty representatives of the student parliament.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wealth of other evidence provided by the school, including self-evaluation, records of challenge meetings held by governors and minutes of governors' meetings. Inspectors also examined a wide sample of students' work, scrutinised school improvement planning and self-evaluation, evidence of students' current achievement, and policies relating to behaviour management and anti-bullying. Inspectors also checked the single central record.

Inspection team

Sally Kenyon, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jacqueline Rothery

Additional Inspector

Ramesh Kapadia

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This free school opened in September 2012 and has not been previously inspected.
- This is a much smaller than average but rapidly expanding 11–18 academy with approximately 150 students currently on roll, all of whom are either in Year 7 or Year 8.
- The academy currently operates from a temporary site in a former infant school.
- There are plans to build a brand new building to house the growing academy population.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (government funding to help schools support children of armed forces families, students who are looked after by the local authority and students who are known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of students with special educational needs supported through school action is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- There are no public examination results by which to measure the school's performance against the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- No student is educated off-site or attends alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching and assessment promote the highest achievement for all by:
 - giving students who are less able or who have special educational needs more help with reading, spelling and writing in lessons
 - ensuring that students receive consistently high-quality feedback about their work
 - ensuring that the evidence gained from visits to lessons, conversations with students and scrutiny of work in students' books is reflected in the academy's data tracking practices so as to build a more accurate picture of the day-to-day quality of teaching.
- Encourage those who are new to the governing body to challenge senior leaders about achievement in more detail.
- Ensure that members of staff who are not directly contracted to the school have access to the same high-quality training as full-time teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the school with broadly average attainment. Evidence from lesson observations, work in books, what the students say and assessment data show that they achieve well over time.
- Students made good progress in the large majority of lessons observed and some students made excellent progress. However, progress is not always as strong for those students who have special educational needs or are less able.
- The Year 7 catch-up premium is being used to help students whose reading age is behind their chronological age to improve their skills and become confident readers. Data show that achievement in reading is improving.
- Strong progress was made in writing in a Year 7 English lesson where students constructed considered responses to the question: 'Does literature influence society or does society influence literature?' They compiled short paragraphs, then critically annotated their own work and improved it by adding connectives and using more sophisticated language, like 'utilities' rather than 'stuff'. The teacher ensured that all students made good progress and many made rapid progress due to the teacher's excellent subject knowledge, careful planning and clear explanation of what they needed to achieve.
- However, literacy is not always taught so well in different subjects, and those who are less able or have special educational needs do not always receive enough support to write accurately and comprehensively. This was observed by inspectors during a small number of lessons and in students' workbooks, where these students did not make good progress because the work was too difficult for them. Sometimes, they could not read the words they were given or were not offered enough help with spelling, constructing sentences and paragraphs.
- Students made good progress in mathematics lessons. However, some of the less able students struggle to complete questions that are too difficult and assessments of their abilities are sometimes overgenerous. Tracking data for other subjects suggest that inconsistencies remain in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed no difference between the achievements of those students known to be eligible for the pupil premium and their peers. As the numbers of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium are so small, their achievements are tracked on an individual basis.

The quality of teaching is good

- The vast majority of teaching observed by inspectors was good and some was outstanding. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge, creativity and skills to ensure that students make good progress in a wide variety of ways. Excellent social, moral, spiritual and cultural education underpins learning for all students.
- Lessons in the academy are based around thought-provoking questions or hypotheses. Teachers employ a range of resources to good effect, from tablet computers to pencils and paper. For example, in a Year 8 science lesson, students considered how mass affects the speed at which something falls. Students constructed their own hypotheses as to why this might be and critically evaluated their own ideas by discussing with a partner. The teacher ensured that all students made good progress and many, particularly the most able, made rapid progress due to the teacher's excellent subject knowledge and ability to quickly identify when they needed further challenge. As a result, strong progress was maintained.
- Year 7 students were observed making really good progress in an art lesson. This was because the teacher explained detail clearly and showed students what they were to achieve. Students showed good evidence of prior learning by correctly identifying the pencils they would use to create contrasting tones and showed the inspector some of the high-quality work in their books.
- Learning slows when teachers do not sufficiently adapt approaches to allow students of different

abilities to make good progress.

- Some excellent examples of written feedback were seen, proving that the new marking policy is beginning to accelerate progress further. However, this is still in its early stages; some students receive too little helpful feedback about their work and some assessment is overgenerous.
- A truly inspirational assembly was led by the head of modern foreign languages. Students were taught about poverty and the impact it has globally, nationally and locally. Students were touched when they realised the proportion of families in Warrington who live in poverty. A small group of students who spoke to the inspector after the assembly reflected on the impact of what they had learnt and decided that they would make sacrifices of their own in order to give some food to local food banks to help others.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of students is outstanding.
- Students are taught to be leaders. They exhibit maturity beyond their years; they are polite, well mannered, considerate and caring. This is because the academy's core values of integrity, respect and endeavour have become learnt behaviours, leading to a strong and intrinsic motivation to succeed. Students manage and regulate their own behaviour well, both in and out of the classroom.
- Behaviour in lessons observed by inspectors was never less than good and often outstanding. Students behave sensibly and courteously at social times. A good range of healthy options are available at lunchtimes.
- All of the parents who responded to Parent View feel that behaviour in school is good. One parent wrote to the inspection team and commented that their son was 'genuinely happy, enriched and loves school'.
- Inspirational role models are in abundance and students speak confidently about their aspirations for the future. The curriculum ensures that they are taught the leadership and interpersonal skills they need to succeed.
- Attendance is consistently high and there have been no exclusions this year. Students consider interrupting a teacher to be a serious misdemeanour, as one student said, 'I consider it rude to speak when other people are speaking.' Students are patient when listening to each other's reasons for their opinions, they are confident to stand alone and justify their choices; they are not followers, they are leaders.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- All students listened to by inspectors said that they felt safe in school. Only respectful language is acceptable and a number of students have transferred to the academy after being bullied in other schools. Senior leaders have risk assessments in place and have due regard for day-to-day safety. Safety routines are used well in science and embedded routines for arriving at and leaving lessons ensure that these times are incredibly orderly. Parents who responded to Parent View are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour and safety.
- Members of the student parliament regularly interview potential new teachers; they suggest to senior leaders what they might like to learn in the afternoons and who might be best to teach them. At their suggestion, students undertake residential visits to the Lake District to contribute towards their Duke of Edinburgh awards.
- Some students have made great strides in their personal development since joining the academy. They are rightly proud of their academy and feel that they are part of a family rather than a school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- This is an academy based firmly on values and the promotion of strong leadership, of which the Principal and his team are excellent examples. This is part of what makes the social, moral,

spiritual, cultural and aspirational development of students first class.

- The second factor is the innovative and inspirational curriculum. Students learn traditional subjects in the morning and enjoy a more creative diet in the afternoons. They learn about integrity, personal resilience, prejudice and discrimination; they are confident public speakers. They learn ju-jitsu, conversational French, and recently produced and performed some of scenes from the musical 'Les Misérables'.
- Performance management is used well to set high expectations among staff. However, there is a strong focus on the quality of teaching during lesson observations and less so on other evidence of teaching over time.
- The leadership and management of teaching and learning are strong and much time and effort are invested in staff development to good effect. However, staff who are not directly contracted to the school but are employed to teach creative subjects in the afternoons are not always included in this training, which has a negative impact on the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, a number of staff who are newly qualified teachers, new to the school, and new to leadership roles are being well supported.
- Senior leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the academy. They rightly recognise through their school improvement plan that inconsistencies remain within the quality of marking, literacy support in lessons and the accuracy of some assessments.
- They are driving improvements with force, and at pace, while also managing a rapidly expanding staff and student population.
- The single central record and safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body had a vision to create a community where future leaders are made. This vision is becoming well established.
 - Members of the governing body garnered support from over 500 local parents for the school to come into existence and are resolute that it will succeed. This steadfast determination is reflective of the academy values and motto, 'Credimus', which means 'We believe'.
 - Governors are driven to continue to expand the academy and allow more young people to have a good-quality education. They understand when students are making good progress and are regularly in school to monitor and challenge the quality of teaching and achievement.
 - Some governors are new and are being supported to challenge senior leaders constructively about the achievement of all students in order to bring them up to speed with other governors.
 - Governors know how well students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium achieve; they are aware that they now need to build a wider picture of achievement beyond tracking data and lesson observations.
 - Governors are continuing to drive up standards in the academy while managing a multitude of complex logistical issues concerning the future location of the school.

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

Unique reference number	138562
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	426045

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	152
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sir Iain Hall
Principal	Mr Shane Ierston
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01925 850824
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	s.ierston@kingsleadershipacademy.com

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