

Kingfisher School

Radley Road, Abingdon, OX14 3RR

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, along with other leaders, has high expectations for all the pupils. Together with the governing body, they have ensured that pupils make at least good progress by providing effective training for staff and regular monitoring of learning. As a result, the achievement and progress of pupils are good.
- Members of the governing body have an effective range of skills that they use to challenge leaders and hold the school to account. They manage the budget well, ensuring that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent for their benefit.
- Parents are pleased with their children’s progress. They say their children make good progress and are happy at school.
- Pupils’ progress is rising because they are consistently well taught. As a result, they achieve well in English and mathematics. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills well in other subjects.
- Children in the early years provision achieve well and make good progress.
- The range of subjects and additional therapies supports pupils’ learning and personal development well. An exciting programme of visits ensures that pupils enjoy school and achieve well.
- Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Through assemblies and topics these all help to consolidate pupils’ self-help, mobility and independence, ensuring that their personal development is good.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school. They say they feel safe at school and on their various visits.
- Teaching is typically good. Effectively planned tasks that meet pupils’ individual needs ensure that pupils are keen to do well. Relationships in lessons are strong.
- The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good and students gain a range of qualifications.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The teaching of sounds that letters make (phonics) is not always accurate enough to help pupils improve their reading.
- The new assessment and tracking system is not yet fully in use in all areas of the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 11 lessons, many of them jointly with the senior leaders. In addition, the inspectors also listened to some pupils sharing their books.
- The inspectors spoke with several different groups of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the Chair of the finance committee and the Director of the Propeller Academic Trust.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's own information about pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and pupils' learning journals.
- The inspectors took account of the 11 parent responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View). The 15 responses to the staff inspection questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Robert Arnold

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kingfisher School converted to become an academy school on 1 February 2013. When its predecessor school known as Kingfisher School was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- Kingfisher School along with its partners, Fitzwaryn School and Abingdon and Witney College, are known as 'The Propeller Academy Trust'. All three work closely together but have kept their original names.
- This school caters for pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties many of whom also have autism. A few pupils also have hearing impairment, visual impairment and/or physical difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Pupils are placed at Kingfisher School from local nurseries, primary schools and other special schools.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very low.
- There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Around one in five pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is below national figures. This is additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals or those children who are looked after by a local authority.
- The school receives additional primary sports funding.
- Off-site training for sixth form students takes place at the local Abingdon and Witney College and for some KS3-5 students at Pennyhooks Farm.
- Pupils come from all parts of Oxfordshire and most travel to school in buses or taxis.
- The school has early years provision for two-year-olds but there was none at the school during the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide training for staff to ensure that the use of phonics is consistent across the school.
- Ensure the new system for tracking pupils' progress is used regularly to check how much progress is being made and target support when required.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- There has been a strong drive to improve all aspects of the school's work since it became an academy. The headteacher together with governors and other leaders and staff have successfully improved the quality of teaching and raised achievement. They have ensured that all pupils receive a good education, and achieve well.
- Key leaders and managers, including middle leaders, have high expectations and are fully committed to improvement. Middle leaders have worked diligently to develop the new, relevant curriculum that is engaging pupils' interests well.
- Together with the governing body, leaders model good professional standards in their work and have created a culture of high expectations for all pupils.
- The school's view of itself is thorough and accurate. Policies are well thought out to ensure that pupils make at least good progress in literacy and numeracy.
- The effective range of subjects on offer engages pupils well and ensures that they enjoy learning. This contributes well to pupils' academic achievements, their physical skills and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Together these aspects promote pupils' good behaviour and understanding of safety well.
- A new system for checking pupils' progress has been developed recently to enable leaders to assess pupils' achievements so that any pupil falling behind can quickly be supported to improve. However, leaders have not ensured that this system is fully embedded across the school. As a result, it is not yet fully effective in checking pupils' outcomes.
- Parents are pleased with the school and all of those who responded to the online questionnaire said that they would recommend the school to other parents.
- Partnerships with their academy partners are good and have improved because of shared funding for sports. This has enabled most pupils to take part in team tournaments together and to receive training from experienced staff, improving their health and fitness.
- Procedures for setting targets for teachers are fully established and leaders ensure that salary increases are not awarded unless staff have met their targets, based on pupils' progress. As a result, leaders have improved teachers' skills.
- Leaders ensure that all staff have regular training in aspects such as safeguarding of pupils, so that there is consistent practice across the school.
- The experiences offered by the school support British values and contribute well to pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils regularly visit local shops and places of interest to support their studies. They join in with community activities showing their good behaviour and their awareness of safety. The school supports pupils to make choices for their next stage of education, training or work.
- Equality of opportunity is ensured for all pupils at the school through the curriculum. The study of different faiths and cultures and regular assemblies ensure that there is no discrimination of any kind.
- The school receives good support from the academy leaders who expressed confidence in the actions of the headteacher. Links with the wider community are developing well. Work experience offers are available at 'Pennyhooks Farm' contributing well to pupils' preparation for their futures.
- Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. Safety checks are undertaken each month and staff receive training each term or when any changes are made. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained in identifying pupils at risk of harm.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding because there is more to do to sharpen all pupils' phonics skills and to embed the new system for showing each pupil's small steps of progress.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has improved since the academy opened because it is well led and provides good challenge to leaders. Governors are fully involved in checking teaching and behaviour so that they know how well pupils are doing. Governors have received training so that they have a good range of skills which they use well to benefit the school. Members know how effective the school is because they carry out regular checks and receive termly reports from staff about pupils' achievements. They fully understand the use of data and how it compares with other similar schools. Governors manage the school's finances well so that additional funding is used to help pupils who are eligible to receive it. It is used well to provide additional resources and support so that these pupils' achievements are at least as good as their classmates. Governors ensure that the best teachers and staff are rewarded and they

understand the importance of setting targets for teachers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils show positive attitudes in lessons and across the school. Documentation shows that there are very few recorded incidents of poor behaviour.
- New recording of behaviour incidents indicates that these are diminishing, showing some marked improvements in some pupils' behaviour over time. There is scope to reduce incidents even further, however, and this is why behaviour is not outstanding.
- Pupils have limited understanding of bullying and incident and accident records do not record any bullying. A few older pupils told the inspectors that they did not think there was any bullying at the school.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are promoted well by the good range of learning that fully meets pupils' individual needs and abilities. As a result, there have been no exclusions over the past two years.
- The promotion of pupils' personal development is good, through good quality support and the exciting activities they experience. Leaders promote tolerance for all pupils and help them to be well prepared for life in modern Britain through their study of different faiths, cultures and lifestyles.
- Effective provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils includes good quality links with their partners in the academy. Pupils understand right and wrong and there is a balanced approach to pupils' broadly Christian religious education which encompasses world faiths.
- Pupils are prepared well for their lives after leaving school through their good quality achievements and accreditation.
- Children in the early years behave well. Students in the sixth form behave well in lessons and in their free time.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and most show this by their improving attendance.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Older pupils told the inspectors that they feel safe. Leaders ensure that pupils' individual needs are accounted for through good quality risk assessments for any activity or visit.
- Case studies show that a high priority is given to safeguarding. No pupils access social media independently, ensuring their e-safety.
- Children in the early years setting are safe and secure in class and in the outdoor play area.
- Students in the sixth form are safe and secure in their accommodation.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time in most subjects is consistently good. As a result, pupils make good progress in most subjects, including English and mathematics. The proportion of good teaching has increased this year because of effective training and rigorous checks by leaders.
- Good and sometimes outstanding teaching enables all groups of pupils to make good or better progress.
- Expectations in lessons are almost always high, ensuring that pupils deepen their knowledge so that they make good progress in their areas of learning.
- Reading and writing are usually taught well. Just occasionally the teaching of reading is limited by an inaccurate approach to phonics which confuses a few pupils. As a result teaching is not outstanding.
- The teaching of writing benefits from the good use of resources that guide pupils to express their ideas or make marks. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are often helped to express their ideas through technology or photographs so that they can have their say.
- The teaching of mathematics is good and typically engages pupils well because they enjoy the activities set. In Years 5 to 8, for example, pupils really enjoyed a shopping game where they had to find the right coins to buy an item. Pupils were highly challenged by the task and achieved particularly well. Very effective questioning extended their understanding of the value of coins.
- Good levels of support in literacy lessons helps pupils to improve their skills so that they can complete their tasks and make good progress.
- The teaching of communication is good because of the high level of support provided by speech

therapists. The use of signing and/or symbols is usually evident in lessons helping pupils to respond to questions or express their ideas. Just occasionally not enough use of these resources is evident.

- Pupils' work is regularly marked. This is usually verbal but is always typically helpful, giving examples of how pupils can improve their skills and what they could try next time. This is particularly evident in English and mathematics. New assessment systems are helping staff to see how well pupils achieve.
- Teaching in the early years provision and in the sixth form is good.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The pupils' attainment on entry is well below that expected for their age, because of their learning difficulties. However, progress across year groups in a wide range of subjects has improved and is consistently good and evidence shows that pupils achieve well. Inspection evidence and school information show that achievement in English and mathematics is good.
- All groups of pupils, including those who receive additional government funding, those with a diagnosis of autism, or sensory or physical difficulties, achieve well.
- Just very occasionally pupils' achievement in reading and writing dips slightly when there are some inaccuracies in the teaching of phonics which confuses them. At these times pupils' achievement is not as good and they are sometimes unable to complete the tasks set. This is why achievement is not outstanding.
- Achievement in mathematics is particularly good and pupils really enjoy these lessons because of the good practical tasks that engage them well.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is similar to, and sometimes better than, that of other pupils in the school so that gaps between pupils are closing.
- Pupils with additional special educational needs receive effective support to enable them to work alongside their classmates. They make similar progress because of the additional expertise provided for them.
- Pupils' sports skills are improving due to additional funding that has enabled the school to join in with additional team sports with their partner academy and other schools. As a result pupils are developing healthy lifestyles because they are undertaking regular exercise. The school's large swimming pool is very well used so that many pupils learn to swim.
- Children in the early years provision and students in the sixth form achieve well.

The early years provision is good

- Children in the Nursery and Reception class get off to a good start to their school lives. They benefit from appropriate accommodation and enjoy playing in the classroom and outdoors.
- There have been a lot of changes in the past two years because the needs of children are more varied and challenging than previously.
- The education offered to all children has depth and breadth across the seven areas of learning and provides some exciting resources and a wide range of activities.
- The quality of teaching is good and all adults plan activities that are set at the right level. For example, staff plan a programme that is structured to meet individual needs and includes opportunities for exploration. Also, children enjoyed playing with toys and investigating activities around the classroom. The outdoor area is spacious and safe. Expectations of each child are high.
- Activities are well organised. Planning contributes well to the development of children's learning, their physical and emotional health, safety and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Effective working partnerships with therapists support children's well-being and ensure their good progress.
- Children's skills are regularly checked to ensure they make good progress. Records show that all children met their targets last year and are on track to do the same this term.
- Children are taught simple phonics daily, providing opportunities for more-able children to learn how to match letters and sounds through playing games. Leaders acknowledge that more training for staff in the approach to phonics is required.
- Staff work well with parents, keeping them well informed about their children's progress through home/school books.
- Safeguarding and child protection policies are implemented well so that children are safe and secure.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the importance of staff training and development so that all staff have appropriate qualifications to support children. Monitoring is regular and ensures that there is

continuous improvement. Leadership of the early years provision is good.

- Children behave well and most are beginning to interact with adults and other children.

The sixth form provision

is good

- The sixth form is good. Leaders have an accurate view of the sixth form. Programmes and accredited courses are in place and these meet students' individual needs and abilities well.
- Relationships between students and staff are positive and staff are proud of their students and keen for them to do well. Students are well looked after and effectively supported in lessons and in their free time. Staff are friendly and students know that there is always someone to talk to.
- Progress is good. All students met their expected targets and achieved their accredited courses last year. Progress is not outstanding, however, because although some students exceeded expectations or made rapid progress, the system to track progress is new. Leaders are working to improve provision and students have some opportunities to follow vocational courses at a local farm and at their partner college.
- The sixth form curriculum ensures that students have opportunities to learn about the wider world and to develop their own independence skills. They have regular trips, for example, into the local area to shop for ingredients.
- Achievement in English and mathematics is good because of the high focus placed on these areas. Students in the sixth form make good progress on their accredited courses.
- Students attend Abingdon and Witney College for one day a week to undertake work-related courses which they thoroughly enjoy and which contribute to their employability.
- Teaching in the sixth form is relevant to the ages of the students. A good start has been made in social development, through working together in groups.
- Students' behaviour is good and they told the inspector that they enjoy the sixth form.
- Students feel safe and secure in their accommodation.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good and the range of qualifications on offer is improving. College links are improving and students' work is regularly checked to ensure that they are making good progress.

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	139079
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	447823

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	7
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barry Taylor
Headteacher	Adrienne Martin
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 November 2011
Telephone number	01235 555512
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