

North Kesteven School

Moor Lane, North Hykeham, Lincoln, LN6 9AG

Inspection dates 12–13 March 2015

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
Sixth form provision	Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Standards have been consistently above average in Key Stage 4 over the past three years.
- The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership that focuses on improving teaching and drives the school forward.
- Governors are knowledgeable about and supportive of the school and so contribute to improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Students' behaviour is good. They enjoy being at school and have a very positive attitude to their learning.
- Teaching is good because teachers set lively and exciting tasks that enable students to build their learning step by step.
- Good provision and guidance for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are central to the school's work.
- The school's work to keep students safe is good. Students, parents and staff say that this is a safe school.
- Students' attendance is above average.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While there is some high-quality marking in students' books, providing clear guidance as to what they need to do to improve, this good practice is not consistent across all classes.
- Standards in the sixth form do not match those in the rest of the school.
- Science results are not as good as those in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 47 lessons, including several shared observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors listened to students read and looked at samples of their recent work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, teachers and members of the governing body. Discussions took place with groups of students.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of school documents, including: the school's self-evaluation; its development plan; behaviour records; governing body documents; and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- The views of the 82 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, along with letters from parents. Inspectors also considered the views expressed in the 72 questionnaires returned by school staff.

Inspection team

Steven Cartlidge, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Iain Denning	Additional Inspector
Andrew Vind	Additional Inspector
Clare Cantle	Additional Inspector
Karen Kerridge	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- North Kesteven School became an academy school on 1 July 2011. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- North Kesteven School is an above average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students eligible for pupil premium funding, which provides additional funding for those students known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national average.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school works in partnership for its sixth form provision, with Sir Robert Pattinson Academy, as part of the North Hykeham Joint Sixth Form.
- There are currently 30 students attending work-related courses away from the school for part of the week at the Showroom, Pilgrim and Riseholme centres.
- Changes in staffing at senior leadership level led to a great deal of staff disruption during the past academic year.
- There have been many recent changes to staffing, including new heads of English and mathematics appointed since September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and so raise achievement, particularly in science, by ensuring that teachers:
 - in all subjects, give pupils clear advice when marking their work, so that they always know what they need to do to improve
 - check that pupils act on the advice they are given through marking
 - provide greater stretch and challenge in science for all students in order to closer match the standards achieved in English and mathematics.
- Improve students' achievement in the sixth form by ensuring that leaders have a clear understanding of information on students' progress and check that teachers set more challenging work, particularly in academic subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher knows his school well and has brought about improvements since the school became an academy. School improvement planning is rigorous, linked to effective action, and subject to accurate and regular checks by governors and senior leaders.
- Following tragic circumstances, at senior leadership level, the school has appointed effective senior leaders responsible for teaching, safeguarding and student data tracking.
- The leadership of teaching is good and the school places a high priority on improving teaching through good-quality training. Checks on teachers' performance are rigorous. Leaders use information from lesson observations and information about students' progress to set teachers targets for improvement. There is a clear understanding that decisions about promotion and pay rates are based on the impact of teaching on students' progress.
- The school is working towards its preferred approach to assessment. This is based on teachers explaining to students what they have done well in their work and offering advice for improvements. However, the quality of assessment and marking is not completely consistent in all classes.
- The appointment of new heads of English and mathematics has driven improvements in the quality of education for all students in their areas of responsibility, including the most able. Consequently, progress has accelerated during this academic year and standards are higher in these subjects. In the past, progress in science has not matched that in English and mathematics because students of all abilities have not always been provided with appropriately challenging science work.
- In the sixth form, leadership requires improvement because it has not secured students' good progress over time, particularly in academic subjects.
- The range of subjects and topics covered in all years is good. The curriculum recognises local, regional and global differences, including different cultures and beliefs, and it promotes an understanding of the points of view of others. Planning promotes fundamental British values around democracy, liberty, and respect and tolerance of faiths and beliefs. As a result, students are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Information about what is taught in the school is published on the school website and meets statutory requirements.
- All relevant safeguarding policies are regularly reviewed and there is a rolling programme of staff training in child protection, including as part of the induction for new teachers. Consequently, students feel safe at school and openly say so.
- Students who find difficulty with traditional subjects attend alternative courses away from the school. School leaders check regularly on the quality of provision, attendance, behaviour and progress of these students in order to ensure that they achieve as well as those attending school full-time.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively and has helped to develop the role of the teaching assistants. Students identified as in need of additional help, including those eligible for the pupil premium, Year 7 'catch-up' funding, and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are well supported. The school's evaluation of its expenditure on the support provided shows that these students are making similarly good progress to that of their classmates.
- The school makes sure that all students have the same opportunities to take part in all aspects of school life. Discrimination of any kind is tackled robustly.
- The school commissions the support it needs. For example, several outside agencies have provided well-targeted support for school leaders.
- Good careers advice aids students to make informed decisions at different points in their education. Almost all students are successful in moving to further education or training at the end of Year 11. The advice about

requirements of courses offered in the sixth form is accurate and helps most students to make the right choices. As a result, most students, particularly those studying vocational subjects, successfully complete their courses in Year 12.

■ The governance of the school:

– The governing body is well informed. It challenges school leaders and holds them to account for students' achievement. It compares the school's performance with that of schools nationally. Governors also strongly support the school and its leaders. They understand the headteacher's vision for the school's further improvement. They manage the performance of staff well and ensure that the salary progression of staff is justified by the outcome of students' progress and achievement. They also have an understanding of new National Curriculum requirements, including the rigour needed for assessment processes. They ensure that the curriculum promotes tolerance and respect and prepares young people positively for life in modern Britain. Governors check carefully on the use of additional funds from the pupil premium in improving the achievement of eligible students. Explanation and action from school leaders and managers are called for when performance does not advance as intended. The governing body oversees the management of finance and resources expertly. Governors rigorously check safeguarding practice and, as a result, safeguarding procedures meet current legal requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. They are very polite, courteous and friendly, and there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school.
- There is good behaviour around the school and low-level disruption in classes is rare. This is because of the school's promotion of spiritual, social moral and cultural values, and students' sense of growing responsibility.
- Students have positive attitudes to learning. They are prompt to lessons, bring the necessary equipment and settle down to work quickly. Relationships are very positive. Students work well together and respond positively to their teachers. School leaders' regular monitoring of the behaviour of students attending alternative provision also demonstrates it is good at all times.
- Attendance has been below the national average. The school has worked to improve this through several initiatives, including in conjunction with outside agencies who work with students and their families on improving attendance. As a result, attendance has improved and is now above the national average.
- The school maintains a detailed log of behaviour-related incidents, which includes details of any action taken. Records show that there have been very few incidents of poor behaviour and only a very small number of exclusions.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The school site is safe and any visitors are appropriately checked. All staff are rigorously checked prior to appointment.
- Students feel safe and are aware of how to keep safe and secure. For example, they understand the potential dangers when using the internet. They also report, and records show, that on the rare occasions bullying occurs, staff deal with it effectively. Students say that any instances of homophobia or racism are not tolerated.
- The overwhelming majority of parents feel that their children are kept safe and are well looked after.
- The school liaises well with the alternative providers to check attendance, behaviour, safety and progress of students attending the off-site provision.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers set challenging work that students relish. This was particularly evident in a fast-paced Year 11 mathematics lesson where students were calculating the area of shapes. The tasks were challenging and stimulating, and students were engaged in discussions about how to carry out the calculations. The most-able students had their work targeted at the higher levels. Students' commitment was evident throughout and the progress demonstrated was good.
- Teachers ensure high levels of co-operation from students and teachers' passion for their subjects inspires students to aim high. For example, in a Year 8 dance lesson, students demonstrated, very enthusiastically, how trust with a partner is paramount, when performing particularly difficult dance routines. All were keen to talk to their classmates about the confidence needed to carry out such demanding high-level work.
- Teachers know their students well and carefully plan learning that challenges all abilities and groups, including disadvantaged students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and the most able. Experienced and well-qualified support staff ably assist teachers by working in the classroom with individual students and with small groups to enable all to achieve well.
- Teachers provide constructive verbal feedback to students but written feedback, in the form of marking, varies. In the best practice, teachers' written comments explain to students what they need to do to improve their work and contribute well to the progress that students make. Students value this kind of feedback, particularly when they are given the opportunity to reflect and act upon the comments. However, this practice is not consistently effective across the school. Not all teachers check that students act on the advice they are given through marking.
- Students complete homework to a good standard and this gives them a strong base for tackling work in the following lesson. Parents agree and are very supportive of the progress that homework helps their children to make.
- Teaching in science has not allowed students to make the same progress as that seen in English and mathematics. Teachers do not always use information about what students already know in science to set work at the right level for those of different abilities. The most-able students are not always challenged enough because work is too easy for them, while others are held back because they are expected to tackle work that is too hard.
- Teaching in the sixth form requires improvement. Teachers do not challenge students enough, particularly in academic subjects, in order for them to reach higher standards.

The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2014, the proportion of students attaining five A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics was above average, and attainment has been similarly above average for the past three years.
- In 2014, students made good progress in mathematics. However, progress in English was slower. The school has tackled this, under new leadership of the English department. Actions already taken, including rigorous monitoring, has resulted in students now making the same good progress in English as they do in mathematics. School information shows that students are on track to attain above-average standards in English in 2015.
- The school is using its pupil premium funding effectively for extra staffing, one-to-one tuition and funding for additional educational resources for eligible students. Disadvantaged students did not achieve as well as their classmates in 2014. They did not make the same good progress as their classmates in English or mathematics and the attainment gap widened as a result. On average, they were half a GCSE grade behind in both English and mathematics. When compared to all students nationally, they were two thirds of a grade behind in English and mathematics. The reasons for this have been thoroughly investigated by senior leaders and now rigorous tracking and well-planned academic support are helping to close the gaps. Evidence seen in students' books indicates they are on track to achieve higher outcomes in 2015.

- Results in science in 2014 were not as high as those in English and mathematics. New initiatives, including ensuring students are entered for the most appropriate GCSE level of paper, have been introduced in 2015 to tackle this underperformance. Evidence seen in students' work indicates they are, this year, making similar progress to that in English and mathematics.
- The most-able students are making good progress across a wide range of subjects. Even greater stretch and challenge are being provided, and this is leading to further improved results for the most able.
- The school has effective systems to track the progress and direct specific support for students in Year 7 who are eligible for the 'catch-up' premium. This is additional funding for those students who join the school with below-average literacy and numeracy skills. Support includes the 'Lexicon group' for reading and '7Club' for mathematics. As a result, the school's data show that these students are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Students who study work-related and other subjects off the school site are gaining appropriate qualifications and making good progress.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. Students have not achieved well, particularly in academic subjects. School internal assessment information indicates a small improvement is expected in 2015 results.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. The school does not have a sufficiently clear understanding of information on students' progress to ensure that teachers plan and set work at the right level. This leads to a lack of challenge, particularly in academic subjects. Results in 2014 show below-average attainment in A and AS level. Attainment in vocational courses was average. The proportion staying on in Year 13 is above national average.
- Teaching in the sixth form is improving but there is too much variation in the quality across the subjects. As a result, students do not make good or better progress in all subjects.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is good. Students take an active role in the life of the school and the community. Their attendance and punctuality are close to the national average.
- Students in the sixth form provide excellent role models for younger students. They get on well together and support the school's activities, including listening to younger students read; mentoring younger students and acting as ambassadors at various school events.
- The sixth form meets the current national 16–19 interim minimum standards.
- Students are very positive about the quality of careers information and guidance they receive. Many go on to study at university; others opt to take up apprenticeships.
- The school's partnership with Sir Robert Pattinson Academy ensures that the range of subjects on offer in the sixth form is appropriately broad and balanced.

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	136871
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	453305

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1365
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Norma Tutty
Headteacher	Martin Connor
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01522 881010
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