

Kingswood Secondary Academy

Gainsborough Road, Corby, NN18 9NS

Inspection dates 21–22 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils	Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- In 2014, GCSE results were well below the national average, including in English and mathematics. The proportions of students making expected and good progress in English and mathematics were below national averages.
- Although students' progress is improving this year, the proportion of students making good or better progress is not high enough. This is also the case for the most-able students.
- Teaching is not always as good as it should be because work is not pitched at the right level.
- Not all teachers check that students act on the advice they receive in marking that shows them how to improve their work.
- The quality of teaching varies across subjects. Teachers do not use their knowledge of what students already know and can do to move them on to the next level of learning.
- Although the rate of progress of disadvantaged students is improving rapidly, there is still too great a gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students and all students nationally.
- The reading of the least-able students and their basic skills in calculation and the application of number are not secure. In writing, their use of vocabulary is sometimes limited and unambitious. Students do not have in-depth knowledge in several of the subjects they are studying.

The school has the following strengths

- The unflinching determination of the Principal, supported well by the senior leadership team, is improving students' achievement and behaviour.
- Students' achievement in English and mathematics has improved since the school became an academy because of better teaching and leaders' drive and determination.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is now good, both in the specialist on-site provision and in the main academy.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the academy is good. They attend regularly, which is a significant improvement from when the school first became an academy.
- The sixth form has improved well this year and is now good. Students are committed to their studies as a result of consistently good teaching.
- Leaders make sure that the academy is a safe place to be and that students are well cared for.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a suitable curriculum and extra-curricular activities and clubs.
- Governance from the sponsor trust is contributing significantly to improvements at the academy through its high level of support and challenge for leaders.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 parts of lessons, including nine jointly made with academy leaders. Inspectors listened to a small number of students read.
- Meetings were held with the Principal and other senior leaders, subject leaders, staff, students and two members representing the academy’s sponsor, including its Chief Executive. Inspectors spoke to students informally at break and lunchtime.
- The inspection team looked at documents provided by the academy, including: the academy’s self-evaluation and its improvement plans; safeguarding documents and those relating to attendance and behaviour; data on students’ progress; records of checking on the quality of teaching; and minutes of the academy’s local advisory council.
- Inspectors took account of 69 staff questionnaires and 21 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, and also an analysis of the academy’s own parent questionnaire.
- Records of students attending the off-site provision were investigated during the inspection.

Inspection team

Dilip Kadodwala, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
John Randall	Additional Inspector
John Conway	Additional Inspector
Ian Jones	Additional Inspector
Dorothy Martin	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The academy opened in September 2013. When its predecessor school, The Kingswood School, was last inspected in November 2012, it was judged to require special measures.
- The academy is sponsored by the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust. The trust is responsible for the governance of all the academies it sponsors. This academy has an 'advisory council', which consists of a small group of parents and staff. Legal responsibilities are held by the Greenwood Dale Foundation Trust.
- The great majority of students are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The academy uses Education Youth Services as alternative provision for seven students in Years 9 to 11. Five of these students attend the provision on a full-time basis.
- The academy offers specially resourced provision for 14 students who are disabled or who have special educational needs. In this provision, the students have autistic spectrum disorders.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more students gain five good passes at GCSE including in English and mathematics by ensuring:
 - teaching is always pitched at the right level of difficulty and is appropriately demanding for all groups of students, including the most-able and disadvantaged students
 - teachers make better use of the information they hold on what students already know and can do when planning lessons
 - teachers check systematically that students consistently act on the advice they are given about how to improve their work.
- Improve achievement by identifying precisely where students' skills and knowledge are still not as secure as they need to be in all subjects, but especially for the least-able students in reading, writing and mathematics, and drawing up action plans with all subject leaders so that these points are given an increased emphasis by teachers in lessons.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Expertly led by the Principal, senior leaders have shown resilience and determination to tackle significant weaknesses in students' achievement and behaviour. Leaders' success in improving these aspects of the academy is clearly evident in the quality of work students submit in all classes. Students' behaviour, particularly in lessons, is also good and this has enabled achievement over time to improve from a low base.
- Actions to improve the academy are well-planned and build well on what has already worked. Leaders have tackled inconsistencies in students' achievement in the sixth form, so that now students benefit from good and better teaching. A significantly higher number of students stay on from Year 12 into Year 13.
- Leaders are not complacent. They are ambitious to build on the gains the academy has made to improve further the quality of teaching and raise students' standards in GCSE examinations at least to match those attained nationally. Data on current students' progress indicate that students are on track to improve their GCSE grades, including in English and mathematics, to a much higher level than in 2014.
- Staff and students are supportive of the academy's leaders. Staff morale is high; the great majority of staff who responded to the staff inspection questionnaire are very positive about leaders' work. Older students report that the academy is now a much better place to attend because of improved teaching and students' behaviour. Students are proud of their academy.
- Teaching is led and managed effectively. There is a strong 'no excuses' culture where leaders insist on removing barriers to improving teaching and learning. Leaders hold teachers to account for the progress their students make, and staff receive pay increases only when they meet their challenging targets for students' progress.
- Leaders' checks, including those by faculty and subject leaders, on the academy's performance are robust. The rising picture of students' progress is displayed clearly around the academy, which motivates all who work there to aspire to higher achievement. Senior and subject leaders discuss in regular meetings the progress of specific students as well as of groups, such as the disadvantaged students. This ensures that actions for tackling underperformance are timely and increasingly effective.
- Leaders at all levels of management have a secure understanding of the academy's strengths and weaknesses. This helps them to identify the right priorities for improvement in a measured way so that improvements are being sustained.
- The quality of subject leadership has strengthened and is now good. Senior leaders are effective role models for other staff. Faculty and subject leaders benefit from sharing and learning from the best practice in the academy and working with colleagues from other academies in the trust.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged students. Funds are used, for example, to provide individual and small group tuition in English and mathematics. This is helping current students to catch up with others in the academy. Funds are also used to help develop students' personal well-being and confidence and help them to take part in academy visits and sports and cultural activities.
- The academy is committed to ensuring all groups of students have an equal opportunity to succeed. Leaders recognise that, in this respect, there is work to do to ensure the most-able students achieve as well as they should.
- Students of all abilities and backgrounds are treated with respect. Discrimination is not tolerated. The academy's partnership work with other agencies is successful in engaging students and families whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. The academy has been successful in improving the attendance for those who previously had the highest absence rate and narrowing the achievement gaps

between disadvantaged students and others in the academy. Leaders are taking suitable action to reduce further the gaps between disadvantaged students and all students nationally.

- The choice of subjects and qualifications the academy offers students, including in the sixth form, is well suited to students' needs and interests. The academy makes good use of the off-site provision to help individual students remain motivated and engaged. Leaders keep a careful track of students' safety, behaviour, attendance and achievement while they are attending this provision.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through lessons, assemblies, tutor times and extra-curricular activities, including sports. Students' participation in these activities is good, including in the five minutes' silence observed during assemblies when students have time to reflect. The quality of displays around the academy is impressive and helps promote students' self-respect and their respect for others who may hold different views.
- The academy actively promotes students' understanding of the diversity of beliefs and practices that exists in Britain and in other countries. It has recently established a programme that is specifically designed to deepen students' knowledge and understanding about British values; all subjects have identified how these values can be shown and developed in ways specific to their faculties. Students have an increasing awareness of the dangers of extremist views and are encouraged to develop their own informed views. Students are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Students are given good-quality careers information and guidance across the academy. Students have access to independent advice from an external source in addition to the guidance provided by the academy. When students transfer from primary schools, they settle in quickly and confidently. This is also the case when students join the sixth form.
- Leaders try hard to engage with parents through one-to-one meetings and regular newsletters. Leaders attend meetings held by a parents' forum to discuss concerns and respond to requests. For example, the academy's website has been revised to enable parents to access information more readily.
- The sponsor provides the right level of support to help the academy to improve its provision and outcomes. It has had demonstrable success in improving teaching and students' achievement.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. All necessary checks on staff are carried out and maintained, supported by suitable training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The board of trustees provides a good balance of support and challenge for the academy's leaders. It uses its expertise judiciously, making sure that the management of the academy's resources lead to improvement in students' achievement.
 - Members fully understand how the academy's performance compares with that of other schools and are able to ask searching questions about how well students are achieving. This includes knowing how well disadvantaged students are doing compared with others in the academy and all students nationally. This helps them to check the value provided by the pupil premium and the 'Year 7 catch-up' funding expenditure.
 - Members understand how well teaching is improving and its contribution to students' achievement. Members are robust in their oversight of the academy's systems for checking teaching and linking teachers' pay to the progress of their students.
 - Support and challenge for the academy's leaders are effective. Members ensure that only good performance is rewarded. Support from the trust's resources and expertise are well-targeted, so that staff gain from their professional development opportunities.
 - Members regularly check that safeguarding arrangements are working well and that they meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. Students move around the academy responsibly, showing courtesy to each other and to adults who work in the academy. Almost no litter is left around the site and students cooperate with academy expectations that litter is disposed of sensibly after they have eaten in the dining hall. There is no sign of graffiti.
- The academy has raised its expectations about students' punctuality in the mornings and these are met increasingly well. The great majority of students arrive on time and lessons start without fuss. Students almost always bring the right equipment to the academy and only need occasional reminders from tutors.
- Leaders and staff have taken concerted action to make sure that there is consistency in teachers' expectations of behaviour in lessons. The result is that there is hardly any low-level disruption to learning.
- The proportion of students who have been permanently excluded is very low; no students were excluded last year and none has been so far this year. Fixed-term exclusions have been reduced significantly this year, as has the number of students who are withdrawn from lessons. When students have to attend another learning area in the academy temporarily, time is spent purposefully and these students are subsequently reintegrated well in daily lessons.
- Students say that they are clear about the importance of good attendance and behaviour. The great majority of students attend regularly and rates of persistent absence have dropped dramatically because of the academy's effective work with students and their families.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Staff are clear about their role in keeping students safe and leaders make sure that staff are regularly and suitably trained about safeguarding.
- Students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and those supported by the specialist provision on site, say that they feel safe and well cared for.
- Students are confident that they know who to go to if they have problems, knowing that their concerns will be taken seriously and dealt with effectively.
- Students say that they learn about the importance of good health and keeping safe through assemblies, tutor time and a variety of lessons, including in their personal, social and health education programmes.
- Students understand the dangers of using the internet and the risks involved with social networking sites.
- Students are aware of the different kinds of bullying, including homophobic and cyber-bullying. They say that it is uncommon, but when it does occur it is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff.
- The small number of parents who responded to Parent View mostly agree that their child is kept safe and that the academy deals effectively with bullying. A greater proportion of parents responding to the academy's own survey of parents, using the same statements as those on Parent View, endorse very positively the academy's work to keep students safe and to make sure that they behave well.
- The academy works well with the off-site provider to check that the safety, attendance and behaviour of the very small number of students who attend is good.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Not enough of the teaching is consistently good. As a result, students do not make consistently good enough progress over time.
- Students are not always challenged to tackle work that is demanding and this limits the level of progress they are able to make from their different starting points. This is particularly the case for the most-able students.
- The quality of teaching varies across subjects. There are too many lessons where teachers' knowledge of what students already know and can do is not used sufficiently well enough to move them on to the next level of learning successfully and quickly.
- Leaders have done much to develop and improve teachers' marking and the quality of feedback to students about their work, both in the main school and in the sixth form. Almost all the books inspectors saw were marked regularly. Students are now receiving helpful information on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. However, students do not always act on the advice they receive and not all teachers insist that students do so.
- There are strengths in teaching which academy leaders themselves have identified accurately. Inspectors saw lessons where teachers had high expectations, regularly checked how well students were making progress, and set suitable homework which extended the learning gained in lessons.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively. They work well alongside teachers and help provide well-targeted support to disabled students and those who have special educational needs. As a result, these students make good progress because their specific needs are understood well. Students in the specialist on-site provision also progress well because of good teaching that meets their needs well.
- Students have effective opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects. The teaching of reading is good. Students are encouraged to read widely and for pleasure, and many do so. As a result, their reading skills are improving rapidly. Students are encouraged to use correct subject-specific terminology, for example, through stimulating displays in classes and generally through teachers' marking. However, in writing, teachers sometimes accept work from the least-able students which includes vocabulary that is too limited and unambitious.
- Teaching in mathematics is generally good. Students develop sophisticated skills in their thinking where teaching is effective. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson on ratio, students successfully developed their understanding of dividing a quantity into a given ratio through teaching which promoted mathematical curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. However, teachers do not always identify quickly enough that the least-able students' calculation skills are insecure when planning lesson activities and do not pitch these at the right level. This restricts the progress these students are able to make.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Students join the academy with attainment that is low. GCSE examination results last year were below the national average. In part, this is because of changes to the curriculum introduced nationally which affected this cohort of students. However, the results also reflected some inadequate teaching.
- Although an increasing proportion of students are now making better than expected progress in English and mathematics from their different starting points, because of the much improved teaching they receive, not enough of them make good or better progress, including the most-able students. The reading of the least-able students and their basic skills in calculation and the application of number are not always secure. Their use of vocabulary when writing is often limited and unambitious. Students do not have sufficient in-depth knowledge in some of the subjects they are studying.
- Achievement is improving significantly. The academy's reliable tracking evidence, verified by external

examiners, suggests that students' achievement is likely to show considerable improvement on the 2014 results.

- Inspectors' scrutiny of current students' work across the academy shows that students are making rapid gains across different subjects. Where students historically have attained higher standards, for example, in the performing arts and information technology, their good progress is being sustained.
- A greater proportion of students are now making expected progress in English and mathematics. An increasing number of students are also making better than expected progress in these subjects. This represents a significant improvement from 2014, indicating the positive impact of action taken by senior leaders.
- The most-able students are making better progress too but not enough of them are making the progress of which they are capable. This is because they are not always challenged sufficiently in all subjects.
- In the past there has been a gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students and their peers in the academy and all students nationally. In 2014, the gap in English between disadvantaged students and their peers was around one GCSE grade; the gap was one and a quarter of a GCSE grade compared with all students nationally. In mathematics, the gap between the academy's disadvantaged students and their peers was one and a quarter GCSE grade and two grades compared to all students nationally.
- The academy's current tracking provides strong evidence of a narrowing of the gap between disadvantaged students and their academy peers to around half a GCSE grade in English and two thirds of a grade in mathematics. However, disadvantaged students' attainment is still too far behind that of all students nationally.
- The academy makes good use of additional funding for younger students whose literacy and numeracy levels are too low on arrival. Good quality support is provided to students who arrive in Year 7 working below expected levels in English and mathematics. This enables the vast majority to catch up by the end of the year.
- Last year a small minority of students took their mathematics GCSE examinations early with very little benefit, although it was not the policy itself that limited the progress of these students. The practice of early entry is no longer used for students currently in Year 11.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve well against their challenging targets. These students achieve well because of high expectations of what they can achieve, the carefully-designed support they are given and the rigorous checks teachers make on their progress in learning.
- Students who attend the specialist on-site provision achieve well because of the support they receive, which is well-tailored to meet their needs. The academy ensures that these students also have access to mainstream classes. There is effective communication between the staff in the specialist provision and class teachers so that students make good progress in their learning.
- The very small number of students who attend alternative provision organised by Education Youth Services make good progress in their vocational studies. The academy's effective management of their curriculum makes sure that these students do not miss out on teaching in English and mathematics. Students' progress in these subjects is in line with that of their peers at the academy.

The sixth form provision

is good

- The sixth form is good and improving. Students usually join the sixth form with attainment which is below average. Attainment by the end of Year 13 is rising and getting closer to the national average because most students make good progress in a range of subjects.

- Students' achievement in vocational subjects is consistently good because the academy takes care to ensure students are placed on courses that reflect their prior attainment. This is also increasingly the case for students currently following academic courses.
- The academy has raised teachers' expectations about the number of courses that students can complete successfully. This is improving retention rates of students between Years 12 to 13. No students leave Year 13 without securing further education, employment or training.
- Good leadership is making sure that systems to check students' achievement are used consistently by all staff. Any students falling behind are quickly identified and suitable action is taken to support them to improve their performance.
- Teaching is good. Lessons are taught by subject specialists and students are set high expectations which are mostly met. There are positive working relationships between students and staff in all subjects and students work together on tasks, helping them to test out their ideas and develop a range of skills well.
- Students attend regularly and their behaviour is good. They contribute willingly to help younger students, for example, with reading.
- Students are safe in the academy. They are aware of the dangers of the misuse of social media and helped to understand the risks and consequences of extremism.
- The academy provides high quality careers advice for all students, including those in the sixth form, in the form of an independent careers advisory service. This helps students to make informed and appropriate choices and prepares them well for their futures.
- The academy meets the current 16-19 national minimum standards. The very small number of students who have not yet gained GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics are on track to do so.

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	139957
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	450097

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	1130
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Wayne Norrie
Principal	Scott Hudson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01536 741 857
Fax number	01536 460 138
Email address	enquiries@kingswoodsecondaryacademy.org

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