

Kirkby College

Tennyson Street, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottingham, NG17 7DH

Inspection dates

14–15 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well. Attainment has improved considerably in the last year and students are currently reaching average standards by the end of Year 11 and this represents good progress in relation to their starting points which are below average and sometime low.
- Students' development of literacy and numeracy skills is good.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good.
- The progress of boys who currently attend the academy is good and the gap between their attainment and the standards reached by girls is narrowing.
- The progress of disadvantaged students is good and gaps between their attainment and that of other students is closing
- Teaching is good. Relationships between teachers and students are very positive and students enjoy acquiring knowledge and gaining skills.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are good. They are motivated by the quality of education and care they receive and attend well and safely.
- Students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good because they are encouraged to succeed in their learning. Their understanding of democracy, British values and respect for difference prepare them well for citizenship.
- Leaders and governors know the academy well and have an accurate view of any remaining areas for improvement. Their determined leadership has improved the quality of teaching and is driving up students' achievement.
- The small sixth form is good. Students' achievement is good in relation to their starting points and they are able to study a wide range of qualifications owing to the useful arrangements between the academy and other local partner schools.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teaching including in mathematics, does not support students to develop the higher level skills needed in order to further raise their achievement.
- Checks on the learning of some disadvantaged students are not frequent enough and this slows down the improvement in their attainment.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was part of a special group of inspections which focused on the educational experiences of students who live in communities located in the former coal-mining areas of the East Midlands.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including the academy's view of its own performance, improvement plans and safeguarding documents. They also looked at the academy's information about how well students are doing and its records relating to teaching, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered how far the academy had improved since its previous inspection and how well students have achieved since they joined the academy from their many different starting points.
- Inspectors observed students' learning in 28 lessons. Six lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders from the academy. Inspectors spoke with students and teachers in lessons and looked at their books. They also observed and talked with students at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Discussions were held with students from each year group and the Student Senate. Students were asked how well they were doing in different subjects and their views on behaviour, safety and life in modern Britain.
- Discussions were held with senior and subject leaders in the academy, the School Improvement Partner and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of 15 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 30 responses of teachers and staff who completed an inspection survey. Inspectors also considered information held by the academy about parental views and received an email from a parent. In addition, they held telephone discussions with two parents.

Inspection team

David Turner, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Nicholas Daws	Additional Inspector
Gwendoline Onyon	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kirkby College converted to become an independent academy in August 2012 and was first inspected in May 2013. At the time of this inspection it had just started its ninth term as a new school, with two published sets of academic results.
- The academy is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The Kirkby College Academy Trust is the relevant authority for the academy.
- The sixth form is small. Students are taught at the academy and through a consortium arrangement with Ashfield School, Quarrydale Academy and Sutton Community Academy.
- The vast majority of students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is very low.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for groups of students including looked-after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above average.
- Through its governing body, the academy runs a well-attended breakfast club for all students eligible for the pupil premium on each school day and an additional breakfast for all students, once a week.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is high.
- A small number of students attend part-time or full-time provision in a variety of courses off-site. These are provided in partnership with other schools through the North Ashfield Behaviour and Attendance Trust (NABA), at 'SPACE' which is located in Kirkby-in-Ashfield and at First Class Tailored Solutions, Mansfield
- The proportion of students entering or leaving the academy at non-standard entry points is considerably higher than for most schools nationally. 40 students joined the academy in this way in the last four academic terms.
- In summer 2014, the academy did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding to further accelerate students' progress by making sure:
 - teaching in all subjects, challenges students to think about and use their subject knowledge to tackle sufficiently difficult work, which deepens their understanding of the purpose of their learning and strengthens their higher level skills, especially in some mathematics lessons.
- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring:
 - information about the progress of students supported through the pupil premium is checked on more frequently, so that subject leaders can respond even more quickly to any concerns and adjust teaching and support arrangements for them in order to further raise their attainment.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- This academy is well-led. The headteacher offers clarity and determination and he is assisted by a capable leadership team. Leaders, governors and teaching staff share a clear understanding of the community served by the academy and are united in their common purpose to help the students achieve well and develop into mature, self-reliant young people. They have set uncompromising, high expectations. As a result and since the previous inspection, students receive a good quality education in a caring and encouraging school.
- Leaders and governors' evaluation of the academy's performance is accurate and their steps to improve the quality of teaching are successful. When evaluating teaching, they take account of the quality of students' work, assessments, progress information and the teaching they see in the lessons they visit. This helps them make the link between what happens in classrooms and how well students achieve. They use this information to provide support and advice to all teachers and set realistic targets for improvement as well as effective training.
- The academy's improvement planning is well-organised around leaders' effective evaluation of performance. Leaders set out clear and realistic targets for the improvement of teaching quality and students' achievement, especially for boys, those eligible for the pupil premium and those with disabilities or special educational needs. Plans are set out in a logical order and arrangements for checking on their progress at key points in time are well-established.
- Subject leaders have received effective support in order to develop their leadership roles. Their improvement planning matches closely to the priorities set by senior leaders, especially for student achievement and the quality of teaching. Subject leaders accept and are held accountable for their performance and work closely with senior staff in the evaluation of teaching quality across their different departments. Their work has contributed to a higher quality of teaching.
- The management of the performance of teachers is well-established and effective. Information gathered during the inspection shows that pay increases are closely matched to the quality of teaching and students' achievement. Arrangements for supporting teachers who are new to the academy or the profession or training through 'Teach First' are well-established and effective.
- Leaders make effective use of pupil premium funding to support eligible students, many of whom present a range of special education needs and challenging personal circumstances. Students receive additional teaching in literacy and numeracy skills and regular catch-up lessons to support them to succeed in their examinations. They are also supported to attend school regularly and on time.
- The use of assessment information is effective. Leaders use it to set challenging academic targets and organise the improvement plan for the academy. They frequently check student progress to see how well students are learning and support those who require additional help. This is indicative of how well leaders promote equality of opportunity. This has helped many students to learn more quickly and raise standards. However, in the case of some of those supported by the pupil premium, checks do not always happen frequently enough.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is carefully organised to support the achievement of students of different abilities and has been changed in response to national changes in examination arrangements. As a result, students can study a wide range of courses, including GCSEs and vocational programmes. They can follow several study routes and receive effective information, guidance and support when making their choices. The curriculum also supports students reading, writing, communication and mathematical development. Further development is needed to support the development of some mathematics skills and leaders have identified this via their own evaluation.
- The academy's leaders are making effective arrangements to assess students when National Curriculum levels are removed. Leaders understand what is required and are working with other local schools to ensure there is consistent practice based on the new expectations for the knowledge and skills the students must

acquire by the time they complete the different stages in their education.

- The academy works closely with three local secondary schools to share expertise and resources for sixth form education and the improvement of behaviour and attendance. These arrangements are effective. The academy also shares good practice in teaching with many schools through a teaching alliance. An improvement adviser offers privately commissioned advice to leaders and this is also effective.
- Relationships between academy staff and the parent community are positive and information gathered during the inspection shows that parents are supportive of the quality of education provided. The vast majority of parents would recommend the school to others.
- The academy's arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. The academy ensures all staff and volunteers are subject to appropriate checks on their suitability to work with students and these are recorded correctly. Staff are suitably trained in safeguarding and child protection procedures and there are designated senior staff who oversee this work. The academy also works closely with the local authority and other agencies to ensure students are safe.
- Leaders ensure that appropriate, close checks are made on the progress, attendance, behaviour and safety of the small number of students who are educated off-site in part-time, temporary courses and full-time programmes.
- The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they show a clear understanding of the importance and value of British democracy. When asked, students are able to explain the importance of the academy's values of respect, equality, achievement, creativity and hard work. Leaders and teachers ensure students are encouraged to be ambitious and aspire to do well and contribute to their society.
- Important motivational messages from global leaders and philosophers are prominently displayed around the site while the names of the house system celebrate local figures including the celebrated children's author, Helen Cresswell. Students volunteer to help local charities, work hard for their Senate and meet with governors to discuss the improvement of the college. As a consequence of these activities, they develop mature and caring attitudes towards each other and their community. One older student spoke for many when he told inspectors, "Differences between people don't matter if we are kind to each other." Their work with veterans' groups makes them aware of the sacrifices others have made for them, including members of the armed forces. They appreciate how British parliamentary democracy works and how laws are made, as well as the need to respect the law.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is a dedicated team with an effective understanding of the local community served by the academy. Governors are suitably experienced and closely involved in the academy's work through regular visits and links to different departments. They also take their responsibilities seriously when checking on the progress of improvement work carried out by leaders. Consequently, governors know the academy well and are able to support leaders and teachers while holding them to account for performance and the quality of teaching. Governors have worked thoughtfully with leaders to make careful decisions about spending and offer a clear understanding of performance management arrangements. As a result, pay rises are well-matched to improvements in the quality of teaching and students' achievement. In addition, governors use their clear understanding of budgets to hold leaders to account for the ways in which pupil premium funding is spent and its impact.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Students' attitudes in lessons are positive. They respect the importance of learning and show genuine

interest in working hard, applying themselves and developing their knowledge and skills with confidence. They are cooperative when working with one another and maintain their effort when working alone.

- As a result of very encouraging and sensitive support from teachers, they are confident in demonstrating their skills and explaining what they have learned in front of others. Students wear the correct uniform, are well-equipped for lessons and their written work is presented with pride. Examples of low-level disruption of learning are extremely rare.
- Conduct around the academy is good. Students move between lessons safely and quickly and are considerate to visitors. They use the playgrounds, public spaces and dining areas in a sensible manner. There is little evidence of litter in the playground, dining area or corridors.
- Leaders, governors and teachers work very hard to set high expectations for standards of conduct and attitudes to learning, which are regarded as the foundation of the academy's community. They communicate these expectations very clearly to all students and families. Behaviour policies are used consistently by all staff and teachers invest a great deal of time in developing positive and encouraging relationships with students. As a result, students are motivated to try hard and respect their teachers and one another.
- The academy ensures a successful start to secondary education for its students, and this strengthens behaviour and attitudes towards learning and relationships. Leaders and teachers carefully organise the way in which Year 6 students are introduced to their new school while still in local primary school. Similar care and attention is given to the many students who join the academy at later points in their education.
- The academy is a leading member of the North Ashfield Behaviour and Attendance Trust (NABA), an organisation of four secondary schools cooperating with each other to support vulnerable students to successfully complete their education. The academy has taken in and supported students who have experienced very difficult personal circumstances or have been unsuccessful in their first secondary school. As a result of their time at the academy, their behaviour and attitudes have significantly improved.
- Attendance is above average owing to improvements since the previous inspection. The importance of attendance and punctuality is carefully explained and communicated to all students and families. The academy is sensitive and firm in its well-organised approach to improving attendance and students are well-supported to get into school.
- The number of exclusions has reduced, along with the numbers of detentions and other sanctions and students agree behaviour is generally good across the academy.
- At the time of the inspection, the very small number of parents who offered their views about behaviour were divided over the standard of behaviour. However, the views of students and other available evidence of parents' views studied by inspectors confirmed that the great majority of parents regard behaviour as good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Arrangements for entry into the academy are secure and checks on visitors and staff are firmly in place. Inspectors met formally with students from each year group and informally during lesson changes, break times and lunch. Students reported they felt safe and confident that any disclosures would be taken seriously.
- Students understand the different types of bullying and are confident that bullying is rare and will be tackled quickly on those rare occasions when it takes place and they report it.
- Students are well aware of potential risks when using the internet and mobile technology or social media. They can explain how to avoid these risks and the correct choices they should make when online. This is a result of the academy's promotion of safe behaviour when using such technology.

- Students' awareness of other personal risks are well-developed. This is a result of the academy working closely with the local authority and police to ensure students understand the importance of personal security, disclosing concerns to responsible adults and providing well-considered advice about sex and relationships.
- Attendance is now above average owing to improvements since the previous inspection. The numbers of students who are persistently absent have also decreased. The importance of attendance and punctuality is carefully explained and communicated to all students and families. The academy is sensitive and firm in its well-organised approach to improving attendance and students are well-supported to get into school.

The quality of teaching **is good**

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and supports the good achievement of students who currently attend the academy.
- Teachers know their students well and encourage them to believe they can succeed. Relationships are respectful and supportive and students respond very positively. They are well motivated and engaged by the consistent enthusiasm of their teachers and the care they receive. As a result, they work hard across different subjects and respond well to the high expectations set by their teachers.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They assess students accurately and plan different levels of work which help students gain the knowledge and skills required to make good progress. This has helped improve the achievement of all students and especially boys, those supported through the pupil premium and students who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- Questions are used skilfully and support students to apply their knowledge. Teachers adjust the questions they ask when checking on the progress of different students and listen carefully to what they say, so that they can challenge them to complete their thinking or help them clear up anything they do not understand properly.
- Work is interesting and requires students to apply what they know. One example was in a Year 11 Spanish lesson, where students were required to use their reading skills and vocabulary in order to quickly work out the meaning of an important passage of writing they had not seen before.
- Teaching supports the development of good reading skills. Students of all abilities make good progress in their ability to comprehend the meaning of stories and different texts and they also learn to identify the opinions of writers and draw conclusions from what they read. They become skilled at analysing poetry and making useful annotations as they study.
- Students' writing skills develop well and teaching helps them become more fluent and confident in their use of vocabulary and in the development of balanced arguments. In a Year 11 history lesson, students were taught well and to write confidently, about the influence of Medieval Christian and Islamic teachings on the development of medical treatments.
- Teaching is supporting good progress in mathematics. Students' knowledge of number and calculation are taught well. They also have opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge in other subjects including history, geography, science and design and technology. However, while it is making them more knowledgeable and skilled, some mathematics teaching does not support students to think through what they are doing sufficiently, in order to see the purpose and wider use of their skills. This prevents them making the best progress they are capable of.
- Students who are disabled or have special educational needs receive additional teaching which is well-planned to support their learning. They also receive good support within lessons from well-managed teaching assistants. In a Year 11 geography lesson, these students were successfully developing their map-

reading skills and could confidently explain the importance and purpose of contour lines and altitude symbols on an ordinance survey map.

- Teaching is carefully organised so that many students can receive additional help. Some are new to the academy and receive effective support in the Transition Unit, in order to quickly help them settle into their new school. A small number are relatively new to the United Kingdom and are effectively supported to develop their use of the English language.
- Marking is effective. Teachers and leaders have worked hard to raise the quality of marking and assessment. Teachers assess work regularly and their comments support students to improve. They also check that students have adopted the advice given.
- Teaching is now good but is not yet outstanding at the academy. This is because some teaching does not support students to think about how they can use their existing knowledge and skills when they start new work or are introduced to new ideas or problems to solve. As a result, they take longer to secure their understanding about what they are learning and this slows down their progress.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the academy at many different starting points with knowledge and skills which are below average or low for their age.
- Kirkby College is currently in its ninth term since opening in autumn 2012. There have been two sets of published results and because it is a new school, students who took examinations in 2013 and 2014 completed only part of their education here. Results were broadly average in 2013 but were below the government's minimum standard in 2014. At 29%, the proportion of students achieving 5A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics was significantly below average, particularly for boys and students eligible for the pupil premium.
- Assessment information shared with inspectors, examination coursework results, lesson visits and scrutiny of students' work show that achievement is good for students currently on roll in Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 3.
- Current standards in Year 11 and Year 10 are much improved owing to a period of accelerated progress in both English and mathematics, while attainment is higher in foreign languages, geography, history, sciences and vocational qualifications. Evidence gathered by inspectors indicates that Year 11 students are likely to achieve results similar to the national average in summer 2015.
- Students' progress and quality of learning in English is good because of a determined focus on supporting the improvement of their literacy knowledge and skills. Students' writing skills are effective. The development of reading is also well-supported, especially when analysing text or inferring opinion.
- Students' progress in mathematics is consistently good when acquiring knowledge and calculation skills.
- In 2013, the academy entered large numbers of students early for GCSE mathematics but has since stopped this. In the past, some of the most able students did not take the most demanding examinations in mathematics. This has stopped and the most able students will now sit the most demanding mathematics examinations.
- The large numbers of disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress taking account of their many different starting points. They present a wide range of needs but arrangements for assessing them are effective and this helps plan high quality support in lessons. Leaders and teachers ensure their needs are met through effective classroom support, additional teaching and well-organised support for literacy and numeracy. Careful attention is also given to supporting their emotional and personal development so that they can be socially confident and take on roles of responsibility at the academy.

- The achievement of students who have joined the academy at non-standard times is good. They enter at many different starting points of knowledge, skills and age but are supported to succeed through the effective transition arrangements the academy offers.
- Boys' achievement is improving quickly. Leaders and teachers have secured improvements to the quality of teaching and this is helping reduce the gap between boys' and girls' attainment.
- The achievement of the most able students is now good. This is a result of improved teaching which sets more demanding work for them to do and ensures closer attention is paid to their progress.
- The progress of the very small numbers of students who speak English as an additional language is good and in some cases exceptional. Most are in the earliest stages of acquiring English when they arrive. They are supported to achieve well and are able to take a full range of qualifications at GCSE and A-level.
- The progress of students who receive additional help as part of the Year 7 'catch-up' programme is also good and shows improvement in reading scores and numeracy skills. This is because of the effective transition work of the academy and arrangements for helpful tuition from suitably experienced staff.
- Most students educated off-site are taking short courses designed to support their social development. The academy takes appropriate action to ensure they attend well and are safe. Their learning on these courses represents good progress.
- The achievement of those students eligible for the pupil premium and currently on roll is now good and gaps are closing. They receive high levels of support to ensure they attend school regularly and the academy provides additional classes for them in literacy, numeracy and examination skills. In 2014, in English, the gap between their students and other students nationally was the equivalent of just over a GCSE grade and the gap in school was around half a GCSE grade. The proportions of these students making expected progress was below that of others nationally but was similar to students within school. The proportions making more than expected progress were low. In mathematics, the gap was the equivalent of one-and-a-half grades compared to other pupils nationally and almost a grade within school. The proportions making expected progress were lower than other students nationally and lower than those within school. The proportions making more than expected progress were low.

The sixth form provision is good

- The sixth form is small but has increased in size since the previous inspection. Leaders have ensured it offers a good quality educational experience to all students. This has been accomplished by working closely with three other local schools in order to offer a suitable range of courses and qualifications that support students' aspirations and needs. As a result, more students are choosing to join the sixth form at the end of Year 11 than in the past and many are the first people in their family to attend a university or achieve A-levels.
- Students are provided with good quality impartial advice and guidance about the courses they wish to study, which is offered well before they join the sixth form. This helps them to study for suitable qualifications which are best-suited to their needs. There are good arrangements in place to check on their progress once their courses have started and relationships between teachers and students are extremely positive. As a result, few students fail to complete their studies and retention rates are high. They speak very highly of their teachers who they regard as very supportive and who want the best for them.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers know their subjects well and plan work which is sufficiently difficult for their students. Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and students' progress. They communicate effectively with subject leaders to ensure students are on track to achieve the

standards they are capable of, and all teachers act quickly to make sure none fall behind. In lessons, students are provided with good quality advice and helpful feedback which support them as they apply their knowledge. One example of this was in an A2 history session, where students were helped to improve their essay writing skills when evaluating the French monarchy of the 18th century. In an A2 mathematics lesson, students were supported to demonstrate how the branch of algebra they were studying could be used for industrial purposes.

- As a result of good advice, teaching and support, students make good progress over time and this is reflected in their academic results. They enter the sixth form with GCSE standards which are below average but their final attainment has risen so that it was closer to the national rates in 2014 and current assessment information indicates similar results in 2015.
- The proportion of students going on to higher education, including 'Russell Group' universities, is increasing. Ex-students return to the academy in order to give presentations to Year 11 audiences on the benefits of sixth form as a means to get into university or a higher level of work. Specialist advice and tuition is given to support students' applications for university. In 2014, half of all students went to university and others took up high quality apprenticeships in fields including accountancy. The number of students who do not enter education, employment or training, following their time in the sixth form, has been nil.
- All sixth form students, who have not previously achieved a grade C in English and mathematics GCSE, are studying these subjects successfully and receive high quality support to achieve their target grade.
- Sixth form students make a good contribution to the life of the academy and this supports their own personal development. They serve as senior members of the Student Senate, represent students' views to governors and have helped lead changes to academy life, including the introduction of a new school uniform. They all participate in the Young Enterprise scheme which helps develop their awareness of business skills. They are involved in academy links with a school in India and participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme. They also volunteer for a number of local charitable campaigns, including efforts to recognise and commemorate the role played by veterans of the armed forces. The academy ensures they are supported to take part in visits to universities in order to help them prepare for their higher education experience.

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	138481
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	461985

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
Number of pupils on the school roll	539
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Reast
Headteacher	Simon Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2013
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