

Kenton School

Drayton Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE3 3RU

Inspection dates

27–29 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The differences between pupils' achievement in different subjects is stark. Too many pupils who do well in one or two subjects do not do well in other subjects, because of variations in the effectiveness of leadership and the quality of teaching.
- Inconsistency in the quality of teaching is especially evident in science, which leaders have been too slow to tackle, and in the humanities and modern foreign languages. Consequently, pupils' progress in these areas of study is weak.
- The improvements evident in the teaching of mathematics have been slow. Too many pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable, including disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding has not made enough difference for disadvantaged pupils in too many subjects. Differences in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others are not diminishing in the weaker subjects. In addition, too many disadvantaged pupils are absent too often.
- A number of leaders are new to their roles, so despite making a positive start, too much is a 'work in progress'. Leaders have not had enough time to make a significant difference to pupils' outcomes.
- Governors cannot account for the wide differences in achievement between subjects. They have not recognised the clear link between leadership, teaching and pupils' outcomes. Therefore, they have not been robust enough in their challenge to leaders.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' outcomes in English and arts subjects are strong. This is because of the effective leadership and, consequently, consistently good teaching in these subjects.
- Leaders have brought about much-needed improvements in behaviour. Pupils' behaviour and their personal development and welfare are good. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Most 16 to 19 study programmes are good, especially vocational programmes. Courses are well suited to the needs of students and help them to move on to suitable further study and the world of work.
- Pupils have access to a wide range of subjects from which to choose. Leaders and teachers give helpful, valued, impartial advice to guide pupils in their choices.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and governance by:
 - ensuring that leaders, when carrying out their checks, rigorously concentrate on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress
 - sharpening improvement planning so that there are clear milestones for improvement that help governors to check on the specific effect of leaders' actions
 - ensuring that leaders and governors can more rigorously account for the difference that additional funding makes, including the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding.
- Improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils, the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly in mathematics, science, the humanities and modern foreign languages, by:
 - checking that leaders' improved analysis of pupils' progress results in reducing differences between the progress of groups of pupils, particularly the difference in progress between disadvantaged pupils in school and other pupils nationally
 - eliminating inconsistencies in the quality of teaching within and between subjects
 - making sure that leaders and teachers learn from what makes leadership and teaching in some subjects more successful than in others
 - increasing the range and quality of resources and support for pupils who need to catch up in mathematics.
- Further raise the attendance of disadvantaged pupils so that it is nearer to that of other pupils nationally.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, leaders have not managed to bring about teaching which is consistently good. There are wide variations in the progress and attainment of pupils in different subjects. The differences between English and mathematics are especially pronounced.
- Leaders are only just beginning to take some effective action in science subjects, in which GCSE outcomes have been poor over a number of years. The current rates of progress for pupils in Year 11 are not fast enough to secure the better outcomes that leaders aspire to for 2017. Although there have been difficulties recruiting suitably qualified teachers, leaders should have done more to address this weakness earlier.
- Mathematics has been an area for improvement since the school became an academy. There have been improvements in mathematics teaching and outcomes over time, but these improvements have not been rapid enough, so too few of the most-able pupils, the disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the progress they should. The mathematics leader's actions are continuing to improve teaching, so that progress is now stronger in key stage 3. However, pupils currently in Year 11 have too much ground to make up because of previously weak teaching.
- A number of senior and middle leaders are new to their roles. Senior leaders have been effective in spotting the potential of staff to lead each subject. The new leaders show great promise and can clearly identify the effect their actions are beginning to have on teaching. However, much improvement has been too little and too late to shift the slow progress many pupils make in the weaker subjects, including the humanities and modern foreign languages.
- There has been much to do. The principal and other senior leaders have successfully eradicated inadequate teaching. They have improved the way they set targets for teachers, so that teachers are better held to account. Senior and middle leaders have become better at identifying the relative strengths and weaknesses in each teacher's teaching. Newly and recently qualified teachers and trainees feel well supported, including with behaviour management.
- Leaders have taken action to improve the way checks are made on the quality of teaching. They are now taking more account of a range of evidence, including looking at pupils' workbooks and speaking to pupils, rather than relying too much on lesson observations alone. Leaders are increasingly making links between teaching and the progress that groups of pupils make.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most-able disadvantaged, make good progress in English and arts subjects. However, leaders' use of pupil premium funding has enabled too few disadvantaged pupils to make the needed progress in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects of mathematics, sciences, the humanities and modern foreign languages.
- Leaders' use of the Year 7 catch-up funding enables many pupils to catch up on their reading and writing skills and to make good progress in English. However, leaders have been less successful in helping pupils to make better progress in mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress from starting points at least in line with that of other pupils in English and arts subjects

because the strong teaching in these subjects meets the needs of all pupils well. However, leadership of this aspect of the school's work has not helped these pupils to make similar progress in too many other subjects.

- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders have taken steps over the last few years to help more pupils to enter academic subjects that would qualify them for the EBacc. Pupils value the wide range of options open to them at both key stage 4 and post-16. All pupils benefit from the high-quality art package from Year 9 onwards. Leaders recognise the most-able pupils early, so that in Years 7 and 8 the pupils in the 'Russell Group' get to study a wider range of subjects, including two languages rather than one, computing, and two hours of enrichment per week. This includes public debating, philosophy and psychology, for example. A wide range of enrichment activities are available to all pupils who want to take part, including many sports, arts clubs, gardening and a cycle club, for example. Team united, a group of talented pupils with a special interest in technology, were the F1 in Schools UK Rookie Class Champions 2016.
- Leaders actively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Work to help pupils prepare for life in modern Britain is particularly strong.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not made a clear link between weak outcomes in some subjects and the quality of leadership and teaching. Governors have been too inclined to put differences in achievement down to the relative difficulty of each subject.
- Some governors are not clear about their delegated powers. They could not explain clearly their responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees.
- Leaders have generally identified the correct areas for improvement. However, improvement plans are not sharp enough to help governors identify and check the precise difference that leaders' actions are making to teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- There are strengths in governance. Members of the local governing board and trustees have an appropriate range of skills and experience. They provide strategic direction. For example, recognising the real strengths in the arts, the governing board pressed leaders to make sure that all pupils enter GCSEs in arts subjects. Governors have high aspirations for all pupils; they want pupils to believe in themselves, work hard and achieve the very highest standards. Governors and trustees carry out their basic statutory functions well, such as making sure that the budget is properly managed and that policies are reviewed regularly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They appreciate the visible supervision on entry to school in the mornings, at lunchtimes and between lessons. Staff are knowledgeable about child protection procedures, the signs to look for and to whom to report concerns. Leaders make referrals to the local authority social care services where necessary and keep a record of conversations and actions. Leaders actively track and trace children who go missing from school. Risk assessments are thorough; for example, measures have been put in place that keep pupils safe in their design and technology lessons.
- Some aspects of recording are not as thorough as they should be. Leaders put in place a number of measures during the inspection to further tighten the safeguarding procedures.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies between and within subject areas. It is the inconsistency in the quality of teaching that has led to wide variations in pupils' progress.
- Improvements in the teaching of mathematics have resulted in pupils making faster progress in key stage 3. The quality of teaching of mathematics over time has been inconsistent, so that the pupils currently in Year 11 are not making fast enough progress. Too many pupils, especially those with lower prior attainment, lack basic understanding of some mathematics concepts, which is holding them back. Where the teaching of mathematics is less strong, teachers give limited opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills. Pupils largely do not show the enthusiasm and commitment in mathematics that is evident in stronger subjects.
- Teaching in EBacc subjects, including geography, history and modern foreign languages, also varies in quality. While teaching is effective in some classes, this is not consistently the case, resulting in slow progress for too many pupils, including the disadvantaged. Where teaching is weaker, teachers do not take enough account of what pupils already know and can do. Too often, all pupils tackle work of similar challenge, regardless of their prior attainment.
- Teaching in science is particularly weak, as too often expectations are not made clear to pupils and pupils sometimes do not really understand what to do. This has led to poor GCSE outcomes over a number of years. In better science lessons, teachers establish clear learning and behaviour routines, and teachers' questioning is more effective.
- Conversely, teaching in English is consistently strong across the department. Teachers' questioning skills are particularly effective, generating discussion and deeper thinking. Pupils demonstrate a positive attitude and can explain how well they are doing because of effective feedback from adults. Teachers take account of diverse needs, making effective use of teaching assistants. Consequently, pupils of all abilities make good progress in English.
- This is also the case for arts subjects including photography and ceramics. The inspirational leadership of the art department results in highly effective teaching that switches pupils on and helps them to produce work of the highest quality. For example, Year 7 pupils are currently very motivated as they prepare work for an installation based on the Tower of London poppies exhibition in time for Remembrance Day. Pupils take pride in their drawing and painting. High-quality pupil artwork adorns the walls of the art department.
- Teaching in the personalised learning centre for pupils at risk of exclusion engages these pupils well. During the inspection, pupils were observed reflecting and making decisions.
- Learning support assistants use their training and a wealth of teaching aids and resources to provide bespoke teaching for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly in English lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Both

adults and pupils confirm that behaviour has improved from a low point over the last year or so.

- Just about all the pupils that inspectors questioned were positive about the behaviour they experience. Pupils are well presented in their uniforms and generally proud of and loyal to their school. Many pupils were keen to engage inspectors in polite conversation. Pupils respect the school environment. They are getting better at keeping the school premises free of litter.
- The impartial advice and guidance that adults provide is a particular strength of the school. This is evident in the extensive support in the form of information and tools on the school's website. Pupils say that they value effective careers and study guidance. Leaders are successfully raising aspirations, seen for example in the increasing numbers of pupils gaining entry to university year on year. All pupils in the personalised learning centre last year went on to education or training.
- The school's work to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils and to prepare them for life in modern Britain is also a real strength. Pupils discuss current affairs regularly through the systematic personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. For example, pupils have learnt about Islamophobia, myths about refugees and about food banks. Pupils have learned in assemblies through impressive presentations from one of their peers about what it is like to be a young Muslim immigrant in Newcastle. The school community publishes a report on these sorts of developments each term.
- Adults actively teach pupils about how to stay safe and keep healthy. All pupils who were questioned demonstrated a good understanding of the potential dangers of social networking, sexting, and what to do about incidences of online bullying. Pupils are encouraged to keep fit. For example, a large group of Year 11 girls were observed sustaining exercise over a lengthy period. Excellent sports facilities are available to pupils and the wider community outside school hours.
- Pupils say that bullying is not a problem and that they have trusted adults they can speak to if they are worried about anything. Inspectors questioned potentially vulnerable pupils, who also said that they felt safe. One pupil explained that some bullying he had experienced had been dealt with well, so it no longer takes place. Pupils value the two form tutors for each tutor group and having both a male and female head of each year group to whom they can talk.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' keenness is seen in how many of them arrive early in the morning. They arrive on time for their lessons with the right equipment and ready to get on promptly. Where teaching is strongest, pupils show an enthusiasm and resilience in learning.
- All parts of the school are well supervised by adults between lessons and at breaktimes so that despite the large numbers of pupils moving around, corridors are generally calm. Staff are consistent in following routines, so pupils follow them. One pupil said, 'Teachers treat us like adults, so we behave like adults.'
- Exclusions have also dropped sharply. Any pupils not excluded from school but not involved in mainstream lessons are meaningfully engaged in learning, including studying for GCSEs. This includes a number of pupils in alternative provision in another setting.
- There has been a sharp decrease in the number of behaviour incidents over the last

year. Leaders could do more to analyse behaviour information more forensically to identify the extent to which certain groups of pupils may be over-represented in the figures.

- Attendance has improved due to the concerted efforts of the attendance team. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains behind that of other pupils and despite an improvement in absence and persistent absence rates for these pupils, too many of them are still absent too often.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils enter the school with attainment generally below average. The rates of progress pupils make in different subjects vary widely. Outcomes in mathematics still require improvement, as well as in science, the humanities and modern foreign languages.
- In the last few years, progress measures have been consistently significantly below average in mathematics, despite an increasing proportion of pupils making good progress, year on year. This improvement stalled in 2016. The slow progress is true of the most-able pupils, the disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Because of improvements in teaching, pupils in key stage 3 are making stronger progress in mathematics.
- In 2016, there were improvements in the proportions of pupils achieving grades A* to C in some subjects. Despite these improvements, progress information confirms that many pupils still should have done so much better. For example, despite most entrants achieving an A* to C grade in French and German, not enough of the most-able pupils reached the higher grades.
- Too few of the current Year 11 pupils are on track to make expected progress in a number of subjects. Rates of progress are variable across the age range because of variability in the quality of teaching over time.
- Outcomes in physical education for the 10% of pupils who did GCSE last year were positive, with a third of pupils achieving an A*. Conversely, only a quarter of pupils last year achieved an A* to C grade in computing, having made very weak progress, where there was some disruption to teaching during the year.
- Outcomes in English have gone from strength to strength. The percentage of pupils who made both expected and more than expected progress towards their GCSEs in 2015 was above the national average. This further improved in 2016. Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and other most-able pupils all make good progress.
- Strong leadership and teaching in art subjects has resulted in high numbers of pupils achieving A* to C grades in art and design, photography and ceramics. Large proportions of pupils, including the most able, make very strong progress indeed.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The school offers an exceptionally wide range of courses and works successfully to help students make choices that help them to build on their key stage 4 achievements, while taking into account their aspirations and interests.
- Students' progress in a wide range of vocational subjects is strong because of the

largely effective teaching, which engages students well. Students do well in such courses as automotive engineering, manufacturing engineering, health studies, sports studies and beauty therapy.

- Students' progress overall at AS level and A level is close to the national average, with some variation between subjects. Relatively few students enter each of the many academic subjects on offer. Students do particularly well in art and design and less well in science subjects. Overall, considering all courses of study, outcomes are generally positive and comfortably above minimum standards.
- For those students who do not achieve at least a C grade in GCSE at key stage 4 in mathematics and/or English, the percentages who improve at least one grade are above national averages. Many pupils for whom GCSE mathematics is proving too difficult are helped to secure a level 2 qualification.
- The proportion of students who stay on at the school after Year 12 has increased year on year. The proportion of students who go on to education, employment and training at the end of their courses of study is above average. Over the years, there has been an increasing number of students who go on to universities, including students with high grades in vocational subjects. There has also been a substantial increase in the numbers of students taking up apprenticeships.
- Students benefit from a very strong enrichment programme in which there is increasing participation, and which makes a positive contribution to their personal and social development. In addition to work experience, which is compulsory for all Year 12 students, students get involved in a wide variety of activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, a sports leaders programme, debating and enterprise challenges. Students are involved in fund-raising, for example, for The Alan Shearer Foundation. Students learn first aid and money management. A school 'sanctuary committee' works to help asylum seekers and refugees.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is good. Students follow the 'smart casual' dress code and wear their ID badges with pride.
- The enthusiastic head of the sixth form checks the students' progress in each course at regular intervals and meets with course leaders to provide challenge and support. Leaders hold teachers to account for the progress students make. Leaders understand where the strengths and weaknesses in teaching are.

School details

Unique reference number	138120
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10000685

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,831
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	270
Appropriate authority	The academy trust
Chair	Jackie McHanwell
Principal	Sarah Holmes-Carne
Telephone number	01912 142200
Website	www.kenton.newcastle.sch.uk
Email address	Sarah.Holmes-Carne@kenton.newcastle.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum and some aspects of special educational needs information.
- The school does not comply with DfE guidance on what academies should publish about the curriculum and some aspects of special educational needs information.
- The school is additionally resourced to offer up to 18 places for pupils with autism spectrum disorders and six places for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. These pupils are all included in mainstream classes for much of the time.

- The school allocates funding to resource 30 places for pupils at risk of exclusion at its personalised learning centre.
- The school converted to an academy in May 2012, very soon after Ofsted last inspected it.
- Twelve pupils attend provision at the Newcastle Bridges School.
- Kenton School is a much larger than average-sized secondary school.
- Almost half of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Fewer than one in ten pupils are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language, well below national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is just above the national average.
- The school met the current floor standards in 2015. These are the minimum expectations of pupils' achievement in English and mathematics set by the government.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of 70 lessons across most subject areas. Many of these visits took place with senior and middle leaders. During visits to classrooms, inspectors looked in pupils' workbooks and questioned pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors discussed with pupils what it is like to be a young person at the school. Pupils' behaviour was observed around the school, including between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtime.
- Discussions took place with the principal, other senior leaders, most subject leaders and a number of teachers. Discussions also took place with the chief executive officer of the trust and members of the local governing board, including trustees.
- Inspectors took into account 14 responses to the Ofsted online parent survey, Parent View. A total of 164 responses to the staff survey and 27 responses to the pupil questionnaire were analysed
- Documents were examined, including school development plans, governing body minutes, leaders' monitoring notes and information about pupils' achievement.
- Records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were scrutinised.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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