

King's Lynn Academy

Queen Mary Road, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 4QG

Inspection dates

1–2 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have not demonstrated the capacity to bring about necessary improvement. They have not acted quickly enough to strengthen teaching and outcomes since the previous inspection. Consequently, leadership is inadequate.
- Pupils' outcomes are below average across a range of subjects, including in English and mathematics. Support from the multi-academy trust has only recently begun to have an impact on the considerable underachievement in the vital subject of English.
- Governors do not check the impact of leaders' actions with enough precision. Consequently, they do not focus on what will make things better quickly.
- Teaching has not improved rapidly enough since the previous inspection. Too many pupils have underachieved, and continue to do so.
- Too much teaching does not intervene quickly enough to address misconceptions in pupils' understanding. Consequently, pupils continue to make the same mistakes over time.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers follow the school's agreed feedback policy consistently. Pupils are not routinely supported to improve their work quickly or robustly enough.
- Disadvantaged pupils underachieve significantly compared with other pupils nationally. Leaders have not used designated funding strategically to quickly improve achievement for disadvantaged pupils.
- Too often, teachers' planning does not take account of the different starting points of pupils. Too often, when work is not pitched at the correct level, pupils make slow progress and the most able pupils are not stretched.
- Leaders do not monitor closely enough whether pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their various starting points. Pupils' specific needs are not being met consistently across year groups.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well.
- Most pupils conduct themselves well around the school.
- The school's work to support pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Safeguarding is effective.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - trust leaders and governors hold school leaders to account for raising standards
 - leaders evaluate the quality of teaching rigorously through a sharp analysis of pupils' progress
 - middle leaders are enabled to swiftly tackle weaker teaching and the underperformance of pupils in their subject areas
 - school priorities are understood by all staff, so that rapid improvements can be made
 - the school's agreed assessment and feedback policies are implemented consistently
 - additional funding is used strategically so that support provided for disadvantaged pupils enables them to achieve well
 - provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good so that they can learn more effectively.
- Improve the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment across the school by:
 - equipping teachers to use assessment information to plan learning that is challenging, allows pupils to deepen their understanding and demonstrates higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially the most able pupils
 - making sure that teachers use the agreed school feedback protocols consistently
 - ensuring that teachers intervene quickly and effectively to correct pupils' misconceptions.
- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress in English and mathematics by:
 - raising the expectations of pupils' reading and writing across the curriculum
 - ensuring that pupils develop their mastery of mathematical concepts before moving on to new learning.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Since the previous inspection, trust and school leaders have not brought about improvements quickly enough. Following the inspection in 2014, the trust did not adequately compensate for a reduction in leadership capacity at the school when the headteacher was appointed to be executive principal for two academies. Consequently, the quality of teaching and outcomes declined in English and mathematics.
- Leaders' actions to intervene and improve achievement in English have not been swift enough because provision has not been monitored well enough. Weak teaching has gone unchecked, and there has been considerable underachievement for pupils in English.
- Until the recent appointment of the permanent head of school, senior leaders have not monitored the quality of middle leadership robustly enough. In areas such as science and art, successful subject leaders model good teaching and effective use of planning, assessment and feedback. However, these features are not replicated in other subjects.
- Leaders have not ensured that disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Leaders' 'big shift' project brought some improvements in disadvantaged pupils' outcomes in 2016 but they are still far too low. Leaders' use of Year 7 catch-up funding is more effective, with a range of strategies, including a reading package, which leads to good improvements in pupils' literacy.
- Leadership of the provision of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not effective in monitoring the quality of teaching. This includes the quality of support from teaching assistants, and the learning activities planned by the class teacher. As a result, not all pupils receive support that is best suited to their needs.
- The executive principal and head of school have taken actions which have started to make improvements. However, most improvements have not been embedded to ensure that they are having a sustained impact on improving pupils' outcomes.
- School leaders have worked hard to overcome serious recruitment issues to have a fully staffed school. They have done this by spotting talent in the wider staff team and supporting them through employment-based training routes to teaching. Trainee teachers say they feel well supported in the school.
- Leaders have established performance management systems with high expectations that all staff understand. As a result, not all teachers received pay progression last year. Those requiring support are coached and mentored by subject leaders to improve their practice. This has significantly reduced inadequate teaching in the school but has yet to strengthen teaching sufficiently.
- Leaders have improved the curriculum, which is now broad and balanced, through effective partnerships with local providers. Pupils benefit from a range of work-related programmes at the College of West Anglia, such as engineering, hair and beauty and tourism. There is a wide range of GCSE subjects in key stage 4 and the opportunity to study additional academic subjects, such as Latin, at another trust school. Teachers

offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities that appeal to most pupils' interests, including trampoline training, singing club, 'let's get cooking' and the Duke of Edinburgh award. Pupils say they enjoy these clubs; those that attend regularly build their self-esteem and develop wider skills and interests.

- Pupils are prepared appropriately for life in modern Britain through their 'seminar' (extended tutor time) lessons, a comprehensive assembly programme and the school's special study days. Pupils understand anti-radicalisation and extremism and fundamental British values such as democracy. The school's programme for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. Pupils learn to work together with respect for each other and for people from different faiths.
- Inspectors recommend that the school may continue to appoint newly qualified teachers because new staff are well supported and are able to make a good start to their careers at the school.

Governance of the school

- Despite a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision, governors have not adequately challenged leaders to secure sustained improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The governing body is supportive and committed to the school. Governors understand the priorities for school improvement and know where the provision in the school is not good enough. However, they have not challenged robustly underachievement in a range of subjects and aspects of weak leadership. Governors have not ensured that the additional funding that the school receives has made enough difference to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors take responsibility for their own training. In safeguarding, they are knowledgeable about the anti-radicalisation and extremism issues and how to safeguard pupils. A governor trained in safe recruitment practices is always present in interviews for new staff. Governors ensure that statutory policies are updated and reflect changes in legislation.
- Governors ensure fair and consistent application of policies, including their oversight of staff performance management.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a secure safeguarding culture and policies that are carefully monitored by the designated safeguarding leader. The well-established safer schools partnership provides high-quality support from the police for attendance monitoring and the education of pupils in how to stay safe. As a consequence, pupils feel safe and have the utmost confidence in their teachers to solve problems rapidly.
- Senior leaders and pastoral staff have extensive training in safeguarding. All staff have regular updates in anti-radicalisation and extremism and they are confident in how to recognise pupils that may be at risk and the steps to take if they are concerned.
- The school's well-trained safeguarding team ensures that vulnerable pupils' attendance is carefully monitored. For example, if vulnerable pupils do not respond to a phone call on their first day of absence the school takes action to ensure pupils are safe. Child protection procedures are well designed and the designated leader for safeguarding ensures that files are well organised and monitors the processes carefully. Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils' educational plans address their needs.

- Leaders maintain comprehensive and detailed records of the recruitment checks they undertake. A governor regularly checks that the records meet all statutory requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school and within subject areas is too variable. Too often, teachers do not set work to stretch and challenge pupils, especially the pupils who are most able. This is especially true in English.
- Questioning is not used well enough to probe and build pupils' understanding and extend learning. When pupils' misconceptions are not checked, their misunderstanding prevents them from accessing more difficult work. In some key stage 4 humanities and design and technology lessons teachers' skilful questioning leads to improved pupil progress, but this is not a consistent picture across the school.
- In mathematics, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding and develop reasoning skills. This slows the progress of the most able pupils because they move on to new topics too quickly, without firm foundations.
- In science, the stretch and challenge for the most able pupils is not consistently planned into learning activities. In some areas teachers ensure that the most able are required to use higher-level thinking skills, but some teaching settles for less.
- Teachers do not consistently apply the school's feedback policy. Too many teachers do not explain to pupils how to take the next steps in their learning. Pupils who understand their teachers' feedback and go on to respond to the advice make faster progress. For example, in art ongoing feedback during themed projects leads to clear improvements in pupils' work.
- The teaching of literacy is well established in tutor time with weekly lessons and regular reading sessions. Pupils who read to inspectors had age-appropriate skills and could explain their understanding of their reading. However, in some subjects spelling and grammatical errors are not consistently addressed. The teaching of writing across the curriculum is underdeveloped; pupils are not given enough opportunities in subjects, other than humanities and English, to practise and apply their extended writing skills.
- The relationships teachers develop in the classroom help pupils to engage well with the learning in lessons. Pupils cooperate well with each other and respond to teachers' instructions. Teachers plan learning activities that engage boys so that their progress in lessons now matches that of girls. For example, in one science lesson the use of a competition around the school's 'age related expectations' assessment scheme led to enthusiastic responses from boys and swift progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They speak with maturity about their opportunities to mix with pupils from different year groups. Pupils respect each other's differences; one pupil reported that 'everyone should be treated fairly, and they are here'.

- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that bullying is rare. They have confidence that the school deals with bullying effectively should it occur. The overwhelming majority of parents agree that their child is safe and happy at the school and that the school deals effectively with any bullying; inspectors agree with this view.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe through personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons, assemblies and visits from speakers, including the police. Pupils have learned about the dangers of using social media and the internet and describe how, as a result, social media bullying has reduced.
- Leaders closely monitor the attendance and behaviour of the very small number of pupils who are educated away from the school. Pupils receive effective support to secure appropriate outcomes and further education, employment or training
- Pupils broaden their understanding of the modern world and prepare well for future life and work through a range of activities both in and out of lessons. The quality of careers information, advice and guidance is good. Pupils in key stage 4 are informed about the range of opportunities open to them at 16, including different kinds of college courses, apprenticeships or training. This has led to a growing proportion of students staying on in further education or training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well and show self-discipline in assemblies, while moving around the school and at social times. They arrive at lessons promptly and with the correct equipment to get on with their work.
- Pupils respect the learning environment. Litter and graffiti are rare. Displays are learning-focused, well maintained and attractive.
- Pupils' overall attendance has improved and is now close to the national average. Leaders' actions have rapidly improved the overall attendance of disadvantaged pupils, and of those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is now approaching the national average.
- Leaders have worked well with pupils who struggle to attend the school regularly, and rates of persistent absence have reduced by two thirds. Leaders acknowledge that more work needs to be done to ensure that pupils who are persistently absent attend more regularly.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. In most lessons they settle quickly, work steadily and take pride in their work. However, on some occasions when teaching is weaker, pupils adopt lower expectations and their behaviour slips.
- School leaders have set high expectations for behaviour. As a result, the proportion of pupils who have been excluded has been above average. School leaders rightly recognise that this is a priority to improve.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- Achievement has not improved quickly enough since the previous inspection. Analysis of the 2016 results indicates that pupils' progress was not good.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress in the (unvalidated) 2016 examination results was nearly a grade below that of other pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils currently in key stage 3 make good progress in most subjects but in key stage 4 their progress is

below average in several subjects, including mathematics and science. This is because the impact of pupil premium spending is not checked well enough to ensure it is effective in overcoming pupils' barriers to learning.

- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, underachieve. Their progress in 2016 in the English Baccalaureate subjects was significantly below average at nearly a grade below other pupils nationally. In mathematics and English it was below average.
- In 2016, less than half of pupils achieved at least a C grade in both English and mathematics. This has remained static for the two years since the previous inspection and is due to the inconsistent quality of teaching, learning and assessment in these core subjects.
- Pupils' progress fluctuates too much across subjects and in different year groups. Most notably, progress in English and mathematics is not good enough across all year groups, although current Year 11 pupils are now making good progress. Equally, while Year 7 and 8 pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are learning well in a number of other subjects, this is not matched in Years 9, 10 and 11.
- Year 7 pupils who require support to catch up with their classmates make good progress in literacy, with three quarters of pupils catching up by the end of Year 7. This is due to effective work in tutor time and by teaching assistants in improving pupils' reading and writing. Those that need further support have additional help throughout Year 8.
- Pupils who completed Year 11 in 2016 nearly all progressed to either one of the trust's post-16 providers or work-related training programmes. The proportion of pupils not in education, employment or training is below the national average.

School details

Unique reference number	136202
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10019617

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 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	657
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Fisher
Executive principal	Craig Morrison
Telephone number	01553 774 671
Website	http://www.kingslynnacademy.co.uk/
Email address	Craig.Morrison@kingslynnacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website
- The school complies with DfE guidance on what academies should publish on their website.
- The school is smaller than the average secondary school.
- The executive principal leads both the King's Lynn Academy and King Edward VII academy in King's Lynn.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan for special educational needs and/or disability is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils that are disadvantaged and eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- Alternative arrangements are made to educate a small minority of pupils off the school site as part of their key stage 4 option choices at King Edward VII academy or the college of West Anglia.
- The school met the government's 2015 floor standards, which were the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 33 lessons, several of which were seen jointly with a senior leader. In addition, several short visits were made to a range of lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior, subject and other leaders and three groups of pupils. The lead inspector met with the vice-chair and three members of the governing body and two representatives of the academy trust, including the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors took account of the 79 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as staff and pupil survey results.
- The inspection team observed the school's work, scrutinised data about pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance, looked at the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, reviewed minutes of the meetings of the governing body and scrutinised pupils' work in lessons.

Inspection team

Simon Webb, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Vivien Corrie-Wing	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Garrett	Ofsted Inspector
Rob James	Ofsted Inspector

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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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