

Kinetic Academy

Meir Youth Cafe, Sandon Road, Meir, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 7DJ

Inspection dates

31 October–2 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor and leadership team are highly effective in their drive both to nurture and to teach pupils who have personal, social and emotional needs. As a result, pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Outstanding leadership has created a highly effective team of adults who are committed to the needs of their pupils. They ensure that they make good progress both emotionally and academically. They are well trained to manage the behaviour of pupils who have mental health and emotional difficulties.
- The teaching team ensures that work matches pupils' abilities, and challenges them to do their best. Pupils make good progress during tutorial group work, one-to-one learning opportunities and high-quality therapeutic experiences.
- The work of the school team ensures that pupils with very low starting points are able to settle down and begin to learn. The positive school ethos ensures that pupils who have not been able to work in any other school can begin to gain confidence.
- Leaders make sure that the views of pupils are considered in the day-to-day running of the school. As a result, the pupils feel that they are valued. In return, they treat the adults with respect.
- The leadership team makes good use of consultants who visit the school to help them to design effective, personalised learning opportunities for the pupils. However, key stage 3 pupils do not yet have enough opportunities to use mathematical reasoning.
- A good, and often inspiring, curriculum provides pupils with a variety of different ways to learn. However, English lessons sometimes lack enough emphasis on the development of a strong spoken and written vocabulary.
- Day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress makes sure that they have aspirational targets to improve their work. Leaders support this with close monitoring of work and lessons to ensure that pupils increase their knowledge, skills and confidence. However, the school does not yet benefit from comparing pupils' written work with that of pupils from other schools.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - pupils develop an increasingly large spoken and written vocabulary
 - pupils have frequent opportunities to develop mathematical reasoning
 - teachers have opportunities to compare writing standards with those in other schools.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- This outstanding leadership team maintains a strong nurturing ethos, linked with high expectations, for the pupils in its care. This is combined with equally high expectations of all adults in the school and contributes to the positive morale among the staff. All staff who responded to the questionnaire said that they are proud to work at Kinetic Academy.
- The proprietor has ensured that all the independent standards are met. Leaders' and managers' evaluation of how well the school is doing is robust. They know their strengths and they know actions that need to be taken to effect improvements.
- Pupils who attend this school have low academic starting points, along with significant social, mental, emotional and health difficulties. They have not been able to work in any other school. The proprietor has created an environment at Kinetic Academy where pupils develop the confidence to settle down and begin to work, and to make progress and achieve academic success. One pupil said: 'I can trust the teachers here more than I could in any other school.'
- Leaders have developed a robust, individualised performance development system for every adult in the school. As a result, each individual knows his or her targets for improvement, which accurately identify the role they perform. All adults take a significant responsibility for supporting and motivating the pupils.
- The proprietor employs a mathematics consultant and a curriculum consultant to support the lead teacher with improvements. As a result, staff at the school benefit from the training given by experienced advisers. A further target is to employ an adviser for special educational needs so that staff will receive expert advice in special educational needs when necessary.
- The school team is enhanced by the employment of a qualified drama therapist who works with pupils to support their social, mental and emotional difficulties. The drama therapist offers pupils one-to-one opportunities for therapy, as well as group therapy drama sessions. These sessions have a significant impact on the ability of pupils to know themselves and to collaborate with others.
- Leaders ensure that all pupils have a personalised education plan. Their needs are carefully considered in response to education, health and care plans. Support workers give some pupils lessons in community locations if they find it impossible to come into the school building. For example, they work in the local library with their key worker. As a result, pupils who have not been able to take advantage of school education can make personal, social, emotional and academic progress.
- Leaders have developed a curriculum that is based on what the school calls '7 pillars of success,' which are: resilience, curiosity, genius, effort, progress, motivation and independence. In this way, the curriculum links both personal development and academic achievements. As a result, work for pupils is varied and often inspiring, motivating them to achieve success.
- Leaders regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make both academically and personally. A robust evaluation programme is set out, with actions to be taken each month. In this way, leaders are able to assess quickly any

changes that need to be made. Where they think that something is not good enough, they ask themselves: 'How can we do this differently?'

- Effective policies ensure that leaders promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils. The school meets statutory responsibilities for safeguarding, providing high-quality care and support for pupils. Leaders ensure the safety of pupils at all times with a robust system of risk assessment.
- The school's premises and accommodation are well maintained. There is a small area of garden at the rear of the school where pupils can grow plants and enjoy fresh air. They enjoy physical education lessons at a local youth centre. As a result, the physical education of pupils is good.
- The leadership team ensures that parents and carers are well informed about their child's progress through termly reports and through regular telephone communications where necessary. As a result, parents have confidence in their child's safety when in school. There were no parent comments on Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View. However, leaders conducted a survey of parents' views in April 2017. The survey showed that all 10 parents who completed it were extremely positive about their child's behaviour and progress.
- The school team includes the head of centre, who is a qualified careers adviser. Consequently, pupils have good opportunities for careers guidance. Both one key stage 4 pupil and one key stage 3 pupil had clear ideas about what they would like to do in the future.
- The leadership team works extremely closely with other agencies. All discussions with representatives of other agencies revealed that Kinetic Academy is valued in the area. The special educational needs adviser said: 'Kinetic Academy is highly respected by the other schools in Stoke.'
- The proprietor has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) for a material change to the age range of the pupils in the school. The local authority had persuaded leaders to take on six key stage 3 pupils because of the respected status of the school. This is below the present registered age range permitted. However, this is already known to the DfE. The proprietor has put in place appropriate curriculum plans and safeguards for this age group. If the material change is granted, all the independent school standards relating to key stage 3 pupils are likely to be met.
- The school proposes to use a separate site for the education of these key stage 3 pupils. An inspector visited this proposed site. He found that when it becomes available for use by Kinetic Academy, all the independent school standards are likely to be met.

Governance

- Governance is very effective. It ensures that a voluntary advisory committee (VAC) provides external, independent professional advice on the governance and leadership within the school.
- The VAC also provides an independent panel to handle complaints where necessary. As a result, the complaints procedure is robust.

Safeguarding

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is effective. Pupils say that they feel safe at school because they trust the adults working with them to help them deal with problems.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- The leadership of the school ensures that parents receive up-to-date advice about how to keep their children safe, especially when using the internet.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and comply with regulations. Accidents and behavioural incidents are carefully recorded and followed up efficiently by staff.
- All staff are trained regularly in how to keep pupils safe.
- A copy of the school's safeguarding policy, which complies with the independent school standards, is published on the school's website.
- If the material change is granted, the independent school standards relating to the safeguarding of key stage 3 pupils are likely to be met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good overall. Consequently, both key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils make good progress. The curriculum gives pupils a wide variety of opportunities to learn art, history, geography, personal, health and social education, citizenship, drama and physical education as well as English and mathematics.
- Teachers make detailed assessments of pupils' abilities when they first arrive in school. These are informed by work from previous schools and the work they do on arrival. The education, health and care plans that teachers set up in collaboration with healthcare professionals from outside agencies underpin all the learning for the pupils.
- Teaching staff provide the pupils with high-quality texts to read. They are taught well to discuss meanings and issues in the texts that they study. Frequent reading opportunities ensure that pupils' reading improves.
- Questioning is often skilful, ensuring that pupils consider deeper aspects of learning. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. This gives pupils the confidence they need to be able to succeed. One key stage 4 pupil said: 'In other schools, teachers think they are above you. Here they are just on a level.' Relationships between staff are also very good so that the teacher and student support workers function most effectively as a team. They create a very positive learning environment.
- Pupils benefit from high-quality English lessons that enable them to develop academically, personally and spiritually. For example, one group of key stage 4 pupils listened to four different pieces of music in an English lesson and wrote their personal responses to them in very perceptive ways, including their own captions for each one. However, not enough emphasis is placed on ensuring that pupils develop their knowledge of more adventurous academic and technical words to be used both in speech and writing.
- The lead teacher ensures that assessments are made frequently of the pupils' English skills, especially in reading and writing. This enables her to let the pupils know how they can improve. Staff who teach writing meet often within the school to discuss the writing

standards of the pupils. However, the school does not yet ensure that it compares the pupils' writing skills with the writing of pupils in other schools.

- Pupils benefit from mathematics lessons given by a mathematics consultant that are carefully tailored to their needs. The consultant identifies the gaps in their mathematical understanding and ensures that each pupil has an individualised programme. One pupil who enjoys mathematics said that the teacher had told him: 'This is where you are now and this is where you need to be.' As a result, pupils in key stage 4 particularly make very good progress. However, pupils in key stage 3 do not have enough opportunities to develop their mathematical reasoning.
- Plans for the teaching of key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils show that leaders plan for different ages and different abilities. Consequently, if the material change is granted, the independent school standards relating to teaching, learning and assessment for key stage 3 pupils are likely to be met.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils take a pride in their school and have a sense of belonging. Consequently, they look after the environment, both internally and externally.
- Experts provide therapeutic intervention sessions for pupils to enable them to make progress with personal, social and mental health issues. As a result, pupils become more and more able to settle to learning. Pupils become much more able to listen, and to respect and respond to each other. They become able to take academic examinations.
- Pupils' ability to focus strongly on learning was most clearly evident in a key stage 4 literacy lesson where they were writing a suspense story, and in the therapeutic drama session for key stage 3 pupils.
- High-quality personal, social and health education ensures that pupils know about life in British society. They have opportunities to learn about British institutions; for example, they made a recent visit to Stafford Crown Court. They learn about respect for different kinds of people and study different religions. Staff are skilled in teaching pupils about personal relationships.
- Teachers ensure that they listen to pupils and act upon their ideas. Recent changes from discussions with pupils include tea and toast for breakfast in the mornings. They have also been given a 'treat day' once a week when they are permitted to have just what they like for lunch. In this way, pupils understand that their voices are heard.
- Pupils are actively engaged in volunteering within the community and support charitable donations. For example, they help in food banks and on a farm. As a result, they begin to understand how they can have a wider influence on the lives of others.
- Careers guidance ensures that pupils consider a wide variety of options for themselves. They are given opportunities for work experience. For example, a key stage 4 group will have the opportunity to experience dry stone walling this year. Previous pupils have moved on to a wide variety of further courses in other institutions or to apprenticeships.

- The attendance of most pupils has improved markedly since coming to this school. The school works hard to improve the attendance of those who do not attend so regularly.
- If the material change is granted, the independent school standards related to the personal development and welfare of key stage 3 pupils are likely to be met.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have good relationships with all staff in the school.
- Pupils have come to this school with catastrophic behaviour patterns and are now learning to behave better. They have not been able to behave well enough to work in any other school.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are logged and regularly evaluated. Pupils have behaviour targets. Consequently, the behaviour of most pupils is improving markedly.
- Pupils explore all aspects of bullying during group tutorials and individual therapy sessions. As a result, pupils are well educated about all forms of bullying. They know whom to turn to if they feel unsafe.
- During an interview with two parents, one of them said that their child had 'come on in leaps and bounds'. The other parent said that both their child's behaviour and learning had improved at this school. One said: 'The staff are marvellous!'
- Pupils say that they feel safe in this school. They learn to keep themselves safe and they know how to use the internet safely. They behaved safely and sensibly during a fire evacuation on the last day of the inspection.
- The number of behavioural incidents of most pupils is decreasing rapidly since coming to this school. This is because staff create excellent relationships with the pupils. They are extremely well trained to deal with any emotional outbursts and they work most effectively as a whole staff team. They set firm boundaries and they are skilled at encouraging pupils to calm down. The pupils accept that if their behaviour is poor, they must think about what they have done and make up for it.
- Two pupils have been permanently excluded from the school building for violent behaviour. Support workers are giving these pupils work at home until the upcoming review meetings.
- If the material change is granted, the independent school standards relating to the behaviour of key stage 3 pupils are likely to be met.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- All pupils are disadvantaged and have special educational needs. The good progress they make is because of the outstanding leadership in the school that gives robust support to their social, mental, emotional, health and academic education.
- Attainment is low overall, but it is improving in English and mathematics. This is because of increasingly accurate assessments when pupils arrive in the school. These assessments are used well to plan the learning for pupils.
- Key stage 4 pupils are making the progress that they should in both literacy and mathematics. In some cases, they are making more rapid progress. Some pupils are

achieving high levels of attainment. This is because of very secure planning that is matched to pupils' abilities.

- Key stage 3 pupils are making the progress that they should in literacy because they are able to learn from high-quality lessons that are often inspiring. The quality of day-to-day assessment is also helping them to work towards aspirational targets. They are not making equally good progress in mathematics because planning is less secure for key stage 3 pupils in this subject.
- Key stage 3 pupils are making the progress that they should in art, but not in technology, because there are fewer opportunities to develop technological learning.
- All pupils have opportunities to read widely.
- In therapeutic sessions, pupils make good progress in personal and social education because of the high-quality support they receive from qualified psychologists.
- Previous pupils educated at Kinetic Academy have all left to take up places in further courses at other educational establishments or apprenticeships. Many of them keep in touch with the staff in the school and return to visit them. They all gained qualifications, many of them achieving GCSEs at grades A*–C.

School details

Unique reference number	140330
DfE registration number	861/6011
Inspection number	10038847

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	7
Number of part-time pupils	7
Proprietor	N Tomlinson
Chair	N/A
Headteacher	N Tomlinson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£35,000
Telephone number	01782 333344
Website	http://kinetic-academy.co.uk
Email address	enquiry@kinetic-academy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–16 October 2014

Information about this school

- Kinetic Academy is a non-profit making social enterprise which registered as an independent school in October 2013. This is its second inspection.
- The proprietor leads the school through an executive group that includes the business manager. The lead teacher oversees all the teaching and learning throughout the academy, supported by the head of centre who is responsible for daily operational pupils' activities within the school.
- The school has a voluntary advisory committee that provides external, independent

professional advice on the governance and leadership within the school.

- The school provides education for pupils who have social, mental, emotional and health needs. It is registered to admit up to 18 male and female pupils in the age range of 14 to 16 and has requested a material change to deliver education to pupils aged 11 to 16 years.
- It provides therapeutic intervention as an integral part of its curriculum.
- Pupils have an education, health and care plan to support their social, mental, emotional and health needs. There are no pupils who have disabilities.
- Kinetic Academy takes pupils who are placed by local authorities when they are at risk of exclusion from either mainstream or special schools. They may have been permanently excluded or need a more therapeutic placement.
- The school is located in a residential part of Meir, a small town within Stoke-on-Trent. It is based in a two-storey building. The school has its own entrance area and exclusive use of its own premises. A second building has been agreed and is located five miles away from the main building.
- The school aims are: to provide training and education opportunities to a wide range of students, in particular those who would benefit from a flexible and personalised curriculum and those who learn “by doing” and to ensure that each student receives a quality education, inclusive support and appropriate guidance, through providing an environment in which they can learn appropriately.’
- The school has no particular religious affiliation.
- The school uses local sports facilities for physical education and games.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors were directed by the DfE to conduct a standard inspection of Kinetic Academy, alongside a material change inspection, related to the new key stage 3 pupils and to the new proposed site.
- Inspectors observed six group tutorials, one group therapeutic session and two one-to-one lessons. One of these one-to-one lessons took place in the local library.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in their books and at some examples of artwork.
- Inspectors reviewed the main premises in Meir as well as the proposed new premises five miles away, called 'the Fenton site.'
- Inspectors also observed behaviour during breaks, at lunchtime and during a fire evacuation.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils and individual pupils.
- The lead inspector listened to one pupil read.
- Inspectors had conversations with teachers and the student support manager as well as with the drama therapist and with two parents.
- Inspectors held meetings with the proprietor and the business manager as well as with the mathematics consultant and the curriculum consultant. The lead inspector also held meetings with the special educational needs adviser to the school and the local authority senior review officer for special educational needs.
- Illness prevented the head of school from being present at meetings.
- The inspectors looked at the results of the parent questionnaire from April 2017 as well as the results of the staff questionnaire completed during the inspection.
- The lead inspector looked at an email trail about the failure of the local authority to hand over the new building in time for the start of September and at a letter from the DfE about the proposed material change.
- Inspectors considered the request for a material change to the age range and to the premises.

Inspection team

Mary Maybank, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Graham Tyrer

Her Majesty's Inspector

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