

Kingfisher Academy

Outwoods Street, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE14 2PJ

Inspection dates

20–21 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Since the school opened as an academy, standards in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 6 have remained well below age-related expectations.
- While the progress made by current pupils is improving, a legacy of underachievement means that many upper key stage 2 pupils are still behind in their learning and work.
- In mathematics, many pupils lack basic skills, which hinders their progress and readiness for secondary school.
- The increasing proportion of pupils who do not speak English do not get enough support to help them understand what is happening in lessons.
- The current quality of teaching presents a mixed picture. In some classes, work does not get the best from pupils and they lose interest.
- Those responsible for governance were slow to provide suitable support when the new academy opened. Governance is now strengthening. However, until recently, governors lacked an informed understanding of the school's performance.
- Checks on how well pupils are doing are better than they used to be, but there is still room for improvement.
- Despite the school's best efforts, some parents do not get their children to school regularly enough or on time.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal has brought order to the school by introducing sensible routines and consistent expectations that have raised everyone's aspirations. She exercises wise judgement and has established a stable staff team that shows promise.
- The school's middle leaders are increasingly effective in their roles. They are well informed about the school's performance and offer challenge and support to their colleagues.
- Pupils understand the school's rules. Their conduct around the school is usually calm and orderly.
- The procedures for keeping pupils safe and attending to pastoral matters work very well.
- The progress now being made in Years 3 and 4 presents a positive picture.
- Pupils who have complex needs receive effective support to help them cope with school life.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in order to improve pupils' progress in English and mathematics so that they are adequately prepared for secondary school by making sure that:
 - urgent action is taken to support pupils who lack basic mathematical skills and knowledge
 - teachers' questions and explanations are pitched at a level that pupils can understand, so they stay interested in learning and do their best
 - pupils who do not speak English who arrive from overseas get timely and effective support so they can make the most of lessons
 - checks on how well pupils are doing are refined in order to improve the accuracy of assessment
 - the most able pupils are suitably challenged in all classes.
- Strengthen the work of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - governors maintain an informed and accurate understanding of the current challenges faced by the school so they can plan for sustainable school improvement
 - there are sufficient resources and staff to support pupils who do not speak English.
- Continue to improve aspects of behaviour by:
 - making sure that staff get the necessary support to help them manage the classroom behaviour of a few pupils who find it hard to settle to their tasks
 - continuing to work with parents and families to improve levels of attendance and punctuality.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The leadership team has a firm grip on the current situation. The principal is steering the school with clear-sighted purpose. She has taken steps to challenge weaknesses in teaching and has brought discipline and order to the running of the school. Pupils and staff know what is expected of them. Indeed, there is a sense of constructive team spirit underpinned by a no-nonsense approach to staff appraisal. Teaching and behaviour are improving and there are signs that academic standards, which have been low for a long time, are beginning to rise. Leaders have shown that they can tackle difficult situations and bring about change for the better. Even so, there is still more to do to strengthen leadership across the school, particularly in relation to provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language, and to lift the school's performance to where it ought to be.
- The principal has appointed capable staff to key leadership posts. Subject leaders for English and mathematics have a well-informed view of teaching and standards in their subjects. They lead by example and do not ask staff to do anything that they are not doing themselves. They regularly check on pupils' books, keep an eye on teaching and make sure that teachers are following agreed school policies.
- The school curriculum has been overhauled so that pupils cover everything they need to. It also includes a strong focus on helping pupils to develop good learning habits. All pupils are able to learn about a broad range of subjects, while regular trips and special events add extra interest and excitement. Already, the benefits can be seen in the work and progress of pupils in Years 3 and 4. Nevertheless, pupils who recently moved on to secondary school had missed out on some key learning in English and mathematics, so were not well prepared for key stage 3. This remains the case for many of the Year 6 pupils and a proportion of the Year 5 pupils still at the school.
- Pupil premium and special educational needs funds are used appropriately and leaders can account for the different ways in which the money is spent. The results of this spending are somewhat mixed. Where spending has been targeted at routines, subsidies or special events that aim to increase pupils' participation and engagement in school life, there has been demonstrable impact. Whatever their abilities or needs, all pupils feel a sense of belonging and no one is left out. On the other hand, the use of funding to boost eligible pupils' academic progress has met with less success. It is also worth noting that some of this additional funding is used, when appropriate, to help pupils who are learning to speak English. Again, results are mixed, with some pupils not getting the right help at the right time.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport funding is put to good use. The school employs a specialist teacher who helps other staff and runs clubs and competitions. At Kingfisher Academy, PE provides a positive outlet for pupils' energies. Pupils are able to try new sports, learn new skills, work as a team and compete.
- All pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and to understand that they are responsible for the consequences of their actions. They are also presented with positive role models, opportunities and events that serve to lift their aspirations. During this inspection, for instance, pupils were looking forward to a visit from a former

Commonwealth Games champion. In readiness for this visit, pupils reflected on the school's values and their own ambitions in order to prepare a special message to share with the athlete. This attention to building confidence and optimism is typical of the current culture in the school.

Governance of the school

- Until recently, governance has had some shortcomings. It is clear that governors were slow to act on recommendations made by educational advisers who visited the school during its first years as Kingfisher Academy. For example, the primary expertise that is now available through the academy trust was a long time coming. That said, a successful recruitment drive for new governors and recent training have refreshed the governing body and reminded leadership at all levels of its responsibilities. Governors and the academy trust have a growing awareness of the challenges faced by the school, especially the limited resources available to support pupils who do not speak English. However, the impact of these changes in governance is yet to be fully felt across all aspects of the school's work.
- Governors do ensure that statutory duties are met and their record keeping is detailed and well organised. There are a few omissions on the school's website, but the information is readily available in governors' and trust records.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and inspection evidence confirms that the school's day-to-day practice helps to make sure that they are. Staff are very aware of their duty of care and are alert to any warning signs that a pupil's welfare or safety may be at risk. The school's procedures for following up concerns are well organised and staff understand what to do. The school's work with families and a variety of professional organisations when following up any concerns that do arise is commendable.
- All the proper checks on staff and visitors are carried out and the school site is kept secure. Supervision arrangements at the start and end of the day and during breaktimes are as they should be. If a pupil is hurt, upset or worried during the day, adults are quick to help in the right ways.
- There is some boisterous behaviour on the playground from time to time, but bullying is uncommon. In class and during assemblies, staff teach pupils how to act responsibly and keep themselves safe. Consequently, pupils come to understand how to behave in different situations and the importance of making sensible choices.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in the school is mixed. Some teaching is effective; some is less so. Nevertheless, the overall quality of teaching has improved in recent times and the current, permanent staff team shows promise.

- There is room for improvement in the way some staff check on pupils' learning and how well they understand their work. In several cases, teachers' explanations are too complicated or they do not ask the right questions to find out what pupils think and know. Consequently, it is hard to pitch their teaching at the right level and pupils lose interest or get confused.
- When, during this inspection, pupils were learning how to write a formal letter or considering rights and responsibilities, quite a few pupils were unable to get to grips with the set tasks because they were not sure what to do. On the other hand, pupils who already understood completed their work quickly.
- Pupils who arrive at school with little or no understanding of English do get extra support and, as one member of staff commented, 'The school does the best it can with the resources it has.' Even so, as the proportion of pupils who do not speak English has risen, this extra help has become more and more stretched. There are undoubtedly some notable successes, but many pupils struggle to understand what is happening in class.
- Work in pupils' books shows that many pupils rely heavily on adult support to plan and structure their written work. Work in mathematics reveals that pupils in Years 5 and 6 have gaps in their knowledge that limit their ability to tackle age-appropriate work. Teachers and leaders are alert to this and are taking action to help pupils catch up. However, this takes time and also limits the extent of new learning that pupils are able to cope with.
- At its most effective, teaching takes account of pupils' current level of understanding and builds securely on what has gone before, as was apparent in some geography teaching seen during this inspection. In a Year 4 class, for example, the map-reading and reference skills being taught followed on logically from the skills taught in Year 3. Teaching staff prompted pupils with questions that checked on what they knew while also steering them to find out more. Pupils were interested and engaged in what they were learning and showed a developing ability to persevere. In several instances, the joy of discovery could be heard and seen.
- Pupils' handwriting and presentation of work show some marked improvements over time. A whole-school focus on cursive joined handwriting is clearly paying off. Classrooms are neat and tidy and work displayed on the walls exemplifies careful work, which is helping to lift expectations. In all classes, there are consistent expectations for how work should be set out and pupils now take an evident pride in the presentation of their writing.
- Teaching assistants make an increasingly valuable contribution to general teaching and learning. They are responding well to leaders' higher expectations of their role and, in many cases, provide meaningful assistance to pupils that helps to build positive classroom behaviours and attitudes to work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

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

- Staff help pupils to develop important life skills that enable them to cope with different situations and manage their emotions in constructive ways. In fact, this is a significant feature of the school's work and one that has helped numerous pupils to improve their outlook on life.
- Woven throughout school life is the school's commitment to Unicef's Rights Respecting programme. Through this work, staff promote consistent messages about the importance of equality, dignity and respect. On top of this, teaching makes regular references to key personal qualities, such as resilience and responsibility, that lead to successful learning behaviours. Pupils of all ages can explain how this approach helps to create a positive mood in lessons and ensures that pupils treat one another with respect. Leaders' focus on this aspect has had a marked impact on creating a clear and purposeful identity for Kingfisher Academy.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that bullying of any type is rare. They are confident that adults will always listen to any worries they might have and will help them if they have a problem. The effective work of the school's parent support adviser provides an important link between home and school, which leads to informed support for pupils' welfare and well-being.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Leaders' work to bring order, consistency and routine has brought many benefits. The school is a calm and orderly place. Pupils look smart, classrooms are kept tidy and most pupils follow the school's rules. In almost all situations, conduct is good. In some classes, however, some pupils are quietly inattentive or restless. This is either because they do not understand the work or, in just a few cases, because they do not want to do it. In the latter circumstance, pupils do nothing, wander about or chat.
- For the most part, such instances of uncooperative behaviour are managed well. The school's reward systems give pupils something to aim for and sanctions are applied fairly when needed. Pupils and parents report that behaviour is 'much better than it used to be' and inspection evidence supports this view. Indeed, when given special responsibilities, such as being a playground leader or a role in organising charity fund-raising, pupils rise to the challenge.
- Attendance rates are below national figures. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, some parents allow their children to miss school or arrive late without good reason. Secondly, parents who take their children on lengthy trips to visit family overseas disrupt their education. These pupils who miss a lot of school often fall behind in their learning and then struggle to catch up. The school staff do all they reasonably can to challenge and support parents with attendance and welfare matters, but with only partial success. Staff are always out and about on the playground and at the school gates in the mornings and welfare staff make home visits, when needs be. This is making a difference and more and more parents are coming to value this support. However, there is still scope for more families to make more of the education provided by the school.
- When moving around the school, pupils are polite to staff and visitors. On several occasions, pupils showed very thoughtful behaviours and went out of their way to be

helpful and respectful without any prompting from adults.

- Exclusion has been used as a last resort when all other options have been exhausted. It is not a frequent occurrence.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- The standards reached by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 are low. In mathematics and reading, standards in 2016 and 2017 were well below age-related expectations. There are several reasons for this, but the main factor has been slow progress over time due to significant variations in the quality of teaching. Pupils have left Kingfisher Academy inadequately prepared for learning at secondary school.
- For pupils currently in the school, a legacy of slow progress continues to hold them back. In mathematics, in particular, pupils have some significant gaps in their knowledge and skills, which hampers their ability to tackle age-appropriate work. Furthermore, pupils who arrive mid-year from overseas, often with little or no spoken English, find it hard to cope with aspects of the school curriculum. The current level of support available in school is hard pressed to meet this increasing need.
- There are signs of improvement. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are making more secure and even progress. They are being taught key knowledge and skills in a logical sequence and are increasingly better prepared for the work that comes next. This is because teaching and the curriculum have both improved. In upper key stage 2, however, pupils are still having to spend a lot of time catching up and, for many of them, standards remain lower than they ought to be.
- Any differences in the rates of progress made by disadvantaged pupils and others in the school are not significant. Both groups have made slow progress over time and have reached standards that are some way behind those of their peers nationally. Leaders' arrangements for spending the pupil premium are appropriate and the progress of current pupils, especially in the younger classes, presents a more encouraging picture than has been seen previously.
- Many of the most able pupils are coping successfully with age-appropriate work. They take pride in their achievements and say that work is better matched to their abilities than it used to be. The level of challenge, however, varies from one class to another. In some classes, teaching pushes the brightest pupils on as soon as they are ready. In others, pupils who finish work quickly or easily are asked to occupy themselves with undemanding tasks. Consequently, while these pupils are keeping up with age-related expectations, they are not deepening their understanding as well as they might.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good-quality care. Inspectors found several examples of how the school has helped pupils who have complex needs or emotional, social or behavioural difficulties to overcome problems and to cope at school. There is no doubt that this aspect of the school's work is a key strength. In class, their academic progress varies. In part, this is the result of pupils' different needs, but the variation in teaching that still exists across the school is also a contributing factor.

School details

Unique reference number	141188
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10037090

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Beaty
Principal	Madelaine Burkett
Telephone number	01283 494530
Website	www.kingfisheracademy.co.uk
Email address	office@kingfisheracademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened as an academy in October 2014 and is part of the Burton and South Derbyshire Education Trust.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above the national average, as is the proportion that speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about key stage 2 results on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about funding, governance and pupils' progress.

- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. The inspectors also examined pupils' work in books and considered school test and assessment information.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour, and the school's procedures, at the beginning and end of the school day, at lunch- and breaktimes, and when pupils were moving about the school site. Inspectors also saw pupils taking part in sports activities and meeting for a special assembly.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, school leaders, parents, governors and representatives from the academy trust.
- By the end of the inspection, there were two recent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), which were not enough to generate a report. There was one free-text response and one parent met with an inspector to talk about the school. In addition, inspectors spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. There were 21 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included: information about pupils' achievement, evaluations of the school's performance; and several policy statements. Records relating to governance, staff performance management, training, the quality of teaching, external support, behaviour, admissions, attendance, safety and safeguarding were also scrutinised. The school's website was also checked.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Susan Helps

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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