

# Keys 7 Ks

Sotherby Road, Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire TS3 8BT

## Inspection dates

16–18 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders record and monitor pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour. However, they do not gather enough information when pupils arrive at the school. As a result, they cannot assess accurately enough their learning needs, progress over time or improvements in behaviour and attendance.
- Leaders' analysis of pupil progress and school improvement is limited. They cannot fully evaluate the effect of their work.
- The system for assessing the performance of teachers is not sound because the school cannot accurately gather all the information that is required.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. Teachers receive training to manage pupils' behaviour, but training to improve the quality of teaching is infrequent. Therefore, teachers, particularly in academic subjects, sometimes lack the skills to motivate and interest pupils.
- Although many pupils improve their behaviour while at the school it is not yet consistently good. Similarly, improvements in attendance are not sustained by all pupils.
- Leaders have not ensured that they meet all the independent school standards.

### The school has the following strengths

- The proprietor, leaders and staff have an absolute passion and commitment to do the best for their pupils. They have created a learning environment where pupils feel supported and safe.
- Pupils say that they value highly the second chance they have at Keys, following their unsuccessful experiences in mainstream school.
- Pupils receive high-quality, impartial careers advice. Strong guidance also comes from staff, local colleges and training providers. Nearly all pupils move on to education, employment or training at the end of key stage 4.
- Staff are skilled at recognising pupils' complex behavioural needs. They work hard to remove barriers that reduce pupils' ability to learn.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed at the end of the full report.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - improving transition arrangements so that leaders have all relevant information about pupils to support and plan for their progress, prior to pupils joining the school
  - developing the school’s self-evaluation and development planning, so that leaders are astutely aware of what the school does well and set precise targets for school improvement
  - improving performance management systems so that teachers and leaders are held to account for the progress pupils make.
- Develop the quality of teaching and learning so that:
  - teachers challenge, motivate and engage pupils in academic subject areas as well as they do in vocational lessons.
- Develop strategies to further improve pupils’ behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders' monitoring, analysis and evaluation of their actions lacks sufficient consistency and focus. This means that they cannot speak confidently about the effect of their actions on attendance, behaviour and progress. Leaders do not have a good enough grasp of pupils' progress.
- The school does not meet all the independent school standards. Those which are unmet do not seriously affect pupils' welfare, health and safety, academic or personal development.
- Although a performance management system is in place at the school, it is not fully effective. This is because it is not underpinned by a rigorous assessment and tracking system in relation to pupil progress.
- Middle leaders have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are supportive of their colleagues and are a strong presence in the school. They are aware of the shortcomings of the school's monitoring processes. Leaders are creating new systems, but they are currently in the early stages of development, so it is too soon to see the effect.
- Teachers and support workers are well-trained in behaviour management. In addition, some have had training in mental health awareness, autism and working with children who have learning difficulties. However, training in teaching and learning has been limited. As a result, not all teachers have the skills necessary to fully challenge and stimulate pupils and help them to make strong progress.
- Leaders and managers work tirelessly to increase the life chances of their pupils. The school is successful in getting nearly all the young people that it admits to re-engage with their education. The school is proud of its record of no fixed-term exclusions of pupils.
- Pupils follow a well-balanced curriculum. Leaders ensure that a well-resourced vocational programme complements academic subjects. Visits are organised to broaden pupils' experiences. A well-resourced games room also provides for extra-curricular activity. Pupils prepare effectively for life as citizens of modern Britain and for progression into further education, training or employment.

## Governance

- Directors employ a regional manager who has responsibility for line managing the school. Along with other trust managers they have a clarity of vision and contribute towards the self-evaluation and overall strategic direction of the school.
- The regional manager receives weekly reports from the head of centre and visits the school monthly. A comprehensive reporting system is in place. As a result, directors are knowledgeable about the strengths of the school. However, their awareness about the school's limitations is less sharp particularly because of weaknesses in the collection and analysis of pupils' progress information.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safeguarding policy is available on the school's website and is compliant with the latest government guidance.
- Leaders ensure that all staff receive training, so that they are knowledgeable about their roles in protecting pupils. Leaders ensure that all appropriate checks are carried out on adults who work with children. Leaders record these checks on a single central record.
- Leaders foster a strong safeguarding culture. Pupils say that they feel safe and they know that they have staff to speak to if they need help. Communication with parents and carers takes place frequently. Parents value regular calls about their child's progress, behaviour and other concerns that might arise.
- Pupils receive appropriate education about the risks that they may face as they grow up. They talk about how to stay safe online and the school has appropriate filters in place to protect pupils from accessing inappropriate material from the internet.
- Leaders ensure that they assess risks and that staff and pupils strictly adhere to safe procedures. This is particularly evident in vocational areas where potential hazards are numerous.
- Seven staff have received 'Prevent' duty training and plans are in place for all others to receive training. Pupils learn about radicalisation and terrorism in personal, social and health education and English lessons.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teaching in academic subjects is variable and provision for physical education requires improvement. Individual education plans do not contain adequate information about each pupil's ability and teachers do not access these regularly enough to inform their planning. As a result, some pupils lose interest. Others may complete a task but their progress is limited as further challenge is not provided.
- Staff have good knowledge of the subjects that they teach. However, too often in academic subjects, an interesting task is short-lived and opportunities are missed to capitalise on pupils' interests. In a science lesson on smoking pupils became excited about an experiment. They spontaneously raised pertinent points about scientific method. However, pupils made little progress in another part of the lesson on smoking-related diseases because they were uninspired.
- In addition to information about ability, teachers are not always aware of pupils' additional needs when they arrive at the school. This impedes teachers' planning and slows the progress that pupils initially make. Pupils tell teachers about their difficulties or staff become aware of needs as they settle into the school. The high ratio of teachers to pupils ensures that individuals are well supported and that barriers to learning are quickly reduced.
- Teachers usually succeed in establishing a calm working atmosphere and keeping a vigilant eye on pupils' moods and attitudes. They are often able to identify a situation where a pupil might be at risk of misbehaviour and act to defuse the situation effectively.

Teachers and support workers work as an effective team.

- Teachers working in vocational areas have significant expertise and use this to engage pupils. As a result, pupils rapidly develop their knowledge and skills. Pupils speak earnestly and confidently about their work. Pieces of furniture, stud walls or welds on a car exhaust system exemplify pupils' dedication to their work and the progress that they have made in these areas.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Every opportunity is taken to foster pupils' personal development as well as their social, moral and cultural education. As a result, this is a strength of the school.
- The content of many lessons is aimed at some aspect of personal development or welfare. Hair and beauty lessons may include skincare and personal hygiene while mathematics looks at the cost of running a motor bike and how to apply for a driving licence.
- Pupils say that there is little bullying. They show tolerance for differences, are developing mature attitudes and are respectful to visitors. They talk positively about their school saying that it 'gives people a chance'.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. They are well-informed about health and safety aspects of their vocational courses. They study health and safety units so that they learn to take responsibility for their own safety. Pupils value the guidance that they receive on risks to their personal safety such as through drugs, alcohol and crime.
- Work in many lessons, including those about personal, social, health and economic education, develop pupils' knowledge and understanding about the wider world. They can talk about issues such as gun control, learn about the judicial system and appreciate British values.
- Pupils often take pride in their work. Many write neatly and especially take care with assessed work or pieces which are to be displayed.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement
- Many pupils come to the school having behaved very poorly in their previous schools. Most improve their behaviour while at Keys. However, the school's behaviour records and inspectors' observations confirm that behaviour is not yet good.
- Some pupils use foul language. When heard, teachers always remind pupils about the school's expectations and they generally respond positively.
- Where attendance information has been received from pupils' previous schools it is clear that most pupils had very poor attendance records. Some of these pupils have now significantly improved their attendance and have sustained their progress. In a small number of cases attendance has declined. Since information about attendance at pupils'

previous schools is incomplete it is not possible to quantify the effect of this school. Overall attendance levels remain low and too many pupils are persistent absentees.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Some assessments of pupils' skills and abilities are carried out when they start the school. The results of these partly compensate for the lack of information about their prior attainment. Regular assessments for entry level and level 1 qualifications enable pupils to celebrate small successes. The shortage of information about pupils' abilities results in uneven progress. Some pupils are easily completing tasks at entry level and are ready for greater challenge.
- Although pupils are often confident readers, many say that they do not read widely or often. Many do, however, read magazines or online. The school does not have a good range of reading resources for pupils to access to develop their reading skills.
- Pupils are placed at this school for varying amounts of time and leaders recognise that it is not always possible for them to follow mainstream courses of study. They recognise the importance of accreditations and qualifications and ensure that all leave the school with as many as possible. Passing many small units to build towards recognised qualifications is therefore a successful strategy for these pupils.
- In English, pupils can show their understanding of writing for different purposes and audiences. Wall displays of pupils' work together with examples in exercise books indicate that progress is strongest in this subject.
- Progress in vocational subjects is strong. Some pupils complete a significant number of assessments in addition to the production of artefacts or photographic evidence to demonstrate their successes.
- Pupils are well supported in preparing for their futures. Impartial advice is complemented by careers work in lessons. Links with local employers, colleges and training companies reinforce this work. As a result, pupils have increased confidence and many now aspire to join apprenticeships in a variety of vocations, continue their education or join the armed forces.

## School details

Unique reference number	136259
DfE registration number	806/6002
Inspection number	10043657

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	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Number of part-time pupils	8
Proprietor	Keys Group
Managing Director of Education	Nicola Kelly
Head of Centre	Ian Kerr
Annual fees (day pupils)	£72.35 per day
Telephone number	01642 218 776
Website	<a href="http://www.keyschildcare.co.uk/services/education/tees-valley">www.keyschildcare.co.uk/services/education/tees-valley</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@keyschildcare.co.uk">info@keyschildcare.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	24 February 2015

## Information about this school

- Keys 7KS school is an independent day school which is part of the Keys Childcare Company. The school is registered as an alternative learning provider which is registered to admit up to 75 girls and boys. Pupils are referred by the local authority, or their mainstream schools where they remain on roll.
- The school is located on a small industrial estate in Middlesbrough.
- Most of the pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion from their mainstream school.

- The school focuses on vocational learning opportunities underpinned by core skills, English, mathematics and computer studies.
- There are currently no pupils on roll who have statements of special educational needs.
- There are currently no pupils on roll in the sixth form.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- Pupils take part in physical education at an off-site purpose-built facility.
- The school was last inspected in February 2015. At that time, the name of the school was '7KS Tees Valley Youth Achievement Foundation'. The managing director of education informed inspectors that the Keys Childcare Group are applying to the Department for Education to change the name to 'Keys Tees Valley College'.



## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out over two and a half days with half a day notice.
- The inspectors toured all buildings currently used by the school, both inside and outside.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons and made some shorter visits to classrooms. The head of centre observed one lesson jointly with an inspector.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, pupils and the Keys education director.
- Inspectors reviewed the work of several pupils both in vocational and non-vocational subject areas.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school was observed. Inspectors met formally and informally with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors evaluated a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluations of the school and development plans, admissions and attendance registers, policies, monitoring information, child protection and safeguarding information, and reports for the director of education. Inspectors also looked closely at all other documents and policies as required as part of the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered the school's evidence of communication with parents. There were no responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. However, inspectors spoke with several parents. Eight staff responded to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

## Inspection team

Steve Rogers, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Debbie Redshaw

Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school must meet the following independent school standards**

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
  - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
  - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons.

#### **Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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