

# Kearsley Academy

Springfield Road, Kearsley, Bolton, Lancashire BL4 8HY

## Inspection dates

26–27 February 2019

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

- The quality of teaching in English and mathematics leads to positive outcomes. However, teaching is less effective in science and humanities and, as a result, progress in these subjects remains below national averages.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site. However, there remains low-level disruption in a minority of lessons, particularly where the teaching is less effective.
- Attendance in key stage 4 is improving but remains below the national average.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is inconsistent. Too often the work set for these pupils does not match their learning needs.
- Governors have not held senior leaders to account rigorously enough. Self-evaluation lacks depth and detail. The impact of the pupil premium funding is not thoroughly monitored and evaluated.
- A few pupils, and parents and carers, are concerned that bullying is not always dealt with appropriately. The school's policy and procedure to deal with bullying are not robust enough.
- A small minority of parents and pupils rightly feel that there are occasions when the behaviour system is applied too strictly and are unhappy with the way that some senior staff speak to pupils.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new leadership of the trust has brought about significant improvements since 2016 when the school's outcomes were among the lowest nationally.
- There are key strengths in middle and senior leadership. The associate principals bring a wealth of experience to support senior leaders.
- The school now offers a broad and balanced curriculum.
- The school receives good support from the trust's subject directors and the director of curriculum.
- Pupils say that their school has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- There are now high expectations and challenging targets for pupils' achievement.

## Full report

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

- Continue to improve the progress pupils make in science and humanities.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
  - there is consistently high-quality support for SEND
  - work is well adapted to meet the learning needs of those with SEND.
- Improve behaviour and pupils' welfare by:
  - improving attendance in key stage 4
  - creating a robust policy and procedure to deal with bullying
  - ensuring that the behaviour policy is applied consistently and fairly
  - ensuring that teachers deal effectively with low-level disruption in lessons.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that governors rigorously hold senior leaders to account and monitor more closely the impact of the pupil premium funding
  - making self-evaluation more robust and incisive.

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

An external review of governance 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

- Shortly after the previous inspection in 2015, standards began to fall and in 2017 results were among the lowest in the country. Since then the trust has taken decisive action to raise standards rapidly in mathematics, English and a range of other subjects.
- The trust has recently strengthened the leadership and management of SEND. Historically, funding for pupils with SEND has not been used well. The recently established 'Bridge' provision provides high-quality support for those with SEND but the quality of in-class teaching and support for this group remains variable.
- Literacy and numeracy support is in place to help pupils catch up with some success. However, there is not enough monitoring and evaluation of this support, so opportunities are missed to ensure that all pupils catch up quickly.
- Although leaders have put in place some strategies which are improving attendance, it remains below the national average in key stage 4.
- Leaders introduced a new behaviour system last academic year. Pupils spoken to by inspectors feel that behaviour is much better than it used to be, although there remains low-level disruption in some of their lessons.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a root-and-branch review of the curriculum in order to improve outcomes rapidly. As a result, a much broader suite of subjects is offered. Last academic year, all pupils went on to further education, employment or training.
- Trust directors of subject have significantly strengthened the quality of provision in English and mathematics. This approach to continuing professional development and coaching is now in place across other subjects but it is too soon to see a significant impact.
- The personal, social and health education curriculum, assembly programme and tutor time provide the basis for the school's work on British values and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils and teachers take part in events such as World Book Day and also raise money for local and national charities. Inspectors observed pupils showing respect for each other during lessons and at social times. Year 10 pupils were highly engaged in a registration period, talking about the 'six pillars of character'.

### Governance of the school

- The trust has rightly recognised that governance needs to be strengthened. As a result, the interim executive board ceased last month in favour of a joint academy council with a local primary school which is also in the trust. Members of the interim executive board have challenged senior leaders and, as a result, standards of behaviour and outcomes have improved.
- Governors regularly visit the school and meet with senior leaders. However, they have not challenged senior leaders enough about the standards that pupils achieve. In particular, there is not enough accountability for the impact of the pupil premium

funding.

- Governors have not ensured that all statutory information is available to parents via the school's website or that there is a robust policy in place to prevent bullying.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding systems are fit for purpose. The single central record meets requirements. All staff have regular child-protection training. Leaders provide a weekly safeguarding briefing in response to any concerns that pupils have. Child-protection records are kept securely. Scrutiny of child-protection records shows that serious concerns are responded to in a timely manner and that the school engages well with external agencies and the local authority to support pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- Inspectors observed typically positive relationships between pupils and staff. All pupils and staff spoken to during the inspection felt able to report any concerns they had about themselves or others. Pupils were confident that their concerns would be effectively dealt with by staff.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted survey and the overwhelming majority of pupils spoken to feel that bullying is dealt with effectively. All logged incidents of bullying are dealt with and the outcomes are carefully documented on the school's safeguarding system. However, the policy and procedure for pupils and parents to report bullying and to understand how it will be dealt with are unclear.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Pupils benefit from good and improving teaching across a range of subjects, including in mathematics, English, physical education (PE) and modern foreign languages. However, teaching in some subjects, including science and humanities, is less effective because often teachers lack the requisite subject knowledge and do not engage pupils well.
- The quality of teaching for pupils with SEND remains variable. There are some examples of pupils who are well supported by caring and well-informed teaching assistants. In other instances, teachers do not plan work effectively for the differing needs and capabilities of pupils. This can lead to some pupils unfairly falling foul of the behaviour system because they cannot do what they are asked to.
- Teachers in mathematics use their strong subject knowledge to engage pupils well. Pupils respond with good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. Teachers use questioning well to move pupils swiftly on in their learning and to identify and clarify any misconceptions.
- Typically, teachers in English inspire pupils to think deeply, which enables them to gain a deep understanding of literature. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that over time they make strong progress as a result of helpful assessment. They show good subject knowledge and understanding of key vocabulary. They receive high praise and reward

for their work and respond with good behaviour.

- There are high expectations across the vast majority of subjects. In PE, pupils are immaculate in their kits. Teachers ensure that no learning time is lost, and pupils apply themselves well in a range of sporting activities.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- A few parents and pupils reported concerns over the way incidents of bullying are handled. Procedures for parents and pupils to follow in order to prevent bullying are ambiguous. In assemblies and PSHE lessons, work has taken place to prevent bullying. However, it has not been fully effective.
- A minority of parents who responded to Parent View feel that their children are not safe in this school. This view was echoed by a few pupils spoken to by inspectors. Almost all the staff who responded to Ofsted's survey and those who were spoken to by inspectors felt that pupils were safe in the school. Parents' concerns centre on senior staff speaking inappropriately to pupils and applying the behaviour system too harshly. Leaders of the trust were already aware of these concerns and are addressing them.
- Inspectors observed effective relationships between staff and pupils. In many lessons there were strong relationships, mutual respect and, in the best ones, much praise, many rewards and good humour.
- Pastoral leaders support pupils well and all pupils spoken to by inspectors confidently reported that they would know who to go to if they had concerns or needed help. Every week leaders monitor pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. As a result, staff are aware of potential risks to safety and well-being.
- Leaders use alternative provision effectively to support the needs of a few pupils. There are regular checks on the safeguarding and well-being of these pupils. Leaders are aware that the progress they are making is varied.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The vast majority of pupils behave in a polite and well-mannered way. However, there remains low-level disruption in a minority of lessons when learning is not engaging.
- A number of teachers and pupils spoken to by inspectors rightly report that behaviour has improved significantly from the academic year 2016/17. As a result, the number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions has decreased although it remains above national averages.
- Attendance is broadly average in key stage 3. In key stage 4 it is improving but remains below the national average. The school is receiving effective support from an

associate principal in order to improve attendance further.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Last year, pupils' progress over the range of subjects that they studied was below the national average. However, the proportion of pupils achieving a good pass in English and mathematics was above the national average. This represents significant improvement from 2016 when the results in English and mathematics were among the lowest found nationally.
- Pupils with SEND do not make good progress because the quality of teaching and support for them is inconsistent.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils has improved in recent years but their outcomes still lag behind those of their peers.
- Progress in science and humanities is improving but remains below the national average. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work and evidence they gathered related to teaching and learning showed that this is due to variation in the quality of teaching.
- Current progress information, lesson observations and work scrutiny show that the proportion of pupils achieving a good pass in English and mathematics has further improved and will likely remain above the national average.
- Pupils make good progress in key stage 3. They achieve well across a broad curriculum.

## School details

Unique reference number	136135
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10055790

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	581
Appropriate authority	Northern Education Trust Board
Chair	David Fann
Acting Principal	Kim McKee
Telephone number	01204 332555
Website	<a href="http://www.kearsleyacademy.org">www.kearsleyacademy.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@kearsleyacademy.org">admin@kearsleyacademy.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	6–7 May 2015

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has not accepted any new learners into the sixth form and is currently consulting on its closure.
- The school is a member of the Northern Education Academies Trust. There are a number of executive headteachers and associate headteachers working with the school.
- Until very recently there was an interim executive board and now there is a joint academy council with a local primary school, also in the same trust.
- The school uses the following alternative providers: The Park School and Lords Independent School.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out following a number of complaints to Ofsted which raised serious concerns. Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised. Inspectors sought to establish whether the quality of provision for SEND students was good enough and to evaluate whether the behaviour system was on occasion applied in an unfair or inconsistent way. They considered whether some senior staff were speaking to pupils in an inappropriate way.
- Inspectors observed teaching across the school and carried out an extensive scrutiny of pupils’ work, including that of disadvantaged pupils, alongside assessment information.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils and staff formally and at social times. They spoke on the telephone to parents who had contacted Ofsted during the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised school policies and records relating to safeguarding, self-evaluation information and a range of other documentation.
- There were 43 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupils’ questionnaire.
- There were 110 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, to be considered and 96 free-text responses.
- Inspectors met with the chief executive of Northern Education Trust. Meetings were also held with senior and middle leaders.

## Inspection team

Sally Kenyon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Colin Bell	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Holmes	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector



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Piccadilly Gate  
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