

# Kenton School

Drayton Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE3 3RU

## 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
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- In 2017 and 2018, the progress that pupils made by the time they finished Year 11 was not good enough in many subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- The progress of pupils currently at school in key stages 3 and 4 requires improvement. This is because the quality of teaching is too variable.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. The standards that these pupils are currently reaching is not high enough.
- There is a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching. Not all teachers question pupils effectively, have high enough expectations of pupils, or develop pupils' literacy and oracy successfully.
- The behaviour of pupils as they move around school, including at breaktime and lunchtime, is not good. In too many lessons, pupils do not fully engage in their learning. Some show a lack of respect towards each other and adults.
- Some school leaders do not prioritise effectively when planning for improvement. Sometimes, there is a lack of understanding as to which strategies are having the greatest impact on the quality of education.
- The system that leaders use to track and monitor attendance and exclusions is less incisive than that used to track academic progress. This hinders improvements in these areas. For example, rates of attendance are too low. Persistent absence is too high.
- A sizable minority of parents, staff and pupils have negative views about the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- School leaders have a passion for inclusion and are open to giving pupils 'another chance' at their education if needed. They honour the school motto of 'all different, all equal'.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Many make strong progress in their learning.
- The majority of Kenton pupils are polite, respectful and well behaved.
- The quality of teaching in art, and the standards that pupils reach in this subject, are impressive.
- Governance of the school is now strong. Governors and trustees support and challenge school leaders effectively.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress and leave Kenton well prepared for the next stages in their education or career.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - identifying and prioritising the school improvement strategies that have the greatest impact
  - ensuring that strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning are relevant, fit for purpose, and clear to members of staff
  - ensuring that recent changes in the use of the pupil premium have an increasingly positive impact on the progress that disadvantaged pupils make
  - making sure that processes to track attendance and exclusions are equally as strong as those in place for academic progress and attainment.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - making sure that all teachers are ambitious about the standards of which pupils are capable
  - ensuring that lessons are consistently well planned and effectively delivered, both within individual subject departments and across the curriculum
  - ensuring that pupils make progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding, in addition to completing tasks
  - developing, more effectively, pupils' literacy and oracy skills
  - further developing teachers' questioning skills.
- Improve pupils' personal development behaviour and welfare by:
  - ensuring that pupils behave appropriately when moving between lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime
  - making sure that any instances of name calling, unkind behaviour or bullying are eradicated
  - ensuring that pupils apply themselves and work productively in subjects across the curriculum.
- Urgently improve attendance and decrease the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent.
- Increase the rate of progress that pupils make, and the standards that they reach, in subjects that contribute to the English Baccalaureate (English, mathematics, science, modern or ancient languages, history and geography).

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, school leaders and those responsible for governance have needed to address major financial challenges. The impact of these challenges has been felt throughout the school community. During the first year since the previous inspection, a sizeable proportion of leaders' time was taken up dealing with these pressures. At that point, this stopped them from being able to fully focus on improving the quality of provision at school.
- Leadership and management require improvement because the impact of leaders' work has not been translated into strong enough outcomes for pupils, either academically or pastorally. The progress that pupils made from their starting points by the time they left school in 2017 and 2018 was not good enough in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science. Rates of attendance are too low. Some improvements are visible. The standards that pupils attained in 2018 by the end of Year 11 were stronger than those of the previous year. This includes the standards that disadvantaged pupils reached. The rate of improvement has been too slow, however.
- The academy improvement plan is a helpful document that brings all aspects of school development together into one place. It is the basis on which school leaders ensure that middle leaders and other staff are held accountable for their roles. It has helped to embed a culture of continual improvement at school. However, although comprehensive, plans do not always explicitly identify and prioritise strategies that are having the greatest impact.
- School leaders know where teaching is strong within school and where it requires further development. All teachers have a 'personalised learning plan' to help them refine their craft. Effective quality assurance processes are in place. School leaders accept that there is more work to do to ensure that strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning are relevant, fit for purpose and clear to all members of staff. Some teachers feel that changes made are too rapid and initiatives are too numerous.
- Systems to track the progress that pupils are making, and the standards that they are reaching, are accurate and comprehensive. Leaders use this information to intervene when pupils are falling behind. Inspectors have identified the need to make sure that processes to track attendance and exclusions are equally as strong as those in place for academic outcomes.
- School leaders are passionate about inclusion. They are determined to give pupils from the area that 'second chance' to help them to move successfully into further education, employment or training when they leave Kenton.
- There are some strong aspects of provision at Kenton. The art curriculum is strikingly successful. Pupils with SEND are well served because the special educational needs coordinator ensures that teachers know the needs of individual pupils. Attempts to build 'cultural capital', so that all pupils at school, including disadvantaged pupils, broaden their horizons and see more of the world are increasingly effective.
- Parents and staff have differing views on the quality of education on offer. Many are content with the quality of teaching and standards of behaviour. A sizable minority,

however, reported negative views about the school and some aspects of its leadership.

## Governance of the school

- Governance has been overhauled since the last inspection. Many trustees and members of the local governing body (LGB) are new. Trustees and members of the LGB now have clearly defined roles. The principal and her team rightly have confidence in the ability of those responsible for governance to support and challenge them to improve the school. Governors and trustees bring a wide range of helpful and relevant experience to their roles.
- Governors understand that, in the past, the impact of the pupil premium has been too variable on the progress that disadvantaged pupils made. They know that they need to ensure that recent changes in the use of the pupil premium have an increasingly positive impact on the progress that these pupils make.
- Members of the governing body, together with trustees and school leaders, have helped to shape the academy improvement plan. They use it to challenge school leaders and hold them accountable in their efforts to improve the quality of provision. They do so on a regular basis. Governors receive useful and accurate information about the quality of teaching and the rates of progress that pupils are making. They know the strengths and areas for improvement for the school. Current governors and trustees add capacity to school leadership.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Systems and procedures used to ensure that pupils are protected are effective. Safeguarding training for members of staff is up to date and policies are comprehensive. They meet legal requirements.
- Any concerns that adults have about pupils who are more vulnerable or who need additional support are dealt with effectively. School leaders deal with any potential child protection issues immediately. They are tenacious in ensuring that the pupils in their care receive the support to which they are entitled.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too inconsistent. The gap between stronger teaching and weaker teaching is too wide. As a result, the progress pupils make is variable.
- Where learning is stronger, teachers plan to meet the needs of different groups of pupils effectively. Here, time is well used in lessons. Teachers plan activities that spark the interests of the pupils and they question pupils well. They listen to the answers that pupils give and push them further by asking questions that probe their understanding. In these classrooms, pupils concentrate hard and focus on the task in hand. As a result, pupils make gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding.

- Too often, however, pupils spend their time in lessons completing tasks that do not necessarily build on their understanding. Here, pupils complete a range of activities, but do not make progress in the subject being studied effectively. Here, teachers' questioning is not consistently successful in pushing pupils forward in their learning.
- New mid-term planning documents are ambitious for pupils. The expectations of what pupils should be able to do, and what they should know, are high. The extent to which individual lessons are planned, to ensure that pupils reach these standards, is currently too inconsistent. In addition, the extent to which lessons effectively develop pupils' literacy and oracy skills is varied. Not all teachers plan lessons that are ambitious enough about the standards of which pupils are capable.
- Strategies to improve the quality of teaching and provision for disadvantaged pupils are not consistently effective. Leaders know that there is a need to ensure that recent changes in the use of the pupil premium have an increasingly positive impact.
- Some most-able pupils at school make stronger progress than their peers. This is because some teachers question these pupils effectively in order to push them forward in their learning. In addition, a greater proportion of these pupils have very positive attitudes to their studies, which helps them make progress.
- Pupils with SEND benefit from strong provision. This includes those linked to the additionally resourced centre which supports pupils with autism spectrum disorders and those with speech, language and communication difficulties. Additional interventions and teaching assistants support these pupils effectively. The information that teachers receive about pupils with SEND and how to meet their needs is helpful and accurate.
- Many pupils respond positively to practical aspects of learning. When this is harnessed successfully, pupils make strong progress. For example, teaching in art and other practical subjects is effective. School leaders are focusing on ways of ensuring that pupils engage in learning more effectively in other subjects too. During the inspection, for example, some strong examples of pupil engagement were seen in English and science.
- Parents receive helpful information about the progress that their children are making. 'Planners' are central to communication with parents. Their use is varied. Parents also reported to inspectors that the amount and quality of homework that pupils receive is inconsistent. School leaders are aware of this, and plans are in place to improve this.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development requires improvement.
- Pupils' confidence as learners is variable. In practical subjects, such as art, music, and design and technology, pupils apply themselves well and work productively. They accept the challenge offered to them by teachers and try hard. In other subjects, such as those that contribute to the English baccalaureate, pupils' confidence and resilience is weaker. This leads to a degree of apathy and, sometimes, disruption.
- The pride that pupils show in their work is inconsistent. Some pupils have untidy

handwriting and do not complete tasks thoroughly. This level of care in pupils' work is uneven because teachers' expectations are variable.

- The school has an effective 'Life Skills' programme that ensures that pupils learn about issues such as bullying, self-harm, fundamental British values and equalities. Most pupils believe that the school motto 'all different, all equal' is upheld well. The school nurse runs sessions on well-being and mental health that are appreciated and valued by pupils.
- The 'Life Skills' programme also helps pupils to understand any risks to their safety. Most pupils feel safe. They learn about staying safe online and other risks prevalent in the local community.
- Pupils contribute well to community activities such as supporting the work of local food banks, and the Shoebox Appeal. Pupils themselves organised a fundraising campaign when a local special school was vandalised. This shows their deep concern for the local community.
- Pupils receive impartial careers guidance. There are planned opportunities for pupils to meet employers, practise interview skills and visit university. More vulnerable pupils receive strong support to help them with their next steps after their time at Kenton. Almost all pupils progress into education, employment or training.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons is too variable. School leaders have recently reviewed the behaviour policy. They are aware that too many pupils do not behave adequately well in lessons. Some pupils do not behave appropriately when moving between lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime.
- School leaders monitor instances of bullying and analyse trends and patterns. They know that bullying happens and work hard to address it. They accept that they need to be even more effective in ensuring that any instances of name calling, unkind behaviour or bullying are eradicated. Many pupils agree that school leaders do their best to sort out any issues that are brought to their attention. School records confirm that this is the case. A few parents and pupils are less convinced that leaders' actions are effective.
- Rates of attendance are too low. This includes rates of attendance for disadvantaged pupils. In addition, too many pupils are persistently absent. Some 'green shoots' are currently visible.
- The use of fixed-term exclusion by leaders increased at the beginning of this academic year. Some pupils at risk of permanent exclusion are now being supported through alternative provision. As a result, the number of fixed-term exclusions is decreasing. Pupils in alternative provision generally improve both their attendance and behaviour because the curriculum in these settings matches their interests more closely.
- A large minority of parents, pupils and members of staff do not consider standards of behaviour at school to be good enough. Inspectors agree. Overall, behaviour is not good. Too many pupils show a lack of respect for each other, for adults and for their

school. Nonetheless, most pupils are polite, respectful and well behaved.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- In 2017 and 2018, pupils left Year 11 having made progress which was below that of all pupils nationally. Their progress was below average in English, mathematics and science. The standards that they reached were below average. School leaders have a passion for inclusion and are open to giving pupils 'another chance' at their education if needed. Consequently, a proportion of pupils arrive at school having moved from different setting at times other than at the beginning of Year 7. Although this has an impact on published performance data, school leaders agree with inspectors that, overall, the progress of pupils has not been good enough.
- Nonetheless, some improvements were seen in 2018. The proportion of pupils who attained English at grades 4 and 5 rose. There were some gains for pupils in mathematics also. This picture is mirrored for disadvantaged pupils.
- The progress that current pupils are making requires improvement. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 10 are making stronger progress now in a wide range of subjects. Pupils are making gains in their learning in Year 9 and 11, although improvements here are slower. Rates of progress are increasing in English and science.
- School leaders now have a comprehensive system for tracking pupils' progress. They know that the progress that many pupils are making in mathematics needs to be addressed. Inspectors confirm that this is the case.
- Every pupil takes an art subject as part of their core programme at key stage 4. This can include photography, ceramics, graphics or textiles. The progress that pupils make in these courses and the standards that they reach are impressive. Art is a real strength of the school.
- Pupils with SEND make stronger progress from their starting points than others at school. This includes those linked to the additionally resourced centre which supports pupils with autism spectrum disorders and those with speech, language and communication difficulties. This is because they receive effective additional support, and because the information that teachers have, in order to help meet the needs of these pupils, is incisive.
- Some of the most able pupils at Kenton make stronger progress in a variety of subject areas, including English. This is because teachers have higher expectations of what they can achieve. Teachers ensure that these pupils are pushed to deepen their thinking in lessons. In addition, many of these pupils show greater levels of commitment to their learning at school.
- The progress that disadvantaged pupils make requires improvement. An increasing number of these pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Leaders' plans for using the pupil premium are stronger now, but it is too early to judge the impact of these changes.
- School leaders know which pupils need support to help them improve their fluency and level of attainment in reading. Catch-up funding is used increasingly well to this end. Pupils who speak English as an additional language develop well as readers and take

advantage of the opportunities given to them in class to focus on this skill.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- School leaders have ensured that study programmes are planned to meet the differing needs of students at Kenton. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good, as is the pastoral support that students receive. As a result, students make good progress from their starting points in both academic and vocational courses.
- Leaders have worked hard to ensure that students follow courses that are well matched to their interests and abilities. The percentage of students that completed courses increased in 2018 as a result. An increasing number of students who need to retake English or mathematics are successful at improving their level of attainment.
- Sixth form leaders work closely with subject staff to track the progress of students and intervene when individuals are falling behind. Systems to check the quality of teaching in the sixth form ensure that leaders can address any decline in performance of individual subjects.
- Students confirm that their teachers plan well to meet their needs and support them to reach their targets. Inspectors confirm that students are well taught. Teachers know their subject well and understand the demands of external accreditations.
- Students have access to a range of enrichment activities and work experience opportunities. Students are given impartial advice and guidance to help orientate them as to their next steps after Kenton. A number of students, those in the engineering group for example, attend subject-specific work experience to help prepare them for future careers. As a result of this type of preparation, together with the standards that students reach, very few students leave sixth form without places in education, employment or training.
- Many students contribute to the life of the school and the local community. Students are involved in the school council and many support younger pupils through drama or sports leadership programmes. This develops students' social and organisational skills. A bespoke personal, social and health education course, which students find relevant to their needs, also helps prepare them for the next stages in their life.
- Students told inspectors how much they appreciate the pastoral team and commended them highly. Students in the sixth form feel safe and know how to stay safe. They trust their tutors and the sixth form leadership team.
- Sixth form leaders know where the strengths and relative weaknesses in provision lie. For example, rates of attendance for sixth formers were an issue historically. This was identified, strategies were put into place, and improvements are now evident. Leaders know that some variation still exists between the progress that students make in different subject areas. Plans are in place to minimise these differences.



## School details

Unique reference number	138120
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10059059

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 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1779
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	222
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Anne Malcolm
Principal	Sarah Holmes-Carne
Telephone number	0191 2142200
Website	<a href="http://www.kenton.newcastle.sch.uk">www.kenton.newcastle.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@kenton.newcastle.sch.uk">admin@kenton.newcastle.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	27–29 September 2016

## Information about this school

- Kenton School is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Kenton School is part of Kenton Schools Academy Trust. According to its scheme of delegation, the board of trustees has responsibility for the strategic direction of the trust, finance and staffing. The school's LGB has responsibility for Kenton School's educational effectiveness and the curriculum on offer.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is close to the national average.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is well below the national average.
- The school is additionally resourced to offer up to 18 places for pupils with autism spectrum disorders and six places for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. These pupils are all included in mainstream classes for much of the time.
- The school works in collaboration with outside providers as part of the curriculum on offer for pupils. At the time of the inspection, these providers were: Skills4U, Trinity Solutions, Sporting Chance and OWN IT. A small number of pupils are dual registered at both Kenton School and Newcastle Bridges School.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning and groups of pupils working in all key stages at the school. Inspectors observed learning jointly with the headteacher and other members of the senior team and discussed what was seen. Learning in the sixth form was also observed.
- Inspectors observed pupils when moving around the school and at social times. They talked to pupils in lessons about their experience at school and looked at work in their books. They talked to four specific groups of pupils and sixth-form students to hear their views about the school and about the behaviour of other pupils.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the trust and the LGB. They also spoke with senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for standards or behaviour and safeguarding. An inspector spoke with the special educational needs coordinator and spent time with some pupils linked to the additionally resourced centre for pupils with autism spectrum disorders and pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties.
- Inspectors took account of the 123 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 96 responses to the pupil questionnaire. The 45 responses to Ofsted’s online parent questionnaire, Parent View, were also considered, including any free-text comments.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and scrutinised a range of documentation, including: the school’s view of its own performance; monitoring records; information about pupils’ progress; improvement planning; and records of behaviour and attendance. They looked closely at records relating to safeguarding and child protection, and at policies, including those published on the school’s website.

## Inspection team

Michael Wardle, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Downs	Ofsted Inspector
Bernard Clark	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Smith	Her Majesty's Inspector
Louise Greatrex	Ofsted Inspector

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