

Kingsmeadow Community Comprehensive School

Market Lane, Dunston, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE11 9NX

Inspection dates

5–6 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Accurate self-evaluation, good relationships and simple yet effective development planning underpin strong leadership in the school.
- Governors challenge school leaders well and provide a good level of support.
- The curriculum is currently broad and balanced. However, some planned changes to the curriculum will limit the depth of pupils' studies if they are implemented.
- Teaching has improved and continues to improve as a result of high-quality training. There are good opportunities for teachers to share and so improve their expertise.
- There remain some inconsistencies in teaching. Pupils' literacy is not always improved across different subjects, for example.
- Pupils behave well both in and out of class. They are well mannered, polite and courteous.
- Pupils feel safe and secure. Bullying is rare. Pupils respect each other and appreciate each other's differences.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is highly effective. As a result, pupils make good progress and thrive during their time in school.
- Outcomes are improving strongly over time, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Outcomes in mathematics lagged behind other subjects in 2018. This is improving well. However, pupils' mathematical reasoning skills still require further improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment further so that:
 - pupils are able to learn the essential skills of spelling, punctuation, grammar and good spoken English across all subjects
 - questioning allows pupils to fully justify their answers and challenges their thinking
 - good support is provided for pupils new to the English language.
- Improve leadership and management further by ensuring that:
 - planned changes in key stage 3 do not lead to a narrowing in depth and breadth of the curriculum, especially in arts subjects
 - checks that leaders make are more precise about what needs to be done to improve teaching in each subject.
- Improve outcomes further in mathematics by ensuring that pupils are given ample opportunity in lessons to reason mathematically, so deepening their understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and his senior team lead with vision and energy. Development plans are short and to the point. Consequently, leaders at all levels know precisely what they should be aiming for. The senior team has fully considered the workload of staff and their personal well-being. As a result, morale is high and staff are committed to giving the best possible experiences to pupils.
- There are good opportunities in the curriculum to develop pupils' knowledge and skills across a range of subjects. Music has a high profile in the curriculum with good opportunities for pupils to perform and sing. One afternoon per week, many pupils and all of Year 7 take part in a range of sporting and artistic activities. Additionally, many pupils take part in sports during extra-curricular time.
- Previously, modern foreign languages were unpopular and the uptake was low in key stage 4. This led to too few pupils taking all five subjects of the English Baccalaureate. The changes leaders have made to the curriculum have promoted languages well. All pupils now take a language in key stage 4.
- The humanities curriculum in Year 7 and Year 8 requires pupils to complete three projects per year covering history, geography, religious education, ethics and philosophy. This curriculum builds up pupils' knowledge of these subjects well, enabling them to take the subjects further in key stage 4 if they wish.
- The school operates a curriculum in key stage 3 that runs over two, rather than three, years. Pupils make their choices for key stage 4 in Year 8. Leaders have so far managed successfully to ensure that this arrangement has not led to a narrowing of the curriculum. However, if implemented, the plans that are in place for the coming year will narrow the curriculum significantly in performing arts, particularly music in key stage 3.
- The pupil premium has had a particularly strong impact on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. High-quality training for staff, an incisive, accurate system to track progress and a range of interventions to support pupils have all paid dividends. The Year 7 catch-up premium ensures that pupils who arrive at the school with weak English and mathematics skills catch up with their peers.
- Similarly, the additional funding for pupils with SEND has had a good impact on their outcomes. Parents are particularly complimentary of the support their children receive, making comments such as: 'Our son's needs are met at every level and he is a happy young man who loves school and learning.'
- Middle leaders ensure that teachers enthuse and motivate pupils. For example, in modern foreign languages, by inviting the Newcastle United player Ayoze Pérez to talk to pupils in Spanish, so motivating them to learn the language. Across the school, leaders have improved the quality of teaching which is now good. However, inconsistencies remain. The checks that middle and senior leaders make lack precision about what needs to be done to improve teaching quickly in each subject.
- Parents who responded to Parent View were overwhelmingly in support of the school's leadership. Most parents would recommend the school to others.

- The local authority and school improvement partner have supported the school well by giving honest, forthright advice on how to improve. For example, the school improvement partner recently undertook a detailed survey of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. His recommendations have been acted upon and so are making a good impact.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed to the school and have good complimentary skills in finance and school improvement. They have audited their skills to ensure that any gaps in their knowledge are addressed promptly.
- Governors give good support to the school and challenge leaders well. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors have kept a watchful eye on improvements in mathematics, ensuring that the things that the school were doing were having a good impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Governors receive high-quality training. This enables them to keep a watchful eye on safeguarding and whether the school is making sufficient progress according to the development plan priorities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are well trained. Staff who were questioned by inspectors knew what they must do if faced with a safeguarding concern. Training for staff and designated safeguarding leaders is up to date and meets current safeguarding requirements.
- Arrangements for vetting new members of staff are secure.
- The curriculum has been designed so that pupils are taught how to keep safe from risks and dangers they may encounter, such as drugs and alcohol.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Over time, the quality of teaching has been improving. As a result of reduced workload, teachers now have the time to plan high-quality learning. Consequently, they are able to spend longer analysing pupils' assessments and deciding on their next steps in learning.
- Teachers receive good training and support, which is customised to their experience and particular needs. The training programme that is in place is designed to help teachers share expertise with each other and use the very latest educational research in their classrooms.
- The inspection team looked carefully at the teaching of mathematics, since pupils' progress in the 2018 GCSE examinations was not strong. The subject is taught well. The most able pupils are now challenged more than before and so are making better progress than in previous years. Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in mathematics. In key stage 3, the mathematics curriculum is designed well so that

pupils become fluent in their times tables and basic calculation. This builds well on the knowledge they have acquired in primary school. However, the teaching of mathematical reasoning remains a relative weakness.

- In the majority of lessons, teachers enthuse and motivate pupils, which is reflected in their good attitudes to learning and their high levels of participation.
- The systems to assess pupils' knowledge and skills has improved. It is now accurate and pinpoints pupils' next steps well. Teachers have an impressive amount of knowledge of what pupils can and cannot yet do. As a result, any pupils who fall behind are quickly identified and a range of interventions is put into place to address any issues.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and provide high-quality support to pupils with SEND. In class, teachers are provided with detailed information about SEND pupils which enables them to tailor support for the pupils.
- In most lessons, the work that is set for pupils is sufficiently demanding for all abilities. For example, in a music lesson, pupils who could already play the piano were challenged to learn blues improvisation, which was entirely new to them.
- The essential skills of spelling, punctuation, grammar and good spoken English are not promoted well across all subjects. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to correct basic spelling errors. Pupils do not always use good, standard English when contributing to lessons.
- When questioning pupils, simple answers are sometimes accepted by teachers. Questioning sometimes does not challenge pupils' thinking sufficiently to move them on with their learning.
- The school's population is changing, with an increasing proportion of pupils arriving at the school with little or no spoken English. The support for these pupils is inconsistent because teachers' skills are lacking in how to get the best out of them. Sometimes they thrive as a result of good support but on occasions they struggle to understand what is being taught in lessons and so could make faster progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe and secure. They say that on the very rare occasions when they experience bullying, there is a caring adult to turn to. Diversity in the school is celebrated. Pupils of different backgrounds are very respectful to each other, irrespective of culture, religion and sexuality.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet or their mobile phones. The school has, through its curriculum, sharpened the advice to older pupils so that they are aware of how to secure their passwords and use social media responsibly and safely.
- Through the comprehensive personal, social and health education curriculum and through assemblies, pupils are taught about how to stay safe from drugs and alcohol.

Sex and relationships education is taught well. However, some pupils told inspectors this could be in more detail as they become older. A particular strength is how parents are kept informed of spotting the signs and symptoms of gang-related drug crime, also known as 'county lines'.

- When questioned by inspectors, pupils were positive about the project-based humanities lessons, which they said helped them to learn about faiths and cultures other than their own. They were also positive about 'character days'. These are days when the curriculum is suspended so that pupils can gain information on careers, qualifications and meet prospective employers.
- Most parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that their children were well looked after and safe in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Inspectors were impressed with pupils' behaviour, both in and out of lessons. In lessons, pupils are well behaved and contribute willingly. Only in lessons where teaching does not fully interest or motivate them do they become passive in their learning.
- Pupils are thoughtful and keen to help each other. There were times in lessons where pupils took the time to patiently explain the work to others who struggled.
- During lunchtimes and breaktimes, pupils behave well and with respect for each other.
- The proportion of pupils who have been permanently excluded has been above average for the past three years. There are now signs of this improving and approaching the national average.
- Attendance has been broadly average for the past three years, although it has recently dipped below the national average. Inspectors looked at this in detail, concluding that school leaders are doing all they can, working with parents and local agencies to improve attendance further.
- Parents who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they were happy with behaviour in the school. Most staff also said that behaviour had improved over time.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In the 2018 the progress that pupils made in their best eight GCSE subjects was similar to pupils nationally. In English, girls made more progress than girls nationally. In mathematics and modern foreign languages, pupils made less progress than their national peers.
- Inspection evidence indicates that the trend of improvement will continue with pupils currently in the school. The progress that pupils are making, particularly the most able in mathematics, has improved considerably. This is the result of better teaching, incisive and accurate assessment and strong leadership. Modern foreign languages has been transformed into a vibrant, relevant and popular subject as a result of better teaching and assessment, an improved curriculum and strong leadership.

- Across other subjects, pupils make good progress. In science, the curriculum provides pupils with a deep understanding of the separate subjects of physics, chemistry and biology from Year 7. This prepares them well for the demands of separate subjects at GCSE level. In English, pupils gain a good appreciation of different genres of literature. In humanities, local as well as global issues are covered in detail so that pupils' knowledge of history, geography and ethical issues are developed well over time.
- At the time of the previous inspection, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils lagged behind those of other pupils. Disadvantaged pupils now make progress which is close to that of other pupils in the school and nationally, as is their attainment.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress. This is the result of high-quality information that is provided to teachers, who in turn are able to support pupils well.
- Reading is promoted well in the school. Those who arrive at the school with weaker reading skills are supported well through the Year 7 catch-up funding. However, there are missed opportunities within lessons to develop pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills.

School details

Unique reference number	108410
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10087523

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	748
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Diggle
Headteacher	Domenic Volpe
Telephone number	0191 460 6004
Website	http://kingsmeadow.org.uk/
Email address	dvolpe@kingsmeadow.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 April 2017

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of students who receive support for SEND is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above that found nationally.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds, although a growing number of pupils arrive from other countries with little or no spoken English.
- No pupils are educated off the school site.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were newly appointed after the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a range of year groups and subjects. Some were jointly observed with middle leaders. Additionally, pupils' work was looked at to check on the progress they had been making over time.
- Meetings were held with students, senior leaders, other staff and members of the governing body. The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors analysed the 18 responses that had been submitted to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View), the 61 staff questionnaire responses and 176 responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents including school improvement plans, minutes of the governing body meetings, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Robert Jones, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jamie Lawler	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Booth	Ofsted Inspector
John Downs	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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