

Northampton International Academy

Barrack Road, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN1 1AA

Inspection dates

9–10 July 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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- With ongoing support from the trust, governors and other senior leaders, the headteacher is building a school with an international focus where pupils can thrive.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance are passionate and committed to securing the very best outcomes for all pupils, irrespective of their background.
- Leaders know the school's strengths well. Their plans for further growth and improvement are ambitious, but achievable.
- Leaders are aspirational for the pupils. They track pupils' progress closely and provide them with close support when required.
- Pupils study a broad range of subjects and enjoy a variety of experiences and activities.
- Pastoral leadership is strong. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site.
- Inclusivity is a real strength of the school. Pupils celebrate their differences.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- Recently appointed subject leaders are not yet rigorous in their oversight of the work in their areas of responsibility.
- Governors do not always challenge leaders to ensure that additional government funding is used as effectively as possible.
- Pupils feel safe and happy. Safeguarding is effective. Incidents of bullying and pupils' use of derogatory language are infrequent.
- The quality of teaching is good. Most teachers use strong subject knowledge to plan clear sequences of learning. Their questioning skills are effective.
- Most teachers apply the school's policy on feedback consistently well to help pupils to improve their work.
- Many pupils achieve well. From low starting points, many children in early years make good progress.
- Children in early years are empathic and caring towards others. They are very well supported by adults in the provision.
- Pupils enjoy school. Their attendance is good. Few are regularly absent from school.
- On occasion, teachers do not ensure that learning matches the needs of all pupils closely enough, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- A minority of teachers do not offer pupils, particularly boys, or children in early years, with enough challenge in their learning.
- While overall exclusions have declined, too many boys receive more than one temporary exclusion.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders continue to develop the leadership skills of subject leaders, especially those new to their roles
 - governors challenge leaders to evaluate their use of additional government funding, including the pupil premium and the primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding, so that leaders use them as effectively as possible.
- Improve the quality of teaching, by ensuring teachers consistently:
 - provide pupils, including children in early years, with an appropriate level of challenge so they all make consistently strong progress, particularly boys
 - use well information about pupils' prior attainment to plan learning that meets all pupils' needs, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Improve the quality of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by reducing the proportion of pupils, particularly boys, who receive more than one temporary exclusion from school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- On entering the school, there is a palpable sense of excitement about the possibilities it offers those who study and work there. Since taking up the post in September 2017, the headteacher has communicated a clear vision and philosophy for what he aims to achieve. With increasing support from a growing team of senior leaders, he is realising his ambitions for the pupils and staff in his care.
- As the school has grown rapidly, leaders, with the support of the trust, have instigated rigorous systems and procedures so the school runs smoothly. The school is fully staffed with appropriately skilled individuals. Staff are wholly supportive of the school's international ethos and they are passionate about the pupils and the local community in which they work. A typical parent comment was, 'The enthusiasm and dedication of the staff is reflected in how much my children enjoy school.'
- Leaders know the school well and have a realistic understanding of its strengths. Their plans for future development are ambitious, but wholly appropriate. Leaders' key development priorities focus on securing existing practice and improving consistency in quality, as well as introducing new strategies.
- In all phases, leaders set pupils aspirational targets. They track closely pupils' progress and attainment, including the progress of different groups. Leaders ensure the information about pupils' progress is accurate, with pupils' assessed work moderated both within school and across the trust.
- An unusually large number of pupils join the school during the academic year. Often, there is no information about the previous attainment of these pupils. Leaders track the achievements of these pupils precisely, providing them with additional support when necessary to improve their outcomes.
- The pastoral team works very closely with heads of year to support pupils, particularly those who are more vulnerable. The adoption of systems that are more consistent and rigorous and closer working with parents and carers and external agencies have seen pupils' behaviour and attendance improve, including for most groups.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is energetic and effective. Systems to monitor and track the quality of teaching and learning are well established, with a key focus on the 'NIA Nine', including, for instance, challenge and meeting pupils' needs. When necessary, leaders provide teachers with bespoke support to bring about improvements. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is typically good.
- Teachers feel valued as professionals and as individuals. Leaders trust and encourage them when they want to try something new. Teachers appreciate the range of training available to help them to improve their practice. In particular, those teachers who are new to the profession feel well supported.
- Leaders provide a rich diet to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) understanding. There is a well-developed programme to celebrate pupils' different heritages, for instance through global awareness day. Pupils demonstrate their tolerance and understanding of other faiths, cultures and beliefs through their daily interactions with each other, while initiatives such as the pupils' forum enhance

their understanding of democracy. Leaders prepare pupils well to become active and productive citizens.

- Leaders' curriculum plans are based firmly around the premise, 'What we want every pupil to have experienced, to know and to be able to do'. As part of this, leaders provide pupils with experiences to enhance their learning. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoyed a visit to the beach as part of their beachcombing project. With an increasing school roll, pupils have the opportunity to study more subjects and enjoy a wider range of experiences and activities.
- Leaders employ effective strategies to ensure that many of the pupils who begin Year 7 behind with their literacy and numeracy skills catch up with their peers.
- Leaders responsible for the provision for pupils with SEND are very knowledgeable. They have clear systems in place to support these pupils. Leaders provide teachers with detailed information about these pupils' individual needs and they review regularly their progress against their targets. However, while some of these pupils make good progress, this is not the case for them all.
- During the current academic year, more subject leaders have been appointed to oversee different aspects of the curriculum. While these leaders are beginning to develop a more strategic view of their areas of responsibility, they are not yet effective in ensuring that, in each case, the curriculum is well planned and sequenced to secure the long-term knowledge and understanding of all pupils.
- While leaders provide significant additional support to those pupils who require it, for example, disadvantaged pupils, they do not evaluate the strategies they use rigorously enough to ensure that additional government funding is being used to best effect in order to improve these pupils' outcomes. In a similar way, leaders do not review thoroughly their use of the primary school PE and sport funding to ensure it is being used to best effect.

Governance of the school

- Although only a small group of individuals who are relatively new to their roles, members of the local advisory board are committed to supporting the school. They are beginning to take on more responsibilities for overseeing the work of school leaders.
- The local advisory board has established clear systems to ensure it has a clear oversight of all aspects of the school's provision. Governors have evaluated their existing skills and sought additional training through the trust, for example in relation to pupils' outcomes and the provision for pupils with SEND. They are aspirational for what the school can achieve. However, they are also realistic about the challenges leaders face in growing the school.
- The trust holds leaders to account closely for pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour, through regular reviews of the school's standards and performance. Trust leaders provide governors and senior leaders with close support. They have increased the school's leadership capacity at all levels and secured appropriate staffing to deliver the planned curriculum. Meanwhile, newly created forums give leaders useful opportunities to share good practice with others, including in relation to safeguarding.
- Governors are not yet sufficiently rigorous in holding senior leaders to account for their

use of additional government funding to support pupils through the pupil premium and the primary school PE and sport funding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Systems and processes for recruiting new staff are robust. Thorough checks are completed for staff and those responsible for governance before they take up their positions. Checks for volunteers are similarly robust.
- Leaders responsible for safeguarding are knowledgeable and well trained. They ensure that pupils' safeguarding records are suitably detailed.
- Leaders are strong advocates for pupils. When necessary, they escalate their concerns about a pupil and request additional support from external agencies. Clear systems allow them to track any pupil who is at risk of going missing from education.
- All staff receive up-to-date safeguarding training, with a particular focus on relevant contextual issues. For instance, all staff who spoke with inspectors understood their responsibilities with regard to radicalisation and extremism, as well as female genital mutilation.
- Staff recognise the warning signs suggesting pupils may be at risk. They know how to make a referral and are confident that leaders will act promptly to keep pupils safe.
- All pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in school. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said their children are happy, safe and well looked after in school.
- Those responsible for governance understand their statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and are well trained to carry out their role.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Many teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They convey consistently the positive message that all pupils can aspire to be the best they can be.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong and productive. Pupils value the support they receive from their teachers and other adults. They collaborate effectively with each other and contribute confidently to discussions.
- Teachers are passionate about their particular discipline, helping pupils to engage in their learning. They employ strong subject knowledge to enthuse pupils, while their frequent references to subject-specific language ensure that pupils begin to use the terms appropriately, both orally and in their written work.
- Many teachers make effective use of questioning to elicit pupils' ideas. In the best examples, teachers use pupils' responses skilfully to assess their understanding and clarify any misconceptions.
- Teachers provide pupils with pertinent feedback that helps pupils to move their learning on to the next stage. In most instances, the school's 'STAR' marking policy is applied consistently well, particularly in English, and help the pupils to make better

progress.

- Teachers are skilled in planning well-structured phonics sessions that build effectively on pupils' previous learning. Pupils enjoy practising their letters and sounds, and many make good progress. Occasionally, adults do not give pupils sufficient time to consolidate their learning before moving on to the next stage.
- Pupils enjoy reading and have plenty of time to read each day in school. Many pupils make effective use of their phonic knowledge to decode unfamiliar words. While many of the pupils in Year 7 whose literacy levels had previously fallen behind those of their peers receive effective support to catch up, a small number require ongoing help.
- In some instances, additional adults support pupils with SEND particularly well. For example, in mathematics, as a result of this extra help, these pupils gain a more detailed understanding and recall their learning in later lessons. However, support for these pupils is not always precise enough.
- Some teachers ensure that pupils are challenged consistently well. For instance, in English, pupils applied their detailed knowledge and understanding effectively when analysing poetry. Meanwhile, key stage 3 pupils were tenacious in their use of the target language to improve their German and Spanish oral skills. However, this is not always the case for all pupils, including in key stage 1.
- Teachers often plan learning that incorporates a wide range of resources to generate pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Some teachers make effective use of information about pupils' prior attainment to inform their planning. However, others do not always ensure that learning matches the needs of all pupils closely enough, particularly for some disadvantaged pupils and for some pupils with SEND.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They are willing to try. For example, when they do not understand a concept, they persist and ask questions readily for clarification.
- There are few instances of bullying or pupils' use of derogatory language. If these do take place, pupils trust adults to sort out any issues.
- Pupils of all ages feel safe in school. They learn about ways to reduce the risks they may face in the local area in age-appropriate ways. For instance, key stage 3 pupils explore the threats from gangs, grooming and knife crime. Meanwhile, key stage 1 pupils learn how to stay safe online. All pupils who spoke with inspectors said they had someone in school with whom they could speak if they had any concerns.
- Inclusivity is a real strength of the school. Pupils speak a rich and diverse range of languages. Staff and pupils celebrate each and every individual, whatever their heritage. There are no defining groups and no one is left out. As key stage 1 pupils explained, they just want, 'more pupils so that they can make even more friends'.
- Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of equality and diversity. They are adamant

that no one is ill-treated because of how they look or their sexual orientation. For example, a recent event to raise awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues was widely supported.

- Pupils have high career aspirations from a young age. Through a detailed programme of activities, they are well informed about a range of different education, employment and training opportunities open to them in the future, including locally and beyond.
- Help is readily available for those pupils who have social, emotional or mental health concerns. Staff check on the well-being of these pupils regularly and these pupils appreciate this support.
- As the school grows, pupils take on leadership responsibilities, for instance as part of the junior leadership team or through charity work.
- While some pupils' workbooks show that pupils demonstrate great pride in their work, a minority of pupils are not as consistent in the care and attention with which they present their work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school's atmosphere is convivial and upbeat. Pupils conduct themselves very well around the school, at the start of the day, during social times and in lessons. Break- and lunchtimes are well organised.
- Strong relationships permeate the school community. Pupils of all ages cooperate well with each other, while they engage readily in amiable conversations with adults.
- Classroom routines are well established, meaning lessons get off to a prompt start. Similarly, smooth transitions between lessons ensure no learning time is lost. At the end of lunchtime, for instance, on hearing Dolly Parton singing '9 to 5', pupils move purposefully to their next lesson!
- Few pupils are late to school or to lessons.
- For both the primary and the secondary phases, attendance has improved and is above the national average.
- No group is disadvantaged by poor attendance. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent is below the national average for all groups of pupils, including for pupils whose first language is English.
- In most lessons, pupils understand the school's expectations for good behaviour and they remain conscientiously on task. However, in a small number of instances, teachers do not challenge pupils well enough, resulting in pupils becoming distracted.
- Over recent months, fewer pupils have received sanctions for poor behaviour. Leaders provide close support to pupils who cause disruption to other's learning, for example, through the 'boot camp'. Eligible pupils said this initiative had helped to modify their attitudes to school.
- Although there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils who have been permanently excluded this year, leaders have successfully supported other pupils who are at risk of being excluded to improve their behaviour.
- The proportion of pupils who have been temporarily excluded has decreased and is

below the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who have received more than one exclusion has risen this year. Many of these pupils are boys.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Having only opened in September 2016, the school has limited published outcomes information to date. However, as the school continues to grow rapidly, many pupils achieve well.
- In Year 7 and Year 8, pupils make good progress across most subjects, including English and mathematics. This is evident in pupils' workbooks.
- Pupils' progress in modern foreign languages at key stage 3 is notably strong, due to consistently good teaching. A high proportion of pupils in Year 9 have chosen to study a modern foreign language at GCSE next year.
- Leaders take swift action after they identify any group of pupils who do not do as well as they should or a particular subject in which pupils underperform. This approach has proved effective, for instance leading to marked improvements in pupils' progress in science in key stage 3.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make better progress than other pupils in school. Focused help ensures that these pupils make consistently good progress from their starting points.
- At the end of Year 2, current pupils who have attended the school since the Reception class achieve well, according to provisional information, particularly in reading.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standards in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 was above the national average. This proportion is likely to decline slightly this year, mainly due to the number of pupils who entered the school part-way through Year 1, many of whom are learning English as an additional language.
- Leaders have taken decisive action to close the gaps in the progress between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. Overall, disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress, although this is not yet the case in all year groups. For example, the proportion of these pupils in Year 2 attaining at greater depth is below that for disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- While some pupils with SEND make good progress, the needs of these pupils are not always met sufficiently well. As a result, some of these pupils do not make good progress from their starting points.
- There are some inconsistencies in the progress of girls and boys. This is particularly the case in Year 9, where pupils' overall progress is weakest, most noticeably for boys.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have a clear and accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the early years provision. Their plans for further improvements are thorough and appropriate.
- Leaders devise a well-structured curriculum that promotes children's personal

development and academic achievement successfully. Learning is stimulating, challenging children to think for themselves.

- The early years environment is bright, welcoming and safe. Children choose from a variety of well-organised activities, both indoors and outside. They explore the world through a mixture of adult-led and child-initiated activities, focusing on learning they find enjoyable and interesting.
- Children have very positive relationships with each other and adults. They behave well and are generally very attentive and keen to learn.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers know the children very well and have high expectations of what each one can achieve.
- Teachers use assessment information well to inform their planning. For instance, having identified children's use of their imagination as an area of weakness, an inspector observed children sharing creative descriptions with adults about the journeys they were taking in their newly constructed vehicles.
- Children persist happily with a task and show good levels of concentration. For example, an inspector observed children working independently to write short, structured sentences about their adventures, while paying close attention to their letter formation.
- Additional adults work closely with teachers. They are well practised in supporting children, offering them frequent opportunities to develop their language skills and acquire new vocabulary.
- Teachers use a rigorous system of assessment to monitor and evaluate children's progress closely. They provide parents and children with pertinent feedback to help children make more progress.
- While children enter early years with skills well below those expected for their age, a majority of them make strong progress. In 2018, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was in line with the national average. They were prepared well to move on to key stage 1.
- Current children achieve well. Those children who speak English as an additional language make at least as much progress as their peers and in some cases more. Occasionally, the most able children are not moved on to more challenging work quickly enough, so they do not make as much progress as they should.
- Children show considerable care and empathy for others. Through a range of well-planned experiences, they gain a good understanding of people in the wider world. A typical comment from parents was, 'Leaders place an emphasis on kindness and caring behaviour, through which a real sense of community is achieved.'
- Leaders ensure that parents are able to be involved fully with their children's learning. For instance, parents provide leaders with valuable information about their children before they start school. Many parents also enjoy visiting the provision each week to work alongside their children.
- Staff are provided with valuable training and development. They also appreciate the additional support they receive from the trust.
- Leaders ensure that they meet all the necessary statutory requirements to keep

children safe and to promote their welfare. For instance, children are taught how to look after their personal hygiene by washing their hands carefully.

- Leaders do not monitor closely the additional funding they receive to support disadvantaged children. Despite this, these children make good progress.

School details

Unique reference number	142485
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10087323

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	785
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Kevin Crompton
Headteacher	Tim Marston
Telephone number	01234 880154
Website	www.nia.uk.com
Email address	info@nia.uk.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2016, accepting pupils into Reception and Year 7. There are now pupils in Years 1, 2, 8 and 9. Key stage 4 pupils and sixth-form students will be admitted to the school for the first time in September 2019.
- The school is part of the East Midlands Academy Trust and the board of trustees oversees the school. A local advisory board was established in September 2018. It has taken over some of the responsibilities for governance from the trust.
- Initially, the school operated from temporary buildings. In September 2018, the school moved into its newly refurbished building.
- The headteacher took up the position in September 2017. Two new deputy headteachers have been appointed since March 2019. There are also three assistant headteachers in post.
- During this last academic year, a notable number of new subject leaders and teachers have been appointed.

- The number of pupils on the school's roll is increasing rapidly as more year groups are admitted. In addition, a notable proportion of pupils join the school part-way through an academic year.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND, including those with an education, health and care plan, has increased and is now well above the national average.
- A disproportionate number of pupils are boys.
- Pupils come from a wide range of different ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is more than double the national average.
- The school does not use any alternative providers of education for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 37 lessons across a wide range of subjects in the Reception class, key stage 1 and key stage 3. Some of these lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors observed tutor time and one assembly. An inspector also visited the breakfast club.
- Inspectors, alongside senior leaders, looked at samples of pupils' work covering a range of subjects, abilities and year groups, including the work of pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work in lessons.
- The lead inspector held a range of meetings, including with the headteacher, leaders responsible for safeguarding, the assistant leader who has oversight of pupils' outcomes and leaders responsible for additional government funding.
- The lead inspector met with two members of the local advisory board, including the chair, and representatives of the trust, including the chief executive officer and the chair of the board of trustees, who joined the meeting by telephone.
- Inspectors held further meetings with the leaders responsible for behaviour and attendance, teaching and learning, the curriculum and the primary phase, including the early years. Inspectors also met with the coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND, the leader responsible for coordinating SMSC education, the leader of careers, subject and pastoral leaders, and two groups of teachers.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour throughout each day, including during lessons.
- Inspectors spoke formally with pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 3. Inspectors also spoke with other pupils informally.
- An inspector heard some pupils from Year 1 and Year 7 read.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents relating to the school's provision, including: self-evaluation and improvement planning; minutes of meetings of the local advisory board and the board of trustees; plans related to additional government funding; behaviour, attendance and exclusion records; information about pupils' attainment and progress; safeguarding; and information on the school's website. The lead inspector also checked the school's single central register and the school's system for recruiting staff.
- Inspectors evaluated the 137 responses to Parent View, including 18 free-text comments.
- Inspectors analysed the 75 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Rachel Tordoff, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Martin Finch	Her Majesty's Inspector
Russell Barr	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew Spoons	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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