

Inspection of North West Kent Alternative Provision Service

Richmond Drive, Gravesend DA12 4DJ

Inspection dates: 11–12 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

For many pupils, their time at North West Kent Alternative Provision Service (NWKAPS) is transformational. They develop their self-belief and aspirations and they grow personally, socially and emotionally. This success is due to the exceptional quality of the school's work to promote pupils' personal development.

Pupils are positive about the support they receive. They are happy to be here and feel safe. They say that staff deal with any misbehaviour well and help pupils to develop their consideration of others. Any incidents of bullying are quickly resolved.

Staff work hard to understand pupils' needs and to create a culture of respect and ambition. Many extra-curricular activities, including sports tournaments, museum visits and the Year 11 residential trip, enhance the curriculum. Pupils enjoy these opportunities. They work hard to make sure that their teachers are proud of their conduct when representing the school.

Pupils benefit from the rapidly improving academic and vocational provision. They do increasingly well in external examinations. Most pupils on short-term placements successfully re-integrate to a mainstream school. However, in core academic areas the quality of education has not improved as quickly as other areas of the school's work have done.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

School leaders have transformed NWKAPS. They have created a caring and determined team whose members believe in the pupils and do all that they can to support them. Pupils' personal development is at the heart of all that they do.

Pupils come to NWKAPS after negative experiences in mainstream schooling. Some pupils arrive with unmet special educational needs. Staff take care to get to know pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) and her team identify pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) very well. They create a bespoke support plan for each pupil. The SENCo makes sure that staff know how to adapt their teaching and tailor support. She works very closely with external experts to help ensure that pupils' needs are met. Occasionally, the SENCo finds that pupils require more specialist SEND provision than NWKAPS is able to offer. In these cases, she skilfully adapts the support until the local authority finds a suitable place for the pupil.

Many pupils arrive with poor literacy skills. Staff in the SEND department help pupils to strengthen their reading skills. This helps to develop pupils' confidence with reading. However, there is not yet an embedded, consistent approach to promoting reading through the school. Too many pupils still see reading as a chore rather than something that will support the rest of their learning.

Leaders have systematically improved all aspects of the school's work. Their success

with pupils' personal development underpins improvement through the school. The weekly SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural) lessons provide pupils with meaningful opportunities to consider their own views and assumptions and explore how other people might see the world. Leaders enrich this learning with a wide range of extra-curricular and wider learning opportunities. These include work experience for Year 11 pupils.

Staff have high expectations and consistently apply the school's behaviour policy. They help pupils to learn to self-regulate their behaviour. Incidents of poor or unkind behaviour are resolved quickly. Pupils' attendance has improved. This is due to the relentless work of the attendance team.

Leaders have clear intentions for the curriculum. This work is promising, although it is not yet fully embedded. Some teachers, including in English and mathematics, do not systematically adapt their teaching to respond to what pupils already know and what they need to know next. In some cases, pupils move through workbooks that are more about preparing for examination requirements than about the knowledge that pupils need to learn.

Parents and carers are happy with NWKAPS. One commented: 'The school took my daughter when no one else would and deals with her in a way that no other school could.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that all staff have a secure understanding of the risks pupils face and how to be alert to them. Consequently, staff are clear about their duties and the need to be vigilant. They are skilled in discussing safeguarding issues with pupils. Staff routinely challenge pupils' views and assumptions about the world to help them to identify potential risk.

Recruitment processes are followed carefully. However, a few administrative errors when recording these checks were identified and corrected during the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have successfully changed the culture in the school. There is a sense of purpose, especially regarding the work supporting pupils' personal development. However, reading is not yet fully promoted across the school. Leaders need to ensure that all staff understand their role in helping pupils to develop as readers.
- Leaders know what they want pupils to learn across the curriculum. This intent is realised very clearly in subjects such as personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). Leaders need to provide further training and support to all

teachers. They also need to monitor the delivery of the curriculum to ensure that it is implemented as they intend.

- Leaders, understandably, have ensured that pupils achieve the qualifications that they need to move on to the next stage of their education, for example college courses. However, the teaching in some of the core subjects has become more about the examination requirements and less about what pupils need to learn overall. Leaders should ensure that staff assess what pupils know and need to know next. Staff should use this knowledge to adapt lessons to match these needs.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	137955
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10088172
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Headteacher	Marie Woolston
Website	www.nwkaps.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 October 2017

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been many changes to staffing at the school. The headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead and she is supported by a fully trained team. There is a new substantive deputy headteacher who is also the SENCo. Most teachers are new, and the school no longer relies on agency staff. This has created more stability for pupils.
- The school now only operates on one site. This site has been subject to extensive refurbishment, making it much more suitable for its purpose than before.
- The regional schools commissioner (RSC) has named a multi-academy trust (MAT) as the preferred sponsor. The management committee is working closely with the RSC to ensure that the transfer of the school to the MAT is as smooth as possible.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- We held meetings with the headteacher, the SENCo, subject leaders, teachers,

teaching assistants and administrative staff.

- The lead inspector met with four members of the management committee and spoke to the chair of the committee by telephone. She also met with the principal lead for school improvement from the local authority.
- We spoke to pupils from every year group about the school and an inspector visited a sample of Year 11 pupils who were on work experience.
- We took account of the six responses by parents to Ofsted’s Parent View, including four written responses.
- We considered the views of staff from conversations and the 29 responses to Ofsted’s online staff survey.
- We evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing leaders’ knowledge, records and actions. This included looking at documentation, including the school’s single central record and a sample of case files. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke to pupils, staff and the management committee about this aspect of their work.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, vocational learning and PSHE. This involved discussions with the leaders of each of these subjects, visits to lessons, scrutiny of pupils’ work, and discussions with pupils and teachers from the lessons visited about the subjects.

Inspection team

Lucy English, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Sue Bzikot

Ofsted Inspector

Rosemary Keen

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020