

Inspection of Kingsmeadow Community Comprehensive School

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

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 September 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They look smart and keep the school site tidy. The atmosphere is calm and orderly. Pupils enjoy good relationships with the staff. The school does much to build pupils' character. Teachers teach about the importance of respect, integrity, compassion, courage, pride and quality. They set a good example and pupils conduct themselves maturely. The school is inclusive. There is an LGBT group which gives pupils a voice. The school's Crown Award encourages pupils to contribute to their community. For example, some pupils have established a school uniform bank which helps disadvantaged families. The strong focus on fostering pupils' character gives the school a distinctive feel.

Changes in the curriculum mean that more pupils now study a more academic diet. They apply themselves well in lessons. They work calmly and studiously. There are many opportunities to discuss and debate issues. Pupils say teachers are always willing to see them at the end of a lesson or during a lunchtime if they don't understand something. Lessons in the sixth form challenge students' thinking.

Most pupils are pleased to be back at school. Some extra-curricular activities that were curtailed last year have begun to resume. For example, football and netball teams are competing again. The school plans to have a musical production next March. Some after-school and lunchtime clubs are up and running.

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

Leaders and governors have a clear vision for the role of education in their community. They are determined to raise aspirations, improve academic achievement and foster pupils' character. They have developed a bespoke curriculum designed to achieve these objectives. Within the curriculum, there is plenty of time dedicated to pupils' personal development.

In most subjects, including English and mathematics, curriculum planning is detailed and well sequenced. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach ideas and concepts that challenge pupils to think deeply. In some subjects, curriculum planning is less detailed. Occasionally, this results in less demanding or less precise teaching. Leaders are aware of this and are focusing on the right issues. They are improving the detail of their plans. Curriculum leaders have good support from senior leaders.

Teachers cover the knowledge set out in the national curriculum at key stage 3. However, in some subjects, such as the arts, there is not enough time for pupils to deepen their knowledge. In other subjects, such as those within the REAL programme, pupils are successfully building the depth of understanding they need for future success at key stage 4.

Teachers check on pupils' learning at three points across the year. Teachers use appropriate assessments to check if pupils have retained the knowledge taught. Teachers use this information well to cover any gaps in knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers use information on pupils to tailor tasks, and teaching assistants provide helpful advice and guidance.

Standards of achievement dipped after the last inspection, in 2019. Leaders acted swiftly to identify the reasons for this. Much has been done to improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching since then. There are effective programmes to support pupils who join the school with weaker reading skills. In addition, all class tutors read carefully selected books to their class each week. This helps to promote a love of reading.

The calm and respectful atmosphere in school means teachers can teach without disruption. Low-level behaviour problems are rare. Pupils are clear that teachers apply the school's behaviour policy fairly and consistently. The number of exclusions did rise last year. Exclusion has been used fairly and as a last resort.

Provision for pupils' personal development is at the heart of this school. Leaders have increased tutorial time, and pupils value what they learn about in these sessions. Relationships, sex and health education is woven into content about safety, anti-bullying, democracy and equalities. Pupils are taught to respect one another and to contribute to the wider community. There is a comprehensive programme of careers guidance. Extensive efforts were made to provide virtual work experiences for students during periods when the school was closed to most pupils last year. There are well planned opportunities for pupils to learn about and meet employers. The school fully meets the requirements of the Baker Clause.

The recently added sixth form is establishing itself well. Leaders of the sixth form are passionate and determined to ensure its success. Every effort has been made to accommodate students' choice of courses. Teaching is well pitched and challenges students. Almost all students who began Year 12 have continued into Year 13.

The senior leadership team and governors lead with integrity. They take decisions in the best interests of pupils. Leaders are sensitive to the workload on staff. The staff feel listened to and supported. Consequently, morale in the school is high.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has a well-developed culture of safeguarding. Safeguarding leaders are experienced. Pupils have great faith and trust in the pastoral team. Bullying and derogatory language rarely happen. Pupils know who to go to if they have any concerns. Leaders work closely with other agencies and take prompt actions to protect pupils at risk of harm. Safeguarding leaders have well-developed links with the local authority social care team. Pupils feel safe in and around the school. They

are taught about a wide range of risks. For example, pupils are taught about rail track safety, cold water shock, sexual relationships, consent and extremism.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school operates a two-year key stage 3. Leaders have checked and made sure that subjects teach the breadth of knowledge within the national curriculum. However, in some subjects, especially the arts, the experience that pupils get is too superficial. These subjects do not get enough time for pupils to practise skills and apply the knowledge they are taught before choosing which examination courses to follow. Leaders should review this and ensure that pupils get a greater depth of experience in key stage 3, particularly in the arts.
- The quality and detail of curriculum planning varies across subjects. Planning is strong in most subjects, including English and mathematics. However, the curriculum is less well planned in some other subjects. Work to do this has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it is clear that leaders are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Attendance has been hit by the pandemic. Overall attendance across the summer term of 2021 dipped below 90%. The level of attendance at the start of the autumn term is much the same. Leaders need to ensure the pastoral team and attendance leaders continue to be relentless in their efforts to improve attendance.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 are the school and you are 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	108410
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10200740
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	900
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Diggle
Headteacher	Domenic Volpe
Website	http://kingsmeadow.org.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Kingsmeadow Community Comprehensive School has grown by around 150 pupils since its last inspection in 2019.
- The school opened a sixth form in September 2020. Currently, there are 40 students in Years 12 and 13.
- At the time of this inspection, the school was not placing any pupils with alternative education providers.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, leaders of the sixth form and safeguarding leaders. Inspectors also met with the chair and vice-chairs of the governing body and spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history, design and technology and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with curriculum leaders for science and modern foreign languages and looked at their curriculum plans. Additional visits were made to observe teaching across a wide range of subjects in the sixth form. A meeting was held with the special educational needs coordinator and an inspector looked at support plans for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with leaders for safeguarding and reviewed records of the school's work to protect vulnerable pupils. An inspector looked at the record of vetting checks made on adults who work in the school. Meetings were held with pupils to explore their understanding of how to stay safe.
- Inspectors looked at the 26 free-text responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Chris Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Pridding	Ofsted Inspector
Toni Spoons	Ofsted Inspector

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