

Inspection of Kirkby College

Tennyson Street, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire NG17 7DH

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 November 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Expectations of how pupils should behave in lessons and around the school are not high enough. Teachers do not challenge poor behaviour in lessons consistently. Pupils say that their learning is often disrupted by others. Inspectors saw examples of this when they visited lessons.

Some pupils say that they feel unsafe because of other pupils' behaviour around the school. Several pupils who met with inspectors said there are areas of the school where they felt uncomfortable, as a result.

Pupils told inspectors that they lack confidence in how leaders deal with bullying. There is not a consistent approach to managing incidents of bullying. Leaders do not record the different kind of behaviours, including when pupils make homophobic or transphobic comments. Consequently, leaders do not know how frequently pupils use such language nor do they ensure that pupils are challenged on such occasions. For some pupils, using such language has become the norm.

Some pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are unable to study the same number of subjects as their peers. When this is the case, leaders' expectations for these pupils are not high enough. These pupils can end up studying qualifications that they have not chosen and that might not meet their needs or prepare them appropriately for their next steps. These pupils are disadvantaged by leaders' lack of ambition for them.

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

The curriculum is not ambitious enough for pupils with SEND, particularly in key stage 4. Leaders have not ensured that these pupils receive the support they need to study the full curriculum. Instead, they have narrowed the curriculum by limiting the number of subjects some pupils with SEND can choose to study. The alternative courses available to these pupils are not always appropriate. The courses do not routinely meet these pupils' needs or prepare them well enough for their next steps.

In many lessons, across many subjects, teachers fail to present subject matter clearly. Teachers have had training to help them teach the curriculum. However, leaders have not ensured that teachers have put into practice what they have learned from this training so that they can better support pupils' learning. As a result, teaching contributes weakly to what pupils need to be learning. In many lessons, pupils stop listening and do not commit to studying because they do not understand.

Some teachers do not challenge low-level disruption in lessons. Pupils say that regular incidents of poor behaviour in lessons stop them learning. Some staff fail to challenge disrespectful behaviour from pupils during social times. For example, inspectors saw some pupils ignore staff's requests for them to use one-way systems.

There is not a consistent approach to managing behaviour. Pupils say that in some areas of the school they feel uncomfortable and unsafe due to the behaviour of other pupils.

There are many incidents of pupils using discriminatory homophobic and transphobic language. Staff do not challenge these comments appropriately. They also fail to report these comments. Leaders do not keep accurate records of such incidents. This limits their capacity to deal effectively with this type of behaviour, and the attitudes and opinions that may lay behind them. Some pupils think this language is acceptable. Having this attitude prepares them poorly for life in modern Britain.

There are planned opportunities to support pupils' wider development. These include lessons that cover important issues such as sex education, justice and careers education. There is an active school council that plans charity events. The LGBT+ club has been created to promote mutual respect and acceptance for others. Religious education is taught in key stage 3. This allows pupils to explore spiritual and moral issues. Some pupils benefit from attending after-school sports clubs. However, these activities and experiences are not sufficient to counteract the intolerance and discrimination that some pupils demonstrate.

Trustees do not hold leaders to account. They accept what leaders tell them and do not have the expertise to question what they are told.

Trustees and leaders are failing to act to bring about the necessary improvements to the curriculum, pupils' behaviour and attitudes, and pupils' personal development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are trained in how to recognise signs of abuse. Staff follow well-understood procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns.

Leaders maintain accurate records of concerns and action taken to support pupils. Safeguarding leaders work with, and challenge, external agencies to make sure the most vulnerable pupils are well supported.

There are opportunities in the curriculum to teach pupils how to stay safe. In information technology, pupils learn about online safety, and in personal, social, health and economic education, they learn about the importance of mental health and well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have designed a curriculum that is not ambitious enough for some pupils with SEND. The curriculum is narrowed for these pupils, and they do not benefit

from a high-quality education. Expectations of what these pupils can achieve academically are low. As a result, they cannot achieve as well as they should. They are poorly prepared for their next steps. Leaders must ensure that all pupils with SEND have access to the same broad and balanced curriculum as their peers, so they have a chance to achieve as highly as they can.

- Leaders have not ensured that all teachers understand how to teach the intended curriculum so that pupils build knowledge. Many lessons do not contribute to pupils knowing and remembering the important concepts of the planned curriculum. As a result, pupils do not build their knowledge over time well enough. Leaders must ensure that teachers' implementation of the curriculum enables pupils to know and remember more.
- Leaders have not ensured that there is a consistent approach to managing poor behaviour. Staff are unable to manage disruption in lessons and fail to challenge routinely any poor behaviour around the school. As a result, some pupils are unable to learn in lessons and some feel unsafe around the school because of the behaviour of other pupils. Leaders must ensure that there is a consistent approach to managing behaviour, so that pupils behave appropriately at all times and all pupils feel safe.
- Leaders have not ensured that they deal with bullying consistently. Pupils do not feel confident in staff's ability to tackle bullying. Leaders must ensure that there is a consistent, effective approach to addressing bullying so that all pupils know that bullying is unacceptable and that any such incidents will be dealt with effectively.
- Leaders do not ensure that they, and their staff, challenge effectively those pupils who express prejudiced, discriminatory views. Not all staff routinely challenge pupils who make homophobic or transphobic remarks. Leaders do not hold accurate records of occasions when pupils express such views. As a result, they do not have an accurate understanding of any patterns or trends that pertain to this type of behaviour. In turn, this has limited their ability to respond to such behaviours and the attitudes that may lay behind them. For example, leaders have not ensured that all pupils learn that it is wrong to use prejudiced language and to express discriminatory views. This is preparing pupils poorly for life in modern Britain. Through their systems to monitor behaviour, the actions of staff and the curriculum pupils receive, leaders must ensure that pupils understand that having and expressing prejudiced, discriminatory views is unacceptable.
- Trustees do not provide senior leaders with effective challenge. They have not ensured that senior leaders have brought about the rapid, necessary improvements to the quality of education, pupils' personal development and pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Consequently, for too long, pupils have received an unacceptable standard of education, while the behaviour and attitudes of some pupils have been inappropriate. Trustees must ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to provide leaders with the challenge required to secure the much-needed, rapid improvement to the education and support the pupils receive.

Having considered the evidence, I strongly recommend that leaders and those responsible for governance do not seek to appoint early careers teachers.

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	138481
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10200072
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	425
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Susan Reast
Headteacher	Mark Golden
Website	http://www.kirkbycollege.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	13–16 July 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides alternative education provision for a small number of pupils at Polytech, Cast and First Class Tailored Solutions.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in science, English, modern foreign languages, history and geography. For each deep dive, they met with curriculum leaders that were available. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at pupils' workbooks, spoke with pupils and met with teachers of the lessons they visited.
- Inspectors visited lessons in a wider range of subjects.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils from key stage 3 and key stage 4 to discuss personal development. They spoke with pupils informally and observed pupils' behaviour during social times.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders responsible for pupil premium and personal development.
- Inspectors met with two groups of Year 10 pupils in single-sex groups.
- To consider the school's safeguarding procedures, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders. The lead inspector also looked at documentation relating to safeguarding, the school's system for recruiting staff and the school's single central record. All inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees and the vice chair of trustees.
- An inspector spoke on the telephone to representatives of the alternative provider the school uses.
- An inspector spoke to the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors took into account the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also considered the responses to the survey for staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, minutes from trustee meetings and documentation regarding attendance, behaviour and exclusions.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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