

Inspection of Kinetic Academy

Meir Youth Cafe, Sandon Road, Meir, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 7DJ

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Kinetic Academy is a school where staff know individual pupils extremely well. Staff take time to build positive relationships with pupils and understand their needs. Pupils have not had positive experiences in education previously, but staff are committed to ensuring pupils re-engage with learning. Many pupils leave with qualifications to help them access further education or training.

Pupils usually behave well. In lessons, pupils are generally calm and complete the work that is asked of them. At social times, pupils talk with each other sensibly and play card games with staff. Leaders do not tolerate bullying. If this does occur, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively.

In many subjects, the curriculum is well planned. Staff help pupils to make progress from their different starting points and build on what they already know. Leaders are aware that there is more work to do to strengthen the English curriculum.

Pupils have many different wider experiences while attending the school. In previous years, pupils have volunteered at a local Macmillan charity shop. They have also raised money for a women's refuge centre and Afghan refugees. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. As one parent said in response to the Ofsted Parent View survey, 'Kinetic has gone above and beyond to help my son succeed both academically and personally.'

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

Leaders are highly ambitious for pupils given their varied experiences of education upon arrival. They have structured the school's curriculum around the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Many pupils successfully achieve either functional skills or GCSE qualifications. There are also opportunities for pupils to complete a sports leadership award and qualifications linked to The Prince's Trust.

The curriculum in mathematics and science is well planned and sequenced. Leaders take time to check pupils' different starting points so that they can build on what they already know. In mathematics, teachers revisit key concepts in order that pupils can deepen their knowledge and understanding. There are similar strengths in science. When looking at the reproductive system, for example, teachers effectively recap the relevant organs of the human body so that pupils develop a more secure understanding of what they know. In addition, teachers routinely check pupils' learning to help identify where there may be errors or misconceptions. In both subjects, it is clear how pupils are able to know and remember more of the curriculum.

The same strengths do not exist in English. Work in exercise books is disjointed and does not follow a clear sequence which looks to build on pupils' knowledge and skills over time. Schemes of learning do not always match what is taught in lessons, and teachers do not provide enough opportunities to revisit learning. Pupils do make

progress in reading, given their low starting points, but they are not routinely encouraged to read out loud or write at length in lessons. Leaders are aware of these weaknesses and have already taken steps to address these. Work has already begun on a new English curriculum, and leaders have secured the appointment of a new English teacher.

All pupils who attend the school receive strong support for their social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. Leaders ensure that pupils' learning plans are appropriate and reviewed regularly to ensure pupils continue to receive highly accurate, targeted support. The transition arrangements for pupils arriving at the school are considered carefully and involve consultation with both parents and external agencies. Leaders ensure staff receive extensive training on SEMH needs so that they are well equipped to provide the right support to pupils.

Leaders have developed a strong programme for pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. The school's 'PSHE roadmap' shows how pupils cover a range of different topics, including relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education in an age-appropriate way. Staff have received training on RSE and health education and the school liaises closely with the NHS school nurse team when delivering sessions. Leaders adapt their PSHE programme to respond quickly to pupils' needs or national events. Pupils have recently had lessons as part of 'county lines awareness week' and have also looked at topics such as children's mental health. Leaders are keen to ensure that pupils can undertake visits to widen their understanding of British institutions. For example, pupils recently visited Staffordshire County Court to understand more about the criminal justice system.

The school's careers programme is exceptionally strong. A local authority careers adviser holds monthly meetings with pupils to discuss their future aspirations. All pupils visit local colleges and apprenticeships to understand what opportunities are available to them when they leave school. Leaders work closely with local employer advisers to help pupils with curriculum vitae writing and interview skills. Pupils enjoy careers visits such as a recent trip to Stoke City Football Club. Leaders work hard to ensure all pupils secure a place in education or training when they leave the academy. Leaders also offer transitional support to pupils when they leave so that they can retain their place on educational courses.

The proprietor is highly effective at providing oversight of the school and has ensured all independent school standards continue to be met. She has a strong sense of purpose and is clear about the school's ethos and vision. The school leadership team has recently been strengthened by the appointment of a new headteacher and designated safeguarding lead. Leaders work together closely to ensure all policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and kept up to date. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They appreciate the care and support they receive from leaders. All staff enjoy working at the school. Leaders have ensured that the school is compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding policy is available to parents and carers on request and is compliant with the latest government guidance. Leaders have a strong understanding of how to safeguard pupils and work closely with external agencies. Leaders ensure that pupils receive help and support in a timely way. Staff receive regular updates on safeguarding through half-termly briefing documents and weekly meetings. All staff have completed safeguarding training, including on issues such as harmful sexual behaviours. Staff are clear about what they should do if they have a concern about a child. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe through the school's PSHE curriculum.

[If the school is not outstanding] What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- At present, the English curriculum is not well developed. It has not been coherently planned and sequenced to build on what pupils already know. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of strengthening English with the appointment of new staff and the introduction of a new curriculum. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Although pupils arrive with low-level literacy skills, teachers do not tackle this as well as they could. This means pupils struggle to write at length and lack the confidence to be able to read independently. Leaders should ensure that literacy is given a higher priority so that pupils are able to develop their reading and writing skills further.

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 provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 140330 |
| DfE registration number | 861/6011 |
| Local authority | Stoke-on-Trent |
| Inspection number | 10212811 |
| Type of school | Other independent school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 16 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 2 |
| Proprietor | Nicola Tomlinson |
| Headteacher | Laura Burgess |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £45,000 |
| Telephone number | 01782 333344 |
| Website | None |
| Email address | director@kineticmail.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 31 October to 2 November 2017 |

Information about this school

- All pupils who attend the school have SEMH needs.
- A new headteacher joined the school in January 2022.
- The school had an emergency inspection in November 2020. The school met all the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection.
- The school uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school uses Velocity Training Academy as part of its physical education curriculum.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

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 met with the proprietor, the headteacher, the assistant director and the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also met with teachers, student support managers and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, PSHE, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors considered the school's curriculum documentation, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their learning in these subjects. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about their wider experiences of school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school policies, risk assessments, attendance information and behaviour logs.
- When inspecting safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's procedures for recruiting staff, the quality of staff's training and the procedures that are in place to keep pupils safe. Inspectors also considered the suitability of the college building and leaders' work to reduce the risks that had been identified.

Inspection team

Mark Howes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gwen Onyon

Ofsted Inspector

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