

Inspection of Kearsley Academy

Springfield Road, Kearsley, Bolton, Lancashire BL4 8HY

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 March 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Kearsley Academy benefit from regular praise and encouragement from their teachers. Pupils are supported to be confident and resilient learners when tackling unfamiliar tasks. They appreciate the help that they receive from their teachers to catch up quickly if they fall behind. Adults have high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. Overall, pupils achieve well at this school.

Pupils celebrate each other's work on 'Proud Thursdays'. During lessons, pupils take the initiative and applaud each other's achievements. They told inspectors that this helps them to feel a sense of motivation. Pupils said that they have developed a can-do approach to learning. Pupils explained that they are happy and proud to attend this school.

Pupils know there is always a member of staff that they can talk to if they have any concerns. They told inspectors that they feel safe at school. Pupils said that bullying is not tolerated. If it does happen, it is dealt with effectively by staff.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils appreciate leaders' systems to manage behaviour, which they said are fair. They explained that behaviour has improved in recent years.

Pupils access a wide range of extra-curricular provision. Pupils benefit from a well-planned programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance.

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

Leaders, including governors and trustees, are ambitious for all pupils at Kearsley Academy. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders ensure that all pupils are given the opportunities that they need to succeed. Governors and trustees are adept at holding leaders to account for the quality of education that pupils receive.

The overarching curriculum that is in place for pupils has been appropriately designed. Leaders' improvements to the curriculum ensure that pupils gain the breadth and depth of knowledge that they need across a range of subjects. The curriculum is commensurate with the national curriculum. Teachers and leaders share a strong understanding of the essential knowledge that sits within the curriculum. Teachers deliver the curriculum in a way that enables pupils to make links across and within different subjects.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is ambitious, with the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) suite of subjects at its heart. Leaders have ensured that all pupils have access to humanities subjects and to modern foreign languages. As a result, the number of pupils who study the EBacc subjects is steadily rising year-on-year. Across the school, teachers provide pupils with the appropriate knowledge and wider learning experiences that they need for their next steps in life.

In most lessons, teachers use their strong subject knowledge to check how well pupils have learned new knowledge and whether they can recall previously taught topics. When needed, teachers act to address any misunderstandings that pupils have in their learning. Teachers use leaders' assessment systems well to address any gaps in pupils' learning.

Leaders are prioritising reading across the school. They successfully focus on improving pupils' knowledge of vocabulary and their ability to read fluently, particularly in key stage 3. In this key stage, leaders have put in place effective strategies to encourage pupils to read for pleasure and as a leisure activity. However, in key stage 4, some pupils are not fluent and accurate readers. This hinders how well a minority of pupils access the curriculum. It hampers their learning.

Leaders have effective procedures in place to identify and support pupils with SEND. They ensure that subject teachers have suitable information to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for these pupils. Where necessary, adults pursue additional help for pupils with SEND from a range of external agencies.

Pupils benefit from a well-considered and carefully planned programme of personal development that is delivered through weekly 'life' lessons. Pupils learn in depth about a range of important topics such as respect and tolerance, relationships, different cultures and citizenship. Pupils in key stage 3 enjoy a range of extra-curricular clubs, including sports and drama.

In most lessons and during social times, pupils behave well. Leaders have ensured that clear systems are in place to help teachers to manage behaviour. However, some staff do not apply these systems consistently. This means that there are just a few occasions when pupils' learning is disrupted by the behaviour of their peers. However, leaders are well on their way to addressing this issue.

Governors and trustees are committed to the school. They have a clear insight into what is required to move the school forward. Staff are appreciative of leaders' actions to address workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are knowledgeable about, and proactive in responding to, local safeguarding issues. Leaders share pertinent safeguarding information, relevant to the school and local area, regularly with staff. They ensure that staff training is kept up to date so that they can quickly identify any possible signs of harm. Staff know how to report any safeguarding concerns in a timely manner.

Leaders are proactive and work effectively with multi-agencies, including early help, to ensure that pupils and their parents and carers get the timely support and help that

they need. They work effectively with external partners to provide targeted support for young people and families linked to a range of issues such as mental health.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In key stage 4, some pupils do not read with sufficient fluency and accuracy. This stops them from reading for pleasure or getting the most out of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that they continue to develop the key stage 4 reading curriculum. This is so that all pupils read widely and have full access to the curriculum.

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	136135
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10216084
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	688
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Sanders
Principal	Kim McKee
Executive Principal	Dean Buckley
Website	www.ka.northerneducationtrust.org
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 February 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Northern Education Trust.
- The school makes use of three registered alternative providers for a very small number of pupils.
- The school makes use of an unregistered provider for one pupil.
- 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 inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the principal, executive principal, senior executive principal, other senior leaders, subject leaders and a range of staff. The lead inspector spoke with two representatives of the governing body (the academy council), including the chair of the governing body, the deputy chair of the trust and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, history, geography and art and design. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited some lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils and teachers.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from a range of year groups. Inspectors also observed and spoke with pupils at social times.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, leaders' own evaluation of the school, external quality assurance reviews and attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors checked on the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the recruitment checks made on staff. Inspectors met with leaders, staff, pupils and governors to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures in school. An inspector checked the arrangements for those pupils who attend alternative provision.

Inspection team

Amanda Downing, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Elizabeth Haddock	Ofsted Inspector
David Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Cocker	Ofsted Inspector

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