

Inspection of a good school: Kassia Academy and Support Services

Fallowfield Grove, Padgate, Warrington, Cheshire WA2 0QQ

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 May 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Kassia Academy improves pupils' attitudes to education. The vast majority of pupils have had turbulent and often negative experiences of education in their previous schools. They appreciate how staff listen to and support them, both personally and academically. There is strong mutual respect between pupils and staff. Pupils feel safe and happy in school because they know the staff value and care for them. Pupils said that staff are quick to intervene should any bullying occur.

Staff have high expectations of pupils. Pupils learn to manage their emotions and behaviour because of the support that staff provide. Pupils have opportunities to learn outside the classroom and enjoy outdoor pursuits. These opportunities raise pupils' self-confidence.

The ambitious curriculum gives pupils aspirations for their future careers. For example, pupils learn a range of vocational courses. However, in some subjects, including English and mathematics, learning is not well organised. Where this is the case, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Strong relationships are the foundation of the school. Adults act as positive role models to pupils. Pupils listen to and respect each other's views and opinions.

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

Pupils have a wide range of needs and many have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have considered pupils' varied needs when designing the curriculum. For example, leaders have widened opportunities for pupils to experience a range of vocational courses, including mechanics, construction and hair and beauty. The exciting and ambitious curriculum, alongside strong staff support, helps pupils value learning.

Pupils gain GCSEs in a range of subjects. However, in some subjects, leaders have not thought about the important knowledge that pupils will need to know before moving to their next stage of learning. Leaders have not considered how pupils will build on their prior knowledge in a logical way. Where this is the case, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Leaders have prioritised reading across the school. Pupils enjoy reading and listening to staff reading a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Any pupils identified as being at an early stage of learning to read benefit from one-to-one support from staff. This helps these pupils to improve their fluency in and understanding of reading.

Some pupils have not attended school for some time before they join Kassia Academy. As a result, they have missed or forgotten some important learning. Teachers use assessment strategies well to identify pupils' gaps in knowledge. Staff help these pupils to catch up quickly. This support raises pupils' self-esteem and confidence in their learning.

Pupils have a very positive view of the school. They were full of praise for how their lives have been turned around by staff, giving them hope for their future. Outdoor education takes pupils out of their comfort zone. They learn orienteering, make fires to cook food and participate in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils enjoy a wide range of sports, including golf, sailing and boxing. Such diverse and challenging opportunities help prepare pupils well for their next steps.

The staff know every pupil extremely well. They intervene quickly if pupils need support, academically or emotionally. When any low-level disruption occurs, staff are quick to step in, so lessons are not disrupted.

Pupils learn about other cultures and religions through the curriculum, assemblies, form time and the personal, social and health education curriculum. Visits to local museums help pupils to learn about important cultural and historical events. For example, during the inspection, one class visited a local maritime museum to find out about the slave trade.

Since the school joined the trust, trust leaders have worked to improve the school. School leaders share the trust's determination to ensure that pupils are at the heart of any decision. Pupils and staff are overwhelmingly happy with the transformation of the school and the support that they receive from the trust.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that English and mathematics may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are highly alert to any behaviour or sign that may indicate a cause for concern. Staff's training is robust and frequent. Staff are up to date with any local or national

safeguarding guidance. Leaders work closely with other professionals to secure the right support and help for pupils and their families.

The school's curriculum helps pupils learn to stay safe. For example, pupils learn about appropriate relationships, including online. Pupils know where to get help if they need it.

Trust leaders keep a careful oversight of safeguarding in school. For example, they support and supervise the school's safeguarding team.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that curriculums in some academic subjects are sequenced coherently. This hinders pupils from building on their prior knowledge and making links with new learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers deliver subject content in a logical order so that pupils can build on earlier learning and deepen their understanding of these subjects over time.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, New Horizons School, to be good in September 2013.

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	144240
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10226056
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Laurence Cooper
Headteacher	Zoe Elwen-Bayne (Acting Headteacher)
Website	www.tkas.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Kassia Academy converted to become an academy school in January 2018. When its predecessor school, New Horizons School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Kings Academy Trust
- School leaders use one registered provider and two unregistered providers for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors spoke to the chief executive and directors from the trust, the chair of the local governing body, the acting headteacher, teachers and staff. They also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, physical education and vocational education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the

curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum and looked at books in some other subjects.
- During the inspection, inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that in relation to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour and pupils' wider development. They met with the school's safeguarding leads.
- Inspectors considered the five free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Julie Bather, lead inspector

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