

Inspection of Kirk Hallam Community Academy

Godfrey Drive, Kirk Hallam, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 4HH

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 July 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly and improving school. Following several changes in leadership, the school is becoming more settled and stable. Pupils are beginning to get to know most staff better and build positive relationships with them.

A lot of things are changing at the school to help it improve. Leaders have overhauled the curriculum and the timings of the school day. Pupils are beginning to recognise and value these changes. As one pupil said, 'We can see that things are beginning to get better.' Most students in the sixth form are proud to study there.

Staff expect pupils to behave and learn well. Most pupils respond positively. The school is calm. However, pupils, staff and parents and carers say that there is some misbehaviour. Typically, this occurs in lessons when pupils do not follow teachers' instructions quickly enough. This results in lost learning time. Sometimes, pupils opt out of completing tasks, particularly when they are unsure about what they are learning.

Most pupils say that they feel safe at school. Many say that staff deal with bullying well. However, some pupils and parents shared their concerns with inspectors that instances of bullying are not always fully resolved.

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

Leaders are working with determination to improve all aspects of the school. They have received strong support and investment from the trust. Trustees, local governors and school leaders have the needs of pupils and their families at heart. Recently, there have been many meetings with pupils, parents and staff to share the school's renewed vision. There is much to do. Leaders recognise this.

Central to leaders' vision has been a comprehensive review of the curriculum. Subject leaders have started to identify the important knowledge that pupils need to learn, and when. In geography, for example, pupils learn relevant topics such as energy security and sustainable development. This work to review the curriculum is not yet complete. Some subjects, such as English and art, are at a more advanced stage of development than others.

Teachers' expectations of pupils are not always high enough. When they are, pupils do well. Although pupils' achievement is improving, there is variability in how staff support all pupils to succeed, particularly disadvantaged pupils. Sometimes, pupils leave work unfinished or opt out of completing tasks. On occasions, this is because they do not fully understand the knowledge they have been learning. Teachers do not consistently check pupils' understanding, or how well pupils have completed their work.

New staff have recently been appointed to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They identify these pupils' needs well. However, the support that staff, including additional adults provide is inconsistent.

Pupils at an early stage of reading have not received the extra help they need to be successful. The lack of a culture of reading has not helped some pupils to broaden their knowledge. Subject leaders have started to incorporate more subject vocabulary into lessons. Most pupils are responding well to this.

Students in the sixth form enjoy their learning and achieve well in some subjects, such as psychology and animal care. However, retention on sixth-form courses is not as high as it should be. Leaders do not intervene quickly enough to help ensure that some students stay on track and achieve as well as they can.

Attendance remains low. Leaders have appointed more staff to work with pupils and their families to encourage good attendance. This is beginning to have some positive impact. However, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND continue to be regularly absent. Similarly, students in the sixth form do not attend as well as they should.

Previously, exclusions have not been used appropriately. Leaders have rapidly rectified this. Pupils say, however, that staff apply the current behaviour policy inconsistently. Not all pupils are as motivated in school as they should be. There are incidents of low-level disruption which affect others' enjoyment of school.

Pupils have a good understanding of equality and the importance of respecting those who are different to themselves. In English and art, for example, pupils learn from a range of well-considered texts to promote their understanding of diversity. However, the planned curriculum for pupils' personal development is inconsistently implemented. It is stronger in the sixth form, where students consider their future career aspirations, discuss current affairs and have the opportunity to learn British sign language. Students say they value the 'family friendly' nature of the sixth form. They feel well cared for.

Pupils enjoy some extra-curricular activities but say they would like more which meet their interests. Most pupils are well supported towards their next steps in education, employment or training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand well their responsibilities for safeguarding. They receive regular training about the risks pupils may face. Staff are alert to the signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm, including child sexual exploitation and neglect. Pupils are taught about the risks they may face. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

Leaders work closely with social care, health services and the police. They pursue help for vulnerable pupils when needed. They keep accurate records of the help pupils receive. Leaders have a good oversight of pupils in the care of the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough in, and between, different subjects. It is not always clear what pupils should learn and when in some subjects. Sometimes, teachers move on to new tasks before ensuring that all pupils have fully understood what has been taught. On occasions, pupils leave work unfinished or opt out of completing tasks when they are unsure of the knowledge they need to apply. Leaders should ensure that across all subjects, there is clarity around what knowledge should be taught and when. Leaders should make sure that teachers have the knowledge and skills to be able to teach the curriculum so that all pupils engage with their learning and build their knowledge over time.
- Leaders do not intervene quickly enough when some sixth-form students fall behind. As a result, some students do not successfully complete their courses of study. Leaders should ensure that those students who require it receive the support that they need so that they complete their courses and achieve as well as they can.
- The oversight of the provision and support for pupils with SEND is inconsistent. The academic support for these pupils does not always receive the priority it needs. There is too much variability in how teachers meet the needs of these pupils, despite the information they receive from leaders about these pupils' additional needs. Leaders have recently begun to strengthen this aspect of the school's work. They must ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills they need to provide the right support for all pupils with SEND.
- There is a weak culture of reading in the school. Pupils at an early stage of reading do not currently receive the extra help they need to study the full range of subjects taught. Leaders should ensure that all pupils who struggle to read receive the support they need so that they quickly become fluent and confident readers.
- Some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should, including sixth-form students. Rates of absence are particularly high for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. Leaders must ensure that pupils who require it receive the support they need to help them attend school regularly.
- There is disruption in some lessons. This prevents pupils from learning as well as they should. Pupils are frustrated by this. Parents are too. Leaders should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to be able to apply the school's behaviour policy consistently.

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	146374
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10245238
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	879
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	99
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Flewitt
Headteacher	Chris Turner
Website	www.kirkhallamacademy.co.uk

Information about this school

- In September 2018, the school joined Nova Education Trust.
- The headteacher took up his substantive role in April 2022.
- The school uses two alternative education providers for a very small number of pupils. Most of these pupils attend a registered provider. The other provider is unregistered.
- 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 qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

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