

# Inspection of a good school: Knole Academy

Knole Academy, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3LE

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Inspection dates:

22 and 23 November 2022

## Outcome

Knole Academy continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and students enjoy coming to this inclusive school. Staff set, and share, high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. Leaders are determined to help pupils achieve their best. Pupils are pleased to have a wide range of academic and vocational subjects to study at GCSE and different pathways to choose from in the sixth form.

Staff know the pupils well. Relationships are strong between staff and pupils. Pupils feel safe and feel that staff care about their welfare. They enjoy making use of the well-being room or interacting with the well-being dog. Bullying rarely happens. If it does, it is swiftly and effectively dealt with by leaders. Behaviour in lessons is good. Leaders know that, occasionally, behaviour in corridors needs improving and they are taking the right actions to deal with this.

There are a wide variety of clubs and activities on offer at school. Pupils are encouraged to participate in trips and visits, with the 'culture voucher' given to every pupil. Students in the sixth form talked enthusiastically about their recent trip to Iceland. Parents are mainly very positive about the school. As one parent wrote, 'My child has flourished at this school and loves going to school and learning.'

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

The curriculum is well designed and builds pupils' knowledge and skills. In almost all subjects, the curriculum is broad, ambitious and well planned. Pupils' learning is organised carefully across all key stages. In a small number of subjects, leaders are still in the process of fine-tuning the curriculum and how it is implemented.

Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects. Most teachers use strategies to check pupils' progress adeptly. Teaching includes specific opportunities for pupils to recall key knowledge that they need to remember. Teachers spot and address pupils' misconceptions quickly and effectively and check if pupils can remember essential learning taught during previous lessons. In discussions with pupils about their work, it was clear to inspectors

that pupils know more and remember more knowledge and concepts across a range of subjects.

There are effective approaches to developing pupils' literacy skills across the school. Curriculum planning clearly sets out the subject-specific language that leaders want pupils to be able to use. Pupils who struggle with literacy receive suitable help. Reading aloud in class is a regular activity across the school. Many pupils speak with confidence and read with fluency. Leaders are building on their work to foster a love of reading among pupils, including in the sixth form.

Pupils focus well in class. Disruption in lessons is rare and dealt with effectively so that learning continues. Students in the sixth form appreciate the excellent learning environment that the school offers. They enjoy the depth of discussions and debates that are central to their courses.

The curriculum is equally ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have effective processes in place to identify the specific needs of pupils and students with SEND. Leaders provide teachers with up-to-date information on the needs of individual pupils. However, the curriculum is not always adapted as effectively as it could be for those pupils with SEND. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as highly as they could.

Pupils experience a wide range of personal development provision in their 'Relevance' programme. Leaders provide regular opportunities for pupils to learn about contemporary issues. In the sixth form, there is a clear focus on helping students to mature into young adults. They are given opportunities to think broadly about global issues and to develop enquiring minds. The daily student bulletin lists the impressive range of clubs on offer each day. Leaders are determined to remove barriers, so that all pupils can participate in the full range of experiences on offer that take them beyond the academic curriculum.

Pupils receive high-quality careers information, advice, guidance and support. Older pupils mostly value their careers education and how it helps them make informed choices about their future education, apprenticeship or employment options. Leaders recognise that students in the sixth form would benefit from earlier advice about university choices.

Staff are happy working at this school. They typically feel well supported by leaders, including with their workload. Teachers appreciate the range of professional development opportunities available to them. Governors are skilled and experienced. They know the school well and make sure that the school is well led and managed effectively. They provide effective support and challenge for leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead is very knowledgeable and provides regular safeguarding training and weekly safeguarding bulletins for staff. Leaders have made it easy for staff and pupils to make their concerns known. The safeguarding philosophy is 'if

in doubt, report it'. Staff know their responsibilities for safeguarding and take them seriously.

Safeguarding leaders take appropriate action when a pupil needs help. Leaders also draw on external support when needed. Leaders make sure that the required checks are made on all staff. Pupils feel safe and say that there are adults they can talk to if they have concerns.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders are fully aware that further refinements are needed in the implementation of the curriculum in a small number of subjects. This means that pupils do not learn consistently well across the whole curriculum. Leaders must continue to embed the curriculum securely across every subject.
- Some teachers are not as confident as they could be in making adaptations to meet the needs of pupils with SEND fully. This means that some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff implement the curriculum for pupils with SEND effectively, utilising examples of best practice in the school.

## **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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2017.

## **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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136128
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240631
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,383
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	160
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Theresa Homewood
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Collins
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.knoleacademy.org">www.knoleacademy.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	20 and 21 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change of headteacher. The present headteacher took up post in January 2019.
- The school uses one unregistered and four registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- 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

- 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.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the leader responsible for pupils with SEND, many teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, art and design and geography. Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke to teachers. They looked at curriculum planning and pupils' work. They met with pupils to discuss their learning.
- The lead inspector also visited a range of lessons in other subjects. In those lessons, the inspector looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors viewed the school's website and policies, met with the designated safeguarding lead, spoke with pupils and staff, checked school records of safeguarding checks carried out on adults working at the school and spoke with governors.
- Inspectors observed pupils around the school site during lunchtimes and at break.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and groups of staff, to hear their views. Inspectors also spoke to pupils and staff informally around the school.
- Inspectors considered the 172 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including 118 free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential surveys completed by staff and pupils and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Ann Fearon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Owen McColgan	Ofsted Inspector
Keith Pailthorpe	Ofsted Inspector

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