

Inspection of Kingsbridge Academy

Balkwill Road, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 1PL

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Kingsbridge Academy as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils attending Kingsbridge Academy benefit from a good education. Leaders are highly ambitious for all pupils. Pupils enjoy their lessons and their learning. Sixth-form students contribute widely to the life of the school. Younger pupils describe sixth-form students as role models.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils say they have a trusted adult they can speak to when they have concerns. Some pupils and parents express concerns about bullying. However, when pupils report an incident, leaders deal with it. Pupils learn about bullying through a well-planned curriculum. As a result, incidents of bullying have reduced.

Sixth-form students passionately lead the newly formed house system. They speak enthusiastically with pupils and school leaders. Pupils feel listened to. For example, the introduction of a skateboarding club followed a request from pupils.

A wide range of extra-curricular clubs run for pupils. Clubs include sports, arts, board games and climbing. Through the 'discovery curriculum', leaders frequently talk to pupils and check who takes part. This helps leaders to understand what is going well and how to ensure all pupils benefit. Many pupils performed in a recent school musical production. Having two casts over four nights increased the number of pupils who could take part.

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

Leaders have developed a well-sequenced and ambitious curriculum. To do this, they have collaborated across the trust and with their subject teams. They have explicitly identified the important knowledge pupils will learn and when they will learn it. Leaders ensure teachers share and deepen their own subject knowledge.

Pupils learn knowledge and skills securely before moving on further with their learning. This helps pupils to build their confidence. They revisit what they have learned previously, in lessons and through homework tasks. This means they remember more over time. Teachers systematically check how well pupils have understood and correct misconceptions. Teachers help pupils with each step in their learning.

The sixth-form curriculum is precise and clear. Teaching is suitably challenging. Students build on what they have learned before and from the teaching they receive. As a result, they learn very well.

In lessons, expectations and routines are clear and consistent. Most pupils concentrate on their learning. As a result, lessons are calm and orderly. The minority of pupils who do not concentrate, continue their learning in a designated room elsewhere in the school. This minimises any loss of learning time.

Through the Kingsbridge 'reading canon', leaders expose pupils to a broad range of texts. This includes a diverse selection of novels. Pupils read or listen to their teachers reading aloud regularly.

Some pupils, who are in the early stages of learning to read, follow a recently introduced phonics programme. However, its implementation is not systematic or accurate enough. This hinders pupils' learning.

Teachers receive useful up-to-date information to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They use this to adapt teaching and provide extra help in lessons. Leaders ensure sixth-form courses meet the needs of students with SEND.

Leaders have planned the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum with care. Subject specialists teach the PSHE curriculum. Pupils learn about sexual relations, consent and respect appropriately for their different ages. The school celebrates diversity and difference widely. Pupils say the school community is welcoming and inclusive.

The careers curriculum provides pupils and students with high-quality information about training, education and employment. The curriculum begins in Year 7. It prepares pupils well for making choices about what to do next.

Leaders are clear about the priorities for the school. They ensure the school is an inclusive community. Leaders have acted decisively to raise standards and expectations. However, some parents believe communication is not effective enough, particularly for those parents who have a child with SEND.

Trust leaders and governors provide robust challenge and support to leaders. Staff feel that leaders consider their workload and well-being carefully.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide regular training for staff and governors. Staff report concerns promptly. Leaders take timely and effective action in response. They work closely with external agencies and the community to care for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Leaders make necessary checks when recruiting new staff. Governors monitor the impact of leaders' work to protect pupils.

Pupils learn to keep themselves safe online and in the community. They are positive about learning how to look after their mental health. Pupils value the pastoral support they receive.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Implementation of the early reading programme is not systematic or accurate enough. As a result, a few pupils in the early stages of learning to read do not make the quick progress they need to catch up with their peers. Leaders need to ensure up-to-date and effective training for staff to implement the programme.
- The quality of communication between school and parents is inconsistent. This sometimes leads to a breakdown in understanding and engagement, which parents find frustrating. Leaders need to manage communication with parents effectively.

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

Unique reference number	136367
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10229022
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
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	1293
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	251
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kellie Knott
Principal	Tina Graham
Website	www.kingsbridgecollege.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Kingsbridge Academy converted to become an academy school in February 2012. Its predecessor school, Kingsbridge Community College, was graded outstanding at its inspection in February 2008.
- The school uses four registered alternative providers and three unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English mathematics, art and photography, geography and music. 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 held discussions with the principal, members of the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders, the chief executive officer and trust leaders, and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors met and spoke with over 120 pupils and students.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector examined school records. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and also spoke to a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors scrutinised behaviour records and bullying logs. They spoke with leaders, staff and pupils about behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke to the alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also viewed the responses to the pupil survey and the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Rachel Hesketh, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gary Lewis	Ofsted Inspector
Deirdre Fitzpatrick	Ofsted Inspector
Gemma Tatlow	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Watson	Ofsted Inspector

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