

Inspection of Kidsgrove Secondary School

Gloucester Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 4DL

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2023

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Kidsgrove has a close-knit community feel. Its small size means everyone knows each other well. Relationships are warm and pupils know their voice matters. There is a culture of trust, which means pupils feel able to raise concerns. They are confident that any bullying would be dealt with.

There have been significant improvements in all aspects of school life over recent years. This includes expectations around pupils' behaviour, the quality of learning experiences and the school environment. Pupils, parents and carers are positive about these changes, especially those that have happened since the headteacher joined the school. Pupils are proud to attend Kidsgrove and staff enjoy working there.

From starting their day with a bagel, to the provision of an after-school homework club, to being given their own electronic tablet, pupils are helped to be in the best possible mindset for successful learning. They apply themselves well in lessons. They respect each other's differing choices in how to spend their social time.

Pupils enjoy the extra-curricular opportunities, such as football and chess club, that are on offer, but would like a wider choice of activities. They appreciate how well the school prepares them for their next steps in education and life.

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

There have been several key staffing changes over the last two years. These changes have strengthened both leadership and the quality of education. Opportunities to work with other leaders and teachers in the multi-academy trust provides helpful support for staff. This has had a positive impact on the design and delivery of the curriculum. Outcomes for pupils are improving. The number of pupils who complete the full suite of subjects which form the English Baccalaureate is rising.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is broad and followed by all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Each subject has been thoughtfully mapped so that learning is organised in a way to help pupils build knowledge and develop skills over time.

Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to share new ideas with pupils. They use real-life examples where possible, such as working out interest rates for loans in mathematics. The electronic tablets are used to develop pupils' digital skills, alongside enhancing subject learning. In many lessons, teachers use strategies to check how much pupils have understood before they move on. However, the effectiveness of this checking is inconsistent. This means that occasionally some pupils are faced with tasks that they are not yet ready for, while others complete tasks very quickly. This can slow the progress pupils make.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND have their needs identified and regularly reviewed. However, not all teachers are effectively adapting learning to ensure that pupils' individual needs are met. Work is already underway to improve this. Leaders ensure that those pupils who are not yet fluent readers receive appropriate interventions to help them quickly improve their reading. Leaders are committed to inclusion. They make sure that pupils with SEND are as actively involved in extra-curricular activities as other pupils. They provide bespoke support around careers and next steps.

The commitment of leaders to removing barriers to learning faced by pupils means that behaviour and attendance have improved. The number of pupils who receive suspensions is decreasing. Pupils live up to these higher expectations and understand the impact that they have on their learning and outcomes.

The quality of the 'PDEV' personal development curriculum means that pupils learn about and revisit important topics, including healthy relationships, equality and careers in an age-appropriate way. Leaders ensure that all pupils have access to high-quality guidance to support them making choices about their next steps in education and employment. Pupils show respect towards others. Leaders ensure that they gain a deep understanding of modern British society and values through assemblies and enrichment days.

Leaders' clear values and vision for the school are universally shared. Staff and leaders work together in their shared commitment to constant improvement. There is a culture of everyone being valued. Staff know leaders care about them and their well-being. Trust leaders provide meaningful and timely support where needed. Trustees use their expertise in holding leaders to account and have a detailed understanding of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate training and regular updates that include information on any emerging safeguarding issues. Staff are clear about what they should do if they have a concern about a child. Leaders take swift, appropriate action to ensure that any pupils at risk receive the support they need, including from external agencies.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe through the 'PDEV' curriculum. Leaders build into the curriculum any local or emerging issues of which pupils need to be aware.

Leaders ensure that all recruitment checks are carried out on staff before they begin work at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teachers are not choosing appropriate strategies to check that pupils have understood their learning. As a result, some pupils are expected to move on to the next step in their learning before they are ready. Other pupils complete tasks quickly because they have already secured their learning; they then wait for their peers to complete the tasks before they can move on. Leaders should ensure that the strong practice seen in some subjects is shared so that the quality and use of checks on learning are consistent across different subjects.
- Not all learning is adapted well enough to meet the differing needs and abilities of pupils, including those with SEND. This means that some pupils do not receive the support they need to secure the important building blocks of key knowledge or access more complex learning. Consequently, some pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. Leaders should ensure that all teachers have the skills and knowledge to effectively adapt learning when necessary.

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	146635
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10256827
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	297
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Meehan
Headteacher	Steven Frost
Website	www.kidsgrovesecondary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Kidsgrove Secondary School joined the Shaw Education Trust in November 2018. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be requiring improvement.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- The school uses two 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 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 focused on the following subjects: English, mathematics, geography and Spanish. Inspectors examined leaders' curriculum plans, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught. They also looked at lessons in other subjects to check how they are planned and taught.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum and improvement planning. The school website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders made employment checks on staff and scrutinised safeguarding records. They also asked how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors met with the trustees and the chair of the local academy council. They had meetings with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Nicola Beech, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sultanat Yunus	His Majesty's Inspector
Neil Warner	Ofsted Inspector

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