

Inspection of North Kesteven Academy

Moor Lane, North Hykeham, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN6 9AG

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Joanne Tunncliffe. This school is run by a single academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Jonathon Sloan.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at North Kesteven Academy. Always polite and respectful, they get along well with each other and enjoy great relationships with staff. The school has developed a strong, inclusive culture built on mutual respect and tolerance. Caring staff strive to get to know pupils well. Pupils trust staff to keep them safe and to help them resolve any worries they may have.

The school is aspirational for all pupils. However, the most recent published outcomes show that too many pupils do not achieve as well as they might. The curriculum has improved recently. This is particularly evident in the sixth form, where students' achievements have got better. However, there is more work to do to ensure that pupils in key stages 3 and 4 achieve well enough.

The school has developed effective routines to support pupils' good behaviour. There is a calm and orderly atmosphere. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Pupils and staff told inspectors that behaviour has improved a great deal.

The school supports pupils' personal development well. This is typified by the high priority that is placed on helping pupils maintain good physical and mental health. Pupils benefit from excellent careers advice. Almost all pupils move on to secure destinations in education, training or employment.

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

The school has developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. At key stage 3, pupils study the national curriculum in full. At key stage 4, all pupils have the opportunity to choose all of the English Baccalaureate subjects. The number of pupils doing so has increased. Despite the relatively small sixth form, there is a wide range of academic and vocational qualifications from which students can choose. The school strives to make sure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can access the curriculum in full. A small number of pupils with SEND benefit from personalised curriculums that meet their needs well.

The delivery of the planned curriculum is inconsistent. Sometimes, staff do not explain new information clearly enough. They do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise or check that they have understood new knowledge before moving on. In the sixth form, students benefit from a stronger and more consistent curriculum delivery.

In some lessons, teachers do not check carefully enough what pupils have learned before. They do not always identify gaps in pupils' knowledge or misconceptions. When pupils' work is of poor quality, teachers do not routinely provide guidance that helps pupils improve. As a result, pupils do not learn securely across the curriculum.

Subject curriculums are well designed. The important knowledge that pupils learn is clearly identified and sequenced well. As pupils progress through the school, the

curriculum is increasingly challenging. This is particularly evident in the sixth form. Staff teach lessons that prioritise disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Planned routines are designed to help pupils connect, develop, and apply new knowledge. Training is helping staff to use these routines consistently in lessons.

The school prioritises reading. Staff quickly identify when pupils have gaps in their reading knowledge. The school provides effective support for these pupils. Pupils in key stage 3 benefit from reading lessons designed to build their reading fluency and strengthen their vocabulary. All pupils read daily from interesting and challenging texts.

The school offers a well-considered programme for personal, social and health education. In lessons and during 'learning for life' days, pupils learn how to keep safe and healthy. The school ensures that there are opportunities for pupils to become active and well-informed citizens. The school council is involved in making decisions that affect school life. Students in the sixth form support younger pupils enthusiastically, for example, by managing the library and helping in key stage 3 lessons.

The school provides a range of clubs for pupils to pursue talents and interests in the performing arts, sports and other areas. Sixth-form students have the opportunity to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

The school works hard to make sure that all pupils attend school often. Staff provide personalised pastoral care and mental health support for pupils who have not attended school well previously. As a result, many of these pupils now come to school more frequently. Sixth-form students attend school well.

The school prides itself in its culture of including all pupils. Staff and trustees share a common vision for a school where everybody feels welcome and safe. Staff value the support they get to continue to develop their expertise. Pupils, parents and carers and staff recognise the significant improvements that the school has already made under strong and courageous leadership. There is a collective determination to provide a high-quality education for all.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not always check pupils' learning carefully enough to identify gaps or misconceptions. They do not always provide pupils with the guidance they need to improve their work. Pupils do not always learn as well as they should. The school needs to ensure that teachers check pupils' learning routinely and give pupils clear direction so that they know how to get better at a subject.

- The curriculum is not delivered consistently well across all areas of the school. Teachers' explanations are not always clear. Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to practise and apply their learning. When this happens, pupils' knowledge is insecure and lacks depth. The school needs to ensure that the planned curriculum is delivered consistently well in all subjects so that all pupils gain the knowledge they need to be successful.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136871
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10324130
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	613
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	45
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jonathon Sloan
Headteacher	Joanne Tunnicliffe
Website	www.nkacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 March 2022

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees, including the chair of the board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, and the performing arts. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited lessons and spoke to pupils in a number of other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders and scrutinised records relating to attendance, behaviour, and personal development.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff, pupils, parents through discussions and Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

John Spragg, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Julie Sheppard	Ofsted Inspector
Farhan Adam	Ofsted Inspector
John Harrison	Ofsted Inspector

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