

Kirkby College

Tennyson Street, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottingham, NG17 7DH

Inspection dates

16–17 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students are not making rapid enough progress from their low starting points, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Although much teaching is good or outstanding, there remains some inconsistency. Recent improvements have not yet had sufficient time to have had a full impact on accelerating rates of progress.
- Teachers occasionally set work that is too easy or too difficult for students, or that does not match the different ways in which they prefer to learn.
- A minority of teachers miss opportunities to involve students fully in their learning because they do not provide sufficient tasks where students can contribute their ideas or learn actively.

The school has the following strengths

- This is a rapidly improving school.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and welcoming and say that they value the support they receive from adults who ensure their safety and wellbeing.
- An effective assessment policy is well established across the school so that students have a good understanding of how well they are doing and what to do to reach their targets.
- Leaders and governors are passionate about raising achievement and the aspirations of students and ensuring their wellbeing. They have been rigorous in their drive to improve teaching and are taking firm action to address remaining areas of inconsistency.
- The curriculum in the main school and in the sixth form meets the needs and interests of the students well, particularly in the provision of vocational courses.
- The sixth form is good. It is well led and students benefit from the close support and good teaching they receive.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons, three of which were jointly observed with one of the school's senior leaders. They also made a number of further short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with students, members of the governing body and staff, including subject leaders. A telephone conversation took place with the school's improvement partner.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at policies, self-evaluation and development planning, monitoring records, minutes of meetings of the governing body, information about students' progress, safeguarding documents, and samples of students' work.
- The views of the 11 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account. Inspectors also took account of 72 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mary Davis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Patrick Cook

Additional Inspector

Russell Barr

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kirkby College converted to become an academy on 10 August 2012. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The very small sixth form is taught through a consortium arrangement with Ashfield School, Quarrydale Academy and Sutton Community Academy.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is high. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- Very few students are from minority ethnic heritages and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and students who have a parent in the armed forces, is well above the national average.
- Up to 25 students at a time, mainly from Key Stage 3, follow a variety of part-time short-term alternative courses off-site. These are provided in partnership with other schools in the local consortium at 'SPACE'.
- All students are entered for mathematics GCSE in the autumn of Year 11 and are able to improve their grade at the end of their final year.
- The school runs a breakfast club every morning for students known to be eligible for free school meals and once a week for all students.
- The proportion of students entering or leaving the school at other than the normal entry points is considerably higher than for most schools nationally.
- During the inspection, the school was led by two acting headteachers, while the headteacher was on long-term sick leave.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - sharing existing outstanding practice more widely
 - ensuring teachers consistently plan work of the right level of difficulty to match the individual needs of students, so that all students are appropriately challenged or supported, particularly the highest attainers
 - providing lesson activities which engage and involve all students more fully in their learning and promote their independence.
- Raise achievement in English, mathematics and science by ensuring that teaching in these subjects is consistently good or outstanding so that the proportion of students in all year groups making better than expected progress compares favourably to students nationally.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The school's tracking shows that rates of progress, although generally at expected rates, are inconsistent across year groups in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science; progress is particularly weak in English in Year 9. Few students are making better than expected progress in these subjects. In order to catch up with national expectations this proportion of students needs to increase. There is no significant difference between the achievements of students from different ethnic backgrounds or of those who speak English as an additional language.
- Students have entered the school with significantly below average levels in the basic skills of reading, writing, communication and mathematics. Standards for the most recent intakes have been just below average on entry. Recent assessments, together with results already received indicate that the current students in Year 11 will reach close to national averages. This is partly as a result of a wide range of well-focused interventions during Year 11, particularly in English. Current standards in other year groups and across subjects are inconsistent.
- Students enter the sixth form with below-average qualifications, but make good progress as a result of a well-matched curriculum and good teaching. Achievement in the sixth form is, therefore, good.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are very well supported and are currently making good progress in English although less so in mathematics. They benefit from being taught in small groups, and are closely supported by additional adults, enabling them to achieve well. In an outstanding English lesson in Year 11, these students were able to hone their writing skills, displaying a good understanding of features such as alliteration and simile. The task was active and fun and focused closely on how to achieve their best in the forthcoming examination. Dyslexic students received close expert support, building their confidence.
- Pupil premium funding is used appropriately to enable small teaching groups and to focus on raising standards of literacy and numeracy. Well-established strategies are in place to help to accelerate reading. A variety of catch-up courses and one-to-one tuition are provided for the weakest readers, establishing a systematic approach and providing effective individual support throughout Key Stage 3 and beyond. This results in most of these students making good progress in reading. Students are frequently encouraged to read out loud, and in most subjects teachers place a strong focus on the use of technical vocabulary for the subject.
- Year 7 catch-up funding supports students who enter the school with weak literacy and numeracy skills to make the transition to secondary school by providing support within a nurture group. This is enabling them to establish appropriate standards of behaviour, is building their self-confidence and is improving their basic skills.
- The school's tracking of progress indicates that the gap between the current performance of those eligible for the pupil premium funding and that of their peers is closing, particularly in mathematics.
- Early entry for mathematics GCSE is used effectively to ensure that students' achievement in this subject is maximised.
- Students following alternative courses achieve well as the result of the active and appropriate

courses.

- The constant encouragement that students receive generates increased self-confidence. One student told an inspector, 'We keep being told how good we are.' This is resulting in students' rising aspirations and very positive attitudes to learning.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although the school's regular monitoring and inspection evidence show that most teaching is effective and much is outstanding, there remains some inconsistency, particularly in Key Stage 3 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Where teaching is good or outstanding, it is now beginning to result in sustaining improved rates of progress.
- A minority of teachers do not plan tasks that sufficiently match the variety of individual abilities within their class. Although they set out different expectations of what each ability group can achieve, they do not provide the resources to support the lowest-attaining students or sufficient challenge for the highest-attainers. Students told inspectors that sometimes work is, therefore, too difficult or too easy or does not match the way in which they prefer to learn.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers are inclined to dominate the lesson rather than providing a variety of activities which enable students to contribute fully to their learning and to develop their independence. Students sit passively for too long before they are appropriately challenged.
- Sixth form students told inspectors that the teaching they receive across the consortium is good and that they value the encouragement they receive. Observations confirmed this. In an outstanding sixth form GCSE English lesson, the teacher skilfully built students' confidence, skills and understanding, step by step during the lesson. They made rapid progress not only in writing descriptively, but also in applying their skills to an examination question as they practised how to tackle a question and learnt how to construct a response in the time allowed.
- Leaders have established very effective assessment practice across the whole school. The marking system includes a comment on how well students are doing, their level or grade, and what they need to do next. It also focuses, in every subject, on raising standards of literacy through a comment on spelling, punctuation and grammar. Students apply this system themselves when assessing their own and others' work and, as a result, have a clear understanding of how they are doing and how to reach their targets.
- Teachers in all subjects promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, by providing opportunities for reflection on issues that face them and for teamwork. In an outstanding music lesson, students in Year 7 composed music in a flamenco style as part of a study of music from around the world. Here they showed good teamwork, cooperating and listening to each other well as they worked in pairs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Students are keen to learn and are excited when tasks are fun and active. They concentrate well and the atmosphere around the school is one of calm.
- Students are very proud of their school. They told inspectors how proud they are to wear the school uniform that makes them feel part of a team. They speak of the very positive

relationships they enjoy with their teachers and of how much this contributes to their progress.

- Students have high expectations of standards of behaviour. They value the consistent behaviour management, one saying, 'The school keeps everyone in order, and maintaining discipline encourages you to be who you want to be.' The school's constant focus on raising aspirations, building self-confidence and providing consistent behaviour management has resulted in the raised self-esteem of students, many of whom face challenging circumstances.
- The low level of fixed and permanent exclusions is an indication of the effectiveness of behaviour systems. Strong partnerships with other agencies, including the development of 'SPACE', the off-site alternative provision, and the well-managed inclusion room in school, have further strengthened the school's work in this area.
- Students feel safe in school. Bullying is uncommon and where it does occur students are confident that it is swiftly dealt with. They have a good understanding of different forms that bullying can take and say that they would intervene if they witnessed anyone being targeted in this way. They demonstrate supportive and caring attitudes towards each other and show tolerance to all.
- Pupil premium funding has enabled the appointment of an attendance officer who works with students and their families to promote good attendance. Levels of attendance have shown improvement as a result and are now broadly average. Students are aware of the importance of good attendance and punctuality. The latter is a current focus and is checked on rigorously by the school's leaders.
- Students of all ages are keen to take responsible roles, for example, through the school council. Students in Year 10 are fully involved in charity fundraising, including researching the charity and making personal contact. Older students are trained as mentors to provide support for younger ones.
- Almost all staff and all parents who responded to the online questionnaire, express positive views about the way in which the school manages behaviour and ensures students' safety and wellbeing.

The leadership and management are good

- The two acting headteachers, well supported by their senior team and by the governing body, are inspirational in the way that they drive improvement. They have rigorously promoted the importance of high-quality teaching and consistent behaviour management and this is leading to improved outcomes for students.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, check on the quality of teaching regularly. Procedures for managing the performance of teachers are well established and link salary increases to the targets set. Teachers are closely held to account for the progress made by their students. Leaders provide a variety of support and training to ensure that good teachers improve to become outstanding. Teachers identified as requiring improvement are supported through personalised coaching packages. This includes mentoring and opportunities to share good practice. Teachers new to the profession are similarly well supported.
- The school knows itself well and has identified appropriate areas for improvement. For example, leaders have identified that students are making slower progress in English at Key Stage 3 and are seeking an external review of the subject, in addition to the introduction of a wide variety of

interventions in Key Stage 4 to address identified areas of weakness.

- The subject leaders of English, mathematics and science are new to their roles and their leadership is beginning to have an impact on raising achievement and to hold teachers better to account for the progress their students make.
- Processes for tracking students' progress are regular and thorough, enabling underachievement to be identified and addressed and to ensure the equal opportunity of all groups of students.
- The range of subjects and courses is good and particularly impressive for such a small school. It provides students with diverse options and pathways that are flexible in meeting their individual needs and interests. A strong focus on raising standards of literacy is evident in all subjects. Vocational courses in motor vehicle maintenance and hairdressing are very popular and successful, while all students are able to access courses that will enable them to achieve the English Baccalaureate.
- The school's sports specialism enhances learning across the school by promoting teamwork and supporting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A partnership with a school in India further enhances this; students learn about Indian culture through a variety of activities, including art, music and food.
- The range of courses offered in the sixth form benefits from partnership with other schools in the consortium. It provides academic and vocational courses in addition to opportunities for students to gain or improve their GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics. The sixth form is well led and students value the care, support and guidance they receive.
- The schools' leaders, including governors, are seeking to improve the engagement of parents, particularly those hard to reach, through the appointment of the attendance officer, to include parental liaison. They have also initiated a parents' forum in order to canvas the views of parents and carers more effectively.
- The additional pupil premium funding is used very effectively across the school to provide a wide variety of strategies to raise levels of literacy, for example, providing one-to-one support and reducing class sizes. It also provides funding for a breakfast club to ensure students have a good start to the day. Year 7 catch-up funding has enabled a nurture group to be established. This supports the most vulnerable students, enabling them to settle on entry to the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well and are well informed. They provide challenge and support for the school and are able to compare its performance with schools nationally. Their current focus is to support the school's acting leaders in their drive to improve the quality of teaching. Governors take an active part in ensuring pay increases are linked to performance and in tackling the causes of underachievement. The governing body is fully aware of the spending of pupil premium funding and checks its impact on raising the achievement of the students it supports. It ensures that safeguarding procedures and practice are exemplary.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors. A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.

School details

Unique reference number	138481
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	412732

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	509
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Reast
Headteacher	Simon Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01623 455925
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