

Kingsthorpe College

Boughton Green Road, Kingsthorpe, Northampton, NN2 7HR

Inspection dates 5–6 June 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		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Too much teaching requires improvement. Work set for students is not always at the right level.
- Students are not making the progress they need to secure good achievement in English and mathematics. Their progress in science is slower than in other core subjects.
- The academy's strategies to develop literacy and numeracy across all subjects are not yet fully in place.
- Checks on the quality of teaching are improving but leaders do not have a clear enough view of the impact of training. Best practice is not being shared fully to help bring about improvement.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently provide students with the information they need to improve their work.
- Checking of their areas by subject leaders is not consistently rigorous and does not always lead to improved practice.
- Some students adopt a passive approach to learning as they are not engaged by the teaching they receive.
- Attendance is below average.
- The sixth form requires improvement. The overall progress made by sixth-form students is no better than expected.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have a clear focus on the academy's priorities and what needs to be done to become a good school.
- Achievement, teaching and behaviour are all improving. Achievement in humanities subjects is good.
- Students feel safe and well cared for. They are courteous to each other and adults. Bullying is dealt with effectively.
- The academy sponsors and governing body hold the academy to account. They provide a good level of support and challenge.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 45 lessons, of which four were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, groups of students, members of the governing body and representative of the academy sponsor.
- Inspectors reviewed school documentation, performance data, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and they looked at samples of students' work. The schools' central record of checks on staff was also scrutinised.
- Inspectors took into account the responses of 21 parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views of one parent who communicated directly with the inspectors by telephone. They also considered the views of staff, including those expressed in 101 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Nigel Boyd, Lead inspector	Seconded Inspector
Bob Roberts	Additional Inspector
Alan Giles	Additional Inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional Inspector
Robert Steed	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kingsthorpe College converted to become an academy on 1 November 2012. It is sponsored by the Collaborative Academies Trust. When its predecessor school, also known as Kingsthorpe College, was last inspected by Ofsted in 2010, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The academy is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is average. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is also average.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families) is close to the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below average.
- The academy has no published examination results at this point.
- A small number of students receive additional support and education off the academy site at Rushmere Academy, On-Track Education and the Real Project.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement to good and improve the quality of teaching so that most is good or better by:
 - making sure that all lessons are planned to meet the individual needs of students and that work set for students is at the right level
 - improving the quality of marking so that all students know what they need to do to improve their work and are provided with opportunities to respond to the comments their teachers make about their work
 - providing opportunities for students to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects.
- Ensure that all students have consistently positive attitudes to learning by:
 - involving all students more actively in lessons
 - making sure that all teaching is lively, stimulating and engages all learners.
- Develop leadership and management by:
 - ensuring monitoring activities by subject leaders are sufficiently rigorous and lead to improvements in teaching
 - ensuring greater sharing of best practice to further improve the quality of teaching
 - evaluating fully the impact of training to improve teaching.
- Improve attendance by:
 - working further with the families of those students who are persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Students' attainment on entry to the academy is significantly below average, with fewer students than seen in many schools reaching higher levels in Year 6.
- 2012 examination results in the predecessor school were significantly below the national average. Early entry GCSE results for mathematics and the academy's own accurate achievement data indicate that the current Year 11 are on track to achieve better grades in 2013. Results are set to improve to closer to the national average.
- However, the progress students are making is not leading to high enough standards in every subject. For example, the percentages of students expected to make better than expected progress in English and mathematics are well below the 2012 national average and overall progress is too slow in science. Students perform particularly well in humanities subjects.
- Achievement in the sixth form is also improving. Students make the progress that is expected but not enough students are making good progress. Some make better progress than this where teaching is good, most notably in mathematics.
- In many of the lessons, students' progress was not rapid enough because the teaching did not always enable students to reach their full potential. Girls are currently still on track to outperform boys, but the gap is set to narrow considerably from that in the predecessor school.
- The majority of disabled students and those who have special educational needs are making progress similar to their peers. This is because of well-focused support, in-class help and careful monitoring. The small number of students who are supported through school action plus make slower progress. This is mainly because these students attending the alternative provision off the academy's site are not making enough progress. Leaders are monitoring their attendance and progress with greater rigour now.
- Students' literacy and numeracy skills are not developed systematically in all subjects. The policies to develop literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are still at an early stage of implementation.
- The academy enters some students for GCSE mathematics examinations early, but then continues to teach them mathematics once they achieve the target C grade. This strategy has been effective in bringing up standards in mathematics.
- Leaders have worked hard, and with success, to refine and use effectively systems to check on students' progress and intervene when they are not on track. These systems are starting to have an impact on raising achievement.
- A scheme to improve reading, aimed at low-attaining students, has resulted in gains in their reading skills that bring them close to age-related expectations. This scheme is supported by the Year 7 catch-up grant.
- Individual support and tuition for students supported through the pupil premium mean they attain almost as well as other students. In English and mathematics, the gap between the attainment of these students and other students is on track to be less than the gap found

nationally. Based on the academy's own checks on student progress, the gap in attainment is equivalent to half a GCSE grade in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Much of the teaching seen was good or better, but a significant number of lessons required improvement and a small number were inadequate, preventing students from making good progress overall. This does not match the academy's own judgement that teaching is mostly good or better. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is similar to that in Years 7 to 11.
- The work set in some lessons does not fully engage, motivate or inspire the students. This is because the teaching is slow in pace and activities are not planned to meet the needs of all students. The teaching does not build on their prior knowledge well enough. In these lessons, students are not challenged enough or the work is too easy. The quality of students' work in books also varied and indicated that teaching is inconsistent over time.
- In many lessons boys often dominate class discussion and teachers do not do enough to encourage all learners to contribute, particularly quiet girls.
- The marking of students' books varies too much. There are good examples of marking, where teachers have provided detailed suggestions for further improvement. However, most students are not responding to this advice as there are no firm expectations from teachers to do so. A considerable minority of teachers mark relatively little and, therefore, their students do not understand what they need to do to produce work of a better quality.
- In lessons where teaching is good or better, teachers plan activities for the full range of students' needs. Students experience a range of creative and interesting teaching methods which capture their imaginations. Good use of questioning helps to deepen students' understanding. In these lessons, students engaged in learning with enthusiasm and made good progress.
- Also, in the better lessons, teachers made good use of National Curriculum level and GCSE grade expectations to help students understand what was expected of them. This was particularly effective in developing students' understanding of examination requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Behaviour and safety are not good because students' attitudes to learning are not consistently positive. While most students are keen to settle into work in lessons, some lose concentration and become passive if the work set does not interest them, and where teaching is weaker.
- Attendance has slipped compared with that in the predecessor school and is currently below average. The main reasons for this are the persistent poor attendance of a minority of students and a spate of illness that affected a large number of students earlier in the academic year. Students are punctual to school and lessons.
- The academy's systems for dealing with serious misconduct are increasingly effective and there are clear signs that behaviour is improving. The number of students who are temporarily excluded from the academy is reducing but is still high.
- Students say they feel safe and well cared for. They have a good understanding of the different

forms of bullying. Students know how to report bullying, and who they can go to for support. There are very few recorded incidents in the academy's records of any serious conflicts between students. Students and parents are confident that the academy deals with bullying effectively on the rare occasions it becomes evident.

- The behaviour of students in the academy between lessons, at breaks and at lunchtimes is calm, well-mannered and polite. Students are friendly towards one another and welcoming to visitors. When given the opportunity, they work well together in lessons and this is a strong feature of their moral and social development.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior staff, governors and the academy sponsors have an ambitious vision for the academy. In a short time, they are on track to achieve improvements to student outcomes compared with the predecessor school.
- Although achievement, teaching and behaviour are not yet good, they are improving. Leaders and managers know what the academy does well and what it should be doing better. The academy's plans for improvement have a sharp focus on the areas to be developed and provide a clear view on how successful the academy can be.
- Plans to improve students' overall achievement are appropriately focused on the quality of teaching. Training to improve the effectiveness of lessons is in place but the impact of this training is not fully evaluated. The sharing of best practice is not yet widespread or systematic but is developing.
- The rigour and regularity with which the quality of teaching is checked has improved. However, the system does not provide a fully accurate picture of the overall quality of teaching and its impact on learning and progress.
- Subject and pastoral leaders are increasingly accepting responsibility for evaluating how well their areas are doing. However, monitoring and evaluation activities sometimes lack rigour and do not always lead to the necessary improvements being made. For example, checks made on students' books have not led to the required improvements being made to teachers' marking.
- Effective procedures are in place to manage the performance of staff. Pay increases are only awarded following a rigorous appraisal of their performance.
- The pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is being suitably spent. Funding has been used to provide additional staffing, help with literacy development and to provide additional support for students' personal needs.
- The curriculum is improving and students follow a range of academic and vocational courses. Students participate in a wide variety of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, many of which contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet statutory requirements.
- The academy has been well supported by the Collaborative Academies Trust, which brings considerable expertise and effective advice into the academy leadership team.

■ The governance of the school:

- The effectiveness of the governing body is improving. The governors have a clear understanding of the academy, its data, how well it is doing and what it needs to do to improve. The governing body knows where the quality of teaching is good and where it requires improvement. It is supporting and challenging the Principal well to bring about the necessary improvements to become a good academy. They contribute effectively to the academy's process for managing teachers' performance. Governors take part in regular training activities to keep themselves up to date. The governing body has a firm grip on the academy's finances, including how the pupil premium funding is being spent. However, governors are not fully aware of the impact pupil premium funding is having on the targeted students' achievement.

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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138932
Local authority	NA
Inspection number	410492

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	1286
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	151
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Savage
Principal	Judith Long
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01604 716106
Fax number	01604 720824
Email address	admin@kingsthorpecollege.org.uk

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