

Kepier

Dairy Lane, Houghton le Spring, Tyne and Wear DH4 5BH

Inspection dates 13–14 January 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Kepier is improving rapidly because the Principal and senior team have vastly raised teachers' expectations of how quickly pupils can make progress in all of the subjects they study.
- GCSE examination results have risen sharply. Pupils in all year groups are progressing more quickly than at the time of the last inspection because teaching and assessment have improved substantially.
- The academy has an outstanding tracking and data system which enables managers to see clearly how much progress pupils are making and who needs further support.
- Pupils speak highly about the quality of support and help they receive from teachers and classroom assistants, especially when they have gaps in understanding or need to catch up.
- Good arrangements for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare mean that they benefit from plenty of personal support whenever they need it.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils conduct themselves in a mature and sensible manner in lessons and around the academy. Attendance has improved to match average levels for secondary schools.
- Parents and pupils are very positive about the quality of education that the academy provides. Older pupils can explain how much teaching has improved over the last two years.
- The Principal, governors and managers at all levels work effectively as a team to ensure that there is a relentless and effective focus on raising achievement and the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is scope for the academy to set even higher targets for pupils, eliminate weaker classroom practice and provide more high-quality teaching, especially in mathematics.
- The academy does not provide a wide enough range of experiences to support pupils in their understanding of the composition of Britain in terms of its cultural diversity.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' performance so that it is outstanding rather than good by ensuring that:
 - targets challenge them to make faster progress
 - they benefit from high-quality rather than good teaching, especially in mathematics.
- Increase pupils' exposure to and understanding of the diversity of British culture.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The outstanding leadership of the Principal and her senior team has ensured that there is a shared vision for the academy that relentlessly raises the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. This group is passionate about being able to provide the best possible quality of education.
- The academy has very effective methods for checking how it is doing and for setting targets for continuous improvement. Systems in place promote improvement effectively. There is no room for complacency and any underachievement is tackled rigorously until slippage is eliminated. In the large majority of subjects, consistently good teaching is raising attainment quickly. However, in a few subjects, such as mathematics and technology, there is still some variation in the quality of teaching that means that the pace of learning in some lessons dips compared with other subjects.
- High levels of accountability mean that the enthusiastic and capable middle managers are developing their leadership skills well in a supportive and structured environment. Staff morale is excellent.
- The way that managers at all levels check the progress of groups of pupils and individuals is outstanding. They know when slippage occurs and move quickly and effectively to help pupils to make up for any lost ground.
- Effective management of teaching by senior and middle managers means that achievement continues to rise. Performance management arrangements are good and pay is firmly linked to responsibilities, discharge of duties and the progress that pupils make.
- Strong promotion of equal opportunities means that the academy ensures that all groups of pupils are enabled to do well at GCSE. Managers use pupil premium well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are closing the gaps with others in the academy at GCSE, and particularly in Years 7 to 9.
- Good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is skilfully incorporated into the wide-ranging curriculum that meets their needs well. A well-structured careers programme enables pupils to have a clear understanding of the options that are available to them after Year 11. There is plenty of opportunity for pupils to benefit from the many sporting activities and music groups that take place after lessons. Teachers provide plenty of opportunity for discussion of topics such as democracy, dictatorship and why and how radicalisation occurs in our society. However, there is still room for pupils to explore further and have practical experience of the many cultures that make up modern Britain and to understand more fully the reasons for their tendency to concentrate in particular areas.
- Ofsted's online parental questionnaire indicates a very high level of satisfaction with the quality of education that the academy provides for their children. Typical of several parents' positive comments was, 'We are delighted with the progress our children are making at Kepier. The staff treat them with respect whilst maintaining a positive learning environment. We look forward to parents' evenings as all staff members are so enthusiastic about their subject. We believe this can only enhance our children's learning.'
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governance has improved substantially since the previous inspection. Governors are an exceptionally effective group. They fulfil all statutory duties well and visit the academy on a very regular basis. They know why the academy has improved substantially over the last two years because they have first-hand experience of how it operates. Like managers, they also know what still needs to be done because they keep themselves exceptionally well informed.
 - The governance provides valuable support and challenge to the academy when appropriate. Governors ensure that performance management arrangements are effective and that salary progressions are fully merited. They understand how the academy spends its pupil premium funding and know why disadvantaged pupils are doing well.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective because there are good systems in place, which members of staff implement consistently. If managers have any concerns about pupils' safety or welfare they always discuss them with parents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching has improved substantially since the previous inspection when it was deemed to require improvement. Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare lessons well so pupils of all abilities

have challenging work, which moves their knowledge and understanding forward well. They have high expectations of pupils and ensure that most make at least good progress.

- Much-improved GCSE examination results show clearly that teaching has become more effective over the last two years. A key factor in the rise in quality has been effective monitoring of classroom practice and good-quality professional advice for teachers and their assistants so that they continuously improve their work.
- Typically, teachers manage their classes well, make learning clear and effectively check the progress that pupils are making. They explain work clearly and frequently show pupils how their studies relate to the world outside the classroom. For example, in a mathematics lesson on approximation the teacher really enlivened the topic by showing pupils how their work related to newspaper approximations of football attendances, lottery winnings and currency exchange rates.
- Teachers use the academy's outstanding checking system well to ensure that pupils in their classes are meeting the targets that the academy has set for them. Consistent promotion of the key skills of reading, writing, spelling and oral communication mean that pupils are increasingly better equipped to answer questions in external examinations and to develop into articulate adults.
- Good questioning of pupils during lessons, especially in English, geography, history, science and physical education, enables teachers to check and consolidate understanding well.
- Teachers consistently follow the academy's effective marking policy. The marking of pupils' work is exceptionally good. It enables them to understand what they have done well and how to improve their work. Following the initial marking of their work, teachers frequently provide pupils with extra tasks to ensure that they have fully mastered the topics they are studying.
- Good approaches for pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs mean that they progress well. Teachers and their assistants frequently provide good-quality individual help for the academy's most needy pupils so that barriers to their progress are systematically removed.
- Teaching is mostly of good or better quality and underpins the consistently rising levels of learners' attainment and progress in the academy. However, there is not a large amount of outstanding teaching and still a few instances of lessons where progress is still too slow, particularly in mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils become more mature and self-assured as they move from Year 7 to Year 11. They feel that teachers and their assistants know them well and that they are always on hand if they need extra help or guidance. Most are really eager to learn but a few still find it difficult to pay full attention in class.
- The good range of extra-curricular activities, especially sporting and musical opportunities, enables pupils to develop additional skills and interests which all help them to broaden horizons and become more confident.
- Effective levels of supervision when groups of pupils are moving between lessons mean that they are kept safe, even in narrow corridors. Pupils say they feel perfectly safe in the academy and that bullying is very rare. They are perfectly confident that if it should occur members of staff would deal with it effectively.
- Pupils confirm that the academy teaches them about all types of bullying, gender-stereotyping and homophobic or racist language. They know how to keep safe from potential perils posed by drugs, alcohol, roads, railways, water, knife and gun crime, and the internet if used unwisely.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The academy runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis with a clear code of conduct that is well understood and adhered to. There is no evidence of poor behaviour in lessons and on the few occasions where pupils do become inattentive or restless an effective set of interventions comes into play.
- Good behaviour has a very positive effect on the progress that pupils make in lessons. Pupils are generally attentive and cooperative. Frequently, conduct in lessons is exemplary. The small number of pupils who struggle to meet the academy's high expectations of their conduct are withdrawn to a very effective on-site provision where they are taught separately until they are ready to return. Exclusions from the academy are now very low.

- Behaviour around the large site is good and pupils move to lunch, breaks or their next lesson in an orderly fashion. Pupils are proud of their appearance and show respect to visitors and the adults who work with them.
- Pupils' attendance has improved to average levels in response to the very effective efforts that members of staff have made to ensure that regular attendance is praised and rewarded. Persistent absence, especially for pupils supported by pupil premium and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, has reduced substantially. The improved levels of attendance are a key factor underpinning the better rates of progress that pupils are making.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' attainment has risen considerably since the previous inspection. GCSE examination results in 2015 rose substantially compared with those in 2014. Current attainment in Year 11 is higher still. Where results in some GCSE subjects had been below average in 2015, checks on pupils' progress indicate strongly that improvements are expected in most in 2016. In 2015, very good GCSE results in history and geography reflected high levels of progress made by pupils in these subjects. Current work in these two subjects is an exceptionally positive feature of the academy.
- In 2015, GCSE results showed that for disadvantaged pupils the gaps in performance between themselves and other pupils in the academy had closed to around half a grade in English and mathematics. Compared with other pupils nationally, the gaps closed to just over half a grade and a full grade respectively. As the academy uses its pupil premium funding ever more effectively, gaps are continuing to close further, especially in Years 7 to 9.
- All groups of pupils currently in the academy, including the most able and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, are progressing well in most of the subjects they study. Apart from the universally high standards of work in geography and history, progress is also particularly good in science, physical education and English. There is still a little slippage in mathematics for some groups in Years 8 and 9 where teachers are still overcoming a legacy of underachievement from previous years.
- Typically, learners now join Year 7 with average attainment in English and mathematics. The academy is challenging them to reach above-average results in examinations from 2016 onwards. Pupils are on track to meet these targets.
- Where pupils join Year 7 with below-average attainment in English and mathematics, the academy provides high-quality teaching to enable them to catch up quickly. In all year groups, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making good progress because the academy challenges and supports them well. A strong emphasis on the development of layout, technical language and the correction of spelling, grammar and punctuation in all subjects is helping pupils to improve the presentation of work and their literacy skills. Only in a few mathematics groups is there some work where presentation still requires improvement if pupils are to optimise their performance in external examinations.
- Good personal development means that pupils develop the skills needed for the next stage in education and the world of work. They learn much about how to develop into mature and thinking adults who are ready to take their place in society. However, older pupils especially have only a hazy understanding of the diverse cultures and ethnic groups that make up Britain.

School details

Unique reference number	137262
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection Number	10002036

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,008
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ken Tonge
Principal	Nicola Cooper
Telephone number	0191 512 8960
Website	www.kepier.com
Email address	info@kepier.com
Date of previous inspection	1–2 October 2013

Information about this school

- Kepier is an average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- There are relatively few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported through pupil premium, is above the national average and increasing. The pupil premium funding is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' performance at GCSE.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons, including 13 jointly with senior and middle managers, and looked at a wide range of pupils' written work, especially in Years 7, 9 and 11. They also looked at written work produced by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- They held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle managers, the special needs coordinator, groups of pupils and representatives of the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the academy's review of its performance, development planning, governors' minutes, records of pupils' progress, safeguarding procedures and incident logs.
- They took account of 71 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), five free-text responses from parents and 36 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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