

The King's School Specialising in Mathematics and Computing

Mill Hill Lane, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 4JF

Inspection dates

20–21 June 2017

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

- Leaders at all levels have high expectations. They have been successful in improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
- Pupils make strong progress in science, history, geography and the creative arts because the work is well matched to pupils' abilities.
- Pupils in most year groups currently in the school make good progress overall. Progress in English and languages is improving rapidly.
- The school's personal development curriculum (PDC) teaches pupils about various risks including those associated with radicalisation, using social media, drugs and alcohol. Pupils develop informed opinions and engage in debate about local and national events.
- Leaders and teachers promote good behaviour consistently well. Most pupils respond very positively to the school's expectations. They are polite and show good attitudes to their learning.
- Most pupils are self-confident and eager to be involved fully in lessons. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills.
- Pupils feel safe. Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively. Pupils work well together and show a high level of respect for diversity.
- Most teachers know their pupils well and plan challenging and engaging work for pupils. However, there is still some variability in the quality of teaching within subjects, which leaders are addressing. Some pupils do not take enough care with the presentation of their work, especially some boys.
- Governance is effective. Governors are highly committed to supporting the school. However, information about pupils' current progress is too limited to enable governors to hold the school fully to account.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is not as strong as that of other pupils. It is improving due to the well-targeted support they now receive. However, their progress still lags behind that of others nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now making good progress due to the effective support they receive from teaching assistants. However, some parents said they did not feel well informed about their children's progress.
- Pupils' attendance is average. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent is reducing. However, some disadvantaged pupils continue to be absent too often, despite the strong efforts of leaders.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen pupils' progress further, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by:
 - further reducing the variability in teaching within subjects, especially at key stage 3
 - building on the work already done to support disadvantaged pupils so that differences between the achievement of these pupils and other pupils nationally diminish further
 - ensuring that new leaders of special educational needs and/or disabilities review the impact of provision regularly and communicate effectively with parents
 - insisting that all pupils take pride in their work and present their work neatly, particularly boys
 - sharpening improvement planning so that actions and timelines are precise enough to bring about further improvements where necessary
 - providing the new governors' committee with timely information about pupils' current progress so that they can challenge the school effectively.
- Reduce the rate of persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school is well led. Leaders and governors have taken decisive action to address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. They set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and achievement. Consequently, most pupils are now making good progress from their starting points across a range of subjects.
- Leaders have secured a strong school culture in which staff and most pupils uphold the school's 'King's 7' values. Pupils are highly committed to improving their learning, helping each other, working hard and taking part in the wide range of activities on offer in the school. Staff and pupils promote a culture of mutual respect and care for others.
- The headteacher has identified, trained and nurtured talented teachers and leaders successfully within the school. Increasingly, teachers are provided with high-quality professional development tailored to their individual areas for improvement. Teachers value this training and are very supportive of the way in which leaders support their development. Under the leadership of a highly effective senior leader, the best practice in teaching and learning is being shared widely across the school.
- The curriculum is well planned. It offers a broad and balanced range of subjects while catering for pupils' interests and aptitudes. Pupils are encouraged to set high expectations for themselves when choosing their options. They are guided well to choose the range of qualifications needed to progress to further education, employment or training. Pupils benefit from helpful independent advice and guidance, including careers guidance. Alternative provision is available for a small number of pupils. It is well selected to engage pupils in their learning and help them plan for their future.
- The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities including several sporting activities, international exchanges, reading and debating clubs, music and drama, as well as revision classes. The level of pupils' participation is high. Staff encourage all pupils to see the benefits of trying new learning experiences. Leaders track the way in which taking part in these activities increases pupils' motivation and progress.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is carefully considered and valued by pupils. Activities are well coordinated through tutorials, assemblies, enrichment activities and curriculum time. Regular debates in science and humanities, on moral and social issues, help pupils to form clear views and opinions based on evidence and coherent argument. Pupils also show a strong awareness of the rule of law and their rights and responsibilities within modern Britain. For example, they play an active part in school elections for head boy and head girl. Local services, such as the police and fire service, work with pupils to explore the effect of anti-social and dangerous behaviour on the local community. The tutorial programme addresses local and national events and promotes respect for diverse faiths and cultures. Pupils also reflect regularly on their own progress and how they can improve.

- Leaders and teachers benefit from working in collaboration with other local schools, for example in shared training events. The trust has provided effective support and challenge to help leaders to improve the quality of teaching.
- Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Senior leaders have tackled any underperformance robustly. Subject leaders are effective in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their subject areas. Consequently, pupils' achievement is good and improving across the curriculum. However, leaders are aware that there is still some variability within subjects, especially at key stage 3, when pupils are not given work which is challenging enough.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is used well to support pupils to make faster progress in literacy and numeracy. Some of the school's approaches to improving rates of progress are more effective than others in helping pupils to catch up quickly. Leaders regularly review the support and intervention being provided.
- Leaders make sure that the pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. They review the progress of disadvantaged pupils regularly. Leaders have appointed additional staffing to support these pupils in lessons and to improve their attendance. The difference in the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils, when compared to other pupils nationally, was very wide in 2016. However, current pupils in the school are making better progress. Therefore, these differences are diminishing but there is more work to do.
- Leaders have recently reviewed how they use the additional funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have invested in training for teaching assistants who are highly effective in guiding pupils in lessons, building their confidence and independent learning skills. As a result, current pupils in key stage 4 are now making better progress than in the recent past, particularly in English and mathematics. However, the changes in leadership have led to uncertainty for some parents, who expressed their concern about the current provision and felt that they had not been kept well informed.
- Although most pupils take pride in their work, leaders are aware that some pupils do not take enough care when presenting their work. This is especially true of some boys. Leaders have not made sure that teachers challenge this consistently. As a result, some boys' writing skills are not good enough. Also, in mathematics, some pupils do not set out their work clearly enough and so they make mistakes in their calculations.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body has been replaced very recently by a smaller governing committee, as part of the trust's re-organisation of its governance arrangements. The new committee is currently receiving information and training to ensure that governors are brought up to speed quickly with the school's priorities. They have a wide range of expertise to bring to the school and are clear about their responsibilities.
- The former governing body has been responsible for making regular checks on the school's progress. These governors have carried out their statutory duties thoroughly to make sure that policies are reviewed regularly and that additional funding is used appropriately. They are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses.

They checked that leaders' actions were making a positive impact on pupils' progress. However, during the process of changing to a new governing committee, they have received too little information about the progress of current pupils to be able to hold school leaders fully to account. They were highly committed to supporting the pupils and staff at the school over many years, visiting the school often to understand the views of pupils and parents. As a result, they have made a positive contribution to the school's improvement since the last inspection.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The designated safeguarding leader and a dedicated team for safeguarding keep careful records of all matters relating to pupils who are, or may be, at risk from harm. Staff are vigilant and follow the school's procedures for identifying the signs of abuse and reporting any concerns.
- The school has several pupils who are looked after by the local authority. This group of pupils receive high-quality care and support from school staff. The school also makes effective use of other specialist agencies to support individuals. As a result, these pupils attend well and are making good progress.
- Leaders are diligent when carrying out checks to make sure that adults being recruited to work in the school are safe to work with children. Leaders also provide regular training and updates for staff so that they are clear about their professional responsibilities to safeguard pupils in the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching across a range of subjects is good. Leaders' intense focus on improving the quality of teachers' planning, questioning and assessment is evident across the curriculum. Consequently, most pupils make consistently good progress. Leaders have been successful in tackling weaker teaching and continue to provide effective training for teachers who need additional guidance.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge to plan lessons which are lively and engaging, deepening pupils' understanding. They are skilled in providing pupils with adequate time to explore new learning or to develop new skills. Most teachers create a positive climate of cooperation and collaboration in which pupils feel confident to share their ideas and explore new concepts. As a result, pupils engage well in activities and make rapid gains in their learning.
- Teachers use questioning well to check pupils' learning, develop pupils' thinking and pick up any misconceptions. Usually, teachers move pupils on to the next stage in their learning promptly when they have mastered the basic skills. Pupils say they enjoy the way in which they are given challenges and problems to solve.
- Teachers develop pupils' literacy skills well. They provide pupils with sufficient time to explore their ideas fully before beginning to write. Teachers also give pupils useful guidance to help them to write effectively in different subjects, for example using research, source material, quotations and evidence to support their views. Teachers also develop pupils' use of subject-specific language and the range of vocabulary they

need to achieve the higher grades. However, teachers do not consistently address the poor presentation of some pupils' work.

- Pupils say they value the homework set because it prepares them for work that they are doing in lessons. The use of additional study support during the 'extended day' encourages better learning habits for those who need this.
- On occasions teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Across a range of subjects, particularly at key stage 3, some teaching is not challenging enough and pupils revisit knowledge and skills which they have already mastered. When this occurs, pupils quickly lose interest and little progress is made.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils show a high level of respect for others and cooperate very well with adults. Pupils are proud of their school and wear their uniform smartly. They said they feel listened to and several changes have happened in the school as a direct result of adults taking account of their views.
- Pupils' safety is given high priority. Pupils said they feel safe in the school. They learn about how to stay safe in different situations, discussing topics such as online safety, and how to stay healthy. Leaders assess risks to pupils' safety within the school grounds and when pupils leave the school site at the end of the day, so that appropriate levels of adult supervision are in place. Parents agree that their children are well looked after.
- Most pupils are self-confident because their teachers and other adults provide them with a wide range of opportunities to develop as independent young adults. Pupils are encouraged to engage in discussion with others so that they learn from each other. They are guided to reflect regularly on their own skills and strengths so that they can develop them further. They are encouraged to use all the resources around them, to be resilient when work is challenging and to work through problems to find a solution.
- Pupils who are educated in alternative provision off-site are well looked after. They benefit from a high level of academic and emotional support from teaching assistants who accompany them to the placements. Leaders keep careful records which show that their behaviour, attendance and progress are improving.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying. They say that staff deal with any bullying quickly. The school's survey of pupils' views shows that they are very appreciative of the level of support provided by the adults in the school. The number of bullying incidents reported this year has reduced, although the number of racist incidents has risen recently. The school deals with incidents effectively through discussion and mediation so that they are not repeated.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well around the school site and during lesson changeovers. Pupils mix well together during social times. They are polite and willing to talk to visitors about their pride in their school.
- Most pupils enjoy coming to school. They attend lessons on time and arrive ready to learn. Pupils said that the school's sanctions and rewards ensure that pupils meet the expectations of the school. As a result, punctuality to school is improving rapidly. The number of occasions of lateness has halved since the beginning of the year.
- The school's behaviour records show that the number of incidents of poor behaviour is also reducing. Most pupils follow their teachers' instructions promptly and show very positive attitudes to learning. On occasions, when learning is not well planned or matched to pupils' abilities, low-level off-task talking prevents pupils from learning as well as they could, especially in key stage 3. Sometimes, teachers are too slow to challenge this behaviour.
- Attendance overall is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is reducing, including for disadvantaged pupils. However, absence rates for disadvantaged pupils remain high compared to other pupils nationally. Leaders have put in place a range of strategies to improve attendance, led by an attendance officer, and these are having a positive effect on the attendance of some individuals. The trust recognises the importance of improving the attendance of some vulnerable pupils and plans are in place to invest in further staffing to tackle this school priority more robustly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils are making good progress over time in a wide range of subjects, including in modern languages where progress was previously weak. Improvements in teaching and subject leadership have resulted in pupils making rapid progress from their starting points in French and Spanish.
- Teaching in science and geography has been particularly strong over time and pupils continue to make good progress across both key stages. This is because teachers use their subject-specific skills to challenge pupils' thinking and to prepare them well for their examinations. Current progress is also strong in history and the creative arts because teachers engage pupils in new learning and develop their confidence to work through challenging activities.
- In 2016, Year 11 pupils' progress in English and mathematics was broadly average. The school's assessment information and the work in pupils' books shows that current pupils in all year groups are now making good progress in English. Teachers provide pupils with carefully planned support to develop their writing skills and there is clear evidence that their vocabulary is developing well. Consequently, pupils are meeting their aspirational targets in English. In mathematics, pupils' progress is also improving but at a slower rate.
- In 2016, the most able pupils in Year 11 achieved in line with national average overall but lower than average proportions achieved the higher grades, A* and A. Leaders and

teachers have focused well on raising the aspirations of the most able pupils currently in the school. Carefully planned master classes have encouraged pupils to understand how to achieve the higher grades. Teachers' use of questioning also challenges pupils to develop their answers in more detail and use subject-specific language to good effect. The school's assessment information and the work in pupils' books shows that the most able pupils are on track to achieve well in key stage 4 this year.

- The school encourages pupils to read widely. When some pupils enter the school with reading ages well below their chronological age, leaders use a range of interventions to systematically develop their literacy skills. Some are proving to be more successful than others, so leaders review their effectiveness regularly and try new approaches.
- Pupils make good progress overall and so they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The proportions of pupils progressing on to suitable destinations at the end of Year 11 are above the national average. Pupils who attend alternative provision gain qualifications that help them to progress to further education and training.
- In 2016, by the end of key stage 4, the progress of disadvantaged pupils was significantly weak, after being a strength of the school in previous years. Leaders have taken robust action to address this dip in performance. They have put in place a range of interventions, from Year 7, to support and motivate individual pupils who are falling behind. Current pupils are making good progress overall, including in English and mathematics. However, differences remain between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and others nationally so leaders are relentless in their efforts to make sure these diminish rapidly.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have not made good progress in the past. The school's assessments show that pupils in key stage 4 are now making progress which is closer to that of other pupils. Teaching assistants know these pupils well and assist them in developing their thinking and writing skills so that they can cope with the demands of their courses. The newly appointed coordinator for special educational needs has clear plans to accelerate the progress of these pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	139500
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10031030

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1034
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	John Gough (Interim Chair)
Headteacher	Barbara Tibbetts
Telephone number	01977 601701
Website	http://kings.wakefield.sch.uk/
Email address	headteacher@kings.wakefield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 June 2015

Information about this school

- The Kings' School Specialising in Mathematics and Computing is an average-sized school. Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school is part of the Pontefract Academies Trust, a multi-academy trust which includes another local secondary school and six local primary schools. A new governing committee was appointed in March 2017 as part of a review of the trust's governance arrangements. A new chair of the governors' committee has been appointed to begin in September 2017.
- A new headteacher has been appointed to start in July 2017 following the planned retirement of the current headteacher.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is also average.
- The school uses a range of alternative providers to support the learning of 49 pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11. Pupils take a range of qualifications as part of their programme at Castleford Fire Station, Wakefield College or Featherstone Rovers RLFC.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for the performance of secondary schools.
- The school complies with the Department for Education's guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 37 lessons across both key stages and a range of subjects, including tutorials and a visit to the off-site provision at Featherstone Rovers. Some lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. In addition to looking at pupils' work in books in lesson observations, inspectors undertook a separate scrutiny of pupils' work with heads of subjects. Inspectors also undertook observations across the school with leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the trust's chief education officer, the trust's school improvement partner, senior and middle leaders and a group of teachers. Inspectors also met with some pupils from all year groups and talked to pupils informally during lessons and breaktimes. The lead inspector met with members of the previous local governing body and members of the newly appointed governors' committee.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, quality assurance documents and monitoring and assessment records. Minutes of governing body meetings and case studies of vulnerable pupils who receive additional support were also considered. Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding procedures and related policies.
- Inspectors considered the 45 responses received from parents to Ofsted's online survey, the 29 free-text responses from parents, the 80 responses from staff and the school's own surveys of pupils' views.

Inspection team

Lynn Kenworthy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew West	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Maddison	Ofsted Inspector
Beverly Clubley	Ofsted Inspector

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