

Inspection of North Kesteven Academy

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

Inspection dates:

15 and 16 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school and are happy coming here. They feel safe and get along well with staff. Teachers work hard to promote an inclusive culture. They support all pupils to settle in using their 'cares' approach. The school's work in promoting pupils' personal development is a strength, including their understanding of democracy and the rule of law. Clubs and extra-curricular activities have restarted after the COVID-19 restrictions. These include a wide range of opportunities in music, drama and sport.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. However, this is not managed consistently across the school. In a minority of lessons, low-level disruption affects pupils' learning. The large majority of pupils who expressed a view said that leaders deal with bullying effectively when it happens.

Leaders and governors are ambitious for pupils to succeed, but the quality of education is inconsistent. Subjects are planned well. However, the teaching of the curriculum does not help pupils to know and remember more in all subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not supported as effectively as they could be.

Sixth-form students are enthusiastic learners and act as good role models for younger pupils. They achieve well and leaders are ambitious for their future destinations.

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

Senior leaders have high aspirations for pupils. They have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including pupils with SEND. Subject leaders have considered carefully what they want pupils to learn and when. The curriculum is ordered appropriately and teachers are clear about the content that they should deliver. Typically, teachers have strong knowledge of the subjects they teach.

Teachers do not use assessment information consistently well to inform their teaching. For example, some teachers do not use assessment successfully to check that pupils remember what they have previously learned. Teachers do not always address pupils' misconceptions. This prevents pupils from overcoming gaps in their learning and achieving as well as they should. For example, in a science lesson, younger pupils were not clear about the nucleus of an atom, confusing this with plant cells.

Leaders have ensured that the systems to identify the needs of pupils with SEND are effective. Pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as others, but they are not always supported well enough in class. Although teachers receive advice on how to adapt the curriculum for pupils with SEND, they do not always use this guidance effectively.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to develop a love of reading. They have focused on helping pupils to develop their vocabulary through a well-organised approach. All younger pupils have a dedicated lesson once a fortnight that helps them to improve their vocabulary and reading skills. To support reading further, students in the sixth form run the library at lunchtime, which pupils find helpful.

Pupils know that staff expect them to behave well. Leaders have ensured that systems are in place to help teachers to manage behaviour. However, some staff do not apply these systems consistently. This means that there are times when pupils' learning is disrupted by the behaviour of others.

The provision for pupils' personal development is strong. Pupils benefit from a range of experiences that prepare them well for life beyond school. The relationships and sex education curriculum develops pupils' knowledge in an age-appropriate way. Pupils explore a range of topics, including identity, rights and responsibilities, safety and security, and health. Leaders have ensured that there is a comprehensive careers programme, including for those in the sixth form. Leaders make sure that pupils receive information from the full range of post-16 providers. Pupils were very positive about the help that they receive to make informed decisions about the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Students enjoy their sixth-form experience. They get on well with each other and with staff. Students study courses that match their interests and aspirations. Teachers in the sixth form have strong subject knowledge. Students have positive attitudes towards their studies and their attendance is high. There are over 25 students in leadership roles, including acting as librarians and anti-bullying ambassadors. Students are full of praise for the support they receive.

Governors have correctly identified the priorities for the school. They are realistic about how long these will take to have full impact, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. School leaders take staff workload into account, and staff said that generally, they feel well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The members of the safeguarding team take their responsibilities seriously. They train staff well and provide regular updates on safeguarding issues. Staff know what to do if they have concerns over a pupil's welfare. The safeguarding team works with pastoral staff to support pupils' welfare. Leaders pursue any concerns about pupils' safety with rigour and sensitivity. They have developed purposeful links with safeguarding partners.

Governors are well trained on safeguarding issues. External partners provide additional guidance and assurance on safeguarding practice, including in relation to harmful sexual behaviours.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The quality of education is inconsistent. Some teachers do not use assessment information consistently well to check that pupils' prior knowledge is secure, to identify misconceptions and to design subsequent learning. This means that there are times when pupils have not grasped new knowledge well enough before teachers move the learning on. This delays pupils from building on what they already know. Leaders should ensure that teachers know how best to use assessment strategies to check that pupils know and remember more over time.
- Although pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as others, they are not supported well enough in class, and teaching is not sufficiently adapted to help them learn well. Teachers do receive clear guidance to help them adapt lessons for pupils with SEND, but they do not use this guidance well enough. Leaders and governors should ensure that support for these pupils is strengthened across the curriculum.
- Despite recent changes to the school's behaviour policy, teachers' expectations in the classroom remain inconsistent. This leads to low-level disruption, which, in turn, is sometimes unchallenged and disrupts learning in lessons. Leaders should ensure that staff understand how and why to apply the school's behaviour policy consistently, both in lessons and around the school.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	136871
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10200271
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	780
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	176
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jonathan Sloan
Headteacher	Joanne Tunncliffe
Website	www.nkacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2018, just a few weeks before the previous inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, an assistant headteacher has left the school and a new head of mathematics has been appointed.
- The school uses three alternative providers for a small number of pupils. These are Acorn Free School, The Pilgrim School and Lincolnshire local authority SEND home-tuition service. Both Acorn Free School and The Pilgrim School are registered providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide students in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors completed four deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science history and performing arts (drama and dance). This involved meeting with curriculum leaders, visits to a sample of lessons, a review of workbooks and other work produced by pupils, and discussions with teachers and with groups of pupils from the lessons visited. Most of the lesson visits were carried out jointly with curriculum leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers and support staff, and also with trustees who are also members of the governing body.
- An inspector spoke with two of the alternative providers the school uses.
- Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with pupils and observed pupils' interactions during social times.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, action plans and evaluations, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding records, recruitment checks and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors considered the 72 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 70 free-text responses. They also considered 38 responses to the survey for staff and 116 responses to the pupils' survey. Inspectors also considered a parent survey and a staff survey conducted in June 2021 by school leaders.

Inspection team

Jamie Clarke, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Roche	Ofsted Inspector
John Harrison	Ofsted Inspector
Dawn Ashbolt	Her Majesty's Inspector

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