

REVIEW REPORT FOR NORTH KESTEVEN ACADEMY

Name of School:	North Kesteven Academy
Headteacher/Principal:	Joanne Tunnicliffe
Hub:	Lincolnshire Hub
School phase:	Secondary with sixth form
MAT (if applicable):	Not applicable

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	22/02/2023
Overall Estimate at last QA Review:	Working towards effective
Date of last QA Review:	11/07/2022
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Requires improvement
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	15/03/2022



REVIEW REPORT FOR NORTH KESTEVEN ACADEMY

Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising host school leaders and visiting reviewers agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

Leadership at all levels Effective

Quality of provision and outcomes Effective

AND

Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs

Area of excellence Not applicable

Previously accredited valid areas Not applicable

of excellence

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The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.





REVIEW REPORT FOR NORTH KESTEVEN ACADEMY

1. Context and character of the school

North Kesteven (NK) Academy is a below average sized 11 - 18 mixed comprehensive school. The school was built in the 1960s and is adjacent to another secondary school. NK Academy shares the site with a small theatre and a leisure centre, which the school uses during the day.

The school's location in North Hykeham, on the outskirts of Lincoln is in an area of average deprivation, although the student base is less deprived. The proportion of disadvantaged students receiving free school meals is close to the national average. The student stability is well below the national average and, because the school has a large number of spaces in all years, mid-year entries are high.

The overwhelming majority of students in the school are of White British heritage and the proportion of students for whom English is an additional language is below average. However, this proportion is increasing year on year.

The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above the national average in the main school and the sixth form. The proportion of students with an education, health and care plan is below the national average in the main school.

The school sits within Lincolnshire local authority with many secondary and grammar schools close by. It converted to a single-academy trust in July 2011.

The school's mission is that students develop a love for learning and that they are prepared for the world of work. The mission aims to develop student character values of being determined, resilient, confident and kind people, who show compassion and act with integrity.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- All staff flexibly adapt to the contextual challenges at the school. Everyone is
 particularly welcoming and helpful, a sentiment echoed by students. Although
 student roll and mid-year admission challenges persist, leaders have
 successfully increased sixth form roll and retention.
- Senior leaders are improving the school by constantly looking at ways to
 move the school forwards. They work as a team to make it happen. For
 example, the reading strategy already incorporates ideas brought back from a



REVIEW REPORT FOR NORTH KESTEVEN ACADEMY

recent Challenge Partners review. As a result, leaders have achieved several goals this year, such as embedding retrieval practice as a routine feature of lessons, ensuring that teachers check understanding, improving the quality of students' written work and reducing student disruption.

- The headteacher leads by example so that well-being has a high priority at the school. This is repaid through high levels of camaraderie and goodwill. This positive culture in the school has contributed to stable staff retention. It is echoed in the high numbers of staff wishing to undertake National Professional Qualifications to further develop their expertise and to make a fuller contribution to school life.
- Leaders run a comprehensive induction process to welcome students who are admitted during the school year. As a result, these students settle quickly into the life and routines of the school. Furthermore, this means that students who have previously left several other schools, choose to stay at NK academy. As one student said, 'Teachers saying hello makes me feel welcome and safe.'
- To help users of curriculum plans, such as parents, governors and teachers, leaders are unifying them to ensure an improved level of consistency against expectations of quality. Senior line managers audit the curriculums they oversee and there is a developing focus on how effective these plans are.
- Leaders provide regular opportunities for ongoing subject development.
 Subject teams have time to recognise where there are gaps in learning and how to address them. As a result, subject leaders are able to regularly amend their curriculum plans for a year group, temporarily or permanently as appropriate.
- The Schools, Students and Teachers' (SSAT) 'Embedding Formative
 Assessment' programme is a central focus within the school's Teaching and
 Learning Communities. As a result, teachers have shared strategies across
 departments that are now embedded, such as the checking methods seen
 across the curriculum.

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...

...all subject leaders ensured that their curriculum plans explicitly incorporated important aspects for teachers, including key vocabulary, retrieval and formative assessment points.

...subject leaders used their expertise to work with teachers to ensure that the quality of provision is of a consistently high quality for all students.



REVIEW REPORT FOR NORTH KESTEVEN ACADEMY

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Leaders and those responsible for governance ensure that the curriculum offer is broad across Key Stages 3 and 4. This means that all students follow and complete the courses to which they are entitled.
- Subject leaders have planned a curriculum which is appropriately ambitious for all students. For example, in the Year 7 English curriculum, the leader has replaced texts that students might already read for pleasure, such as Harry Potter, with classic texts that they might not, such as Chaucer and Beowulf.
- Teachers routinely use a range of whole school strategies for retrieval and practice, vocabulary development and for checking understanding. As a result, students feel that there is an increased focus on the quality of their education.
- Students appreciate that teachers increasingly support them to improve their literacy and oracy. Students say that this helps them to be more confident. As one explained, 'In Year 7, I was very quiet with no confidence. Now in Year 8, I am full of confidence and getting involved.'
- Where questioning is well-planned, teachers use this to check students' depth
 of understanding. It is particularly effective where teachers vary the range of
 questions to broaden the range of responses, such as identifying difference.
 For example, in mathematics one student correctly identified that the next
 vector was a ratio of a third rather than a half. This has led to engaged
 students that progress well through the curriculum.
- To help students remember vocabulary and produce high quality work, teachers routinely remind students to make use of their knowledge organisers. As a result, students use subject specific vocabulary well in their answers and writing. For example, sociology students described the importance of the 'proletariat' to communist society, music students analysed music for 'pitch' and 'tempo' and PE students repeated how the 'layout' position is used in flips and jumps.
- Students benefit from a comprehensive and growing extra-curricular and subject enrichment programme. All subjects offer enrichment activities and trips and all staff contribute to the extra-curricular programme. Leaders have driven the importance of this so that staff now see the benefits. Staff are increasingly offering 'out of the box thinking' to engage different students. For



REVIEW REPORT FOR NORTH KESTEVEN ACADEMY

example, the Warhammer club has been wildly popular and meets the needs of a wider range of students.

- Students across all key stages enthusiastically comment on how supportive and encouraging their teachers are. They talk of how teachers will always help them and respond to their needs. As a result, most students are well behaved in lessons.
- For each students' next steps, staff give advice and guidance in a supportive way. For example, a senior leader meets with every Year 11 student, supporting parents too. As a result, Key Stage 4 and 5 student destination outcomes are above the national averages over time.
- The careers provision develops high aspirations and ensures students are well prepared for the world of work. The aspirations start in Key Stage 3 with students introduced to the opportunities surrounding higher education and encouraging students to be the first in their family to attend university. Leaders target the programme with opportunities to hear from local employers, in areas such as accountancy and law, as well as ensuring all students have experience of activities run by providers such as The University of Lincoln. Leaders capitalise on their connections to the armed services, particularly the RAF, and welcome talks to inspire and motivate students. Students in Year 10 and 12 benefit from the opportunity of work experience outside of the academy.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...

...teachers made sure that all students, not just a majority, understood what they needed to know before moving the class on to the next step in their learning.

...teachers planned how to adapt once their checking identifies i) which students do not understand or remember the key knowledge underpinning the lesson or ii) which students can be stretched.

...staff identified inappropriate attitudes to learning early to avoid any later disruption.



REVIEW REPORT FOR NORTH KESTEVEN ACADEMY

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- All students access the same curriculum and complete the same work in every subject. For example, there was no difference between students' quality of work seen in their English books.
- Teachers' focus on vocabulary particularly helps disadvantaged students and students with additional needs. In addition, when teachers sequence their questioning to scaffold learning, students with SEND feel confident to address more challenging content. This was seen in English and health and social care lessons.
- Following an audit and advice from an external expert, the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) has improved the plans that help teachers meet the needs of students with SEND. These learner profiles are streamlined to be precise, with explicit reference to literacy and numeracy strategies, curriculum specific pedagogy and personalised teaching strategies. The SENCo monitors impact with student voice activities and case studies which have shown improved student behaviour and conduct.
- The new inclusion area, The Bridge, provides temporary learning support for vulnerable students. Specialist support includes emotional literacy programmes, social skills development with Talkabout Teenager, selfregulation with the 5 point scale and cognitive behaviour therapy with the Anxiety Gremlin. This provision results in students returning to mainstream teaching quickly.
- The new reading skills strategy is in place. This measures students against national averages using a standardised assessment. Staff have devised ways of assessing and triangulating this information to accurately establish student starting points and to enable leaders to measure impact. The impact of the Bedrock digital literacy curriculum, for example, is that staff have been able to assess levels of reading. This has enabled them, alongside reading age data, to ensure that students who are struggling with reading are identified for intervention. Students engage well with the adaptive platform which means they learn their specific vocabulary well.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

...leaders ensured that, for disadvantaged students, teachers i) adapted seating plans to proactively prioritise needs and ii) provided teachers with specific strategies for how to support students in the classroom, as they have done for students with SEND.



REVIEW REPORT FOR NORTH KESTEVEN ACADEMY

...teachers planned appropriate checks and adaptations for their students with SEND and for their disadvantaged students.

...leaders clarified and resourced the systems and procedures for quality assuring teaching for students with SEND.

5. Area of Excellence

Not submitted.



REVIEW REPORT FOR NORTH KESTEVEN ACADEMY

Following the QA Review

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, we encourage you to share the main findings with your hub/hub manager so that they can support your hub's activity planning. Challenge Partners will also collate and analyse report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.

For further support following your QA Review, schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice (SLP) events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website.(https://www.challengepartners.org/)

Finally, following the QA Review, schools may find it useful to refer to research such as the EEF toolkit to help inform their approach to tackling the EBIs identified in the report

(https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit)