

Kettering Buccleuch Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135966
Local Authority	N/A
Inspection number	381989
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Elaine Taylor HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1195
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sir Ewan Harper
Headteacher	Dawn Cotter (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
School address	Weekley Glebe Road Kettering NN16 9NS
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Age group	4–18
Inspection date(s)	12–13 October 2011
Inspection number	381989

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They observed 49 lessons, including four shorter visits as part of a learning walk; 49 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with three parents, groups of students, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the academy’s work, and looked at records of students’ attainment and progress, policies, safeguarding documents, minutes of meetings, examples of students’ work, 20 staff questionnaires, 176 student questionnaires and 181 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school’s work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress made in English across all phases and how rapidly and securely standards in all subjects are rising.
- The quality of teachers’ use of assessment to set appropriate challenges for all learners.
- How rigorously leaders, especially middle leaders, drive improvement in their areas of responsibility.

Information about the school

The academy opened in September 2009 following the merger of three separate schools. It is sponsored by the United Learning Trust. It operates on three sites but a new building is due for completion in December 2012. Most of the students are White British. An above average proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals and the number of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is slightly above the national average. A new principal took up post on 1 September 2011. The academy has specialisms in mathematics, information and communication technology, sport and business and enterprise.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school’s capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The academy provides a satisfactory and improving quality of education for students of all ages. The good provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures they get off to a good start. Students are proud to be members of the safe and happy community. Achievement is satisfactory overall. The current low

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attainment is rising strongly as a result of progress that, though satisfactory, is increasingly rapid. Gaps that existed between the attainment of different groups of students have almost disappeared.

Good care, guidance and support have a positive impact on students' learning. Students are well cared for and safeguarding arrangements are robust and effective. Students say they feel safe and have a satisfactory understanding of how to be healthy. They make a good contribution to the daily life of the academy and to the local community.

The monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous and supportive. Leaders regularly visit lessons, scrutinise students' work and take firm remedial action when poor performance is identified. Coaching and mentoring systems have resulted in improved performance across the academy, especially in Key Stage 2, where teaching and learning are now good. Taken overall, teaching is satisfactory because of some remaining inconsistencies, particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4. Teachers do not consistently use the good range of information about students' prior attainment and learning needs to ensure that tasks, activities and support meet the needs of all students. In addition, marking and the feedback teachers provide for students on their next steps is of variable quality. However, the academy's records, students' work and observation of lessons show that, in the last two years, leaders have made major improvements to teaching that was previously inadequate in some subjects and key stages. They have also put in place supportive and well-organised systems to share the good practice that is emerging.

Students behave well, showing consideration for each other. As a result, the atmosphere around the academy is calm and welcoming. The infrequent poor behaviour of a small minority of students is well-managed using the academy's discipline system. Students confirm that relationships are good and that bullying is rare and promptly and effectively dealt with if it should occur. Improvements to the curriculum, which is now good, are having a positive impact on enjoyment, and attendance is above average.

Outcomes in the sixth form are well below expectations. Too many students leave after Year 12 and standards in A level examinations are well below average. New leadership in the sixth form is starting to have a positive impact in turning this underperformance around, and teaching and learning observed in the sixth form during the inspection were mainly good.

There are regular and rigorous systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the academy based on detailed and reliable information about students' progress. The recent change of leadership means some of the systems are relatively new. However, the accuracy of the academy's self-evaluation and the pattern of improvement made so far indicate that there is satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5

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inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by:
 - embedding and sharing the emerging strengths in teaching across all subject areas
 - ensuring that teachers make full use of information about students' prior attainment and barriers to learning in order to plan and deliver lessons that meet the needs of all students in the class
 - providing more detailed information to students on their next steps when marking their work.

- Improve outcomes and retention in the sixth form by:
 - ensuring leadership consolidates the recent improvements in teaching
 - strengthening guidance for students to ensure that they enrol on appropriate courses.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students join the academy with attainment lower than expected for their age. The progress students make as they move through the academy is now more consistent across year groups and subject areas. A significant improvement in GCSE results in 2011 meant the academy exceeded its challenging targets. Similarly, a significant rise in the proportion of students reaching Level 5 or above at the end of Key Stage 2, indicates improvements are taking place across primary and secondary phases. In some subjects, such as mathematics in Year 6 and in some key stages, for example in Key Stage 1, progress is now good. Evidence shows that the progress of groups, such as those known to be eligible for free school meals and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is also accelerating at the same rate or better as a result of the careful attention paid to students' individual needs.

Students enjoy their learning. In lessons, they engage well with the activities set for them and show determination to succeed. They apply well their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and have the necessary personal skills to work productively in pairs or groups. Primary students show a good awareness of how to stay healthy, but this is less well-developed in the secondary phase. The academy parliament and the primary school council give the students good opportunities to make a positive contribution and they make a good contribution to the local community through fundraising and other projects. The academy specialisms in business and enterprise have a positive impact on their workplace skills, which are good. Students respond well to a range of experiences that demonstrate their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These include projects on

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sustainability, in music and in arts subjects. In lessons, their responses in discussions show they empathise well with the plight of less fortunate people and those from different backgrounds.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are characterised by good relationships and a purposeful climate for learning. Teachers make good use of ICT to bring learning to life. Consistently good teaching in English and mathematics at Key Stages 1 and 2 is resulting in good progress and, in this part of the academy, some excellent examples of assessment were observed. At all key stages, planning ensures lessons are well structured. In some lessons, targeted questioning provides good opportunities for pupils to use higher order thinking skills. There are still some weaknesses, particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4. Teachers dominate the discussions in some lessons; this reduces opportunities for learning and developing independence. The support provided by teaching assistants is of variable quality.

The good curriculum contains imaginative learning experiences, especially in the primary phase, where a huge range of integrated learning experiences motivate, enthuse and engage the students. At Key Stage 3, the integrated humanities curriculum generates cross-curricular skills development and, at Key Stage 4, provision for vulnerable students is tailored well to their needs. The range of certificated courses continues to be developed and offers opportunities for all students. The academy makes good use of specialist teachers from the secondary

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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phase to deliver lessons in the primary classes in subjects such as science and French. The work-related curriculum starts in Year 6 with business studies and is designed to focus students on their futures and to raise their aspirations. The business and enterprise element of the specialism is taught in exciting and innovative ways, such as through business challenges, work experience placements and workshops run by local businesses. Extra-curricular activities are very varied and take-up is high.

The academy takes good care of all its students. Vulnerable students are well-supported and all students are known and valued as individuals. Transition arrangements are good as students move between phases and pupils from other feeder primary schools feel welcomed and settle in well. The systems for discussing option choices in Year 9 are well-organised and include helpful links to the world of work. Motivational strategies to improve attendance are very successful. A wide range of support strategies and partnerships with outside agencies ensures those with special educational needs and/or disabilities now make at least the same progress as others.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

There is a shared vision for the academy which is clearly articulated and understood. Leaders use data on learners’ progress to hold members of their teams to account. The systems for monitoring the work of the school are rigorous and systematic. They are accompanied by processes that support where improvement is needed. As a result, inadequate teaching has been almost eradicated and the proportion of good or better teaching is increasing. Self-evaluation is accurate and leads to good development planning. Middle leaders, both in academic and in pastoral teams, work together well, sharing good practice and information on learners’ progress. Outcomes are currently low but they are improving strongly and securely.

The governing body provides satisfactory support and challenge. Its members are currently undertaking training on the interpretation of data on students’ progress in order to allow them to challenge even more effectively. Safeguarding arrangements include examples of best practice, for example through the detailed arrangements to tackle the challenges posed by operating on three sites. The academy regularly shares information with parents and carers and has provided a range of opportunities to help them to support their children’s learning. Newsletters are sent from all

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phases, and parents and carers are particularly pleased to witness the presentations of projects made by Key Stage 2 students.

The partnership with the sponsors provides valuable opportunities to network and share ideas and valuable access to training. Links with film and media companies provide opportunities to enhance the curriculum. The academy ensures all required policies to promote equality and tackle discrimination are followed. Gaps in outcomes for different groups are closing as a result. The initiatives to actively promote an understanding of equality issues are satisfactory. A plan for promoting community cohesion has been drawn up, but is yet to be evaluated. Nevertheless, the academy is a cohesive community and work with the local community is good. Links with a school in Kuwait have recently been established to enhance the global aspect of the academy’s work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes are good because challenging targets are set and monitored regularly, thereby ensuring that children make good progress. Children behave well and strategies such as the ‘worry tree’ ensure they feel safe. Free-flow activities provide them with a wide range of opportunities to develop a variety of skills, with an emphasis on creativity, developing independence and making choices. Children work well together to solve problems, but staff do not do enough to ensure they manage the tendency of some children to dominate when working in pairs. A clear focus on developing literacy, numeracy and oracy is evident in activities such as reading aloud and problem solving. Staff have good knowledge of the requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage and use this knowledge to track children’s progress and plan for individual needs. Resources and staff development are well managed. Risk

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assessments are thorough and children’s welfare is given paramount importance. Excellent links with parents and carers and with a wide range of agencies ensure no individuals or groups are disadvantaged.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Sixth form

Inadequate outcomes in the sixth form are exemplified by the poor progress made in Years 12 and 13, poor retention from one year to the next and nearly a quarter of results at AS level being graded U. In the past, the choice and variety of courses available to students have been too limited. Too little use is made of partnership approaches to extend the provision. Leadership is relatively new and has already started to take action to address the issues. Action to tackle poor teaching is underway and teaching is improving. During the inspection, much good teaching was observed, with students enjoying active and interesting lessons. For example, in a lesson in law, they were enjoying the opportunity to discuss in groups complicated scenarios to decide culpability. Improved guidance for students has resulted in increased numbers this year and entry requirements have been raised to try to ensure more students enrol on appropriate courses and stay on in Year 13. New courses have been introduced and the coordinated tutor programme, assemblies and life skills sessions contribute to students’ good personal development. In turn, students contribute well to the life of the academy. Students are given good opportunities to develop vocational and higher level thinking skills.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	4
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	4
The quality of provision in the sixth form	4
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

Although only a small proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, their responses were overwhelmingly positive. A small minority wrote of their concerns regarding bullying, but students were positive that the new systems have reduced the incidence and were confident any issues would be dealt with

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promptly and successfully. Parents and carers largely agreed that the academy keeps their children safe, despite some concerns that behaviour was not always dealt with effectively. Inspectors found that the behaviour around the academy was welcoming and orderly, and the students who spoke to inspectors had no concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kettering Buccleuch Academy to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 181 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1195 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	103	57	68	38	8	4	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	90	50	88	49	2	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	90	50	76	42	10	6	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	82	46	91	51	4	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	84	47	89	50	3	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	82	46	87	49	5	3	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	72	40	100	55	7	4	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	75	42	90	50	3	2	3	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	75	42	92	51	8	4	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	65	36	89	50	16	9	6	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	32	103	58	12	7	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	78	44	89	50	6	3	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	87	48	82	45	5	3	5	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Kettering Buccleuch Academy, Kettering, NN16 9NS

Thank you for the help that you gave us when we inspected your academy and particular thanks to those of you who took time to talk to us or to complete the inspection questionnaire. You told us that you feel safe and well cared for, and we saw that most of you are making satisfactory progress in your learning, although standards are still lower than they should be. The only part of the school where progress has been too slow is the sixth form.

Here are some of the things we found most successful:

- the youngest children get off to a good start
- you take up the good opportunities available to you to contribute to the academy and to the wider community and you behave well
- you are making much more rapid progress in your learning
- you are well looked after and given the support you need to help you to develop as responsible young people
- leaders in the academy are making sure teaching and learning are improving quickly.

Here are the things that are to be improved:

- we would like your teachers to make sure that they use the information that they have about you all to plan work that is at exactly the right level so that you can all make good progress, and to be more consistent in sharing with you what you need to do to improve when they mark your work
- we want the sixth form leaders to continue to improve the range of courses on offer and the way they are taught so that more of you can be successful.

I am sure that you will all want to play your part by working hard and helping your teachers with these and other improvements. I hope you will find time to read the full report.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector

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