

Kings Science Academy

Northside Road, Lidget Green, Bradford, BD7 2AN

Inspection dates 9–10 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Actions taken to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection are relatively recent. Too little was done to address the areas for improvement robustly in the twelve months following that inspection.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Assessment data are not always used to plan work that is well matched to students' needs, especially boys with special educational needs.
- The quality of marking and feedback is variable. While the academy's policy is sometimes followed well, on occasions appropriate feedback is not provided to help students take the next steps in their learning.
- Behaviour is improving, but occasional misbehaviour in lessons persists.
- Recently, the collection and analysis of progress data have improved markedly and the academy is now aware of the progress of all students; however, the academy's knowledge of progress of groups over time, including the current Year 10, is limited.
- Significantly improved structures and procedures, introduced by the new leadership team, have had insufficient time to demonstrate sustainable impact on the academy's overall effectiveness.
- Over time, the curriculum has focused overly on English, mathematics and science at the expense of a richer educational experience for students. Recent improvements are a move in the right direction.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership at all levels is improving.
- The Executive Principal has driven the changes which are beginning to impact positively on the quality of teaching and students' progress.
- Governors, led by a strong Chair, are supporting and challenging the academy well.
- Areas for improvement are now being tackled rigorously.
- Students' behaviour during social times is good and they get on well together. They feel safe in school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 32 parts of lessons, five jointly with senior leaders, and conducted two learning walks. One of the learning walks was to look at behaviour and the other to investigate the progress of the most able students.
- Visits were made to an assembly, morning tutor periods and to the enrichment period at the end of the day.
- Inspectors met with the Executive Principal, senior and middle leaders, a group of teachers and a representative of the Bradford Partnership. (The Bradford Partnership is a not-for-profit organisation, owned by its member schools to support schools to deliver the best outcomes for children, young people and their communities.) The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also spoke to three groups of students formally and to others during lessons and social times.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents including the academy’s view of how well it is doing, its development plan, evidence about the work of the governing body, data showing students’ progress, records of students’ behaviour and attendance and documents related to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 33 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire (Parent View) and those of a very small number of parents who shared their views in writing.

Inspection team

Helen Lane, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Mary Lanovy Taylor	Additional Inspector
Stephen Wall	Additional Inspector
Henry Moreton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kings Science Academy opened as a free school in September 2011. At the time of this inspection, only Year 7, Year 8, Year 9 and Year 10 were on roll. The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The vast majority of students are of Pakistani heritage. The proportion of students with English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students (those supported by the pupil premium) is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is below average.
- No students are educated off-site.
- In April 2014, the headteacher of Immanuel College in Bradford became the Executive Principal of the academy.
- Plans are in place for the academy to join the Dixons Academies Charitable Trust in January 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and students make good or better progress in all subjects and in all year groups by:
 - using assessment data more effectively to plan activities which match students' needs and abilities
 - sharing the good practice which exists in teaching and learning as well as in marking and feedback
 - ensuring no time is wasted at the end of lessons.
- Tackle the instances of low-level disruption to learning in a small number of lessons.
- Ensure that leaders and managers at all levels:
 - continue to monitor rigorously the progress of Year 10 students until they complete Key Stage 4
 - check on the impact on students' achievement of recent changes to the taught curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **require improvement**

- The Executive Principal has provided outstanding leadership and direction for the academy during a time of considerable change. Staff say they value her leadership and the opportunities to learn from her effective practice. She has introduced systems and procedures, supported by an improvement plan, which are having a positive impact on the organisation of all areas in the academy. It is too soon to see a sustained impact; however, there are improvements in the progress made by students across the academy.
 - All the senior leaders are highly focused and taking responsibility for driving improvement in their areas. As the Executive Principal says, 'They have stepped up to the plate.'
 - The leadership of teaching, achievement and the curriculum is having a discernible impact on the quality of teaching. Effective monitoring and evaluation through learning walks, lesson observations, scrutiny of students' work and review of data about students' progress mean that leaders have a clear picture of the quality of teaching. High-quality professional development opportunities and support plans for those whose practice is not yet good are resulting in clear improvements in teaching. However, improvements in the quality of teaching, marking and feedback are not consistent across the academy.
 - A new, much more robust, performance management system has been put into place which is linked strongly to the quality of teaching and students' progress. It is too soon to measure the impact of this.
 - Middle leadership is improving. Middle leaders have been empowered by professional development opportunities. They are growing in confidence in monitoring and evaluating their faculties and holding teachers to account for students' progress.
 - The Bradford Partnership has provided effective support during a challenging period, acting quickly to establish stable leadership for the academy. The Executive Principal has involved some of the senior leaders from Immanuel College in the leadership of the academy. These leaders are adding capacity in role modelling effective leadership. Other schools and academies in the Bradford Partnership are contributing by providing curriculum materials, resources and other support which has improved the accuracy of assessment.
 - Recent changes mean the curriculum is now offering increased choice of qualifications and courses at Key Stage 4, matched more closely to students' needs, aspirations and abilities. Religious education lessons and the 'Character Citizenship' curriculum delivered in tutor time are beginning to contribute to students' understanding of the structure and diversity of modern Britain. The academy has worked hard to develop the quality of advice given to students about their future education and careers.
 - 'Compulsory enrichment' activities take place twice weekly. The academy day is very long on the days when enrichment takes place and students do not always enjoy their additional activities, although they do offer opportunities for extra literacy and numeracy practice and for extra help with GCSE courses.
 - The academy meets requirements for safeguarding and for ensuring equality of opportunity.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governance arrangements are much improved since the previous inspection. The Chair of the Governing Body has worked tirelessly to ensure appropriate safeguarding and financial structures. He works closely with the Executive Principal to support the drive for improvement. Governors have an appropriate range of skills, particularly in finance and education. Governors have a detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the academy and hold senior and middle leaders to account with challenging questions. They check students' progress rigorously, including the impact of pupil premium spending. The gap in progress between students in receipt of the pupil premium and others is very small and well below that seen nationally.
 - The new performance management policy makes very clear the criteria for teachers' pay awards and the quality of teaching is now carefully monitored by the governing body.
 - Governors have carried out their statutory duty for safeguarding through a partnership with the local authority human resources department. Recruitment and checks on new staff are now very rigorous.
 - Financial management is transparent and accountable. The budget is balanced.

The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Students and staff recognise behaviour is improving, but students told inspectors that sometimes their learning was disrupted by a small minority of their peers. This was supported by observations made during the inspection. Of the very small proportion of the parents who responded to Parent View, some expressed a concern about behaviour.
- Disruption in lessons is linked to the quality of teaching. In lessons where the work challenges the students and they are motivated to do well, students behave very well and are keen to learn. Where the needs of students, particularly of boys who have special educational needs, are not met, behaviour deteriorates.
- Students' attitudes to learning vary but are improving. During the inspection, outstanding attitudes to learning were seen in some classrooms, which had a strong impact on learning. However, in others, attitudes are not as positive and progress is not as good.
- Students say they respect each other and the staff, no matter what their role. Year 7 students say the older students have respected them from their start at the academy.
- Students look smart and are proud of their uniform.
- Fixed-period exclusions have reduced. Behaviour logs suggest an increase in behaviour incidents; however, this is likely to be a result of much-improved recording systems. The middle leaders say the type of incidents now recorded reflects the real drive for better behaviour, and behaviour is improving rapidly.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Attendance has improved. When students are not attending, it is used as an indicator of a concern. There are robust systems in place to address concerns about the welfare of students.
- Students say they feel safe in the academy and there is very little bullying or racism. They are confident any concerns they might have would be dealt with quickly by adults in whom they can confide. Students also value the prefects who are role models and help them with problems. Students understand different types of bullying, including homophobic bullying and cyber-bullying.
- Some students are not punctual to morning tutor time. Students are generally punctual to lessons.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Actions taken to improve the quality of teaching are resulting in strengthening practice in classrooms that is benefiting students, but the quality of teaching over time has not been consistently strong enough to ensure all students make good progress.
- The impact of better teaching in English and mathematics can be seen in the data provided by the academy, which shows the progress in these subjects to be variable but improving. In some year groups, progress is good, for example in Years 9 and 10; in others, it still requires improvement. Work on literacy across the curriculum is further forward than that in numeracy, with students regularly reading and using the 'word of the week' in tutor time. A reading programme funded by the Year 7 catch-up funding is boosting the attainment of less-able students in Year 7.
- Marking and feedback have improved. Teachers mark students' written work regularly and many make helpful comments which show students how to improve their work. For example, consistently high-quality marking in English is helping to accelerate students' progress. However, this is not the case in all subjects.
- Teachers are becoming more adept at using data about students' progress and abilities to match activities to their needs; teachers have a better understanding of the need to drive progress at a faster rate. However, this is at an early stage and the effectiveness in the use of data is still variable, to support boys with special educational needs for example.
- Students learn quickly when activities are closely matched to their abilities and needs. For example, in a Year 8 religious education lesson about discrimination, exceptionally challenging teaching elicited very thoughtful responses that reflected the rapid progress the students were making in their understanding and knowledge. In some classes, activities are not well matched to students' needs and this slows the progress they make.
- The impact of teaching assistants is improving. Appropriate training ensures they provide increasingly effective support, for example in improving pupils' reading skills in Year 7 and in providing in-class support for identified pupils.

- Relationships between students and their teachers are usually strong, giving students the enthusiasm to do their best. However, on occasion, teachers are not quick enough to tackle students who are chatting and off task. This slows progress.
- In some classes, students are allowed to stop working too early and spend too long packing away. This limits the amount of learning in the lesson.
- Appropriate homework is set in some subjects but this is variable.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Judgements about the achievement of students are based on observations of progress over time in lessons and on the academy's own data. No students have yet completed their GCSE courses. As a result, there is no direct comparison with national data at Key Stage 4.
- The academy's data which monitor students' progress have been made more rigorous as a result of new, well-monitored assessment procedures. The data are starting to be used effectively by teachers to monitor the progress of individual students in their classes and to identify appropriate support for those who are making insufficient progress. It is too early to see the impact of this, but leaders have a sound understanding of where progress is good and where it requires improvement. Data show good progress is not consistent in all subjects and in all year groups, and this is supported by what was observed in lessons during the inspection. However, in some classes observed, progress since September is good or outstanding. Outstanding progress was seen in observations of English and religious education.
- Early data demonstrate that extra classes and one-to-one support are impacting positively on the progress of Year 10 students. In the last school year, Year 7 students who were involved in a reading programme improved by one National Curriculum level in one year.
- Academy data suggest the proportion of the current Year 10 working towards attaining five GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics is above the national average for 2014. The majority of Year 10 students are currently making expected progress in English and mathematics. A greater proportion of students are making more-than-expected progress in English than in mathematics. The gap between the performance of disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students is negligible in all year groups. In Year 7, disadvantaged students are making better progress in mathematics than their peers.
- Visits to lessons where the most able were being taught, and a review of the work in their books, showed high expectations and strong challenge. For example, Year 10 students were competently solving quadratic equations and Year 8 students had written lengthy pieces of work in Spanish. In the lessons observed, the most able students had made very good progress since September.
- Prior to the new leadership in the academy, provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs was patchy. This is now improving. The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is variable. Although some make good progress, the variations in the quality of teaching and support mean that it requires improvement overall.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137277
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	442300

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	708
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Bowers
Executive Principal	Jane Tiller
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2013
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