

Kettering Buccleuch Academy

Weekley Glebe Road, Kettering NN16 9NS

Inspection dates

1–2 December 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an academy that requires improvement

- While there has been significant improvement since the last inspection, leaders do not have an accurate enough view of how well the academy is doing. They are sometimes too optimistic in their judgements.
- Leaders do not have a precise enough understanding of how well pupils are achieving, particularly in early years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. As a result, pupils' learning is not always progressing as well as it could.
- In Key Stage 2, teaching and assessment are not always good enough to make sure that all pupils make the progress expected of them.
- In Key Stage 4, the introduction of a new system to monitor pupils' progress towards their targets has caused some confusion. This means that pupils are not always clear about the GCSE grades they are aiming for.
- Teachers do not always accurately plan the learning that some pupils need in order that they make progress. This is particularly the case for higher-ability pupils and those for whom further literacy support is required.
- Governors do not have a precise enough view of the academy's strengths and areas for improvement and do not effectively hold academy leaders to account.

The academy has the following strengths

- This academy has been transformed since the last inspection. Leaders have created an awe-inspiring learning environment within which pupils flourish.
- The academy house system is effective and pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are proud of their house and their academy.
- The sixth form is good. This provision is now helping pupils to progress appropriately to employment, higher education or training.
- Leaders are creative and successful at recruiting capable teachers and future leaders. High-quality professional development is in place and the system of monitoring teaching quality is extensive and beginning to have impact. Increasingly, the right people are in place to make sure that the further improvement required happens quickly.
- In Key Stage 4, the progress that pupils make in science is a strength of the academy.

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the academy no longer requires significant improvement.

What does the academy need to do to improve further?

- Build on the significant improvements made to the leadership of the academy by ensuring that:
 - leaders and governors have an accurate view of how well the academy is doing
 - a fit-for-purpose development plan is in place that allows the governing body to more effectively hold leaders to account.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in Key Stage 2, by making sure that:
 - the assessment processes are effective across and between all key stages within the academy so that the progress of all pupils can be closely monitored and appropriate intervention put in place
 - all teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan activities which fully meet the needs of all groups of pupils
 - the legacy of underperformance, particularly within literacy, is addressed so that pupils quickly acquire the skills they need to access the next stage in their learning
 - all teachers are equipped with the skills to stretch and challenge pupils, particularly the most able.
- Make sure that there is clarity, across the academy, about the targets that pupils are set and the criteria used to do this, and that leaders, teachers, pupils and parents are clear about what these mean.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management **requires improvement**

- Senior leaders do not have an accurate enough view of how well the academy is doing. There are a range of systems in place to gather evidence and there is much to celebrate. However, when making overall judgements, insufficient weight is given to pupils' progress or the outcomes achieved at each key stage throughout the academy.
- There is no meaningful analysis of achievement at Key Stage 2, and leaders and teachers do not always have accurate enough information about the progress that pupils are making. Consequently, there are some pupils who continue to underachieve because the teaching they are receiving is not appropriate to their starting points.
- As a result of recent changes to the leadership, there are new processes in place to ensure greater consistency and accuracy in the assessment of pupils' achievement at Key Stage 4. The previous 'working at' target grade has been replaced. Pupils are now set targets in each subject area based on prior data and the prediction of the result that will be achieved at the end of the GCSE course. It is early days for this change and confusion remains at subject leader, teacher and pupil level about predictions, the targets set and what they mean.
- The way in which information about pupils' achievement is tracked within Key Stage 4 has been imprecise and some of the assessment information from some subject leaders has not been accurate. There is now a more effective system in place which enables leaders to have an overview of the progress that is being made by subject, pupil and teaching group. This system is not yet being used in Key Stage 2.
- The impact of pupil premium funding cannot be accurately evaluated at Key Stage 2 because there is insufficient assessment information to do so. More is known about the progress of disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 4 where they are making accelerated progress. Leaders have not effectively evaluated the impact of previous pupil premium funding to determine which strategies have worked successfully.
- Leaders do evaluate the impact of catch-up funding and all pupils entitled to this additional support have made accelerated progress.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have transformed the academy and have been highly successful in making sure that the expectations of what can be achieved by all pupils are high. This ambition can be seen in the magnificent learning environment that has been created. Pupils said that they are now proud to attend the academy and that they are grateful for the extensive changes that have taken place.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. There are many and varied opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and faiths, including an extensive programme of after-school activities and trips. Pupils are proud of their 'house' and learn much about the democratic process. They are keen to negotiate with leaders if there is something they would wish to improve. Pupils spoke with inspectors about the changes to the common room system that were currently under discussion. The learning environment is exceptional and promotes the well-being and pride of all pupils and all staff.
- Leaders carefully consider the curriculum that is most appropriate for pupils within the academy and have systems in place to review this, particularly within the sixth form. A skills ladder has been mapped from the early years to Year 13 in order that teaching staff can be more aware and then teach the key skills that pupils need in order that they achieve well. It is too early to judge the full impact of the skills ladder; however, pupils are increasingly enthusiastic about their learning.
- Pupils receive effective guidance when they make their GCSE choices and support is offered to broaden their knowledge and experience of future employment, education and training. Year 11 pupils were keen to tell inspectors about the recent careers fair and the full array of business, college, university and employers that were represented. They are appreciative of the efforts of leaders to provide them with this opportunity.
- Professional development of all staff is increasingly effective. Staff said that they appreciate the high-quality training opportunities that they receive. Sharing good practice and having an 'open door' approach is a common feature of developing skills together as a staff. The 'Pathways' brochure effectively supports professional development; the teaching directory, which lists the skills of teaching staff, is a particularly successful way of teachers learning from each other. As a result, there is a strong culture of professional development in the academy.

- Subject and house leaders are committed to ensuring that the academy continues to improve at a fast pace and that all pupils make good progress. Some of these leaders are new to role so the impact of their work is yet to be seen. The 'Leadership lenses' is a comprehensive leadership tool that will support effective and consistent leadership strategies moving forward.
- The academy provides many sporting opportunities within the curriculum and extra-curricular activities after school that support the healthy lifestyle of pupils.
- **The governance of the academy**
 - Governors do not have an accurate view of how well the academy is doing; this is because leaders' self-evaluation is inaccurate.
 - Governors do not have an effective mechanism to hold leaders to account; this is because the academy development plan needs to be revised.
 - Governors have worked with both the academy and the United Learning Trust in order to become more effective in their role. They have responded appropriately to some of the recommendations of the external review of governance and now have more appropriate committee structures and formal roles within the academy, including links to safeguarding. However, further work is required to make sure they are more successful in holding leaders to account.
 - Governors are passionate about the academy and take their roles seriously. They recognise the way in which the academy has been transformed and the importance of this to the community.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All teachers receive annual safeguarding training which reflects changes to statutory requirements. Senior leaders and staff work well with external agencies and parents to support pupils who may be vulnerable or require support. The monitoring of pupils' safety and well-being is rigorous. Leaders and governors are uncompromising in their determination to provide a safe and positive culture within the academy.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable across the academy and requires improvement. Sometimes teachers do not have the information they need in order to plan lessons that will accelerate pupils' progress; this is particularly the case in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, but not exclusively so. As a consequence, some pupils spend too much time on tasks that are too easy.
- Teachers use the 'Key, Boost, Aspire' objectives consistently. Year 11 pupils said that they like having a choice of objectives and described them as 'stepping stones to success'. However, sometimes these objectives are not appropriate for pupils' starting points and are either too easily achieved or too challenging. Sometimes pupils do not receive the appropriate support or intervention they need to select the most appropriate objective; this is particularly the case for pupils who need further help to develop their literacy skills.
- Teaching in Key Stage 2 is too variable; too many pupils spend time repeating learning rather than moving on to the next stage.
- Teaching in science and physical education is good, and is improving in mathematics and English at Key Stage 4. Teaching is too variable in geography, design and technology, languages and business studies.
- The legacy of underperformance from Key Stage 2 into Key Stage 3 is not being addressed quickly enough; consequently, there are some pupils who still need help to rapidly improve their literacy and numeracy skills in order that they can make the progress they should.
- Where pupils' learning is extended, it is because the teacher has a precise knowledge of the pupils' starting points. Effective strategies are used to help challenge pupils, including asking high-quality questions that make pupils really think. No learning time is lost by overly repeating tasks. Not all teachers use these skills well enough and some planned activities do not sufficiently extend pupils' learning. Consequently, most-able pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
- Pupils take pride in their work; this can be seen in their books and the care taken with presentation. The academy celebrates pupils' work and it is visible throughout the academy, including on many TV screens.
- Pupils said they value the positive relationships teachers develop in the classroom and around the academy. They said that they are welcomed to lessons and that their teachers encourage good dialogue, mutual respect and cooperation. Consequently, pupils said that they are more confident to participate in group activities, discussion and performance.

- There is an energy and enthusiasm to make sure that learning is fun. Many teachers work extremely effectively to find creative ways to engage pupils' interest and keep learning 'alive'. All pupils spoken with appreciate these efforts.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils clearly enjoy being a member of this academy and are keen to speak about the 'amazing improvements' that have taken place since the last inspection. Breaktime and lunchtime have a positive buzz; pupils are polite and friendly to each other, to staff and to visitors.
- Pupils appreciate the amount of care, guidance and support they receive. They said that the house system is particularly effective in providing a sense of belonging and providing opportunities for leadership and responsibility. While speaking with inspectors, the conversation was halted so that pupils could hear the results of the in-house quiz, and there were cheers from the members of the winning house.
- Pupils said that they feel safe within the academy and that there are no areas that feel intimidating or where they would not go. They are informed about how to keep safe online and who, in the academy, to speak with if they ever feel at risk. They appreciate the ethos that has been created for them and said that it helps them to 'watch out for each other'.
- Incidents of bullying have significantly reduced since the last inspection. There are comprehensive systems in place to track and record and monitor any issues. Anti-bullying ambassadors work effectively with leaders to prevent bullying; older pupils provide a listening ear and peer support for younger ones. Pupils are well informed about different kinds of bullying and said that no bullying, including racist or homophobic bullying will be tolerated. They said they are proud of how they help each other.
- The academy promotes well the next steps in education and the world of work. Careers advice and guidance are comprehensive.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Younger children work well together and care for each other. Inspectors saw examples of pupils helping each other, unprompted, and cooperating and playing harmoniously.
- The academy environment is highly stimulating and pupils respond positively to this. At every opportunity there are ways in which the work of pupils is celebrated, including the use of technology, TV screens and verbal announcements. This effort is rewarded because pupils have a great deal of respect for, and enjoyment of, their academy.
- The house system is particularly effective and heads of house are influential in promoting positive behaviour. Incidents of low-level disruption have fallen dramatically. Rewards are used well to encourage good behaviour and attitude.
- Pupils are proud of their academy and the sixth form. The house system is effective in promoting individual responsibility and the pupils take this extremely seriously. Pupils have a strong sense of democracy and fairness and are totally committed to the 'KBA' ethos. Pupils told inspectors that the house system was 'at the heart of what the school is about'. They are good ambassadors for the academy.
- Behaviour for learning is a key part of the training of all staff. Pupils said that the behaviour systems are clear and that their teachers consistently promote them. As a result, pupils are punctual to lessons, settle quickly and are soon prepared for action.
- The new behaviour systems and pastoral arrangements are effective; consequently, fixed-term and permanent exclusions are reducing.
- Pupils wear their uniform with pride. Importantly, they are proud of their house tie and what this represents.
- Attendance has improved and the gap between the academy and national figures is narrowing quickly. The number of pupils that are persistently absent is also reducing. Boys' attendance is better than that of girls, but the academy is aware of this and has specific interventions in place.
- The attendance of the small number of pupils attending alternative provision off site is good. These pupils behave well and are making good progress.

- Pastoral leaders accept that a more systematic linking between achievement and pastoral information would be a helpful next step to provide extra support to pupils if it is needed.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes across the academy require improvement. The progress that pupils make varies because the quality of teaching is inconsistent. This is particularly the case at Key Stage 2.
- There is new leadership of assessment. There is a comprehensive overview of information about Key Stage 4 which supports effective monitoring of pupils' progress. Heads of subject are now expected to be accountable for the predictions entered into this assessment system. Elements of this have been shared with Key Stage 2 leaders: for example, all phases now have a six-point 'data drop'. More needs to be done to ensure consistency of assessment practice throughout the academy.
- In 2015, pupils did not achieve well enough across all subjects in Key Stage 2. The information currently available, including pupils' work, would indicate that pupils currently within Key Stage 2 are not making the progress that they should.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, at Key Stage 2.
- Outcomes for the Year 1 national phonics screening test exceeded the national average in 2014 and 2015. These gains are not appropriately built on in Key Stage 1 and pupils do not achieve well enough in reading. The information available would suggest that the pupils currently working within Key Stage 1 are not making good progress in relation to their starting points.
- The achievement gaps at GCSE between the disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers in the academy and nationally have closed significantly in the last academic year. The current 'professional predictions' suggest that this gap will continue to reduce; certainly the academy has better systems in Key Stage 4 to make sure this is the case. However, the way in which leaders monitor the achievement of this group of pupils is not good enough in Key Stage 2, and therefore they do not know if the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates is closing.
- At times, overly ambitious targets are given to pupils. Some pupils seen had been given an 'A plus' target and their starting point would not suggest this to be realistic. This is sometimes unhelpful for pupils.
- Achievement of most-able pupils is variable across the academy. This is because teaching is insufficiently challenging within some subject areas or within a particular key stage.
- Achievement in geography, design and technology, and business studies was not good enough in 2015 and 'professional predictions' would suggest that challenges still remain. The achievement within these subjects is not yet good.
- Achievement at GCSE has improved in the last academic year. The proportion of pupils achieving five A* to C grades including English and mathematics is now closer to the national figure.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils making the expected progress within science was significantly above the national figure. The current 'professional predictions' and the work of pupils would suggest that this trend is set to continue in 2016.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils making the expected progress in both mathematics and English was closer to the national figure. The current 'professional predictions' would suggest that a greater proportion of pupils will be making expected and above expected progress in both these subject areas in 2016.
- At Key Stage 4, the achievement of pupils who require additional support is improving and more are now making the progress they should. This is because leaders track their achievement more carefully and put appropriate support in place.
- Regular and effective monitoring of the achievement of the small number of pupils who receive their education elsewhere ensures that they make good progress on their courses.
- Pupils are increasingly better prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. A growing number of pupils are selecting to stay on into the academy's sixth form.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- The early years leader is passionate about this stage in children's learning but her leadership skills require development. There is insufficient overview of the progress that children make. Consequently, additional support to accelerate their progress is not implemented as quickly as it should be.
- There is not enough challenge for most-able children. Some of the planned activities or the questions that the adults ask do not help to move the learning on in an appropriate way.
- Children enter the early years with levels of development which are generally typical of those seen nationally. The proportion who achieve a good level of development is above the national figure. However, some children do not achieve as well as they could in some areas; this includes girls and the most able.
- Children's development in literacy and mathematics does not progress as quickly as it should; as a result, some children are not equipped well enough for learning in Key Stage 1. Disadvantaged children do broadly as well as others nationally except in speaking, where their achievement is lower than that seen nationally.
- Staff have made sure that children feel safe and secure in the early years. Safeguarding is effective and children behave well, even after only a few weeks in school. Children adopt new routines quickly and they are well supported. The teacher works hard to get to know the children well. She makes good links between home, external agencies and school.
- The provision is well equipped and many of the activities, creatively planned by the teachers, enable purposeful learning. Some teachers skilfully use questioning to extend this learning further, but this is not always the case.
- Children play together happily when it is playtime; they cooperate with each other and help each other out. Children arrive happily and eagerly to school, and they are greeted warmly. Any anxieties are dealt with efficiently and with care. Parents said that they value this provision extremely highly. They were keen to inform inspectors that communication between the academy and themselves is far better than at the last inspection, and that they appreciate the expertise and kindness of staff.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Leaders within the sixth form set high expectations for learners; consequently, learners are ambitious to achieve well. Achievement is improving and more learners are gaining higher grades at A level. Learners are prepared well to progress to university, higher education or training. More learners are applying and accepting places at universities, including Russell Group universities.
- The quality of advice and guidance is good, with the result that retention rates from Year 12 to Year 13 have improved. This is because leaders know learners well, recruitment processes are effective and learners begin on the right courses.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good overall. Where the learning is most effective, teachers make good use of questioning to extend the level of challenge and make learners really think.
- Disadvantaged learners achieve well and progress to university, higher education or training.
- There is close liaison between the director of aspiration, teaching staff and learners; communication is good. This means that correct intervention is put in place if learners are falling behind or not meeting their predicted grade.
- Learners benefit from strong support in making applications to higher education. They also benefit from growing provision to strengthen their understanding of other routes following the sixth form, resulting in some learners successfully gaining apprenticeships.
- There are a range and breadth of courses on offer, including vocational courses. These are reviewed or adapted depending on the needs of learners. The range of courses will develop further as the sixth form provision grows. Extra-curricular activities are in place, as is a wealth of activities to broaden the experience, knowledge and leadership abilities of all those involved; this includes work experience.
- Attendance is closely monitored by the sixth form leaders and is good.

School details

Unique reference number	135966
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10001629

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

Type of school	All through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,527
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cluny Broadbent
Principal	James Bowkett
Telephone number	01536 515644
Website	http://kba.uk
Email address	enquiries@ketteringbuccleuch-academy.org
Date of previous inspection	3–4 June 2014

Information about this academy

- The is an academy for children aged between 4 and 19 years. It is an all-through academy and is much larger than most schools nationally.
- The academy is increasingly popular and becoming a first choice for parents within the community.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, at Key Stage 2.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, at Key Stage 4.
- The United Learning Trust sponsors the academy.
- A small number of pupils receive their education off site at Torch Learning, Oaklands, and the William Knibb Centre in Kettering.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the learning in 53 lessons, the majority of which were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also observed an assembly.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, house leaders and subject leaders. Inspectors met with senior leaders responsible for pupils' achievement, teaching and learning, curriculum, behaviour and attendance, pupil premium, safeguarding, the sixth form, early years and the primary phase. Inspectors met with the Chair of the Governing Body and other members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke extensively with the academy Principal.
- Inspectors met formally with representatives of the United Learning Trust.
- Inspectors observed learning within the primary phase alongside representatives of the United Learning Trust.
- Inspectors spoke formally with groups of pupils. They observed behaviour between lessons and at lunchtime, and took these opportunities to speak further with pupils.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation, including the academy's own evaluation of how it is doing and information relating to pupils' achievement. Inspectors checked the academy's records relating to the monitoring of behaviour, attendance, exclusions and the safeguarding of pupils. Inspectors considered records of governors' meetings and systems used to manage staff performance.
- Inspectors considered the views of 87 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

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Jane Burton	Ofsted Inspector
Aileen King	Ofsted Inspector
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