

# Kirkby High School

Bracknell Avenue, Kirkby, Liverpool, Merseyside L32 9PP

## Inspection dates

21–22 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Pupils make inadequate progress across a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and boys do not make enough progress from their starting points.
- Leaders and governors have too generous a view of the school's effectiveness. Their views of pupils' progress are inaccurate because assessment information is unreliable.
- Leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching and pupils' work lack sufficient rigour. This means that they have too optimistic a view of the quality of education that pupils receive.
- Weak teaching over time has led to pupils making insufficient progress from their starting points. Teachers' expectations are too low. They do not use assessment information to build on pupils' prior knowledge.
- Teachers' questioning is not challenging enough. Pupils, including the most able, are not challenged sufficiently to think deeply.
- Literacy is not taught consistently well across different subjects.
- Attendance is significantly below the national average for all pupils and too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough.
- Teachers do not apply the behaviour management policy system effectively in lessons. Pupils' learning is disrupted by poor behaviour. The proportion of pupils who are excluded from school is high.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively.
- Leaders and governors do not have the capacity to improve the school. Few of the shortcomings identified in the previous inspection have been tackled successfully.
- Despite the challenge from the sponsor, necessary improvements have not been implemented quickly enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils wear their uniform with pride and are polite to adults. They feel safe in the school.
- The quality of teaching in art, dance, drama and physical education is improving.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to urgently enhance outcomes for all groups of pupils across all subjects, especially for disadvantaged pupils, boys and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities by:
  - ensuring that all teachers have the skills to assess pupils' progress accurately
  - ensuring that teachers use accurate assessment information to plan lessons to suit the needs of all pupils
  - making sure that teachers have high expectations of what all pupils should achieve for their age and from their respective starting points
  - ensuring that teachers' questioning is used to challenge and stretch the thinking of the most able pupils
  - developing and implementing a policy which is followed by all teachers to improve pupils' literacy skills.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - raising attendance for all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - ensuring the consistent application of the school's behaviour policy to reduce disruption in lessons
  - continuing to reduce the rates of exclusion.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that all leaders rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes so that they have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school
  - sharpening school development planning so that it is more effective in driving improvement
  - developing the skills of leaders of different subjects and groups so that they are able to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement
  - ensuring that leaders use the pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding more effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and younger pupils who have fallen behind
  - ensuring that the sponsor and governors rigorously hold all leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Progress since the previous inspection has been too slow. Boys and disadvantaged pupils continue to make weak progress, particularly in mathematics. Poor rates of attendance and inconsistencies in the application of spelling, punctuation and grammar in pupils' written work continue to hamper pupils' learning. Leaders at all levels have had limited tangible impact in improving teaching and pupils' achievement. There is insufficient capacity to bring about future improvement.
- Leaders have an inaccurate view of the school. For example, leaders judge personal development, behaviour and welfare to be good despite very low attendance rates, high persistent absence and some poor behaviour in lessons. Pupils' attendance is not improving. So far in this academic year pupils' attendance is worse than it was last year. The school has a range of strategies to promote good attendance. However, these strategies are not having enough impact.
- Leaders do not have a realistic view of teaching. This is because their judgements are based on observations of teaching, with insufficient emphasis on the impact that it has on pupils' progress.
- Senior leaders do not hold subject leaders to account effectively. In turn, subject leaders do not check well enough on the performance of the teachers in their departments. The systems to check how well pupils are achieving lack rigour. Some teachers expressed concern about the accuracy of assessments and their lack of confidence in analysing data. Arrangements for performance management meet statutory guidance but have too little impact on teachers' performance because leaders only take into account teaching they observe in lessons and pay too little attention to other types of monitoring such as the work in pupils' books.
- New teachers are positive about the support they receive. While the school provides teachers with a range of training opportunities for professional development, they are not having enough impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Leaders have struggled to recruit and retain high-quality staff in science. This has resulted in weaker standards in science and poor behaviour.
- Staff have received training on the school's new key stage 3 assessment system, which was introduced in the current academic year. However, leaders have not been effective in implementing this new method of assessment as some staff and pupils are confused by the new system. This has led to unreliable information about pupils' achievement.
- School leaders do not have a clear rationale for the allocation of pupil premium funding. Disadvantaged pupils make significantly less progress than other pupils nationally, which limits their opportunities in the next phase of their education, training or employment. The Year 7 catch-up funding has not been used effectively to support pupils' progress in English.
- The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including trips abroad and drama productions. A high number of pupils enjoy the excellent range of sporting

activities available, including football, netball and swimming. This contributes well to pupils' physical well-being.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a range of activities such as charity events, including the 'big help project'. However, there is no monitoring and review of this provision. As a result, there are missed opportunities to improve pupils' development in this area.
- There is inconsistency in how well literacy is developed across subjects. The curriculum is broad and balanced and has been adapted to enable pupils to study a wide range of vocational courses. However, leaders have not ensured that British values are promoted effectively. As a result, there is wide variation in pupils' understanding of, and preparation for, life in modern Britain.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not good enough. The funding is not used well, which means that these pupils progress too slowly.
- The school accesses support for mathematics from another school which is part of the Rowan Learning Trust. It is still too early to see the impact of this support.
- It is recommended that newly qualified teachers are not appointed to the school.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are loyal and want the best for the pupils, but they are too reliant on the often overgenerous and inaccurate information provided by leaders. This means that they are unable to rigorously challenge leaders about the school's performance.
- Governors ensure that the school meets its safeguarding requirements.
- The local governing body does not provide school leaders with enough challenge to ensure that pupils' attendance and progress improve.
- Governors have not ensured that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for those who need to catch up have been effective.
- The sponsor has grasped and communicated marked weaknesses within the school, however, leaders and the local governing body have been too slow to act on advice about how to address these.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders make checks on staff when they are recruited to the school to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Staff are alert to potential signs of neglect or abuse because they receive regular and relevant training on child protection. Staff are clear about how they would report incidents to the safeguarding leader or a member of the safeguarding team.
- Leaders ensure that there are appropriate filtering systems in place to keep pupils safe online. Pupils are taught about online safety through the curriculum.
- Pupils say they feel safe and know which adults to speak to if they have concerns.
- There are strong partnerships with other agencies responsible for protecting children and the school provides high-quality support for potentially vulnerable pupils.

- The overwhelming majority of parents and staff who responded to the online questionnaires felt that the school is a safe environment.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Inadequate**

- Teaching is inadequate and as a result, most pupils fail to make the progress that they should. Teaching is ineffective across most subjects, and particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. In many lessons, teachers do not set work to challenge different abilities of pupils. This results in many pupils, especially boys, making weak progress. In science, not all teachers have the subject knowledge to teach the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils need to achieve well in this subject.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils is inaccurate. This means that those pupils who need additional help are not getting the support that they need to help them make the progress that they should.
- Teachers do not provide enough challenge for the most able pupils. As a result, these pupils often complete work that does not extend their learning. They do not make the rapid progress or attain the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils' skills in writing and speaking are not developed consistently in all subjects. They do not correct or improve their spelling or understanding of key words, which means that some pupils continue to make the same mistakes over time.
- Pupils' enthusiasm and interest in learning vary, depending on the subject and the teacher. Pupils' learning is more effective where teachers consistently use good subject knowledge to plan engaging lessons, such as in art, drama and physical education.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

### **Inadequate**

#### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The curriculum provides pupils with some understanding of life in modern Britain, but their understanding is too narrow. For example, pupils do not have a good enough understanding of democracy.
- Careers information, advice and guidance are better for pupils in key stage 4 than for those in key stage 3. Disadvantaged pupils make slow progress and the difference between their attainment and other pupils nationally has not diminished quickly enough, which means that this group is not well prepared for their futures. However, the majority of older pupils pursue suitable education, employment or training pathways once they have left the school.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They are taught about how to keep safe. Pupils value the care and support given to them by staff in school.

- Pupils understand different forms of bullying. They report that some bullying does take place and teachers deal with it.
- Leaders have ensured that there are regular opportunities for pupils to discuss issues of equality and diversity. For example, Year 9 pupils have workshops in drama on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues. Wall displays provide a constant reminder of the school's stance on promoting equality and diversity for all pupils.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Teachers do not apply the school's behaviour management policy system effectively in lessons. Consequently, learning is disrupted by a small number of pupils. Boys' poor behaviour, in particular, is not addressed sufficiently well by staff.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is still too low compared to the national average. It has declined further in the current academic year.
- The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is well above the national average and is increasing over time. There are valid reasons for some absences, such as illness.
- In the past, the number of exclusions has been above the national average. Boys, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have had higher exclusion rates than their peers. Leaders have introduced new systems which are beginning to reduce exclusions. Nonetheless, they remain high.
- Pupils wear their uniform smartly and most are proud of their school. They generally conduct themselves well around the school and move quickly and sensibly to their lessons.
- Pupils who receive their education off-site at alternative provision generally attend well. These pupils receive appropriate support to help them manage their behaviour.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- Pupils' outcomes are inadequate. The GCSE results across a range of subjects for the past three years have been significantly below average. This is because pupils make weak progress from their starting points. Consequently, the school has failed to meet the government's floor standards for the last three consecutive years. This trend of underachievement is mirrored in the 2016 results. All groups of pupils made weak progress from their starting points. Pupils' progress is in the lowest 10% of schools nationally.
- Pupils' progress in English and mathematics in 2016 was significantly below average for low-ability and middle-ability groups. An analysis of pupils' books during this inspection confirms that these groups of pupils are not achieving as well as they should. There is too little evidence to indicate sustained improvement for those pupils currently attending the school.
- The development of pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar is not consistent across the school. The school identifies weak literacy skills as a key barrier to pupils'

academic success. Additional support to improve literacy is at an early stage of development. Information about pupils' reading ages is unreliable and does not lead to well-planned and targeted extra help for those pupils who find reading difficult.

- Leaders do not use the extra funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. Disadvantaged pupils underachieve considerably when compared with other pupils nationally across a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science. The most able disadvantaged pupils significantly underperform in mathematics, science, humanities and languages.
- The most able pupils do not make enough progress across a range of subjects because expectations are not high enough and teachers do not insist that work is completed to a high standard.
- Over time, boys make slower progress than girls. They fail to make the same progress as other pupils nationally who have the same starting point.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not flourish in this school. They make weak progress. This is because teachers do not meet the needs of these pupils effectively. Additional funding to support these pupils does not yield good outcomes.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding has been spent solely on supporting pupils in mathematics for the last two years, with limited success.
- The school's own assessment information indicates that pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science in key stage 3 is too slow. Inspection evidence confirms this.

## School details

Unique reference number	140001
Local authority	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Inspection number	10032201

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	815
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Downing
Headteacher	William Leyland
Telephone number	0151 477 8710
Website	<a href="http://kirkbyhighschool.net">http://kirkbyhighschool.net</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@kirkbyhighschool.net">admin@kirkbyhighschool.net</a>
Date of previous inspection	3–4 June 2015

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about curriculum information for some subjects. In addition, the special educational needs local offer is not present on the website.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- Kirkby High School is a member of the Rowan Learning Trust.
- It is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- Some pupils are supported through the Year 7 catch-up premium.

- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision for their education at All Saints School, Everton Free School, Evolve and Meadow Park.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment across a wide range of subjects in different age groups. Eight lessons were observed jointly with school leaders. Inspectors also visited registration time, assemblies, and listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors met with pupils, both formally and informally, to listen to their views.
- Inspectors observed pupils at breaks, lunchtimes, in registration periods, in assemblies and in lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and looked at a sample of pupils' books to evaluate pupils' learning over time in different subjects.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, and a range of staff, including newly and recently qualified teachers. In addition, a meeting was held with a representative from the Rowan Learning Trust and three members of the local governing body. Inspectors also spoke by telephone with representatives of alternative providers.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including: records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding information, minutes of local governing body meetings, information on the progress made by pupils, training arrangements for teachers and other staff, checks on the quality of teaching, the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- No responses were received to the questionnaire for staff.
- No responses were received to the questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in the 13 responses to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View) as well as seven comments received via the free text facility on Parent View.

## Inspection team

Ahmed Marikar, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Claire Hollister	Ofsted Inspector
Annette Patterson	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Bailey	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

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. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2017