

Kettering Buccleuch Academy

Weekley Glebe Road, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN16 9NS

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The rate of pupils' progress has increased. However, until recently, it has been too slow for some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. Inconsistencies remain in pupils' progress in some year groups and in some subjects.
- Leaders do not routinely evaluate the actions they take to know which are having the greatest impact on pupils' progress.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. Some teaching does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to make good progress. At other times, teaching is of a high quality and pupils make good progress.
- The teaching of reading and mathematics in key stage 2 has not yet shown the same improvement as in writing.
- Teaching assistants are not consistently effective in supporting pupils' learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The actions taken by the new, highly committed and steadfast principal have led to improvements in many areas of the school's effectiveness. The dedicated team of senior and middle leaders support the principal well.
- Senior leaders, governors and members of the academy trust have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The school is well placed, through its improvement plan, to continue to improve.
- The school's curriculum provides a good learning experience. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and understanding of British values are strong.
- Pupils' progress has accelerated rapidly in key stage 4. In key stage 1, pupils attain well in the phonics screening checks.
- Children in early years get off to a happy start and make good progress.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress in both academic and applied qualifications.
- Pupils' behaviour and conduct are good. At times they are exemplary. The school helps pupils to keep safe.
- Parents and carers are supportive and appreciative of the school's work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders, at all levels, evaluate the effectiveness of the actions they take to accelerate pupils' progress
- Eliminate the inconsistencies in teaching and accelerate more pupils' progress by ensuring that all teachers routinely:
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their mastery skills in mathematics, especially in the primary phase
 - improve pupils' reading skills through the primary reading programmes that leaders have recently established
 - ask questions which help pupils to explore their ideas in greater depth
 - adapt activities to meet the needs of more pupils and increase the number of pupils who achieve a higher standard in their learning
 - make more effective use of teaching assistants to develop pupils' understanding
 - provide more opportunities for disadvantaged pupils to make the same progress as other pupils in the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders, many recently appointed to their roles, have high expectations for staff and pupils. The new principal and the head of the primary phase have raised the bar since the last inspection. Leadership, teaching quality, pupils' behaviour and pupils' progress have all improved. Some areas of the school's effectiveness, however, have improved more rapidly than others. Staff are supportive of leaders and are committed to improving the school further.
- The principal and his enthusiastic team of senior leaders have a clear and well-informed understanding of what still needs to improve. Detailed improvement plans provide a well-structured approach to removing the inconsistencies that remain.
- Leaders communicate well and work effectively with parents. The school is oversubscribed and highly regarded in the community. Parents are appreciative of the support and care that their children receive. Many talk positively about the new leadership and the improvements made.
- The school's curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of the pupils. This is especially true in the secondary phase of the school. Leaders provide pupils with a wide range of subjects that support good attitudes to learning and career aspirations. The use of alternative education, for a few pupils, is effective and enables these pupils to achieve well. Teachers use homework well to support pupils' learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of fundamental British values are well promoted in all aspects of school life. Extra-curricular activities provide pupils with opportunities to explore a variety of other interests. Leaders provide pupils with the skills to become good citizens.
- Most teachers use the school's feedback policy consistently. Pupils appreciate the feedback they get and follow it up conscientiously to increase their knowledge and improve their skills and understanding.
- Leaders have now established an effective assessment system to measure pupils' progress. All subjects have targets and pupils understand them. Leaders check on pupils' progress and attainment frequently. The accuracy of teachers' checks has improved since the last inspection. Leaders and teachers work closely with the academy trust to ensure that what they measure and record is accurate and reliable. Leaders provide pupils with any extra support they may need to catch up but do not, however, measure the effectiveness of their actions well enough.
- Senior leaders have successfully improved pupils' achievement in many areas across the school. This is particularly notable in the early years, in the phonics screening checks and in the progress that pupils make during the secondary phase of their education. Improvements by the end of key stage 2 have been too slow, especially in reading and mathematics. Not enough pupils leave key stage 2 sufficiently well prepared for the next phase of their education.
- There has been a period of transition in staffing since the last inspection. Leaders have managed the numerous staff changes effectively. Although teaching has improved, the high turnover of staff has contributed to the inconsistencies that remain in the overall

quality of teaching. Leaders have established effective systems to check on and improve the quality of teaching. However, they do not routinely evaluate their actions to pinpoint the next steps of development. Some processes, designed to improve teaching further, are new and have not had time to make a sustained difference in accelerating pupils' progress.

- Subject leaders, several of whom are recently appointed, hold responsibility for improving the quality of teaching within their subjects. They know their teams well and have introduced strategies to improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress. However, some of their initiatives are at an early stage, and leaders need time to measure any sustained success they may bring.
- Leaders are now making better use of the extra funding they receive. Pupil premium funding is diminishing the progress gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. Until this year, however, disadvantaged pupils have not been catching up quickly enough. Extra teaching of literacy and numeracy helps Year 7 pupils to fill gaps in their knowledge and understanding and catch up with other pupils.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is used well. Leaders provide these pupils with bespoke programmes of learning. However, leaders do not evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes they use to know which are making a difference to accelerating pupils' progress.

Governance of the school

- The academy trust and the local governing body are ambitious for the pupils who attend the school. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors provide an appropriate level of challenge and support to leaders.
- The academy trust provides a layer of governance that is skilled and experienced. Members of the local governing body have a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities than at the previous inspection. They recognise, however, that some aspects of their work are still at a developmental stage. A review of governance has provided them with a set of actions to implement for further improvement.
- The academy trust has taken time to establish a stable and committed team of leaders. The appointment of several new leaders over the last year has improved the school's effectiveness. The time this has taken, however, means that inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and in the progress made by some pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in the school. The curriculum contributes to raising pupils' awareness of safe practices. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey and the school's own surveys, and those who were spoken with during the inspection, agreed that their children are safe and looked after well.
- Staff receive relevant training, including that associated with radicalisation and extremism. Partnership working with parents and external agencies is effective in making

sure that all pupils are supported and are safe. The designated teacher for child protection and safeguarding ensures that records are detailed and well maintained.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet consistently good across the school. Overall, there is not yet enough high-quality teaching. Some teaching does not help pupils make fast enough progress. However, teaching has improved since the last inspection. Learning is rapid in some lessons.
- Some teachers do not consistently use their strong subject knowledge to plan work that matches enough of the pupils' learning needs. Sometimes pupils do not move on to harder work quickly enough. In mathematics, for example, some activities set were at a very low standard. At other times, teachers provide pupils with stimulating tasks and challenge them, as was observed in algebra learning.
- Some teachers have not yet developed their use of questioning as well as others. Teachers use questions to check pupils' knowledge but do not routinely use them to encourage pupils to think harder. For example, in some of the lessons observed, teachers did not use questioning effectively to check on how well pupils understood the topics they were studying. Some teachers, however, use their questioning skills confidently to check pupils' learning and deepen their understanding. This was observed to be particularly effective in key stage 3 history. Pupils answered demanding questions confidently when discussing different historical documents.
- Teaching assistants do not routinely provide an effective approach for pupils who need extra support. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. At times they intervene too quickly and do not provide pupils with the strategies they need to be successful in future learning. Some teaching assistants, however, make good use of extra resources and successful learning strategies. This improves pupils' understanding and accelerates the progress that they make.
- Approaches to the teaching of reading, especially in key stage 2, do not identify and target the specific skills that pupils lack. Pupils were not able to read the words in some of the activities that their teachers set. Some pupils' understanding of what they read is less well developed. Leaders have established new approaches to rectify this. However, these approaches have yet to be routinely built into daily practice and checked for their effectiveness.
- Teachers do not routinely provide enough opportunities for pupils to use their reasoning skills in mathematics, particularly in the primary phase. Not enough pupils use explanations confidently to demonstrate their understanding of the skills they are learning.
- Phonics teaching has improved and is now strong. Writing skills are well developed and teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation are typically high. This also extends to the presentation of work in their different exercise books, which is of a good standard.
- There are strong relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils willingly cooperate with staff and follow instructions. There is little low-level disruption and most lessons flow smoothly.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident and proud to be a part of the school. Primary pupils understand and respect the school's 'rainbow values'. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and parents agree.
- Bullying, including racism, is rare in the school. Pupils report that when it does occur, staff deal with it swiftly. Most parents agree that bullying is rare, and many speak well of how it is dealt with.
- The curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their understanding of a wide range of issues. These include being healthy, keeping fit and staying safe. The many extra-curricular opportunities help pupils to develop additional skills.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about different religions, take part in overseas trips and support local charities. Leaders are effective in promoting fundamental British values and pupils know how to be good citizens.
- Pupils have access to effective careers education, advice and guidance to support them in making important decisions about their options and the next stages of their education, training or employment.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils act in a responsible way and good behaviour for the majority of pupils is self-regulated. They are polite, welcoming and courteous. Pupils take pride in their appearance and wear their uniforms well, reflecting their loyalty to the school. A large majority of pupils and parents agree that behaviour is good.
- Leaders continue to raise the bar for behavioural standards. They track behaviour meticulously and although incidents of poor behaviour still occur, they are reducing. The number of pupils who are fixed-term excluded is also decreasing.
- A small number of pupils attend off-site education. Leaders work closely with the alternative providers to check that pupils are safe and behave well. They also ensure that these pupils attend regularly and succeed in their qualifications.
- Pupils' attendance has been lower than the national average and, until this year, has shown little sign of improvement. Leaders' recent actions have already made a difference in reducing the number of pupils who are absent, particularly for pupils who are disadvantaged or who have SEN and/or disabilities. Current school information indicates that attendance is likely to be above the 2017 national average. However, leaders have yet to evaluate their actions to identify which practices are making the most difference. Also, it is not yet known if this improvement will be sustained.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not yet make consistently good progress across the school. Improvements by the end of key stage 2 have been too slow, especially in reading and mathematics. However, pupils are beginning to leave key stage 2 better prepared for the next phase of their education. Improvements by the end of key stage 4 have been more rapid and pupils now make good progress. Pupils leave key stage 4 well prepared for their next stages of education, training or employment.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the phonics screening checks increased last year. Assessment information indicates that this is likely to be sustained this year.
- During key stage 1, pupils are attaining higher standards than they have done in previous years, especially in reading and in writing. The school's assessment information suggests that many improvements are set to continue for pupils currently in key stage 1. However, some variation remains in the pace of this improvement. The number of pupils who are likely to achieve a greater depth to their learning is too low.
- For a number of years, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 in reading and mathematics has been well below the national averages. Improvements have been slow but assessment information now indicates that progress is now accelerating. Inconsistencies remain, however, between different year groups and in the number of pupils reaching a greater depth to their learning. Progress in writing, by the end of key stage 2, has been more rapid.
- For pupils in the secondary phase of the school, progress has accelerated since the last inspection, especially in English and mathematics. Progress has accelerated for all different ability groups, but has not been as rapid for the most able pupils. The number of pupils taking the English Baccalaureate has been low. Progress within these subjects has also been slow. An improving trend is now evident from the school's assessment information.
- Disadvantaged pupils have not made the progress that they should. Although the pace of improvement is becoming more rapid, it has been too slow. In many subjects, gaps to national averages are beginning to close but the progress of disadvantaged pupils has not yet caught up with that of other pupils in the school.
- The small number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are cared for well. Their individual care plans make sure that many make progress from their different starting points.
- The school has more boys than girls. Progress made by the boys has not yet caught up with that of the girls across the school. Leaders are taking effective action to remedy this. Although gaps remain in some years, these are much less notable.
- Pupils' progress in a range of other subjects during the secondary phase is good. Leaders are taking action to eliminate the variation in some progress rates in the different subjects.

Early years provision

Good

- New leadership of early years is good and has led to rapid improvement. The number

of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception has increased since the previous inspection. Children now leave the Reception Year having made good progress. Leaders prepare children well for their entry to Year 1.

- The early years leader is ambitious for the children. She provides strong leadership and has a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. Leaders use children's assessment information effectively to measure the progress that they make. Targeted support provides additional teaching to fill any gaps identified in the children's learning.
- The curriculum is designed to address children's needs and interests and covers all areas of learning. Teachers plan activities that motivate the children and provide challenge. The curriculum also incorporates opportunities to develop children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning. For example, the children learn about different religions and different countries.
- The learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, is bright and rich. Adults set carefully-chosen tasks that interest the children and help them to learn. The teaching of phonics is effective. Adults develop the children's writing and mathematics skills well.
- Children are happy in the early years. Their behaviour is good and often it is exemplary. Children sustain their play and work well together. Adults ensure that all safeguarding requirements are adhered to and help keep children safe.
- Parents are included in their children's education and are invited to the school regularly. Effective partnerships with other agencies provide children with any extra support they may need.
- Teaching in early years is consistently good. Adults interact with children and support them effectively. They question children to both check and deepen their understanding. Sometimes, however, adults do not encourage some pupils to find things out for themselves.
- Different groups of children, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress in all of their learning goals. However, leaders recognise, and are working effectively to eliminate, the gaps in attainment between boys and girls.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders have high expectations of students in the sixth form. Detailed use of assessment information provides sixth-form leaders with an accurate view of the sixth form's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders' close monitoring, and timely interventions, help students make good progress in both academic and applied qualifications.
- The curriculum is appropriate and adapted to meet the needs of current students. Students are able to mix academic and applied courses. Students' progress in applied qualifications is particularly strong. Their progress in academic qualifications is good and improving. More of the most able students are now attaining higher standards in the courses that they take.
- Disadvantaged students have not made the same rapid progress as other students in the past. The school's current assessment information suggests that the gaps between

disadvantaged students and others have closed. Historically, boys have not made as rapid progress as girls. These gender gaps are also closing.

- Sixth-form leaders are committed to developing students' personal development and well-being. A well-constructed global learning programme, including personal, social, health and economic education, helps students to develop life skills that will help them get a good job. All students, whether taking academic or applied subjects, undertake work experience. A careers programme provides students with advice and guidance so that they follow the most suitable course, based on their prior attainment and their career ambitions.
- Leaders ensure that students who did not achieve standard pass grades in English and/or mathematics at GCSE receive appropriate support. Students achieve well in the English and mathematics retake examinations compared to other students nationally.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is consistently good. Teachers use questioning particularly well to challenge students, stimulate their interests, and engage them in learning. In Year 13 statistics, questioning was used skilfully to check on students' understanding and explore learning at a deeper level.
- Students behave well in the sixth form and know how to stay safe. Sixth-form students support and mentor other pupils. For example, some have been trained as counsellors and others work with disadvantaged pupils.
- Retention on courses has, until recently, been high. Leaders have reviewed the curriculum offered and made changes to prevent the recent loss of students from some courses occurring again. Destinations information is strong and progression to higher education is high.
- Leaders acknowledge that progress in a few subjects is not as rapid as it is in others. They are taking action to improve this. Part of this work involves using the skills and experience found within the leadership teams in other academy trust schools.

School details

Unique reference number	135966
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10041569

This inspection of the school 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 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,694
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	136
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Paul Clarke
Principal	Dino Di Salvo
Telephone number	01536 515644
Website	www.kba.uk
Email address	Enquiries@kba.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 December 2015

Information about this school

- Kettering Buccleuch is a large all-through school for children aged between 4 and 18 years. The school is an academy, sponsored by the United Learning Trust. There are currently 60 schools within this multi-academy trust. The trustees have overall responsibility for the governance of the school. The trust delegates some of its functions to the local governing body. The trust provides effective support to the school.
- A new principal and a new primary phase headteacher took up post in April 2016 and September 2016 respectively. Several other leaders and numerous teachers have also been appointed recently.

- Three quarters of the pupils are white British. The other quarter of pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average. The school has a higher proportion of boys than most schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is average.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 results in 2015, 2016 and 2017.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- A small number of pupils are taught off-site. These pupils attend the William Knibb Centre, Oaklands, the Torch Learning Centre and hospital provisions.
- The school provides a breakfast club for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 55 lessons. All this learning was observed jointly with the senior leaders and members of the academy trust.
- Discussions took place with school staff, members of the governing body and trustees.
- The inspectors met with five groups of pupils. They considered the school's own pupil survey and talked with pupils informally. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey. Inspectors also listened to pupils reading. They observed assembly, tutor time and pupils' social time.
- Inspectors took into account the 135 responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, including the 104 free-text comments and an email. They also considered the 169 staff responses to Ofsted's online surveys. Inspectors spoke formally and informally with parents.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a broad range of evidence, including the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, planning and monitoring documentation, the work in pupils' books, records relating to attendance and behaviour and the school's information on pupils' current attainment and progress in reading, writing, English, mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- The school's child protection and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised. Inspectors reviewed the school's website to confirm whether it met the requirements on the publication of specified information.

Inspection team

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Claire Buffham	Ofsted Inspector
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Nina Bee	Ofsted Inspector
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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.

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