

Inspection of Kepier

Dairy Lane, Houghton le Spring, Tyne and Wear, DH4 5BH

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 March 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Kepier is a school where everyone is valued. Pupils and staff work harmoniously to create a positive environment for learning. Staff know pupils, they care about their well-being and support them to achieve their best. Pupils greatly appreciate the support they receive, inspectors heard that 'They have a sixth sense for when we need support.'

The school is at the heart of the community. It is a safe space where pupils can thrive, develop their academic abilities and social skills. There are opportunities for pupils to debate their ideas, take part in a range of extra-curricular activities and learn about the world of work. Clubs include several sports, French, coding and cookery.

Older pupils can apply to become prefects or 'Lead Learners', an opportunity which they relish. As part of this role, they work alongside leaders to improve the school and ensure every pupil has a voice.

Leaders ensure that pupils leave the school with the skills and qualifications to become successful, motivated and ambitious adults. This is achieved through a comprehensive plan for personal development and well-being.

Staff uphold the school ethos; inspire, challenge, support in everything they do. Leaders think carefully about the actions they take, this means the school continues to go from strength to strength.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have clear vision and ambition for all pupils. They know how best to support pupils and ensure that school is a positive place to be. Leaders at all levels are committed to improving the lives of young people. Staff receive effective training to meet the needs of pupils. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, (SEND) have access to a broad and ambitious curriculum.

Teachers use their knowledge and passion to develop pupils' love of learning. Planning of the curriculum develops 'powerful knowledge', which is key information all pupils need. Leaders ensure that pupils know how to use subject-specific skills with confidence. Departments are beginning to work together to develop these skills further, for example drawing graphs in mathematics and science.

Staff use assessment effectively to establish next steps for pupils. This includes opportunities to re-visit previous learning. As a result, pupils are beginning to know and remember more over time.

The number of pupils studying the range of subjects that form the English Baccalaureate is not increasing rapidly enough to meet the government's ambition. Leaders' work on the French curriculum has built a solid foundation for this to improve.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils, as a result, lessons have a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to contribute. They understand the rewards and sanctions policy the school has in place. At social times, behaviour is also good, and pupils feel safe around the school site. All staff are clear about their expectations for all pupils.

The school has a carefully planned curriculum for personal development. Pupils learn about a wide range of issues and understand what it means to be a citizen in Modern Britain. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have benefitted from a clearly sequenced personal development curriculum. Older pupils have gaps in their learning, partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and are less confident in their understanding of diversity. Careers information, education, advice and guidance is planned in detail. There are opportunities for pupils to meet local employers, such as Nissan, and attend careers fairs organised by the school. The requirements of the Baker Clause are met.

Leaders have prioritised reading and invest in several schemes to support this. The schemes are regularly reviewed to ensure they are meeting pupils' needs. As a result, weaker readers are improving their reading.

School leaders, including governors, identify areas for improvement. They create training and development opportunities for all staff while also carefully considering workload. As a result, staff feel supported and valued. Leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils leave the school with skills and qualifications that will allow them to go on to their next stage in education or employment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed a culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Staff at all levels receive regular training and updates to help them understand the risks that young people face. Record keeping and monitoring of those most at risk is highly effective.

All staff are encouraged to report a wide range of concerns, so that young people at risk can be identified quickly and effectively. This leads to positive outcomes for vulnerable pupils attending the school.

Pupils feel safe at school and speak highly of the support they receive from staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not enough pupils take the suite of courses that make up the English Baccalaureate. This is limiting their opportunities when accessing further education and employment. Leaders need to further develop the languages curriculum and set ambitious targets for increasing the uptake of these subjects over the next three years.

- The curriculum for personal development is not yet fully embedded. This has led to gaps in understanding for older pupils in relation to protected characteristics and British Values. Leaders must continue to develop the curriculum to target gaps in pupils' knowledge. In addition, further advice and training is required for staff delivering the personal development curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	137262
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10212344
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1090
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Martin Connor
Headteacher	Nicola Ashton
Website	http://www.kepier.com
Date of previous inspection	3 December 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is an above average sized comprehensive school and growing.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The school serves a deprived area of the Sunderland Authority.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average, those on an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is above average.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.

- Deep Dives were carried out in English, Science, Geography and Design Technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited sample lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders responsible for SEND provision and higher attaining pupils. They listened to a selection of pupils read and inspectors also looked at a range of other curriculum plans.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body and other inspectors spoke to alternative providers.
- Inspectors spoke with those staff responsible for safeguarding, checked records and procedures for keeping young people safe as well as speaking to staff and pupils. One inspector checked the single central record to ensure all adults on site had appropriate safeguarding checks carried out.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View online and read responses to parent surveys.

Inspection team

John Linkins, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Martin Featherstone	Ofsted Inspector
Shelley Heseltine	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector

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