

King's Oak Academy

Brook Road, Kingswood, Bristol, Gloucestershire BS15 4JT

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal has led a steady improvement in the performance of the school over the last two years. Overall, pupils are now making good progress from their starting points.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They tackle issues methodically and so have gradually improved teaching, learning and assessment over time.
- The board and governors provide strong oversight of the work of the school. They hold the principal to account well and they have acted to strengthen the school's leadership team. The school has improved as a consequence.
- Leaders have recently revised the key stages 3 and 4 curriculum. This has raised expectations of what pupils can achieve and is leading to improved standards, particularly in key stage 3.
- Teaching typically meets pupils' needs well. Teachers set work that encourages pupils to think and to explain. The most able are given challenges that stretch them.
- Where teaching is at its best, pupils are keen to learn. They know how to improve their work and are diligent in correcting and redrafting their work.
- The primary phase, called 'the Acorn', is providing a good start for pupils because expectations are high and leaders and staff work hard to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The early years is a strength of the school. Staff work closely with those in key stage 1 to get children off to a strong start. Staff know the children well. Teaching is stimulating and children make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils behave well overall. Parents and carers, and pupils, say that behaviour has improved significantly over the last two years. Pupils generally have positive attitudes to learning too.
- Attendance is improving but too many pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, are still regularly absent. This is having a significant impact on their learning because they fall behind.
- Some weaker teaching remains. Pupils make slow progress where expectations of them remain too low. They become disengaged and are content to sit back.
- Not all middle leadership is as effective as the best. This has allowed weaker teaching to persist in a few subjects.
- Some parents feel that school leaders do not respond to their concerns promptly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, and hence raise standards further, by ensuring that teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high across all subjects.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all middle leaders have the skills to carry out their roles effectively
 - improving communication with parents so that parents feel their concerns are addressed.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - continuing to improve attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average
 - redoubling efforts to tackle persistent absence, particularly of disadvantaged pupils, and to ensure that absent pupils catch up.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since his appointment in 2016, the principal has acted with determination to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment for all pupils. He understands the importance of raising standards without delay but at the same time ensuring that improvements are embedded and long-lasting. This approach has led to a steady, long-term improvement in the quality of education across the school.
- The principal, supported by the multi-academy trust, has strengthened his senior team. Together, they have a clear-sighted view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Over the last two years, they have methodically tackled weak aspects of the school's provision. This has led to continual, steady improvement. They understand, however, that some areas require further development. The capacity for further improvement is good.
- Leaders have raised expectations of what pupils can achieve. They are challenging pupils and teachers alike to reach those expectations. They are supporting teachers by putting in place a range of training opportunities for them. Teachers are asked to reflect on their practice and to share the improvements they make. Leaders are also tackling the underperformance of teachers where necessary. However, they acknowledge that although they have made considerable progress, inconsistencies remain.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum to ensure that pupils in key stage 3 build on what they know when they arrive in Year 7 and are well prepared for their GCSE courses. Leaders correctly identified improving literacy as a priority. They ensure that there are numerous opportunities for pupils to practise their writing through the curriculum. In history and religious education, for example, pupils are regularly asked to write thoughtful, extended passages.
- Leaders have developed a strong assessment system and, as a result, they have a good understanding of the progress that pupils are making over time. They make good use of the common structure in place across the multi-academy trust to check on the accuracy of teachers' assessments. They are now developing their assessment practice further so that teachers have a clear understanding of the key next steps in pupils' learning. This incremental improvement is characteristic of the principal's approach to improving the school.
- Leadership of the Acorn is strong. It is in its third year of operation and is thriving as a result of strong strategic oversight and good day-to-day management. Leaders have developed a culture that ensures that they meet the needs of all pupils through partnership between teachers, teaching partners (teaching assistants) and parents. Parents value this approach and pupils are making good progress.
- Middle leaders are improving their effectiveness in leading their subjects and areas of responsibility. Senior leaders have raised their expectations of middle leaders and middle leaders have responded well. Most are successful in ensuring that teaching is consistently good. However, in some subjects, inconsistencies remain. In these

subjects, middle leaders are not monitoring the quality of teaching effectively. As a result, some weaker teaching has not yet been tackled.

- Leaders make good use of the pupil premium funding they receive. They monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils closely and intervene to support them when necessary. Pupils are given extra support at key moments in their school life, for example when choosing their GCSE options. As a result of these strategies, pupils make good progress when they are in school. However, they are still vulnerable to falling behind because their rates of attendance are too low.
- Leadership of special educational needs (SEN) is good. Leaders make good use of the funding they receive to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Pupils' needs are assessed carefully and their progress is monitored. A small number of pupils attend alternative provision on a temporary basis. Leaders work closely with the alternative provision to monitor progress and to arrange a smooth transition back into the main school at an appropriate time. In key stage 3, leaders use additional Year 7 funding appropriately to boost the basic skills of those pupils who need to catch up.
- Leaders make good use of the support they receive from the multi-academy trust to improve teaching and learning. They work closely with the trust's leaders to get access to training for teachers and to make sure that they are assessing pupils correctly. The Acorn has made particularly good use of the trust's support as it develops from its early days.
- The school's positive partnership with parents is a strong feature of key stage 1 and the early years. However, some parents of pupils in key stages 3 and 4 are frustrated that they do not get a response from school staff when they contact the school. Leaders are aware that this undermines relationships and are keen to address the issue.

Governance of the school

- The multi-academy trust's board holds school leaders and the academy council (the local governing body) to account well. They ask challenging questions and they are persistent, returning to key issues if they are not satisfied.
- The academy council scrutinises the work of the school closely. Council members know the school well. They work with leaders across the school so that they can better understand its strengths and weaknesses and so be well placed to ask searching questions. They are ambitious for the school and are keen that the current improvements are built on.
- The multi-academy trust draws on its understanding of the school's current performance when it deploys resources to provide the additional support the school needs to develop further. This has proved effective in addressing some of the school's pressing issues.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- All members of staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. They are well trained and know what to do should they feel a pupil is unsafe. Acorn staff are vigilant and all the appropriate safeguards and risk assessments are in place.
- Pupils say they feel safe and they are confident that they can approach a member of staff if they have a concern. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe online and to protect themselves from the dangers of radicalisation.
- Safeguarding systems throughout the school are strong. All the necessary recruitment checks are made and good records kept. There is an additional layer of oversight from the multi-academy trust, which monitors the school's safeguarding work closely.
- School staff work well with external agencies, such as the local authority social care team, to protect vulnerable pupils and those who are experiencing additional challenges in their lives.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved steadily over the last few years. This is the result of the focus leaders have put on them and the work that teachers are doing to improve their skills. Typically, teachers have a good understanding of what pupils know, understand and can do because they assess pupils carefully. They then set appropriate work that moves the pupils' learning forward.
- Where teaching is at its best, pupils make progress because they know what to do to their work to improve it. Teachers focus on identifying gaps in pupils' learning and then tackle them.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do have improved and are now generally good. Pupils enjoy the challenge they now get and respond positively to it.
- Leaders and teachers put an emphasis on improving pupils' writing skills from the early years to key stage 4. As they get older, pupils are expected to write extended passages in English and across the curriculum. The result is that they are able to express themselves in writing well. They can set out their thinking coherently and use language well to convince the reader. Their increasing skill is having a positive impact on their work across the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching in key stage 1 is high. Teachers and teaching partners work together closely to tailor the work they set for pupils. They are skilled at asking probing questions that make pupils think and take the next step in their understanding. Pupils respond positively and are keen to learn. The result is that pupils are making good progress with their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders and teachers focus closely on ensuring that disadvantaged pupils are given the support they need to overcome the barriers they face. Teachers are asked to focus on these pupils in classes to make sure that they are involved and active in their lessons. This is having a positive impact and pupils are doing well in most lessons. However, they still fall behind because they are absent too often and are not required to catch up on the work they missed.

- Teachers support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities well. Pupils are monitored closely and an appropriate curriculum is in place for them. They are supported well in lessons by teaching partners, who know them well.
- Leaders know that while they have improved the overall quality of teaching, some weaker teaching remains. Teachers still sometimes set work that does not challenge pupils or make them think. When this happens, pupils lose concentration and they drift along. Sometimes, pupils do not know how to improve their work, or they are not motivated to do so. The result is that progress is slow.
- The quality of teaching of English in key stages 3 and 4 is improving and is now good overall. Pupils enjoy developing their writing skills because teachers challenge them to think and to explain. Teachers give pupils good advice on how to edit and improve their work. The quality of secondary mathematics teaching is less consistent. Some teaching is stimulating and encourages pupils to solve problems and to reason and deduce. However, some is less challenging, with too much time spent on basic calculations. When this happens, pupils lose interest and make slower progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to work are generally positive. They are punctual to lessons and come to school expecting to work. They enjoy answering teachers' questions and they generally take pride in the presentation of their work. In most subjects they are keen to do well.
- Leaders place great value on making sure that pupils have the opportunity for personal growth and to consider moral issues. The programme for personal, social and health education is carefully structured and pupils are keen to take part. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online. They are also taught about fundamental British values and are able to discuss and debate newsworthy topics in an open and friendly atmosphere.
- There is strong provision in place to support pupils who have emotional and mental-health needs. Staff are trained and the school culture is sympathetic and helpful.
- Key stage 1 pupils come to school enthusiastically and are eager to learn. Teachers harness pupils' energy and use it to develop their social skills and ability to work together. Pupils are taught to work and play safely. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong.
- There is a broad range of extra-curricular opportunities available across the school. Pupils enjoy these and are keen to take part. There are also opportunities for pupils to take on positions of responsibility, such as those of school council representatives. Pupils who are selected are proud of their success.
- A small number of pupils who need additional support attend an alternative provider. These pupils are monitored closely so that they can return to school when they are able to do so. This arrangement is generally successful because there is an appropriate

focus on pupils' self-discipline and their ability to work positively in classroom environments.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The conduct of pupils around the school site is typically good. Behaviour has improved significantly over the last few years. The vast majority of pupils move around the school sensibly and treat each other with warmth and good humour. Some isolated pockets of poor behaviour from older boys remain. However, these are becoming increasingly rare.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. When the quality of teaching is good, pupils are engaged and positive. On the occasions when teaching is weaker, there is some occasional low-level disruption.
- Attendance is below the national average. School leaders employ a broad range of strategies to improve attendance and these are having an effect. However, progress is slow. Attendance in the Acorn is good. Most pupils come to school every day.
- Too many pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, are regularly absent. Consequently, they miss work and they often do not catch up. This is holding them back.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Overall, pupils in key stages 3 and 4 are making good progress. Historically, there has been a year-on-year improvement from a low base. Results in 2017 were in line with the national average in most areas. Current pupils are continuing that improvement.
- The most able pupils are now reaching the standards they are capable of, across most subjects and year groups. This is an improvement on previous years. They are now making more progress because more is expected of them and they are responding to that additional challenge.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than in the past. In 2017, they achieved standards broadly similar to those of other pupils. Those current pupils with good attendance are making good progress in most subjects.
- Standards in English have been poor in the past, largely as a result of the poor outcomes for boys. However, English is now showing a marked improvement. The quality of writing and understanding of literature is better across all year groups because teaching has improved. Pupils are entering the school in Year 7 with higher standards than previously and they are maintaining these standards as they progress through key stage 3.
- Standards in mathematics were in line with national averages in 2017. This was an improvement on 2016. However, standards in the school now show no further improvement because not all mathematics teaching meets the needs of pupils, particularly the most able.
- Pupils in key stage 1 are achieving good standards in reading, writing and mathematics. They are making good progress from their starting points. In Year 2, for

example, pupils are able to write at length with accurate punctuation. The most able are building on the good start they received in Reception and are now working confidently at greater depth.

- In 2017, Year 1 pupils undertook the phonics screening check for the first time. The outcomes were slightly below the national average. This year, the current Year 1 are achieving a good standard in their phonics work. This is because leaders and teachers reflected on, and improved, their teaching.

Early years provision

Good

- Early years provision is strong. Children get off to a flying start and all groups of children make good progress over time so that by the end of the foundation stage outcomes are above the national average and improving. Outcomes for disadvantaged groups are improving quickly.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths of the early years and areas for its future development. They share a strong vision and communicate this clearly to staff at all levels. Leaders at all levels have developed the quality and quantity of monitoring of the quality of teaching, and staff know what to do to improve further. Staff receive training, both externally and through the multi-academy trust group of schools. Morale is high and all staff report a strong sense of teamwork.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan and deliver lessons which engage and motivate children to do their best. Activities are designed around children so that they know what to do to improve. As a result, behaviour is consistently strong and virtually no instances of disruption were observed during this inspection.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. Children know whom to speak to if they are worried or have a problem. Pastoral provision is a strength and vulnerable children with complex needs are given the care and attention they need to ensure that they can access learning in a safe and caring environment. Children are supported by good care plans and a highly effective pastoral team.

School details

Unique reference number	137106
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10033759

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	845
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jane Harrington
Principal	Richard Clutterbuck
Telephone number	01179 927 127
Website	kingsoakacademy.org.uk
Email address	principal@kingsoakacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Cabot Learning Federation. It is an all-through school that caters for pupils from 4 to 19. However, it currently only has pupils in Reception and key stages 1, 3 and 4. The primary phase (the Acorn) opened in 2015 and will grow each year until it reaches Year 6. There is no longer a sixth-form provision. Sixth-form students now attend another school in the Cabot Federation.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium grant is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well above average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress by the end of key stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across the range of subjects and age groups, and scrutinised a wide range of pupils' written work. Some of the observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including minutes of academy council and trust meetings, development plans, analysis of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour data, safeguarding documents and the school's review of its own performance.
- Meetings were held with members of the academy council, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and groups of pupils.
- An inspector spoke to the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust and the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors took account of 82 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to parents in person and by telephone. They also took into account the responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Andrew Lovett, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paul Nicholson	Ofsted Inspector
Benjamin Antell	Ofsted Inspector
Non Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Aaron Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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