

# Inspection of Kingsthorpe College

Boughton Green Road, Kingsthorpe, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN2 7HR

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Inspection dates: 10–11 December 2019

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Kingsthorpe College is a welcoming and friendly school. Relationships are positive, and expectations are high. The school's motto is 'Everything is possible.' Pupils know that staff want them to 'dream big, work hard and stay humble'. Pupils know that the learning culture in the school is getting better all the time.

Pupils are happy at the school. They wear their uniform smartly. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and are well looked after. Incidents of bullying are low. Pupils say that they are confident staff will deal with any issues that occur. The school is a calm and orderly environment where most pupils behave well. There are many polite and courteous pupils.

Leaders have improved the curriculum so that pupils learn the key information they need at the right time. Pupils' achievement has improved overall in the past year, including that of students in the sixth form. However, pupils are not always given sufficiently demanding work in all subjects. Some pupils do not achieve as well as they should in some courses.

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

Leaders have implemented a well-thought-out and ambitious curriculum. They thought about the local labour market and pupils' aspirations when they designed it. Pupils study a broad range of subjects in all key stages. They value the balance of academic and vocational subjects.

Curriculum leaders think carefully about what pupils should learn and when. Pupils' knowledge and skills build over time and their achievement has improved. However, in some subjects, teachers do not always ensure that all work is demanding enough. Sometimes pupils do not use technical vocabulary precisely.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They present this clearly so that pupils know and remember more. Teachers check pupils' understanding and clear up misconceptions. However, in some subjects pupils do not use vocabulary with precision.

Leaders have emphasised the importance of reading. 'Buddy-reading' sessions help pupils to become fluent and confident readers. Pupils support each other to read often. Pupils in Years 9 and 12 act as mentors for younger pupils. Younger pupils say they appreciate the reading support they receive.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Pupils achieve particularly strongly in subjects such as art, business studies, ethics and dance. Achievement has improved in mathematics and humanities. Staff who support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) understand their needs well. Many parents appreciate this. Staff have received training to ensure

that teaching meets the needs of pupils with SEND better. However, this training is recent and not all teachers adapt their teaching to support these pupils in the classroom.

Students enjoy their time in the sixth form. They feel challenged and well supported. There is a wide range of courses to study. Teaching in most subjects helps them to learn and remember more, especially in subjects like sociology and psychology. Levels of achievement have improved, and students are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training. Some students feel that the number of lessons taught by temporary staff in some subjects has reduced their enjoyment of these subjects.

The curriculum for personal development is a strength of the school. The programme for personal, social, health and economic education is comprehensive. Teachers make sure pupils understand how to protect themselves from the potential risks of substance misuse, gang culture, knife crime and the internet. Leaders ensure that pupils receive high-quality careers advice and guidance across all year groups. Pupils are confident about the choices they have made. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities on offer.

Leaders work hard to make sure that pupils attend school regularly. As a result, pupils' overall attendance has improved for all groups of pupils. However, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are still more likely to be absent more than others.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct. The school is generally a calm and orderly community. Leaders make sure that pupils have the opportunity to reflect on the choices that they have made. They help pupils to think how they could act differently in the future. Levels of fixed-term exclusions are low and have reduced. Leaders have used permanent exclusions appropriately. They recognise the need to reduce these.

Leaders and governors have established a positive school culture. They have a clear vision which has united staff. Staff morale is high. Leaders take workload into consideration when developing strategies for improvements.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that the culture of safeguarding is strong. Staff are well trained. They follow reporting systems well. Leaders respond to pupils' needs. They work well with external agencies to keep vulnerable pupils safe. Leaders are persistent in securing extra support, including access to early help when needed. Leaders' analysis of the potential risks that pupils may face in the local area has informed the teaching of personal safety. Leaders and governors follow safer recruitment guidance when appointing new staff. They act swiftly to protect pupils, including when concerns arise about the conduct of adults.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have improved curriculum plans to help pupils build knowledge over time. The implementation of the curriculum is not consistently effective in all subjects, particularly in key stage 3. Sometimes work is not demanding enough. Sometimes pupils are not supported to develop their use of technical terminology. Leaders should ensure that teachers set demanding work and deepen pupils' understanding by using technical vocabulary with precision and supporting pupils to reflect this in their own written and oral responses.
- Pupils with SEND are supported well within the learning support base. However, teachers do not always plan their teaching so that pupils with SEND get the support that they need across the wider curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers adapt the curriculum to meet all pupils' needs appropriately.
- Permanent exclusions are used as a last resort. Nevertheless, the number of pupils who have been permanently excluded is too high. Leaders need to reduce this number.
- There has been recent turbulence in staffing which has detrimentally affected the quality of education and pupils' achievement in the past. Leaders have been successful in retaining more staff and reducing the proportion of lessons taught by temporary staff. However, in some subjects the levels of 'cover' remain high, including in the sixth form. This is to the frustration of some pupils and parents. Leaders need to ensure that the proportion of lessons taught by temporary staff continues to reduce further.

## 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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're 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138932
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110084
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,358
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	185
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Carly Waterman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jennifer Giovanelli
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.kingsthorpecollege.org.uk">http://www.kingsthorpecollege.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13–14 May 2015

## Information about this school

- Kingsthorpe College is the sole academy of the Collaborative Academies Trust, which it joined in January 2015.
- The school uses two alternative education providers for a very small number of pupils. These providers are the CE Academy and the Northampton Schools Tutorial Centre, based at the Northampton International Academy.

## Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. Meetings were also held with the leaders for the sixth form, the provision for pupils with SEND and curriculum subjects.

- In order to check the school's arrangements for safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the school's designated leaders for safeguarding. Policies, procedures and record keeping were evaluated. This included a review of the school's single central register and the school's processes for recruiting staff.
- A meeting was held with the chair and vice-chair of the local governing body. A telephone conversation was held with representatives from the board of trustees, including the chair.
- Meetings were held with three groups of staff, including a group of newly qualified teachers.
- We met with several groups of pupils, including students in the sixth form. We also spoke to pupils informally around the school site.
- The subjects that were considered in depth as part of this inspection were English, mathematics, history, art and design, and business studies. In each subject, we visited lessons, scrutinised the work in pupils' books and held discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils.
- We also considered the 177 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including 161 free-text comments. We also considered the 117 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

## **Inspection team**

Chris Stevens, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sally Wicken	Ofsted Inspector
Jason Brooks	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Sheppard	Ofsted Inspector
Laurence Reilly	Ofsted Inspector

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