

Dixons Kings Academy

Northside Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD7 2AN

Inspection dates

26–27 January 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders at all levels are relentless in their pursuit of excellence. They uphold the highest expectations of behaviour and learning. Consequently, the rate of school improvement has been tremendous.
- In 2016, the progress of pupils in Year 11 was exceptional. The school was in the top 10% of schools nationally for progress overall and in the top 1% for progress in science.
- This substantial and sustained progress is evident across all current year groups and almost all subjects.
- While in 2016 there was a small degree of inconsistency in progress for some groups and subjects, any differences are quickly diminishing.
- Leaders and teachers have virtually eliminated any difference in achievement between disadvantaged pupils in the school and that of other pupils nationally.
- Teachers support and challenge pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well so that they make strong progress.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make sustained progress so that many reach the highest grades by the time they leave the school. There remains some scope for a few of these pupils to make even more progress.
- Teachers' training and development and leaders' checks on teaching quality are highly effective. As a result, teaching is highly consistent in quality across almost all subjects.
- Teachers get the basics right. In particular, they assess pupils exceptionally well and make use of this information to plan teaching that deepens learning for all groups of pupils.
- The school's core values of integrity, civility and diligence are evident in practice. Pupils are well mannered and motivated, and develop resilience.
- Leaders and teachers prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain through well-planned personal and social development programmes and a range of enrichment activities.
- Leaders' commitment to helping pupils achieve high-quality academic qualifications is evident in the much higher than average proportion of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate.
- Leaders ensure that pupils throughout the age range receive high-quality independent advice, including impartial careers guidance. As a result, last year, all pupils went on to suitable post-16 education and training programmes.
- Trustees, directors and governors offer robust challenge and support to leaders. They are persistent in their drive for excellence in all aspects of pupils' development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further reduce the small inconsistencies in pupils' outcomes by:
 - diminishing any remaining gaps in progress between pupils with high prior attainment and those with middle- and low prior attainment
 - raising attainment in those few subjects where it is not as high as in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Improvements since the last inspection have been rapid and sustained, following a turbulent period. This is because of the exceptional leadership and tireless drive of the principal in particular, and other senior leaders that filters down through the whole school community. Consequently, all adults have the highest expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning, which results in exceptional rates of progress and excellent behaviour.
- Leaders at all levels make regular, routine and systematic checks on the quality of teaching, paying close attention to detail. They know exactly which pupils are doing less well and check systematically to make sure that teachers are meeting the needs of these pupils. Consequently, the quality of teaching is of a consistently high standard and the small remaining differences in the performance of groups of pupils are diminishing rapidly.
- Teachers value highly the training, support and feedback on their practice that leaders give them. Teachers are comfortable with an open-door policy that means leaders and others can drop into the classroom at any time. Weekly coaching opportunities help teachers to accept responsibility for their own practice and to identify where they can make small refinements. Leaders hold teachers to account for achieving challenging targets while providing high levels of support to achieve these targets.
- A robust assessment system, developed across the trust, helps leaders and teachers to track each pupil's progress carefully. Leaders have a deep understanding of the performance of groups of pupils in each subject, including the disadvantaged, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able. This has helped leaders to ensure that all pupil groups make outstanding progress.
- Leaders make effective use of additional government funding. Shrewd spending of pupil premium funds means that differences in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others have been all but eliminated. Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities results in these pupils making as much progress as other pupils from similar starting points. The Year 7 catch-up funding is well targeted at the literacy skills of pupils who did not reach expected standards by the end of their primary schooling. Most of these pupils make rapid progress, developing reading and writing skills that help them to make strong progress in other subjects.
- Pupils throughout the age range benefit from a systematic impartial careers guidance programme. Timely support from an external adviser is available and accessible to all pupils. The 'Mosaic' initiative this year and last gives a large number of pupils in Years 9 and 10 access to support from a range of professional mentors, builds confidence and helps them develop leadership skills. Pupils of all ages were very positive about the careers fair. Information and guidance helped every pupil in Year 11 last year to go on to post-16 courses or apprenticeships. Three quarters of disadvantaged pupils went on to study A levels or similar qualifications.

- A broad and balanced curriculum is increasingly well suited to the needs of every pupil. Leaders and governors have prioritised entering pupils for subjects that contribute to the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving the EBacc last year was well above the national average. As current leaders recognise, before they took up post, some pupils were entered for subjects that may not have been best suited to their skills and aptitudes. Leaders are addressing this. For example, pupils who are at risk of not achieving at least a grade C in GCSE English receive more teaching time in this vital subject rather than sitting a modern foreign language.
- All pupils in Year 7 attend at least one enrichment class or club at the end of the school day. A wide range of opportunities exists for all pupils, including popular homework clubs. These activities make a strong contribution to pupils' personal, social and academic development and broaden their horizons.
- Leaders and teachers actively promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, preparing them well for life in modern Britain. Daily tutor group sessions give pupils the chance to discuss current affairs and to reflect on their own personal, social and emotional development. Consequently, pupils have a well-developed understanding of diversity and demonstrate respect for people of different cultures, religions and sexual orientation.
- The chief executive officer of Dixons Academy Trust keeps a careful check on how well the school is improving. Leaders' management of well-targeted support and challenge from across the trust schools has ensured the maximum impact of this work. Successful leadership and teaching methods adopted from across the trust schools have been key to the rapid and sustainable improvements made.

Governance of the school

- Governance is highly effective. This is because governors are totally committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for pupils. Individual governors have the skills and experience that enable them to challenge leaders. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well because they request information in a format that enables them to evaluate how well groups of pupils are doing. This in turn helps the governing body to challenge leaders to make further improvements.
- Governors set ambitious targets for senior leaders and ensure that leaders set equally challenging targets for teachers. Governors ensure that decisions about teachers' pay take into account how well teachers perform.
- The trust has ensured that a clear scheme of delegation makes clear where responsibility and accountability lie. Consequently, the governing board is well organised and fulfils its statutory responsibilities well, including the duty to ensure proper financial management and that young people are safeguarded.

Safeguarding

- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders carry out all the statutorily required checks on adults when recruiting new staff and keep an accurate central record of these checks.

Thorough training of staff ensures that they understand their responsibilities.

- Adults know the signs to look for that suggest a young person is being harmed or is at risk of harm. For example, they understand the signs that a pupil may be exposed to extremist ideas or radicalisation. Adults record their concerns, and leaders keep an accurate record of their timely contacts with the local authority social care services and other professionals. They follow up where needed to ensure that appropriate action is taken to help protect pupils.
- Leaders make sure that in the event of a pupil being absent and unaccounted for, someone visits the young person's home. Where a family has gone missing, leaders follow the correct local authority procedures and promptly report this.
- A robust emergency plan is in place in the event of any critical incident presenting a significant danger to pupils and staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Leaders have implemented a highly successful teaching methodology suited to the needs of all groups of pupils, including the disadvantaged, the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers have high expectations of pupils whatever their prior attainment.
- Teachers ask pupils thoughtful questions to probe and deepen their thinking. They systematically check pupils' learning and spot where they need to support or provide further challenge. These and other teaching skills are exceptionally well developed and consistently applied by the vast majority of teachers.
- Assessment procedures are robust. Teachers understand the strengths and weaknesses in each pupil's learning. Teachers plan activities that challenge pupils of all abilities and deepen learning. For this reason, pupils' work is rarely too hard or too easy so they make substantial and sustained progress throughout the age range and across a wide range of subjects.
- Teachers are adept at supporting pupils who may need extra help or challenge. Careful record keeping helps teachers to see where they may need to re-teach some content or where they may need to challenge the most able pupils even further by giving them more tricky work to attempt. Teachers address misconceptions well.
- Effective teaching ensures that those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make as much progress as other pupils do from similar starting points. Pupils develop confidence in their ability to work independently, knowing that support is on hand if needed. Those pupils who have more substantial learning needs receive effective support from well-trained teaching assistants.
- Teachers of all subjects prioritise the improvement of pupils' reading, writing and speaking. As a result, pupils develop communication skills that enable them to give clear written and spoken answers to questions. Most pupils become adept at constructing extended complex sentences, helping them to reason more deeply.
- Teaching in science especially stands out. Right from Year 7, pupils hit the ground running with difficult content and continue in this vein right up to Year 11, by which

time progress for the vast majority of pupils truly could not be any better.

- The teaching of Spanish, geography and physical education is less strong, but effective leadership is bringing about rapid improvement in these subjects so that pupils are making much faster progress than was evident in last year's GCSE outcomes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Strong relationships between adults and pupils, along with highly effective teaching promote a positive learning atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils develop resilience as they tackle challenging tasks. Teachers help pupils to think for themselves and to be independent. Pupils learn that there is always something more to learn, that they can learn from mistakes, and that there is no gain without pain.
- Most pupils are true to the school's core value of diligence. They are punctual to school and lessons, always have the right equipment, and do not waste any time at the beginning and end of lessons. Pupils complete their homework assignments and present their work neatly in their books. They wear their uniform smartly and say that they are proud of their school.
- Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills. Pupils get involved in fund-raising. Others are involved in 'stand up, speak out and make a difference', which helps them to form opinions and voice them. Pupils have opportunities to engage in 'young apprentice' activities and in enterprise challenges; some pupils came second in a national enterprise competition and another group of pupils is entering again this year. The 'stretch' programme builds confidence as pupils learn to present to their peers and others.
- Leaders regularly ask for pupils' views and provide opportunities for them to complete surveys. The school council is active and pupils know how to share their views. Most pupils therefore feel that adults listen to their opinions.
- Pupils involve themselves in fund-raising for charity. A group of pupils last year held a welcome event for Syrian refugees, provided a meal and presented aid packages. This effort is typical of this outward-looking school community.
- Pupils demonstrate understanding of how to stay safe online. They are able to explain what information it is unwise to share on a social network site and about privacy settings. They know what to do if they experience bullying online and understand the dangers of sexting. Pupils know how to make their concerns heard either through dedicated school email addresses or directly to a trusted adult.
- Pupils whom inspectors questioned say that bullying is rare and when it does occur, they are confident that adults deal with it effectively and in a timely way. Pupils are unequivocal that the use of racist or homophobic language is rare and that adults are quick to address any discriminatory behaviour.

- A small handful of pupils on the school roll are educated in other settings. They are engaged in appropriate study programmes and leaders receive regular reports on their progress. Suitable safeguarding procedures are in place for these pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Leaders have set exceptionally high expectations of pupils' behaviour. For example, there are sanctions for uncompleted homework, being off task in lessons or not having the right books and equipment, as well as more serious rule breaking. Most pupils happily accept this as a fair price to pay for almost guaranteed success, and they comply. They enjoy receiving 'positives' and the rewards that follow.
- A number of parents completing the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, believe that their children are not happy in school. No pupils expressed any concerns to inspectors and the vast majority of pupils certainly appear happy in school. A few older pupils have still not fully come to terms with the school rules, though any disruption in or out of lessons is rare.
- Pupils move around the school calmly, respecting each other's space. They behave well as they socialise in the grounds or in the lunch halls. Year 7 pupils appreciate the opportunity to share lunch together in their form groups and understand that mixing with pupils they might not normally choose to socialise with helps them to get to know more people and to understand different points of view. Most pupils enjoy the food on offer.
- Pupils demonstrate the school's core value of civility. They are well mannered and greet visitors with a smile.
- There has been a substantial improvement in exclusion rates from the exceptionally high levels in 2015 to far fewer last year and below the national average.
- Attendance improved in 2016. To date, attendance is above the national average for secondary schools, a big improvement compared with the same point last year. Improved accountability and a more joined-up approach are having the desired effect as a number of adults, including form tutors, members of the attendance team and senior leaders, coordinate their efforts around individual pupils. As a result, persistent absence levels are half what they were. Persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils remains above that of other pupils in the school but is no higher than the average for all pupils nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- From their starting points at the end of primary school, last year's leavers made exceptional progress overall, placing the school in the top 10% of schools nationally for progress. The proportion of pupils achieving the EBacc was well above the national average. The school was in the top 1% nationally in science. Progress was strong in a range of other subjects.

- Progress in English, though positive in 2016, was not as strong as in mathematics, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. However, pupils currently in the school, across the age range and including disadvantaged pupils, are making much faster progress in English than did the 2016 cohort of pupils. Similarly, outcomes in geography were not as strong as in history, and outcomes in Spanish were not as strong as in French. However, pupils are now making more rapid progress in geography and Spanish as teaching in these departments improves.
- Across the school, there is very little difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of others, and in some cases disadvantaged pupils are making stronger progress than other pupils. In the few instances where differences in achievement remain, these are diminishing. There is no significant difference between the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and that of other pupils.
- The most able pupils and the most able disadvantaged made especially strong progress in science in 2016. Almost four in 10 pupils achieved A* and A grades in science. Similarly, the most able pupils achieved highly across the EBacc subjects overall. Although the most able pupils did as well as this group nationally in a range of other subjects, they did not make the particularly strong progress that pupils with middle- and low prior attainment made. Teachers stretch the most able pupils, and leaders recognise where there is scope for yet stronger progress.
- Pupils in key stage 3 are making very strong progress across a range of subjects because of the excellent teaching and high expectations they receive. No ground is lost as pupils get off to a flying start as soon as they enter the school.
- Pupils read widely, often and well. Leaders expect all pupils to carry a reading book with them at all times. Most pupils enjoy reading and make much use of the excellent library, which is lively centre for learning. One pupil told inspectors that the school librarian is an inspiration to them. Teachers provide challenging texts in lessons and help pupils to read carefully between the lines. The ability of most pupils to read with fluency and understanding gives them greater ability to succeed in other areas of the curriculum.

School details

Unique reference number	137277
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10023815

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	818
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	John Bowers
Principal	Neil Miley
Telephone number	01274 449706
Website	www.dixonska.com
Email address	info@dixonska.com
Date of previous inspection	9–10 December 2014

Information about this school

- Kings Science Academy opened as a free school in September 2011. In January 2015, the academy became part of the Dixons Academies Trust and was renamed Dixons Kings Academy.
- The school is a smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Most are of Pakistani heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- About four in 10 pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, above the national average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school met the current floor standards in 2016. These are the minimum expectations of pupils' progress set by the government.
- Five pupils are educated off site at Bradford College.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of nearly 50 lessons across most subject areas. Some of these visits took place with senior and middle leaders. During visits to classrooms, inspectors examined pupils' workbooks, listened to some of them reading and questioned them about their learning.
- There were no responses to the staff survey, though discussions took place with a number of teachers, the principal, other senior leaders and faculty leaders.
- Discussions also took place with the chief executive officer of the trust and members of the local governing board, including trustees.
- Inspectors took into account 29 responses to the parent online survey, Parent View, and a number of written comments from parents.
- There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire. However, inspectors discussed with many pupils what it is like to be a young person at the school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtime.
- Documents were examined, including the school improvement plan, minutes of governing board meetings, leaders' monitoring notes and information about pupils' achievement.
- Records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were scrutinised.

Inspection team

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Melanie Williams	Ofsted Inspector
Natasha Greenough	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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