

Inspection of Kenton School

Drayton Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE3 3RU

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 March 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The principal of this school is Sinead Green. This school is part of the Northern Leaders Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Lee Kirtley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Therese Quincey. There is also an executive principal, Martyn Gordon, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school values all pupils. It has created an environment in which pupils build positive friendships with each other. Pupils know there is an adult they can go to if they have any concerns. Staff show a genuine commitment to helping pupils succeed.

The school has high aspirations for what pupils can achieve. Recent changes to the curriculum mean that pupils are now experiencing more ambitious programmes of study. However, in spite of curriculum changes and ongoing staff development, many pupils do not achieve well at the end of key stage 4.

Most pupils behave well. They follow teachers' instructions and conduct themselves in a calm and sensible manner. However, a significant minority of pupils do not meet the school's expectations. Sometimes, these pupils disrupt learning and display inappropriate behaviour around the school.

The school prioritises attendance. Its recent work in addressing high levels of absence is starting to improve the attendance of some pupils. However, levels of absence are still high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils enjoy the elective curriculum. They choose activities that give them new experiences and develop their talents and interests. Pupils also benefit from educational visits and from an extra-curricular sports programme.

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

The school is working in a context that provides significant challenge. It is experiencing the impact of local social and economic issues. This impact is most evident in regard to attendance and pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs.

The school has established a well-sequenced curriculum from Year 7 to the sixth form. It has identified the essential knowledge that it wants pupils to know and remember. However, key stage 4 pupils have not experienced this curriculum from the start of their time at the school. Some pupils have significant gaps in their subject knowledge.

The school adapts the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with autism and speech and language needs, receive high-quality specialist teaching. The school identifies pupils' needs with speed and precision. It provides appropriate and well-targeted support. The school meets the needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND achieve well from their different starting points.

A high proportion of pupils join the school with low levels of literacy. The school provides these pupils with extra support in phonics and reading fluency and comprehension. This helps pupils to catch up with their peers. Moreover, the school is beginning to develop a culture of reading. Pupils read often at school.

Teachers have a secure subject knowledge. They structure lessons well and use appropriate strategies to develop pupils' literacy. In the sixth form, teachers explain new ideas clearly and give students feedback that helps them to improve their work. However, at key stage 3 and 4, sometimes teachers do not check pupils' understanding with enough rigour. As a result, they do not secure pupils' knowledge before moving on to the next stage of learning.

The school has established a clear set of expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils know and understand these expectations. Most teachers use the school's behaviour policy well. The school does not tolerate disruption to learning. It has worked hard to minimise such disruption, but it persists, particularly in younger years. A significant minority of pupils do not meet the schools' high expectations. Levels of suspension are high.

The school has developed a rigorous approach to attendance. It has invested considerable resource into its drive to reduce high levels of absence. Its strategy includes provision within the school to support pupils with anxiety. Levels of absence have begun to fall. However, they are still high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils benefit from a comprehensive, age-appropriate personal development programme. They learn about healthy relationships, equality and diversity and physical and mental health. They learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. From Year 7 to the sixth form, pupils receive appropriate careers education and guidance. This helps them to make well-informed choices about their next steps into education, training and employment.

The school has a clear vision to provide pupils with a high-quality education. Trustees, supported by local governors, perform their statutory duties. The trust has begun to provide the school with additional leadership capacity. This is leading to some improvement in the quality of the curriculum and in approaches to behaviour and attendance. However, the impact of the school's work on pupils' achievement is not significant.

The school has created a positive staff culture. It prioritises staff well-being and ensures that workload is manageable. Staff value this and enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At key stage 3 and 4, sometimes teachers do not check pupils' understanding or secure pupils' knowledge with enough rigour before moving on to the next stage of learning. This means that pupils develop gaps in their knowledge and find it difficult to apply

what they have been taught. The school should ensure that it provides teachers with the training and development they need in pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge to secure a deep and coherent body of knowledge for pupils.

- A significant minority of pupils do not meet the school's expectations with regard to behaviour. This results in some disruption to the learning of other pupils and to inappropriate behaviour around school. The school should address this inappropriate behaviour and reduce the time spent out of school by pupils through suspension.
- Levels of absence for disadvantaged pupils are high. This means that many pupils miss too much of their education and do not achieve well at the end of key stage 4. The school should build on its current rigorous attendance strategy to reduce absence 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 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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138120
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10346438
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1727
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	174
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Therese Quincey
CEO of the trust	Lee Kirtley
Principal	Sinead Green
Website	https://ks.northernleaderstrust.org
Date of previous inspection	16 November 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Northern Leaders Trust.
- There is currently an acting principal in post.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. This provision is for pupils aged 11 to 18 with autism and with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). There are twenty-four pupils accessing the provision with autism and seven pupils with SLCN.
- The school uses three registered providers of alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about

approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the executive principal, the acting principal, the CEO of the trust and other trust leaders. They also met with the chair of the board of trustees, an adviser to the board of trustees and the chair of the local governing body.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, art and design, French, and health and social care. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in geography and science. They visited sixth form lessons in biology, physics, sociology and performing arts.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff, and to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

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