

St Katherine's School

Pill Road, Ham Green, Bristol, Somerset BS20 0HU

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement, including in mathematics and science. In some subjects, the most able pupils and those who are disadvantaged do not achieve as well as they should.
- There is too much variation in achievement across the school. In 2017, overall progress was below the government's floor target.
- The quality of teaching varies across the school. Teaching and the curriculum are not challenging enough in all subjects.
- Leaders are working hard to improve the impact of behaviour on learning. Nevertheless, pupils' behaviour sometimes gets in the way of learning.
- Although exclusions are falling, disadvantaged pupils are disproportionately excluded from school.
- Overall attendance is broadly average. Leaders' actions to improve it are not yet having enough impact. Attendance records in the sixth form are not consistently accurate.
- Provision for students' personal development in the sixth form is weak. Work-related learning and opportunities for work experience in the sixth form require improvement.
- Until recently, the actions of the trust, governors and leaders at all levels have not had enough impact on improving the school.
- Leaders do not evaluate the school's effectiveness well enough. This limits the impact of actions to improve the school.
- Leaders and governors do not understand whether additional funding, including the pupil premium, is having enough impact on pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Low-attaining pupils receive effective support and achieve well. The quality of teaching and achievement for all groups of pupils in humanities is good.
- The school provides an inclusive and safe environment for vulnerable pupils. Pupils and parents and carers praise the quality of the support provided.
- Leaders' actions to improve the school are gathering momentum. They are demonstrating the capacity to improve the school further, including in the sixth form.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. They know how to keep themselves safe in school, online and in the community.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement, particularly in science and mathematics, by:
 - improving the quality of teaching across the school
 - ensuring that teaching is challenging for all groups of pupils, particularly the most able
 - making sure teaching, and the use of the pupil premium, helps disadvantaged pupils to make faster progress
 - further improving the contribution of behaviour to pupils' learning across the school.
- Increase the impact of leadership and management, by:
 - further strengthening the capacity of leaders at all levels to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement
 - evaluating accurately the work of the school and the impact of leaders' actions to bring about improvement.
- Improve pupils' behaviour, by:
 - ensuring a consistent approach to managing the impact of pupils' behaviour on learning
 - further reducing the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are excluded from school
 - raising attendance for all groups of pupils, particularly for those pupils who are persistently absent from school.
- Strengthen the impact of study programmes in the sixth form, by:
 - improving students' personal development and their skills for life, work and further study
 - ensuring that records of attendance in the sixth form are fully accurate.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over the period since the school converted to an academy, pupils' outcomes and the school's effectiveness have declined. Until recently, the response of leaders, governors and the trust to this decline has not had enough impact. However, actions to improve the school are gathering momentum and leaders are demonstrating the capacity to improve the school further.
- Leaders have an accurate view of where the school needs to improve, but hold an overgenerous view of its effectiveness, including that of the sixth form. This is partly because information and evidence about the school's work is not drawn together clearly enough to provide a fully robust evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses.
- This is also the case for the use of additional funding, such as the pupil premium. Weaknesses in evaluation mean that leaders and governors are unable to be sure whether this funding is having enough impact on pupils' achievement.
- Despite the decline in the overall quality of the school's work, leaders have sustained some positive aspects. These include its inclusive and welcoming ethos, good-quality teaching in some areas such as humanities, and the support that it provides for vulnerable pupils. Leaders have secured the support of staff to tackle the school's weaknesses and there is a widely held confidence in the vision for improvement.
- There is greater clarity and direction in the school's approach to improving teaching and learning. A revised framework for appraising the performance of teachers is providing robust support for improvement. Middle leaders are developing their skills and confidence well, and actions to tackle the weakest teaching are effective. However, it is too soon to see significant and sustained impact across all curriculum areas, particularly in science and mathematics.
- Similarly, leaders and staff are working hard to improve the 'climate for learning' throughout the school (the contribution of pupils' behaviour to their learning). In particular, they have established raised expectations of how pupils behave in school and relate to each other and to adults. Although many pupils believe that poor behaviour sometimes gets in the way of learning, behaviour in lessons and around the school is improving.
- In the past, assessment information has not always been as accurate as it could be. Leaders have increased the scrutiny of and support for assessment, particularly where there have previously been concerns. However, there is more to do to ensure the reliability and validity of teachers' assessments in all subject areas.
- The school development plan sets out clearly leaders' main priorities for improvement. Nevertheless, it does not make clear how leaders, governors and the trust will know whether improvement is happening as leaders envisage, or whether it is happening quickly enough. It is unclear how leaders will evaluate the success of their actions.
- The trust has a realistic view of the school's effectiveness. It has worked with leaders to assess the school's strengths and weaknesses and provided some support for improvements to teaching quality. However, the trust has not had enough impact in

supporting improvements to pupils' outcomes, the climate for learning and the sixth form. The trust has limited capacity to bring about more rapid improvement.

Governance of the school

- Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's performance and are under no illusions that the school needs to improve. They are supportive of the school and provide adequate levels of challenge for school leaders. Governors keep a close eye on safeguarding matters and are involved in checking that arrangements are effective.
- The governing body has recently reorganised its structures to support the school better. However, it is too soon to see whether this reorganisation will lead to greater scrutiny and challenge for school leaders. For example, governors do not know enough about how leaders spend additional funding, including the pupil premium, and whether they are using this funding effectively enough.

Safeguarding

- Leaders, governors and the trust have ensured that arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements, including for the safe recruitment of staff and other adults. Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. Risk assessments, including for the site perimeter, are fully in place.
- Staff promptly and accurately record concerns about children. Leaders ensure that external agencies are fully involved where this is appropriate. The school keeps effective records of all incidents and concerns, including any about bullying. Leaders take account of any emerging themes and patterns, such as those about e-safety, when planning assemblies and adapting the curriculum.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. Although leaders are tackling areas where teaching is weakest, teaching, assessment and the climate for learning are not consistently strong enough to speed up pupils' progress in all subjects. Visits made to the school by an adviser from the trust also noted inconsistencies in teaching quality and pupils' behaviour.
- Weaknesses in teaching are most often apparent in mathematics and science. In mathematics, for example, too little teaching is effective in helping pupils to understand mathematical concepts and ideas. Too often, teaching simply provides rules and methods that pupils do not understand well enough to use effectively across a wide range of problems.
- In science, teachers do not typically ask pupils to reason, analyse or explain their answers fully enough. These weaknesses in teaching in mathematics and science are frequently a barrier to speeding up progress for the most able pupils in particular. By contrast, teaching in humanities is effective in helping pupils to make rapid progress and reach above-average levels of attainment.

- There are inconsistencies in how well assessment is used to help pupils to learn well. In some subjects, such as in BTEC National Diploma sports and in physical education, teachers' feedback is very effective in helping pupils to put right mistakes and misconceptions. In the sixth form, students say that the feedback they receive is helpful in explaining how to improve their work and reach higher grades.
- However, feedback in some other subjects is not prompt or useful enough to move on learning more effectively. Sometimes, this is a result of too great a reliance on written feedback to pinpoint pupils' mistakes. Discussions and teachers' questioning in class are sometimes not detailed or probing enough to reveal where pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders are working hard to improve the climate for learning across the school. Nevertheless, from time to time pupils' behaviour declines when teaching does not capture their interest or challenge them sufficiently. In some instances, pupils behave well and are generally cooperative, but do not take part effectively enough in lessons.
- Teaching for pupils who need extra help is often more effective than for other pupils. These pupils benefit from the care and support provided. Pupils and parents rightly praised the work of the school to provide an inclusive and safe environment in which to learn.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in school, online and in the community. They believe bullying is rare and are confident that staff in school will deal with any concerns promptly and effectively.
- The support for pupils' welfare, well-being and mental and physical health is good. Pupils know that there are adults they can turn to for help and advice, including through a counselling service at the school.
- The 'engage' facility is very effective in providing sensitive and tailored support for pupils who may need it. Transition into Year 7 from a very large number of primary schools is carefully and thoughtfully managed.
- The provision for children looked after is also good. Planning for pupils' academic, social and emotional development is thorough and reviewed regularly. Pupils are fully included in the life of the school.
- A well-structured programme for pupils' personal, social and emotional development forms part of the curriculum. This is supplemented by themed days and events, alongside contributions from external speakers and providers. This programme makes a strong contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- The provision for careers education, advice and guidance is being reviewed and improved. It is more effective for pupils in key stage 4 than it is for those in key stage 3. While every pupil who completed Year 11 in 2017 went on to worthwhile

destinations, younger pupils who spoke to inspectors said they would like more useful and timely information about the options available to them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Leaders have placed a very high priority on improving pupils' behaviour. They have rightly identified that improving the climate for learning in classrooms throughout the school is an essential step to securing better outcomes for all pupils.
- However, despite important improvements to behaviour, pupils and staff report that learning is sometimes affected by the behaviour of a small number of pupils. Two-thirds of pupils who responded to the online survey felt that their learning was sometimes disturbed by the behaviour of other pupils. Some staff and pupils feel that the approach to tackling poor behaviour is not used consistently by all members of staff.
- Previously high levels of exclusions are falling. The rate of fixed-term exclusion is now broadly in line with other secondary schools. However, the exclusion of disadvantaged pupils remains disproportionately high when compared with other pupils in school, and the number of referrals to the school's own isolation facility remains higher than leaders would like.
- Overall attendance is broadly in line with that in other secondary schools. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is higher than the average nationally. Actions to tackle poor attendance have not yet been effective enough in bringing about significant improvements.
- Leaders have a wealth of information about pupils' attendance and behaviour. However, this information is not always used well enough to plan and implement improvements to how behaviour and attendance are managed in school. The leadership of these aspects therefore requires improvement.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- There is too much variation in pupils' progress across the school. For example, pupils' achievement is lower in mathematics and science than it is in humanities subjects. Similarly, the most able pupils and pupils who are disadvantaged do not achieve as well as they should. These are the main reasons that outcomes require improvement.
- Although overall attainment was broadly average in 2016 and 2017, not enough pupils secured the grades of which they were capable by the end of key stage 4. Most progress measures declined in 2017 compared with the previous year and overall school performance was below the government's minimum floor target.
- While there are signs of improvement in many areas of the school's work, outcomes require improvement for most groups of current pupils, too. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Teaching and the curriculum are not challenging enough in all the subjects that pupils study.

- Pupils' achievement in mathematics and science requires improvement. While leaders have taken action to improve teaching and subject leadership, too little teaching is effective in deepening pupils' understanding in these subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils at the school do less well than pupils do nationally. Some middle-attaining pupils make slower progress than they should, particularly boys. Not enough teaching is effective in helping these pupils make more rapid progress. Sometimes, behaviour in lessons gets in the way of pupils' learning.
- By contrast, teaching is more effective in some other subjects across the curriculum, particularly in humanities. Here, pupils' progress is at least in line with and is sometimes better than for similar pupils nationally. The support and the curriculum provided for many lower-attaining pupils helps them to do well. This is also the case for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils learn well where teachers encourage them to develop good skills in analysing, reasoning and explaining. In most subjects, effective feedback helps pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding well, including in their written work. By contrast, learning is less secure where pupils are not challenged to deepen their thinking, or where errors and misconceptions are not tackled effectively enough.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- This sixth form provides a small and welcoming community. Staff have a good understanding of students as individuals. A strength of the sixth form is the quality of relationships throughout. Students in the sixth form choose mainly academic programmes, or follow a mix of academic and vocational courses.
- The new sixth form leader has reviewed the quality of provision in the sixth form. He has accurately identified those aspects in need of improvement. There are early signs of impact from the actions he is taking to remedy these weaknesses.
- In 2016 and 2017, rates of progress for students who completed vocational or academic programmes were broadly in line with similar students nationally. However, progress on AS-level courses was lower, including for students who did not continue their studies into Year 13. The achievement of current students is similar to that in previous years, although the small numbers on many courses makes comparisons between subjects unreliable.
- Overall, students in the sixth form benefit from the teaching they receive. They say that feedback about their work helps them to make improvements. They value the individual help and support they get in most subjects. Teachers' assessments of students' attainment are usually accurate, particularly in Year 13.
- Students who resit GCSE examinations in English or mathematics typically achieve at least in line with similar students nationally, and often do better than this in English.
- In the past, students have not always made effective use of private study time. As a first step to tackling this, leaders have introduced an expectation that students will attend for the whole school day. However, this has highlighted inaccuracies in the recording of students' attendance. As a result, leaders are not able to evaluate students' attendance and its impact on achievement effectively enough.

- Many students do not yet have the skills needed to make use of their study time well. This is a result of weaknesses in the provision for students' personal development and skills for work, life and study. For example, students say they do not get enough useful information and support from enrichment and tutorial times.
- Similarly, there are inconsistencies in the quality of careers education, advice and guidance for sixth-form students. Students greatly value the good-quality support they receive to help them with their applications to higher education institutions in particular. However, the programme of work experience and work-related learning is too limited. Leaders are aware of these weaknesses and are taking action to remedy them.

School details

Unique reference number	142853
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	10045396

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	781
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	91
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	William Harding
Head of school	Justin Humphreys
Telephone number	01275 373737
Website	www.stkaths.org.uk
Email address	school@stkaths.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Inspirational Futures Trust (IFT). This trust comprises five schools, including two secondary schools, two primary schools and an academy alternative provision. This school joined the trust on 1 June 2016. This inspection is the first inspection of the school since it became an academy and joined the trust. In addition to the board of trustees, governance of the school is provided by a local governing body.
- Prior to joining the trust, the predecessor school – also known as St Katherine’s School – was last inspected in September 2015 when it was judged good.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

- The school does not meet 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 visited a range of lessons throughout the school to talk with pupils and to look at learning and behaviour. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences of school and about their progress. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and talked to them about their learning. Many of the visits to lessons took place jointly with members of the school's leadership team.
- Inspectors considered documents about the school's self-evaluation, alongside development planning and assessment information. They scrutinised documentation about pupils' behaviour and attendance, and the minutes of meetings of the governing body. They also examined safeguarding records and documentation.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, met with staff, school leaders and governors, and with representatives of the IFT.
- Inspectors considered the views of 53 staff and 92 pupils and students who responded to online surveys. Inspectors looked at the 93 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

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Duncan Millard	Ofsted Inspector
Jonathan Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Butler	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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