

Keys Tees Valley College

Sotherby Road, Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire TS3 8BT

Inspection dates

9–11 July 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders and the proprietor have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The school provides pupils with a good quality education.
- The headteacher is dedicated to the school and its pupils. He ensures that pupils are very well looked after and supported by all members of staff. The school is a welcoming, friendly and positive place to be.
- As a result of frequent and accurate monitoring, the headteacher and managers from the Keys Group have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and areas to improve further.
- Staff understand the importance of providing pupils with positive and successful learning experiences and, as a result, pupils make good progress while at the school.
- Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Staff understand the pupils very well and they work hard to break down the barriers that have previously prevented pupils from learning.
- Pupils' attendance significantly improves at the school compared to their attendance prior to starting at Keys Tees Valley College. However, leaders recognise that there is still some work to be carried out to increase overall attendance further.
- Governors support the school well. They hold leaders to account for the progress of pupils. Governors are aware of the significant needs of the pupils and they offer skilled support to leaders where necessary.
- The safeguarding of pupils is effective. The promotion of the health, safety and welfare of pupils is given high priority. Staff understand this and ensure that they are highly vigilant and responsive to the pastoral needs of pupils.
- Opportunities for vocational study and accreditation are available. However, leaders understand that this offer should be increased to meet the interests of pupils further.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Middle leaders should have opportunities to increase and broaden their leadership experience to enable them to support the headteacher, in order to further accelerate pupils' progress.
- Leaders should develop further initiatives in order to increase attendance.
- The Keys Group should continue to improve facilities that will enable leaders to broaden the range of vocational courses available, so that pupils gain further meaningful accreditation.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, supported by the proprietor, has ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- The proprietor and the headteacher are determined to provide the best possible education for their pupils. They are committed to the school and to improving the life chances of its pupils.
- The headteacher, leaders and staff have successfully worked together to make strong improvements since the last inspection. Leaders know the school's strengths and areas for improvement well, because of their frequent checks on the performance of the school. They have put strategic plans in place in which their expectations of all staff are clear. Leaders are able to measure the progress of the school carefully over time, because they have thorough monitoring systems in place and they are held to account by their managers.
- Leaders make sure they provide parents and carers with the information that is required. All parents receive an annual report about their child's progress. Excellent communication systems are in place, so that parents are always well informed about their child's academic and personal development progress.
- The headteacher has formed positive relationships with a number of local authorities that place pupils at the school. He ensures that all pupils are properly placed at the school after careful and reflective referral procedures have been followed. As a result of this, pupils' needs are met, and they are successful at the school.
- The headteacher ensures that pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the requirements of the standards. The curriculum is well thought out and planned. It considers the pupils' interests and strengths, in addition to their academic and social and emotional needs. Leaders continue to develop the curriculum. They understand the need to improve and expand the vocational courses that are available to pupils. The Keys Group have plans to expand and improve the buildings and facilities to enable leaders to introduce further areas of study.
- Teachers develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding very well through a range of activities. During the inspection, pupils took part in a range of insightful debates and discussions. They are confident speakers and were able to ask questions which contributed well to the discussion. Staff were able to provoke further thought, discussion and interest through carefully thought out comments, opinions and questions.
- Leaders ensure that all staff have ample opportunities to attend training that is specific to their needs and interests. Staff say that they can identify, request and attend training, and leaders encourage them to do so. As a result of this, staff are well prepared for their roles and most have a well-developed understanding of the needs of pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

- Pupils participate in a range of off-site educational activities, including ice-skating, climbing and walking, which assist in developing their social skills and promote their physical development.
- Leaders keep up-to-date logs of events within the school. These include the recording of incidents of serious behaviour and physical intervention. Leaders make sure that staff record incidents in detail, including the outcomes for pupils. If incidents occur, they are quickly shared with the proprietor.
- Middle leaders are relatively new in their positions and require further training to ensure that they have a sound overview of the school and the progress pupils make. The leadership skills of these leaders are not yet sharp enough to enable them to support the headteacher fully in whole-school development.

Governance

- The governance of the school is effective and has ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The chair of the governing body has a good understanding of the role that governors play in the strategic leadership of the school. Governors provide high levels of regular positive support and challenge to the headteacher.
- Governors have high expectations of leaders. They hold leaders at all levels to account for their performance and the impact of their work at the school.
- Governors understand the school very well. They regularly visit the school. They spend time in classrooms and they recognise the strengths and areas for development of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher and all staff recognise the importance of making safeguarding a priority. Staff know the pupils very well. They understand the potential risks faced by pupils, both in and out of the school.
- The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. The Keys Group and leaders work closely together to make sure that all staff are highly trained in safeguarding procedures and policies. The school's policy for safeguarding and child protection is thorough and fit for purpose. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns about safeguarding. Leaders are quick to follow up any concerns with the appropriate external agencies.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at the school. They always have someone to talk to and they appreciate the support and understanding they receive from staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and support staff know and understand their pupils well. They are patient and persistent when they need to be and work hard to provide pupils with a wide range of learning opportunities and activities. As a result, most pupils are making good or better progress at the school.
- Pupils have all had major disruptions to their learning prior to attending the school. Most

have had very negative experiences of education, and they arrive highly disengaged with learning. Staff understand this and they waste no time before sparking pupils' interests, building positive relationships and beginning to build up re-engagement in learning. They quickly and thoroughly assess pupils' strengths and interests, as part of the induction process. They use this valuable information to plan personalised learning programmes for each pupil. Consequently, pupils quickly become enthusiastic learners. They are motivated and appreciate the opportunities that the staff give them to succeed.

- Staff use resources effectively to ensure that pupils understand their learning and can make progress. The headteacher makes sure that resources are plentiful and of high quality. Practical equipment and machinery used in vocational study are regularly safety checked. The equipment provided reflects that found in the modern workplace. Staff ensure that pupils wear the required safety equipment before using machinery. Pupils understand that staff will not give permission to use the practical resources unless they adhere to the safety rules and regulations that are in place.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, particularly in their specialist subjects. This also applies to those members of staff who lead on the vocational opportunities on offer.
- Visits to classrooms during the inspection showed that pupils were fully engaged with all areas of learning. They were motivated and enthused about their learning. Pupils particularly enjoy practical aspects of their learning programmes. As a result, leaders have introduced many opportunities for staff to combine academic subjects. For example, the inspector observed an English lesson which was being taught through art. In this lesson, pupils were developing their understanding of character by decorating masks to interpret expression, using colour and texture.
- Staff support pupils well in lessons. By using a range of strategies and questioning, they encourage pupils to become independent learners. Support staff provide additional behaviour, emotional and academic support where necessary. Pupils say staff challenge them and encourage them to be their best.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils arrive at the school extremely disengaged with education, having experienced multiple moves in educational provisions. Many pupils are at risk of being permanently excluded from their mainstream school.
- During their time at the school, pupils overcome their many obstacles to learning. This is due to the quality of the teaching, support and guidance they receive. For most pupils, the nurturing environment encourages them to commit to learning and to value their education. Pupils develop their self-confidence and can talk enthusiastically about their future aspirations.
- Pupils understand why they have been placed at Tees Valley College. Most quickly appreciate the quality of support that the highly experienced, skilled and caring staff offer. One pupil noted: 'If I have an off day, they help me through it and it becomes positive.' Pupils value their positive relationships with staff and the care and guidance

they receive. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.

- Frequent visits to college open days and the school's own careers day broaden pupils' options and aspirations about their future employment options.
- Pupils show a high level of awareness of the dangers that they face in and out of the school. This includes the use of social media and the internet. Pupils understand clearly how to keep themselves safe and what to do if any issues occur that worry them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils new to the school quickly settle in, because of the very well-established routines and the extremely high expectations of the staff. All staff implement and follow the school's positive behaviour policy consistently, and this enables pupils to know and understand the expectations and consequences of their behaviour.
- Pupils show a great deal of respect for one another and for staff and visitors.
- Pupils are quickly able to develop their self-regulation skills and can then control their emotions and behaviour. As a result of the high-quality support from staff, pupils are able to implement their own actions to deal with emotional crises should they occur.
- Pupils say they feel safe at the school and that no bullying behaviour occurs. They are confident, however, that if any bullying did occur staff would deal with it quickly and effectively.
- Behaviour in classrooms is exemplary. Pupils are motivated and understand that, in order to learn, they must not disturb the learning for themselves and others; as a result, little or no learning time is lost. Leaders track pupil behaviour meticulously, and, as a result, significant improvements in individual pupils' behaviour can be seen.
- The large majority of pupils arrive at the school with significant gaps in their education, because of prolonged absences from school, often due to exclusion. Individually, pupils make considerable and significant improvement to their attendance at the school; however, overall attendance at the school is not as high as it could be.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make strong progress from their starting points in a wide variety of subjects, including vocational subjects. Pupils develop positive social, emotional and communication skills, because of the teaching, support and guidance that they receive.
- Due to the good-quality teaching, the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding decrease substantially.
- Leaders make positive use of external accreditation to support pupils' engagement in learning. They make sure that they build the curriculum around individual pupils. Leaders discuss pupil progress regularly and use interventions accurately if it becomes necessary to provide additional learning support.
- All pupils in this and the previous academic year left the school with accreditations in English and mathematics.

- All pupils move on to further education, employment or training. Several pupils this academic year have joined the armed forces.

School details

Unique reference number	136259
DfE registration number	806/6002
Inspection number	10093650

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The Keys Group
Managing Director of Education	Nicola Kelly
Headteacher	Ian Kerr
Annual fees (day pupils)	£85.00 per day
Telephone number	01642 218776
Website	www.keyschildcare.co.uk/services/education/tees-valley/
Email address	info@keyschildcare.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 May 2019

Information about this school

- Keys Tees Valley College is a small independent school which is part of the Keys Childcare Group.
- The school is registered as an alternative learning provider which can admit up to 75 pupils. Pupils are referred by a number of local authorities or their mainstream schools, where they remain on roll.
- The school is located on the edge of an industrial estate in Middlesbrough.

- Most of the pupils have social, emotional and mental health difficulties and have been excluded or are at risk of permanent exclusion from their mainstream school.
- The school offers a range of vocational opportunities in addition to English, mathematics and a range of other academic subjects.
- There are currently no pupils on roll with an education, health and care plan.
- There are currently no pupils on roll in the sixth form.
- The school takes part in physical education at an off-site facility.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector took a tour of the school site. The facilities were checked against Part 5 of the independent school standards.
- The inspector observed learning taking place in a variety of lessons. The observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders, the designated lead for safeguarding, governors and a representative of the Keys Tees group.
- An extensive range of documentation was scrutinised, including policies, curriculum plans, information provided to governors, documents relating to staff training, and information about pupil progress, behaviour and attendance, the quality of teaching, safeguarding and complaints against the school. The inspector looked at the school's single central record and employment checks.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at social times, in classrooms and when they moved around the school.
- Several pupils were spoken to formally, and others were spoken to informally around the school and in classes.
- There were too few responses for analysis to Ofsted's online survey for parents Parent View; however, the inspector spoke to some parents on the telephone.

Inspection team

Sara Roe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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