

Inspection of a good school: Kelford School

Oakdale Road, Kimberworth, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S61 2NU

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 May 2024

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Mulhall. This school is part of the Nexus Multi-Academy 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), Warren Carratt, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Child MBE.

Outcome

Kelford School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and excited to come to Kelford School. Staff greet them warmly as they arrive. Most pupils settle quickly into the routine of the school day. Familiar and trusted staff, who know pupils well, help pupils to feel safe and secure.

Staff help pupils to be settled and ready for learning. For younger pupils and those in early years, learning starts with circle time and a game, a rhyme or a song. Older pupils often complete a round of sensory circuits to help them regulate, ready for learning.

One pupil told the inspectors that, 'In school you have to try your hardest and do your best.' This aspiration could be seen across the school, from a pupil following light and colours using her eyes to others working hard in their maths books.

Pupils know and understand that school staff care for them, showing kindness and respect. Most understand that hurting others is not the right thing to do. As a result, there are very few incidents of bullying in school.

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

This a school where staff personalise learning to meet pupils' individual needs. Staff have high aspirations for what pupils can achieve. They know and understand their pupils well. The teaching of phonics is embedded across the school. Knowledgeable and well-trained staff deliver this well. They know when pupils are ready for the next phase in learning.

Reading is an aspiration for most pupils. Staff use a range of different teaching strategies to help pupils learn to read. This includes supporting pupils who are pre-verbal to learn initial letter sounds. Writing is becoming an aspiration for some pupils. Those pupils that have begun to write, proudly showed the inspection team their books. They were keen to explain how they had improved their letter formation and sentence writing.

A small number of children attend the school's early years unit. At the time of the inspection, some pupils in Year 1 were accessing the early years curriculum. The school has developed the inside learning area within the early years unit to provide a range of different learning opportunities. Children can access these activities independently and with support. The outdoor area consists of large equipment, which encourages children to be physically active. However, a small number of children have mobility issues and their access to this equipment is limited. This reduces their opportunities for independent play.

The school is currently reviewing and transforming the curriculum. Subject design builds, reinforces and strengthens pupils' knowledge and skills. Some subject areas, for example early reading, mathematics and communication, are more developed than others. The school is developing systems to check on pupils' progress alongside the subject developments. Staff provide pupils with regular feedback to let them know what they are doing well and what they need to develop next. Curriculum leaders play a pivotal role in supporting staff. Staff speak positively about the levels of support they received during the development and implementation phases of the new curriculum.

The school believes strongly that pupil behaviour is a form of communication. All staff are trained well to understand the triggers and purpose behind pupils' behaviours. This helps the school to meet each pupil's needs and has reduced the number of dysregulated behaviour incidents. Staff use their knowledge to support pupils to manage their own behaviour. During COVID-19, many vulnerable pupils remained at home. It has taken time for some pupils to re-establish the routine of coming to school. The school's deep knowledge and understanding of its pupils has aided this process. Working closely with Rotherham local authority, pupils' attendance is improving and is returning to pre COVID-19 levels.

The school is ambitious for all its pupils. The post-16 students are proud of their achievements in the local community as well as in school. From the start of their school career, these students have been taught the skills to develop their independence in preparation for an active life in the community.

Threaded through pupils' learning is an understanding of the importance of respect for everyone, including those who may seem different to us. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons teach pupils how to show respect for each other and for visitors. It was difficult for the school to organise work experience in the time immediately after COVID-19. However, the school has used every opportunity to enable students to experience the world of work. One student told inspectors that working in the main school as a teaching assistant had helped him to decide that this was what he wants as his future career. The school offers its pupils many opportunities to try new things. Pupils enjoy attending the Makaton choir. However, currently there are few opportunities to join clubs. Pupils say they would like more activities at lunchtime.

The trust leadership team provides effective support and advice to the school to help bring about change and improvement. Through regular visits to the school, the team provides challenge to school leaders to bring about the best outcomes for all pupils. Staff are proud to work in this school. Leaders care about staff well-being and help them to manage their workload effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- The outdoor provision in the early years is inaccessible to some pupils with physical disabilities. This reduces their opportunities to participate and develop their physical skills. The school should provide greater opportunities to enable children who have a physical difficulty to participate fully in outdoor activities with support and independently.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to join clubs and activities at social times. This limits pupils' chances to socialise with friends and to try new activities. The school should develop the number and range of clubs available to pupils to ensure that they can develop their talents and interests outside of the classroom.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged Kelford School to be good in December 2014.

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	142797
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10323078
Type of school	Special school
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	135
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	36
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Child MBE
Headteacher	Sarah Mullhall
Website	www.kelfordschool.com
Date of previous inspection	19 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Nexus Multi-Academy Trust.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has had two changes in headteacher. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2024, but prior to this supported the school on a part-time basis.
- The school makes provision for two-year-olds. At the time of the inspection, there were no two-year-olds on the school's roll.
- The school does not use alternative providers.
- The school uses another site to educate some pupils. Forest View, Rawmarsh, Rotherham, is a vocational centre for pupils aged 16 to 19.
- The school caters for a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities including autism, profound and multiple learning difficulties and physical difficulties.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a-point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's educational provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, who was also the designated lead for safeguarding, and three assistant headteachers.
- The inspection team also met with the CEO of the trust and members of the board of trustees, including the chair of the trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, early reading and communication, and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). For each deep dive, 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.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum in other subject areas and visited students in the post-16 provision, Forest View.
- 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 inspection team considered the views of staff and parents who completed the Ofsted surveys.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Claire Leech

Ofsted Inspector

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