

# Kings Langley School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117526
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358151
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Joyce HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1089
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	176
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Frances Stickle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gary Lewis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Love Lane Kings Langley WD4 9HN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01923 264504
<b>Fax number</b>	01923 260564
<b>Email address</b>	Middletont05@kingslangley.herts.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 26 lessons and reviewed the work of 40 teachers. Meetings were held with the senior leadership team, school middle managers, nominated teachers and support staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at minutes of meetings, school improvement plans, subject review documentation and many other school policies. Inspectors analysed questionnaires returned from 312 parents and carers, 93 school staff and a sample of over 150 students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The achievement of students in English.
- The effectiveness of actions taken to improve teaching and learning.
- The impact of the specialist status in raising standards across the school.
- The development of the sixth form to ensure the range of courses on offer meet the needs and interests of students.
- The effectiveness of guidance and support provided to students with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities.

## Information about the school

Kings Langley is a large school that is oversubscribed. The school population is predominantly White British, and the proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language are below average. The number of students with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements, is low. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school is a specialist arts college that has gained Artsmark, Sportsmark and Healthy School accreditation and has Investors in People status. The school is involved in a collaborative partnership offering post-16 provision.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school that continues to improve year on year. Staff and students are rightly proud of their school as it provides a well-rounded education that enables students to develop as responsible citizens and to achieve well academically. Its excellent leaders have engineered sustained improvement since the last inspection, resulting in the strengthening of every aspect of the school's work. The school is clearly focused on further improving provision and has a carefully considered and detailed improvement plan. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and correctly identifies the underdeveloped role of middle managers in their areas of responsibility as a relative weakness, as the effectiveness of subject leadership does vary. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

Outcomes for students are now good. Attainment levels are above average, having improved significantly over the last two years. Provision in English, which was a cause for concern previously, has improved markedly and students now make good progress and achieve as well as they do in other subjects. Improved attainment levels across the school are the successful result of a determined effort to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching are excellent, and sharply focused staff training continues to improve the effectiveness of teaching. Good teaching in most lessons motivates and engages students in memorable learning activities that are well suited to individual needs and ability levels. In a minority of lessons teachers do not use achievement information effectively to plan activities at different levels to match students' differing needs, and consequently individual students do not always make the progress they are capable of.

A broad and balanced curriculum contributes significantly to students' personal development and to their enjoyment of school life. Subjects within the arts specialism have made a significant contribution to raising standards across the school and to students' social and cultural development. The curriculum, along with an impressive range of extra-curricular activities, provides a wide range of opportunities to help students of all ability levels to make considerable gains in confidence and prepares them exceptionally well for later life. The school provides good care, guidance and support for students and pastoral care is outstanding, ensuring that all groups of students achieve equally well. Students feel extremely safe within school and benefit from a calm and positive learning environment. The procedures for safeguarding are outstanding.

The effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory, although provision and outcomes vary between different subject areas in keeping with variations in teaching quality. Collaborative provision with other local schools and colleges provides students with a wide range of course options. Good leadership is improving the sixth form and guidance and

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support are becoming more effective at ensuring students are placed onto the course that meets their needs, interests and ability levels.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Sharpen the effectiveness of middle managers, particularly in relation to provision in the sixth form, by ensuring that they:
  - share best practice in monitoring, evaluation and the use of data
  - apply greater consistency in the way they implement school policies and procedures.
  - Make the quality of learning and teaching throughout the school consistently good or better by ensuring teachers:
  - use individual students' achievement data effectively to inform lesson planning
  - design lesson activities at the right levels of difficulty to challenge all individual students to aim high.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Observations of lessons and students' work during the inspection confirmed that students enter the school in Year 7 with broadly average levels of attainment and make good progress throughout the school to achieve above average GCSE results in Year 11. In 2010 the school had its best ever GCSE results. All groups of students achieve equally well, and results show no significant underperformance in any classification. The school is rightly proud that all students who left last year found places in education, training or employment. In lessons, students settle quickly to their work and become engaged in meaningful and memorable learning activities. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support that enables them to progress and achieve as well as their peers. Students feel extremely safe in school as a result of the excellent pastoral care provided, and are confident that any instances of bullying or harassment are quickly and effectively dealt with. Behaviour around the school is often exemplary although in few instances, usually because of less engaging teaching, passive behaviour in lessons does inhibit progress.

Students' wider personal development is particularly good. The impressive technology and language aspects of the curriculum promote the development of a broad range of skills that make a very significant contribution to students' future economic well-being. Students enjoy school life, as reflected by their excellent attendance record and their participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Students understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and participate well in optional physical activities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a wide range of activities, especially through subjects within the arts specialism. Many students willingly contribute to the life of the school and beyond through the school council and their work with local community organisations.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

The majority of lessons observed by inspectors were good and some were outstanding. Typically teachers plan their lessons well and students are motivated by a range of different teaching methods that encourage them to participate and engage. Lessons enable students to develop their literacy, numeracy and information technology skills as well as developing other important life skills such as team working and effective communication. Most lessons follow a consistent format and routine that students respond well to. In the minority of less effective but still satisfactory lessons, students are not as motivated or engaged by meaningful activities that are well suited to their ability level and as a consequence some become passive and do not make the progress they are capable of.

The specialist arts curriculum is popular and has had a notable impact across the school. The technology curriculum enables all students to sample a more practical subject. Courses to build self-confidence and self-esteem in Year 7 are beneficial and activities to promote health awareness and enterprise are well received by students. The 'Rock Challenge' is an outstanding example of one of the many extra-curricular activities that help students' moral and social development whilst making a good contribution to the community. Pastoral support arrangements are particularly strong. Highly effective links with external agencies enhance the support provided by the school where necessary. The school's work with students who find themselves in vulnerable situations is very good and

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has reduced permanent exclusions and improved attendance. Academic guidance and support are becoming more effective at helping all students make faster progress.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school's leaders and managers are highly effective at embedding ambition and driving improvement. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership for the school and is exceptionally well supported by a principal deputy headteacher and a capable senior leadership team. The school's 'talent management programme' is appropriately focused on developing the leadership capacity of middle managers to further improve their areas of responsibility.

The school's safeguarding arrangements, performance management and quality assurance systems, including those for 'subject review' and for the management of teaching and learning, are outstanding models of best practice. School leaders are passionate about improving provision further with a key focused on driving improvements in teaching and learning using many innovative and cost-effective strategies. The teaching and learning group is a real asset to the school and is particularly focused on ironing out inconsistencies in practice among staff.

The governing body provides outstanding support for the school and ensures that it is fully held to account for its performance. The wealth of experience and expertise of the governing body is used to very good effect. They ensure the school fulfils its statutory obligations well with regard to the promotion of equality of opportunity, community cohesion and child protection. They also ensure that the school deploys its resources effectively to achieve good value for money, although some accommodation at the school is in a very poor state of repair and this inhibits further curriculum development or enhancement.

The school plays a leading role with many of the partners it works with, and has good working relationships with a range of external agencies that help promote learning and well-being. Engagement with parents and carers is good overall, but the school is rightly planning to review the effectiveness of current arrangements to enhance communication further. The school promotes community cohesion effectively and students develop a good appreciation of different cultures and backgrounds. They form positive relationships with each other and share a common sense of belonging to the school and local community.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Sixth form

Students have mature attitudes to learning in this improving sixth form and typically make satisfactory progress from their various starting points. While student outcomes have been consistently good in subjects such as biology and business studies, achievement in other subjects varies considerably. The school has correctly identified that this variation is closely linked to differences in the quality of teaching and subject leadership, and is taking decisive action to remedy the situation. Good leadership is helping to set a very clear direction for the future and the effective management of performance in different subject areas is starting to bring benefits. A sharpening of the monitoring and support given to students who need additional academic guidance is starting to see attainment levels increase.

Students rightly say that the good pastoral care and support they receive helps them to settle well into the sixth form and to adapt and cope with the different expectations placed on them. Students have a good range of courses to choose from and this is enhanced by good partnerships with local schools and colleges which provide additional options. Effective actions are being taken to improve the quality assurance arrangements for courses provided in partner schools.



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*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned inspection questionnaires were very supportive of the school and the quality of education it provides. A significant number of parents took the time to make additional comments about the time and care school staff dedicated to their children and praised the support provided. A very small minority of parents and carers cited specific instances of dissatisfaction with one or more aspects of the school's work, including instances when bullying had not been adequately dealt with in their view. These individual concerns were followed up by the inspection team, but followed no particular pattern.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kings Langley School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 312 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1089 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	109	35	185	59	13	4	4	1
The school keeps my child safe	116	37	192	62	3	1	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	70	23	196	66	30	10	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	76	26	195	66	21	7	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	58	20	224	76	13	4	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	57	19	203	69	31	11	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	16	210	71	37	12	3	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	61	22	198	70	23	8	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	68	23	199	68	23	7	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	76	26	181	62	29	10	4	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	15	188	69	36	13	6	2
The school is led and managed effectively	111	36	184	60	9	3	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	109	37	179	60	10	3	2	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



8 October 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of Kings Langley School, Kings Langley, WD4 9HN**

Thank you for making such a positive contribution to our recent inspection. We really appreciated the time that you took to speak to us and were very impressed by your mature attitudes and the courtesy you showed us. Your views, alongside the questionnaire responses from your parents and carers, were very helpful in confirming our first-hand observations of your school.

We judged your school to be a good school with a satisfactory sixth form. We were particularly impressed by:

- the progress you are now making because of good teaching in most lessons
- the standards that you achieve, which are above national averages
- the good curriculum, which prepares you so well for later life and enables you to develop as responsible citizens
- the good care, guidance and support the school provides
- the highly effective leadership provided by the headteacher.

It was clear to us that you are well cared for and feel extremely safe while at school and that the school has high hopes for your future success. School leaders are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and continue to make the school even better. To help the school improve we have asked the headteacher to:

- work with subject leaders and help them to further develop their departments, particularly in the sixth form
- work with teachers to ensure they challenge all of you to do well in every lesson.

You can help the school and your teachers by continuing to work hard in all of your lessons. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Joyce

Her Majesty's Inspector

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