

CTC Kingshurst Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135684
Local Authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	364405
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Nada Trikic HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1600
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barry Jones
Headteacher	Ann Jones
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cooks Lane Kingshurst, Solihull B37 6NZ
Telephone number	0121 329 8300
Fax number	0121 770 0879
Email address	ann.jones@kingshurst.ac.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 54 lessons taught by 53 teachers, and held meetings with the School Improvement Partner, representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including improvement plans, the analysis and tracking of progress, records of classroom observation, attendance and exclusion data and monitoring information. Inspectors considered the outcomes and analysis of questionnaires from 128 students and 411 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively do teachers plan and deliver lessons to meet the needs of higher-ability students?
- To what extent do middle and senior leaders consider students' progress over time when judging the quality of teaching?
- What steps are taken to tackle the variation in attainment and progress across subjects and courses?
- What information is gathered to support rigorous self-evaluation of the sixth form?

Information about the school

The academy opened in September 2008 and is very much larger than most secondary schools. The academy attracts students from a very large number of primary schools in Solihull and the surrounding area. Students come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds with an above average proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. A large majority of the student population are of White British heritage with a wide range of other minority backgrounds represented. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students identified by the academy as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below the national average but rising. The academy's specialisms are technology and visual arts. The academy holds Training School status and has gained a number of awards including the Healthy Schools award and the Intermediate International Schools award. The academy provides a range of extended services for the local community.

Significant building and refurbishment work has caused disruption across the site over the past two years. Staff turnover and changes have led to disruption to teaching and leadership in recent years.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Kingshurst is a satisfactory and improving school. It has great strengths in its provision for students' personal development and well-being. This provides an inclusive and harmonious community which is highly valued by parents, carers and students. Staff have been highly successful in creating a safe and vibrant environment where excellent relationships underpin students' positive attitudes to learning. Students' attendance is above average and their contribution to the community is outstanding. Students speak enthusiastically and with pride about their involvement in the school. They lead projects and performances within school and the wider community, nationally and internationally. Students are keen to experience new things and particularly enjoy learning about different cultural and artistic influences and traditions, for example through the performing and visual arts. Knowledge of other cultures is strengthened by links with communities in Nepal and Zambia, and the enterprising and challenging voluntary work undertaken there by older students, including some with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders recognise that there has been too much focus on increasing the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A* to C passes, and not enough on maximising the progress students make from Years 7 to 11. In recent years, attainment in GCSE has been above the national average but too few students achieve the highest grades, or make the progress expected. Standards vary across courses because of pockets of weaker teaching and inconsistent use of assessment information. The principal has been influential in redefining priorities to meet these challenges. Effective steps have been taken to tackle weaknesses in teaching, and to implement more rigorous monitoring of teaching that now takes account of students' progress over time. Assessment information is now readily available, and the frequency of progress tracking increased to identify students at risk of falling behind. This means that intervention strategies such as one-to-one sessions are effectively programmed. Careful targeting has meant that in the current Year 11, students are on track to increase the proportion of A* and A grades in English and mathematics.

Teaching makes a variable contribution to students' learning and progress, which is satisfactory and improving. Students enjoy their lessons but high-ability students are not routinely challenged by the work set. Students benefit from much good teaching but the proportion is not high enough. Assessment information is not used well enough to plan and adjust lessons, or to identify appropriate tasks and resources to meet students' diverse needs. Students' involvement in assessing their own work and identifying their next steps in learning is developing. In some lessons there are too few opportunities for students to discuss their ideas before written tasks are set, or to use and apply their information and communication technology (ICT) skills. The curriculum continues to evolve successfully in response to students' needs, interests and aspirations. A strength lies in the innovative pathways to meet students' needs. A wide range of specialist partnership activities contribute effectively to the curriculum, achievement and well-being

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of students. This is particularly strong in the sixth form, where real-life work-related problems set by partners, most notably in BTEC art, enable students to showcase their talents. Developments in the technology specialism are less well advanced.

Senior leaders have a broadly accurate view of strengths and areas for improvement, although there is a tendency to be overgenerous. This is because monitoring information is not always systematically gathered and interrogated to substantiate judgements, for example in the sixth form. The leadership and management structure is beginning to provide a stronger focus on teaching and learning, variation between subjects, and accountability for students' progress through the subject leader role. Leaders demonstrate a satisfactory and developing capacity to sustain improvement through the actions taken this year. A strength of the school is the strong community spirit evident in the shared commitment to improve. The governing body can be proud of its work in overseeing building and refurbishment projects that have enhanced the learning environment.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and improve rates of progress, particularly in mathematics and English, through:
 - regular checks on standards and progress against explicit milestones for individuals and groups of learners
 - increasing the proportion of A* and A grades
 - the effective use of students' prior learning and progress information.
- Increase the proportion of securely good or better teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan lessons, tasks and resources that provide appropriate challenge, especially for high-ability students to promote their independent learning
 - involve students in assessing their progress so they are clear about their next steps in learning
 - check students' learning regularly during lessons so plans can be adjusted as necessary
 - increase opportunities for students to discuss their learning prior to written work
 - incorporate additional opportunities for students to use and apply their ICT skills.
- Review and refine the roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders so that:
 - effective line management arrangements strengthen accountability for students' progress
 - subject leadership drives improvements in the quality of teaching
 - the outcomes of quality assurance are followed up rigorously to reduce the variations in quality between teachers and subjects.
- Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of students' performance and provision in the sixth form.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment on entry to the school is above average. By the end of Year 11 standards remain above average overall, although there is some variation across groups of learners when compared to groups nationally. Boys' standards are broadly average whereas standards for students known to be eligible for free school meals are above average. In 2010, the students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities made satisfactory progress. The school's current data show pockets of good progress, but it is not consistent.

Evidence from students' work seen during the inspection indicates that most classes are making at least satisfactory progress, with about half making good progress. Positive relationships are a common feature of lessons. Students respond well when expectations are high and they are challenged by a variety of tasks. They enjoy group work and tasks that help them to develop and apply their knowledge and understanding. In one Year 7 'pathway' class for vulnerable learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities, learning and progress were good because individual needs were met by intensive teaching. In too many satisfactory lessons students become too dependent on the teacher, and have to listen for too long. The tasks selected do not adequately meet the needs of different groups of learners to ensure rapid progress.

Other features of students' outcomes include the following.

Students treat each other and adults with respect, and are able to show empathy and sensitivity to those less fortunate than themselves, as seen in a Year 11 lesson on coping with, and reacting to, people with facial disfigurements.

The 'student voice' is imaginatively structured into committees, each led by sixth form students. It has had notable success in the design of the new buildings, the new timetable and structure of the day.

Individual students are encouraged to prepare and present formally their ideas and proposals, some of which have been adopted, for example the purchase of two degus.

Students' behaviour is good; discussions with students confirm that the occasional incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with swiftly.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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?

High expectations and challenge characterise the strongest teaching, supported by a good range of strategies to engage and interest students. The difference between the good and satisfactory teaching is linked to the use of assessment. Where assessment is strong, teachers use questions well to check on students' understanding during lessons. Self- and peer-assessment activities help students to understand how they are doing and how to improve. Where it is weaker, teachers do not unpick success or grade criteria sufficiently well to help students to check on their progress. In these lessons teachers do not always take enough account of students' prior learning or have high enough expectations of the most able learners

The work of the pastoral and welfare teams is impressive, especially with the students whose circumstances make them most vulnerable. Excellent transition links ensure that all students get off to a good start. A wide range of support, starting before students arrive in Year 7, is on offer, often using in-house expertise to speed up the process, with external agency support to supplement. Another key feature of support is through the extended schools programme, which includes family learning opportunities. For example, following the 'Dads in Demand' programme students wrote: 'It has helped me become closer to my dad,' and, 'It has helped me understand my dad.' Information, advice and personal guidance is a strong feature as students make curriculum choices and decisions about the options available to them.

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The curriculum is well adapted to meet the needs of different groups of students. A highly successful pathway has been designed to cater for the higher number of Year 7 students who enter with special educational needs and/or disabilities, providing them with intensive teaching and support prior to re-integration into mainstream provision. A very well established database of links with a full range of work-related learning providers, both local and national, support the career aspirations of students. Participation rates in extra-curricular provision are improving with striking examples where specific provision is having an impact. For example, the sports partnership has improved attendance and reduced absence.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The governing body, leaders and staff share a strong passion and drive to improve students' achievement and life chances. A high priority is placed on improving the quality of teaching through a systematic approach to training and coaching. As a training school, staff have access to an observation suite where lessons can be recorded and discussed to hone teaching skills. The emphasis is now on increasing the proportion of good or better teaching. There has been some very recent success but good practice is not embedded across the school.

Through changes to the leadership and management structure the principal is building capacity. Greater delegation of responsibility to subject leaders is supporting closer monitoring and tighter accountability. Although the structure has not yet been fully implemented, there is clear evidence that quality assurance activities such as work scrutiny are used to identify variation in the quality of students' work. Leaders recognise that they have not yet followed up the findings rigorously enough to secure greater consistency. The governing body contributes satisfactorily to the school's development. Membership is in transition but the governing body is beginning to identify the sources of evidence to enable it to take a more prominent role in the school's self-evaluation. The school has adopted the recommended good practice for safeguarding. Systems for training staff ensure that procedures are followed when concerns about child protection are raised.

The good promotion of equal opportunity and community cohesion is evident in the school's work to identify barriers to students' personal and academic development. A project has successfully increased the participation rate of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals in enrichment activities. Leaders increasingly analyse the performance of the different groups of learners to inform their interventions. Well-established links with the local community and schools in Zambia and Nepal broaden

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students' horizons and knowledge of contrasting lifestyles. Sixth form students who visit partner schools share their life-changing experiences in assemblies.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Sixth form students enjoy excellent relationships with their teachers, and take their responsibilities seriously. They act as good mentors and role models for their younger peers, through a full range of leadership initiatives and their participation in leading the 'student voice'. Students enter the sixth form with standards below the national average because many do not reach the highest levels in GCSE examinations. They make satisfactory progress overall. Most teachers provide a good range of learning activities in their lessons and students say how much they enjoy them. However, many students require support with literacy and numeracy and this reduces their ability to develop as effective independent learners. Some students eventually catch up in Year 13 and make good and, in some cases, outstanding progress relative to their starting point. The curriculum is very broad and provides a good choice of subjects within the International Baccalaureate and vocational programmes, complemented by enrichment and volunteering opportunities. The quality of provision is good because specialist on-site care, guidance and support are excellent, and students cite this as a significant contributor to their ongoing personal and social development and well-being. Students progress successfully on to higher education or employment. The personal mentoring system is effective and students are provided with appropriate advice about their next steps.

The leadership and management of the sixth form have undergone some recent changes. Steps have been taken to ensure that students have an enjoyable and enriching experience in the sixth form but monitoring processes are not yet sufficiently rigorous to identify the priorities to drive improvement.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

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

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of responses from parents and carers is above average for a secondary school. A very large majority of parents and carers report very favourably on their children's experiences, and the extent to which the school provides a safe learning environment. A small minority of parents and carers report that the school does not help them to support their children's learning. Inspectors found that there is a range of family learning opportunities such as 'understanding your child', or 'keeping up with mathematics' to encourage parents and carers to become learners, often with their children, and to become more comfortable with supporting their children's learning. The feedback from these courses is positive. A small minority report that the school does not take account of their suggestions and comments. Although the school has a consultative group which is open to parents and carers to share their views, it is not well attended. Leaders recognise that they have not yet fully involved parents and carers in the school's developments. A small minority also expressed concerns about how well the school helps students to have a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors found that participation in extra-curricular sporting activities is increasing to promote health-related exercise, and to help students to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at CTC Kingshurst Academy 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 411 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1600 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	122	30	260	63	24	6	4	1
The school keeps my child safe	149	36	245	60	11	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	133	32	245	60	26	6	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	134	33	222	54	42	10	2	0
The teaching is good at this school	116	28	239	58	35	9	2	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	97	24	242	59	51	12	2	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	75	18	265	64	53	13	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)	99	24	261	64	19	5	4	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	112	27	234	57	43	10	6	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	115	28	232	56	35	9	5	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	84	20	239	58	41	10	8	2
The school is led and managed effectively	134	33	242	59	15	4	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	162	39	207	50	28	7	6	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



1 April 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of CTC Kingshurst Academy, Solihull, B37 6NZ

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited recently. You were all overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the school, and very enthusiastic about the range of exciting opportunities available through the curriculum and enrichment programme. We decided that Kingshurst is a satisfactory and improving school. It has great strengths in the care and support it provides. You appreciate the dedication of the pastoral and welfare teams, who know you well. Another strength is the community spirit and the outstanding way that most of you contribute within the school and local community. You take your responsibilities seriously and through 'student voice' are making a difference to the running of the school.

You enter the school with standards that are above average. Although standards are still above average in the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C passes in GCSE, not enough of you gain the top A* and A grades. This means that you make satisfactory rather than good progress by the end of Year 11. It also means that not all of you are ready to meet the challenges of post-16 studies. The sixth form is satisfactory overall. Although the teaching, curriculum, care, support and guidance are good, students have to work hard to develop higher-levels skills to become independent learners.

Over the last year, the principal, staff and governors have been working hard to make improvements and inspectors could see evidence of progress. At the end of the inspection we identified some improvement points to support the next stage. These are to:

- raise standards and improve rates of progress, particularly in mathematics and English, and to increase the proportion of A* and A grades at GCSE
- increase the proportion of good or better lessons across the school
- refocus leadership and management roles on improving the quality and consistency of teaching, and student progress
- strengthen the monitoring of provision and students' progress in the sixth form.

I am sure that you will play your part by working hard to meet your challenging targets.

Yours sincerely

Nada Trikic

Her Majesty's Inspector

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