

Kings Norton Boys' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103562
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	376932
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Mark Sims HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	722
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Clarke
Headteacher	Clive Sentance
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2008
School address	Northfield Road Birmingham B30 1DY
Telephone number	0121 628 0010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 29 lessons taught by 26 teachers. Inspectors also held meetings with the headteacher and other staff, a member of the governing body, students and a parent and a telephone conversation with a local headteacher. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents; improvement plans; progress reports; minutes of governing body meetings; and records of students' progress. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from 133 parents and carers and took account of student and staff questionnaires.

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

- What is the consistency of the provision for all students in English and mathematics?
- What impact has the school's specialist status had on the achievement of students in science?
- What is the quality of the provision and support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- What has been the impact of leaders at all levels in bringing about improvements?
- How safe and well behaved are students?

Information about the school

King's Norton is smaller than the average secondary school. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is broadly average, although the percentage of students for whom English is an additional language is low. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with that found in most schools but the proportion of those who have a statement of special educational needs is high. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average and student mobility is lower than the national average. The school holds a national Healthy Schools award. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

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

2

Main findings

King's Norton is an improving school that provides a satisfactory standard of education. The headteacher, strongly supported by his senior leadership team, has rapidly brought about significant improvements in student behaviour and developed an ethos where the extent to which students say they feel safe is exceptionally high. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students are outstanding. Central to this improved behaviour has been the reorganisation of the pastoral system and the introduction of a clear policy where rewards and sanctions are consistently applied. Students, staff, parents and carers all confirm that this has transformed the learning environment and raised the morale of the staff. Students enjoy their learning and want to be in school, as evidenced by rapidly improving level of attendance, which is above average over time but this term has been high so far. Exclusions have fallen in line with the significant reduction of reported incidents. The school provides a good level of care, guidance and support for its students.

There have been improvements in achievement. In recent years, students joined the school having achieved broadly the expected level of attainment for their age in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. By the time they leave at the end of Key Stage 4 they have maintained broadly average standards as measured by the proportion of students achieving five A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics. A higher proportion of students have achieved at least a C grade in English compared to mathematics because while the teaching is now good in English, it is still satisfactory in mathematics. Not enough students achieve the highest possible grades at GCSE in English and mathematics. All groups of students have made a similar rate of satisfactory progress over time, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, although individual progress of these students varies depending on the quality of the provision.

Teaching has improved and the large majority of lessons are now at least good. The improvement in teaching has not been in place long enough to see the impact in progress over time or a significant rise in GCSE results, although outcomes are good in languages, art, and design and technology. Through rigorous monitoring and support from senior leaders there have been improvements in teaching in targeted areas, such as science where the majority of teaching seen was good, although recent GCSE results do not yet reflect this. Until very recently the school's specialism has not had sufficient impact on provision and outcomes in science. Assessment throughout the school is satisfactory but there are inconsistencies from lesson to

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lesson. Marking is particularly effective in English and art but too often it is limited to ticks and brief praise comments. At times, work is not marked at all. Target sheets in exercise books are often incomplete so that students are not sure of their expected level. Consequently, students often do not know precisely how well they are doing or how they could improve.

The headteacher and senior leaders have a very accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The effectiveness of the governing body has significantly improved. It has given the school strategic direction with the appointment of the new headteacher and through successfully tackling a very large deficit budget without any detrimental effect on the school. The extent to which heads of subject are involved in monitoring teaching or tracking students' progress is very variable and scrutiny of students' work and teacher marking is limited. There is very little sharing of the best lessons within subjects or across the school by middle leaders. Outcomes have improved in the sixth form and are good, in line with the provision and leadership and management. The curriculum is significantly enhanced by the partnership with the girls' school.

Students' behaviour in and around school is good. They are respectful and courteous and get on well together. They have the chance to take on responsibilities, such as house captains and prefects. They have a good awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles in sport and eating. A particular strength commented on by parents and carers, and students was the extent of outdoor pursuits. Take-up of extra-curricular activities, including sport, is very high although the extent to which this is monitored by the school is underdeveloped. The curriculum offers a good variety of vocational and academic pathways. The school has a good capacity to improve because of the significant improvements to behaviour, safety, teaching, outcomes in the sixth form and the rising trend of improvements in achievement. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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 the overall level of attainment by ensuring that:
 - all groups of students, including more-able students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are consistently set challenging tasks in all lessons
 - teaching in mathematics is consistently good.
- Improve teacher assessment by ensuring that:
 - marking is regular and consistent, and informs students how well they have done and how they could improve
 - targets are consistently monitored and shared with students.

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- Develop the role of middle leaders so that they:
 - have a greater role in monitoring teaching and tracking performance of students in their subjects
 - share the aspects of the very best lessons seen more widely to ensure consistency within and across subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The learning of students in lessons was good in the majority of lessons. Students are motivated to do well in a learning environment which is safe and secure. They enjoy taking part in whole class or group discussions on topical issues such as gender. Learning is satisfactory in a small minority of lessons where students spend too long passively listening or the pace of learning is slower or where there are not enough opportunities for students to take the initiative in their learning. Most students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the expected progress given their starting points. They work well in a range of subjects when given appropriate tasks and challenges but expectations are not always high enough for them. Students are developing the necessary skills for learning but do not always get the opportunity to apply them.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They respect each others' differences and have an extensive knowledge of other faiths and cultures, which has broadened their understanding of the world around them. Students have a strong sense of right and wrong and have reacted positively in lessons to the expected code of conduct for behaviour. The move to an afternoon register at the end of the school day has had a positive impact on students' attitudes and they respond well to the rewards for good behaviour. Students know about unsafe practices and potentially dangerous situations and what to do if they arise. Reported racist incidents are very rare. Students know that if any bullying incident occurs they can report it with confidence that the school will deal with it effectively. Students participate extensively in charitable events and causes which they have chosen. Through the school council they contribute towards the decision making of the school. They are guided well for the next steps in their learning. The extent to which they are prepared well for their future economic well being is satisfactory because of the extent of the basic skills in literacy and numeracy, although they have well developed basic skills in information and communication and technology (ICT).

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	3

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

How effective is the provision?

In the very best lessons, students know what exactly is expected of them and how they are going to achieve their learning intention. Planning takes account of students' different starting points and allows for a variety of activities to engage students' interest. However, at times the work set is insufficiently challenging. Relationships between teachers and students are very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they impart well to students. The best questioning challenges students to give extended replies. Speaking skills are well developed in English and languages lessons. In less effective lessons, students are not always set work appropriate to their starting points and the pace of learning is slow. Assessment is satisfactory because of the inconsistency in marking. At its best, especially in English and art, students are clearly and regularly informed how well they are doing. Target sheets are used to ensure that students know their targets and how to reach them. Teachers' written comments also support this. In other instances, exercise books have not been marked for long periods and there is no evidence that heads of subjects have scrutinised marking. Comments are brief and too focused on praise.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and well organised, with a wide range of academic and vocational courses on offer. Partnerships with extended services are well established to meet students' individual needs. The school is relying less and less on off-site alternative provision and almost all students are now catered for by the school itself. There is a strong range of work-related learning through links with universities and industry. The curriculum is enriched through flexible learning days. Many parents and students spoke very positively of the opportunities for outdoor pursuits, which are extensive.

Care guidance and support is good. The revised pastoral system and the work of the

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

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heads of house, although at an early stage of development, have already had an impact on the attitudes and behaviour of students. They are, for example, responding well to rewards and the consistent use of sanctions. A well-structured personal social and health education programme (PSHE) is addressing issues of healthy lifestyles for which the school holds a national award. There is a well-targeted multi-agency approach to students who may be vulnerable. Transition arrangements with other schools and settings are good. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for and a nurture group caters well for their emotional needs. One parent, summing up the views of many others, said, 'Since joining Kings Norton my son's self-esteem and confidence have increased considerably.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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?

On appointment, the headteacher's first priority was to address student behaviour. The extent to which he and senior leaders have embedded ambition and driven improvement is satisfactory. This is because, although there have been significant improvements in behaviour and teaching, the extent to which middle leadership has been strengthened is variable. Outcomes, although improving, have been rising steadily rather than significantly. The school's strategic direction is clear and the governing body has given strong support to the headteacher in addressing a large deficit budget. Teaching has been improved with the rigorous monitoring conducted by senior leaders, but middle leaders have only had limited involvement in this process and there are insufficient opportunities to share best teaching throughout the school.

Engagement with parents is good, with the overwhelming majority happy with their children's experience at school. Partnerships are also strong. In addition to the joint curriculum offered to the sixth form in partnership with the girls' school, there are links with other local schools and universities in maths and science, enhanced by the school's subject specialism. The school places a strong emphasis on promoting equality of opportunity and ensures that there are no significant differences in outcomes for groups of learners. As a result of rigorous safeguarding procedures and good care, guidance and support, there are few students at risk of becoming vulnerable. Senior leaders and governors are very thorough in reviewing safeguarding procedures regularly: roles and responsibilities are very clear and staff are trained to a high level. The school promotes community cohesion well. Students

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have regular opportunities to participate in the local community, for example through engagement with local hospitals. Understanding of the wider national and international world is promoted through the curriculum and especially in PSHE and assemblies. There are good international links with South Africa.

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	2
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	1
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

Outcomes are good in the sixth form. Attainment at both A and AS level has been on a rising trend in recent years and is now broadly average. There have been significant improvements in mathematics and science. Students' progress is good because of the low starting points based on prior attainment up to GCSE when they start AS courses. The proportion of students achieving the highest possible A to B grades is not as high as found nationally. Tracking of students currently in school indicates that they are making good progress. Students are well focused on their learning in lessons. They are able to research and analyse data independently and enter into high-quality discussions on relevant topics where they consider opposing points of view. Students use information and communication technology effectively in their learning and research. Students enjoy their learning, as reflected in their high level of attendance and the high retention rate. Teaching is good and students' performance is closely tracked. The high quality of the additional support and intervention has contributed to the good achievement of students although more-able students do not always receive a sufficient level of challenge.

The curriculum is predominantly academic but there is a wide range of courses available as a result of the partnership with the girls' school. There is a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, including design engineering projects linked to industries and universities, as well as a good sports programme. Students have a

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strong voice in school affairs and the school responds well to their views. Leadership of the sixth form is good because of the effective monitoring of progress of individuals and the attention given to the needs of different groups, including those on free school meals or with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is a shared vision between senior leaders and leadership of the sixth form which has led to year-on-year improvement.

These are the grades for the sixth form

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

Views of parents and carers

All parents and carers who responded to the survey and expressed a view about the statement said that the school is well led and managed. Almost all said they were happy with their child’s experience at Kings Norton Boys’ school; that the school keeps their child safe; their child is making enough progress in school; and that teaching is good. A few parents and carers disagreed that the school keeps them well informed about their child’s progress or that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. The inspection team investigated their concerns and found that, overall, the school engages well with parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at King's Norton Boys' 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 133 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 722 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	41	72	54	6	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	62	47	69	52	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	61	46	65	49	6	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	45	70	53	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	39	77	58	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	45	34	72	54	12	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	35	79	59	2	2	0	0
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)	38	29	75	56	7	5	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	47	35	75	56	5	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	31	78	59	8	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	50	38	69	52	10	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	56	42	70	53	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	64	48	66	50	2	2	0	0

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



9 December 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Kings Norton Boys' School, Birmingham, B30 1DY

You will know that we recently came to inspect your school and I thought you would like to know what we have said in our report. Kings Norton provides a satisfactory standard of education. When you join the school at the start of Year 7 your level of attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average. You make satisfactory progress during your time in the school and the percentage of you who achieve a good GCSE grade in both English and mathematics is about the same as that found in most schools.

The way the school makes sure you are kept safe through its safeguarding arrangements is outstanding, and all of you who spoke to us or who completed the survey told us you feel safe in school. The care, guidance and support you receive from school are good, as is the quality of teaching in most subjects. You have told us how behaviour has improved and we agree with the school that it is good. Your headteacher and senior leaders have ensured that there is a good learning environment in school, largely free from any disruptive behaviour. You can be proud of the part you have played in this. Provision in the sixth form is good and outcomes for students have significantly improved recently.

There are a few things we have asked the school to do, which we think will help improve the school further.

- Ensure that teachers, when they mark your work, give you clear guidance how well you are doing and how you could improve.
- Raise achievement by making sure that you are all set challenging work and that all the lessons in mathematics are consistently good.
- Make sure that your subject leaders have a greater role in checking the quality of your lessons, so that they know how well you are doing in their subject, and in ensuring that all your lessons match those of the very best.

I would like to thank you for making us so welcome to your school and for taking the time to speak to us. I wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

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