

Kingsmead Technology College

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124397
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380884
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2012
Lead inspector	Robert Barbour HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1305
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Heath
Headteacher	Ian Bryant
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2009
School address	Kings Avenue Cannock WS12 1DH
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

Inspection team

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This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 37 lessons taught by 37 teachers and made six short visits to lessons. Inspectors held meetings with groups of students, school staff and governors. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at school self-evaluation, school planning, behaviour records, governing body minutes and other documentation. Inspectors scrutinised 136 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and questionnaires completed by staff and students.

Information about the school

Kingsmead Technology College is larger than the average-sized secondary school. The overwhelming majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of students from ethnic minorities is low. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs or supported at school action plus is low. Sixth form provision is provided in partnership with two other nearby schools. The school exceeds the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected by the government.

The school has the Arts Mark award. In 2011, the school received the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust award for the most improved GCSE results and also their award for the most improved value-added in GCSE results.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. The headteacher and his senior team provide high quality leadership and the school continues to improve. Students develop well, both academically and as rounded individuals, well-prepared for their future lives. The school is not outstanding because there is variation in the quality of teaching. Many teachers actively foster students' skills in speaking and writing, but this is not consistent across all classes. Group work is often managed well, but sometimes students do not participate actively enough in these situations.
- Students make good progress. They work hard and appreciate the wide range of opportunities the school provides, from sports clubs to Saturday School.
- Teaching is good and is supported by a simple but effective approach to lesson structure. School leaders know the quality of teaching well and support its development effectively with tailored programmes to help teachers develop their skills.
- Students feel very safe in school. They are courteous and behave well. They respond especially well when they are able to take ownership of their learning and have opportunities to express themselves creatively. In many lessons, they join in group work with enthusiasm but, in some lessons, their response is more passive.
- The leadership of the school is good. In particular, the management of performance is rigorous. There is a clear vision and purpose shared by all staff.
- The sixth form is satisfactory. It is led and managed well so that the progress of students is improving; students' progress at present is in line with the national average. The higher quality teaching that is present in the main school is not as well embedded into sixth form practice.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Spread the existing good and outstanding practice across all classes, in particular to
 - develop students' speaking and writing skills
 - develop students' skills as active participants when they undertake group work.

- Ensure that the high quality practice in teaching in Key Stage 3 and 4 is spread across all sixth form teaching.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students have broadly average attainment when they start in Year 7. By Year 11, their attainment is above average and they have made good progress. In the 2011 GCSE results, this progress was less marked due to lower results in English and mathematics. Performance in these subjects has improved significantly this year. Progress in the sixth form is satisfactory but improving. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress due to the high quality provision that is made for their needs. There are some differences in the attainment between boys and girls, but these are relatively small and both genders make good progress.

Students respond particularly well when they can express themselves creatively or work on real-life problems. Students in Year 11 expressed pride in their art work and described how their technique and style had developed. Another student described the website he had created for a local company as part of his course in information and communication technology. The fact that there was a real-life context had been a major motivator. In music lessons, students responded very well to being given responsibility for their learning and were absorbed as they worked together in groups. In some lessons, however, they were less fully engaged and had fewer opportunities to develop speaking skills as less was expected of them. In the sixth form, students work hard. In a Year 12 drama lesson, students worked together outstandingly well in assessing each other's performances. In some sixth form lessons, by contrast, students communicated only at a low level, and this limited the depth of their learning and meant that their speaking and writing skills did not develop as fully as they could have.

A small minority of students join the school with low reading skills. These students make good progress with their reading due to a high quality additional programme. Their comprehension strategies are developing particularly well.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers overwhelmingly stated that their children are making good progress at the school, and students concurred in their questionnaire responses.

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Quality of teaching

The school has adopted a simple but effective structure for lessons, which is well embedded into the main school but less so across the sixth form. When the structure is applied well, lessons are varied and are subdivided into activities that keep students engaged. Teachers have high expectations and lessons have pace and challenge. In a Year 10 technology class, the principles of vacuum-forming were taught well through a series of linked activities which were effective in developing students' speaking skills as well as their technology skills and understanding. In a Year 7 music lesson, students were intensively involved throughout the lesson. They worked actively in groups and, at the end of the lesson, a student led the review of learning. Once again, this active participation enhanced students' learning in the subject and also their speaking skills. In a Year 12 art lesson, students worked well both on their work and in assessing the work of their peers. In some lessons, however, the technical vocabulary relevant to that lesson was not highlighted, discussion was limited and, where students were set tasks in groups, some students took a very passive role and let their neighbours do too much of the work. The skill of writing is developed well in some subjects but, at times, such opportunities are missed.

Teaching encourages students to develop a deep moral sense. In Year 10 technology, the morality of the use of the Earth's natural resources was emphasised. In Year 9 citizenship, the morality of typical spending habits was explored. Students' spiritual sense is fostered through imaginative activities in art and music; in a Year 7 English lesson, students developed their imagination as they explored soliloquy and created a version of their own.

Disabled students and those with special educational needs are taught well. Clear support plans are available in all classes so that teachers use practical and effective strategies to enhance these students' learning. Lessons are planned to meet these students' needs and good quality additional adult support is often available.

Parents and carers overwhelmingly stated in the questionnaire that their children are taught well, and students agree. In discussions with inspectors, students commented how approachable their teachers are in sorting out any difficulties they encounter with their work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

One year ago, school leaders introduced a new behaviour management system. The fruits of this are apparent. Exclusion rates are below the national average and are declining. Records of school detentions show that these are also declining and their incidence is low. Students are clear that they feel safe in school, as bullying of all kinds is rare and dealt with quickly. They describe incidents more as personality clashes that are sorted out rapidly by school staff. The vast majority of students describe behaviour as good in their questionnaire results. The school keeps good

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records of all types of behaviour incidents.

A minority of parents and carers in their questionnaires felt that lessons were sometimes disrupted by poor behaviour, while at the same time agreeing that their children are making good progress. School records confirm that such disruption does occur in lessons, but only rarely. Records also show that the behaviour of individual students who have caused difficulty is improving strongly. Inspectors noted that, in the vast majority of instances, teachers have well-developed skills in managing behaviour, and that students are considerate, respectful and courteous to each other. Their behaviour makes a positive contribution to the good quality of their learning. Sixth form students demonstrate exemplary behaviour and many make valuable contributions to the life of the school, including in the all-age tutor groups.

Attendance is better than the national average, and effective steps are taken to promote further improvement. Punctuality is also good. Students have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including keeping safe on the internet.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and his senior team have worked with great determination and successfully to improve the quality of education. Rigorous systems are used to monitor the quality of teaching, and alongside this there are substantial opportunities for the professional development of teachers, including peer coaching. Subject leaders and other middle leaders are effective in monitoring and developing their areas of responsibility. As a result, over the past year, the quality of teaching has improved, students' behaviour has improved and students are making more progress in their lessons. In this way, leaders and managers have demonstrated a good capacity for further improvement.

The curriculum is broad and enables a wide range of needs to be met. It makes good provision for academic and vocational pathways. It is effective in meeting students' needs, and only a very small proportion of them are not in education, employment or training when they leave school. The curriculum places an emphasis on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. This is actively promoted in lessons and in extra-curricular experiences, such as in music opportunities, sports clubs and national and international visits. Recently, a group of students led a presentation in the Houses of Parliament on climate change that was attended by the local MP. The mixed-age tutor groups play an important role in helping to develop students' social awareness. The school houses are active in raising money for charities, many of them local. The school places an emphasis on enabling students to gain wider experience of the multi-cultural nature of modern British society.

The governing body is effective in its work. Its members understand the school's strengths and development needs well, and it provides a high quality of support and challenge. It takes care in setting and monitoring targets for the performance of the school. It monitors well the school's duty to safeguard its students, and all aspects of

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this are effective. The school works well in partnerships with other providers. The most significant of these is in the sixth form, where some teaching is shared between schools. There are good arrangements for ensuring safeguarding across this partnership, and good procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching across the three schools. This is an important factor leading to the rising standards in the sixth form, notwithstanding that progress has lagged a little behind the main school provision.

The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination well. Differences in attainment between different groups of students are monitored well and effective action ensures that these are small and reducing. In addition, the school makes very good provision for students who have specific needs.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



4 May 2012

Dear Students,

Inspection of Kingsmead Technology College, Cannock, WS12 1DH

Thank you for taking the time to talk to us during the recent inspection.

We have judged your school to be a good school. You are making good progress. This is because you are taught well, you work hard and behave well. You told us that you make particularly good progress when you are positively motivated and use your creativity, and when you recognise the relevance and value of what you are doing. In these instances, you develop a wide range of skills as well as success in your work. These skills include those of speaking, writing and the ability to work well together in a group. We have recommended to the school that your progress will be even better if you can have opportunities in more of your lessons to develop these skills.

In the sixth form, we have judged the progress that you make to be in line with the national average. We have recommended that it can become better than this if the teaching methods adopted in the rest of the school are applied more consistently in the sixth form. We have noted, however, that standards in the sixth form are already rising.

Your headteacher and all the staff are working hard and effectively to keep on improving the school. You can play your part by maintaining your good attendance, punctuality, hard work and behaviour. You can also make sure that you focus on the key skills of speaking, reading and writing and making sure you take an active part whenever you work in groups in lessons. These are skills that will play an especially important role as you move on into further or higher education, or into employment or training.

Yours sincerely

Robert Barbour
Her Majesty's Inspector

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