

Kings Grove School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111442
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	378303
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2012
Lead inspector	Sally Kenyon HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	706
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Dunlop
Headteacher	Trevor Langston
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 37 teachers, in 37 lessons and conducted three 'learning walks'. Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body, staff, the school improvement officer and the local authority representative. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, scrutinised students' work, and took account of responses in 139 parental questionnaires alongside those from student and staff questionnaires.

Information about the school

This smaller than average-sized secondary school has held business and enterprise specialist status since 2008. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average and rising. The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is above the national average. The school has recently changed its status to a foundation cooperative trust which has led to stronger links with local schools and a college. It is a leading member of the Crewe Partnership involving four secondary schools, 14 primary schools and two special schools. On-site there is a conference centre and a number of shops run by students. The school holds the Eco Schools Silver and Fair Trade awards and has Healthy School status. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

In July 2010, the school's provision for religious education was inspected as part of Ofsted's survey programme. At this time the overall effectiveness of religious education was inadequate.

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	4
Achievement of pupils	4
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	4

Key Findings

- In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.
- This is not a satisfactory school. School leaders have not tracked, monitored or evaluated the performance of different groups of students with enough rigour or accuracy. As a result, improvement to the students' low attainment is inconsistent and too slow. For these reasons, together with inadequate procedures for safeguarding students, the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate.
- Students' achievement is inadequate. The proportion of students leaving with at least five GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, remains significantly below the national average. Approximately half of students fail to make expected progress in English and mathematics. The lower than average attendance of some groups has a negative impact upon their achievement.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall. However, it is not strong enough to enable students to make the accelerated progress they need in order to make up ground they have lost in the past and raise attainment. While some good and outstanding practice was seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching over time, particularly in English and mathematics remains satisfactory.
- Students' behaviour and safety over time is satisfactory. Behaviour observed in lessons during the inspection was predominantly good. Nevertheless, teachers, students and parents and carers raised some well-founded concerns over inconsistencies in the management of behaviour and the quality of behaviour in lessons.

- The effectiveness of leaders and managers is inadequate. The school's arrangements for safeguarding students do not meet statutory requirements because the procedures to check, monitor and update staff recruitment records are inconsistently applied. In addition, while members of the governing body are involved in whole-school decision making they are not rigorously monitoring, evaluating and reviewing all aspects of the school's performance. There have been improvements in the quality of teaching with staff coaching each other and sharing good practice but the impact of this approach is not evident on students' achievement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders, managers and the governing body comply with statutory requirements for safeguarding students and that all necessary recruitment checks are made promptly and all records are kept up-to-date.
- Increase the proportion of students gaining at least five A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, so that it meets or exceeds national levels at the end of Key Stage 4 by:
 - using the analysis of achievement data to plan effective support programmes for underachieving groups
 - ensuring that support in lessons is deployed effectively
 - developing a whole-school approach to improving literacy and numeracy across the curriculum
 - improving attendance, particularly for groups whose attendance falls below the national average.
- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring a consistently detailed approach to lesson planning with clear objectives and suitably-staged, levelled outcomes that challenge and engage students of all abilities
 - checking that teachers provide learning resources and activities adapted to students' specific learning needs.
- Improve the impact of leaders at all levels on raising achievement by:
 - developing the skills of all those with leadership responsibility, including the governing body, to support effective monitoring and evaluation of the school's work
 - ensuring that assessment information is accurate in all subjects and its use is monitored rigorously so that learning opportunities fully meet the needs of different groups of students
 - ensuring that the system for behaviour management is applied consistently by all staff and understood by students
 - monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision, including additional support for students in the school's seclusion centre and for students subject to a fixed-term exclusion.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Students' achievements are inadequate, including the achievement of those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, disabled students and those with special educational needs. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire consider that their children are making good progress at school. Inspection evidence does not support this view.

Results have improved since the previous inspection, particularly the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE. However, current rates of progress are not strong enough to secure the rapid gains required if students are to achieve in line with their peers nationally. Students' attainment across the school is below average due to underachievement across a range of subjects. Attainment in mathematics has improved steadily, although it remains significantly below the national average. Attainment in English has not shown sustained improvement and weaknesses in this subject have a detrimental impact across the curriculum. This is further compounded by the lack of a whole-school strategy to develop literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. Some students are withdrawn from lessons in Key Stage 3 to attend additional support for literacy but the impact is yet to be seen. Over the past few years, students' attainment on entry has declined and is now below the national average.

Progress in the lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. Some good and a few outstanding examples of teaching were seen; however, inconsistencies in teaching stifle achievement over time. Some students are entered early for examinations, particularly in English and mathematics. In isolated cases students do not continue to attend mathematics lessons because they have achieved the grade the school considers acceptable.. This impedes their further progress because it restricts their opportunity to achieve the highest grades.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. While there is an increasing amount of good and better teaching, the quality is not strong enough to enable students to make the accelerated progress required to address previous underperformance and raise attainment, particularly in English and mathematics. An analysis of outcomes in a range of subjects demonstrates that the impact of teaching on students' achievement over time is improving. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire feel that their children are taught well. However, inspectors found that teaching is inconsistent in quality both within and across subject areas.

Where teaching is weaker it does not capture students' imaginations. In weaker lessons learning objectives and outcomes are unclear or confused. In addition, not enough emphasis is given to students' individual capabilities and needs and a lack of effective assessment leads to uncertainty about how much progress students are making. The school has many support staff and they were often seen offering

effective learning support. However, inconsistencies in their deployment mean that some classes are very well supported and others less so.

In the best lessons, teaching is challenging and very well planned so that students are fully engaged and take ownership of their learning. Students thrive when learning activities specifically tailored to meet their individual needs help them make rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding. Self- and peer-assessment are used well to further learning, and the teachers' secure subject knowledge results in creative and challenging activities. For example, in a Year 8 geography lesson students made outstanding progress in exploring the cause and effects of deforestation. They were totally engaged not only by the stimulating learning environment but by the exciting challenge presented. The most-able students worked first in a group then split up to work with other groups to assess their progress. All were challenged and well supported by the explicit use and explanation of important vocabulary, and well-planned opportunities to develop their thinking and other skills independently.

Staff and students speak very positively of the impact of starting GCSE courses in Year 9 this year, but the full impact of the revised curriculum is yet to be seen in improved examination performance. A wide range of courses is offered across the curriculum yet historically some students have been allowed to choose unsuitable courses for their abilities which has severely limited their progress. Some good opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be seen across subjects, for example, through group work and exploring moral and cultural issues through poems and texts. However, these opportunities are not always clearly identified in teachers' lesson plans.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students' behaviour and safety are satisfactory. Most students who responded to the survey say that they feel safe and are happy to come to school. The very large majority of parents and all staff who responded to the questionnaire feel that students are safe. However, some parents and carers felt that lessons were disrupted by bad behaviour. Similarly some students reported concerns about disruption in lessons.

Behaviour seen by inspectors in lessons and around the school was predominantly good. However, records of referrals to seclusion (the school's internal exclusion area) and the proportion of fixed-term exclusions paint a less positive picture of behaviour over time. There is a high staff presence on duty at breaks and lunchtimes. A small group of students with very challenging behaviour accounts for the majority of referrals to seclusion in some year groups. Despite an agreed system to manage behaviour, a common approach is not always applied in lessons and staff do not always link the quality of teaching and its impact on behaviour for some groups of students. However, there are compelling case studies illustrating the extensive, effective work with outside support services to keep some students attending school regularly. Students have an awareness of the different types of bullying and during the inspection students in Years 7 and 8 took part in some highly engaging anti-bullying work led by a theatre company.

Overall attendance is average but is better for some groups of students. For others, including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, while improving over time, attendance remains low.

Leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate because of weaknesses in safeguarding and in the school's evaluation of its effectiveness. Shortcomings in the way the school carries out the necessary checks and maintains records concerning the recruitment of staff mean that the arrangements to safeguard students are inadequate. The governing body has not ensured that the required checks on staff are carried out, or recorded accurately and to the required level of detail. The school's self-evaluation is over-generous and not fully substantiated by evidence. Meetings known as 'significant conversations' take place regularly between senior and middle leaders, yet such opportunities to measure the quality of self-evaluation against students' current progress and past examination performance lack rigour. Consequently, some leaders, managers and the governing body think that students are doing better than they are. Aspects of self-evaluation across the school are incomplete and not followed up in a timely manner. A system for target-setting and tracking is in place but it does not extend to particular groups of students so there is no discrete tracking for disabled students and those with special educational needs. Data are not analysed in sufficient detail to inform school improvement planning and the school's own data and predictions are unreliable.

Teachers are set performance management targets related to students' achievements but the impact of this is limited as a number of departments consistently underperform. The overwhelming majority of staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire are proud of the school and many teachers are keen to improve their own practice. However, despite some improvements in teaching and the curriculum, and a wide range of support programmes for students at both key stages, there has not been a sustained impact on raising achievement. Consequently, the school's capacity to improve is inadequate.

A minority of staff who completed the inspection questionnaire felt that policies were not routinely followed by everyone. These concerns were followed up and inspectors found some variation in the management of behaviour across the school. In many respects, the school is a strongly inclusive community. However, provision to promote equality and tackle discrimination is inadequate because of variations in the achievement of different groups of students.

A complete curriculum review took place last year and the school introduced a three-year Key Stage 4 programme from September 2011. Staff and students speak very positively about this and feel it has increased engagement and motivation in Year 9. However, the impact of these curricular changes cannot yet be seen in improved academic outcomes. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted satisfactorily; however, there are missed opportunities to audit fully the strengths and weaknesses of provision. The school now has a number of links with schools in Kenya, Tanzania and is rightly proud of big events, such as the school show, future chef and cheerleading competitions.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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.
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.
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.



16 March 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Kings Grove School, Crewe, CW2 7NQ

Thank you for the welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We listened carefully to you and appreciated your comments, which we have used to help us reach our judgements. Thank you also for the time you spent completing questionnaires and for talking to inspectors in meetings and around the school.

We found that you are not making as much progress as you should and the school has not made enough improvements since it was last inspected. We have judged your school to require special measures. This means it will receive extra help to tackle the areas for improvement urgently. Further visits will be made by inspectors to monitor the progress that it is making. Too many of you are leaving the school without reaching your potential across a range of subjects but particularly in English and mathematics. Many of you have positive attitudes to learning, care about helping others and behave satisfactorily overall. You told us that some of your lessons are occasionally disrupted by poor behaviour but that serious disruption to your learning is uncommon. While most of you attend regularly, some groups of students have much lower attendance, which prevents them from achieving as well as they should.

Some good and outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection. However, particularly in English and mathematics, the quality of teaching overall is satisfactory which is not good enough to help you make the progress of which you are capable. We also found that the way in which the school monitors and checks important records is ineffective. We have asked school leaders and the governing body to:

- increase the proportion of students gaining at least five A*-C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics, and ensure that all groups of students attend regularly to help raise achievement
- improve further the quality of teaching, particularly in English and mathematics and ensure that you have regular opportunities to develop your literacy and mathematical skills across different subjects
- check that assessment information is accurate in each subject

- improve the use of assessment information by teachers so that learning activities and support programmes are adapted to meet your individual needs and accelerate your progress
- ensure the behaviour management system is consistently applied in all lessons and is clearly understood by all students
- ensure that records, including those relating to safeguarding procedures are up to date and accurate.

You can help your school continue to improve by behaving well at all times and asking for help if you are unsure about how to complete your work.

Yours sincerely

Sally Kenyon
Her Majesty's Inspector

