

President Kennedy School and Community College

Rookery Lane, Coventry, CV6 4GL

Inspection dates 10–11 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Leaders, staff and governors share a passionate commitment to raise the aspirations and achievement of all the students who attend the school.
- The headteacher and senior team have a very clear vision of good teaching and learning and have used this to drive up standards of teaching in all areas. Nearly all the teaching in the school is consistently good or outstanding.
- Students achieve exceptionally well and above national averages by the end of Key Stage 4. This is despite many of them starting in Year 7 with attainment that is well below the national average. The progress that students make in English and mathematics is much better than the progress of students in most schools.
- The school has made exceptionally good provision to help improve the reading, writing and speaking of students, so that their literacy skills do not hold back their learning in other subjects. The results are impressive, and most students can talk confidently about their learning.
- The school has an exceptional commitment to equality of opportunity. Real efforts are made to ensure that no student experiences any barrier to their learning. Great care is taken to ensure that the most able, students whose circumstances make them vulnerable or with special educational needs are supported, encouraged and inspired to do well.
- Very challenging targets are set for students when they join the school. The progress of each student towards their target is monitored regularly, and action is quickly taken if anyone looks to be falling behind.
- The sixth form is good and students make progress that is in line with national averages. It is not yet outstanding because the range of subjects offered does not fully meet the needs of all students who join the sixth form and because not all teachers have yet mastered the particular skills of teaching this age group most effectively.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Students are typically polite, well-motivated and considerate towards each other. They respond very well to requests and instructions from teachers and can quickly and responsibly work in pairs or groups.
- The leadership of the headteacher has been clear, firm and inspirational. He is very ably supported by excellent leaders in the senior team and by those who lead departments and other aspects of the school. The impact of governance is outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place after Year 11 and Year 13 students had left. On the first day of the inspection, there was significant variation from the normal routines because it was the induction day for the Year 6 pupils due to join the school in September.
- Inspectors observed parts of 33 lessons taught by 32 teachers. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with members of the school leadership team.
- Inspectors observed the conduct of students around the school and at break and lunchtimes.
- Interviews were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and middle leaders such as the special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders and teachers. The Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority were also interviewed.
- The school's improvement plan and self-evaluation were scrutinised.
- Formal and informal meetings were held with several groups of students from all year groups. Some students completed questionnaires about aspects of their school experience.
- Inspectors scrutinised students' work and school documents, including records of monitoring, policies, assessment information and students' records.
- The inspection took into account the views of 32 parents who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View), and the views of four parents who attended a meeting with an inspector.
- The views of the 83 staff who completed questionnaires or wrote comments about the school were also considered.

Inspection team

John Peckham, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Susan Bullen	Additional Inspector
Justine McNeillie	Additional Inspector
Alan Giles	Additional Inspector
William Cassell	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most secondary schools.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for students entitled to free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority or whose parents are in the armed forces) is above average.
- The proportions of students who come from minority ethnic backgrounds or whose first language is not English are much higher than in most schools.
- Both the proportions of students with special educational needs supported through school action and the proportion who are supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs are much higher than average.
- The proportion of students who join or leave the school other than at the start of Year 7 and the end of Year 11 is much higher than in most schools.
- The school has specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs. There are 10 students with speech and language difficulties.
- A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 attend part-time work-related courses at City College, Arthur Rank, the Belgrade Theatre and the Herbert Art Gallery.
- A very small number of sixth form students participate in consortium lessons in other 11-18 schools in the City.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of sixth form outcomes to that of the main part of the school by:
 - developing a wider curriculum better suited to the range of students
 - adapting the highly successful approaches to teaching used in the main school to the specific needs of post-16 students.
- Continue to improve the quantity of outstanding teaching by ensuring all staff are as skilled as the best in:
 - fine tuning resources, including the use of teaching assistants, and adapting teaching approaches to suit the individual needs of each student
 - planning learning to make the most of subject content and gaining skills at the same time.
- Seek to further close the gaps in performance between those who join the school with low attainment and other students, by working closely with partner primary schools and other community agencies to help them tackle disadvantage from an early age more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- A large proportion of students join President Kennedy School with attainment that is below average. Many have poor levels of literacy and numeracy or a history of underachieving in primary school. Despite this, students who took examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2012 achieved results that were well above the national average. The school's rigorous analysis of progress and likely outcomes for 2013 indicates that they should be even better.
- The school has placed a significant focus on ensuring that there are no barriers to learning. All students are checked for their standards of literacy and numeracy on entering the school and a range of programmes are used to ensure the progress of students whose reading, writing or mathematics might hold them back. A very concerted whole-school focus on the promotion of literacy, including speaking skills, has had a strong impact. In all subjects, teachers promote good speaking and writing, and because of this, students can talk confidently with each other and with adults.
- The school sets very ambitious targets for all students based on their Key Stage 2 results. Progress towards these targets is very closely and regularly monitored and at the first sign of slow progress, support is planned. Students and parents get very good information about their progress and where students are reaching their targets more quickly, targets are revised upwards.
- There is an outstanding commitment to equality of opportunity. Students eligible for the pupil premium make exceptionally good progress gaining the equivalent of nearly a grade higher in each of the best eight subjects compared to similar students nationally. There is still a gap between the performance of students eligible for the pupil premium and other students at the school, but it is smaller than nationally.
- Students with special educational needs, including those in the speech and language unit, also make outstanding progress. The identification of their needs and the careful provision of support go hand-in-hand with challenging targets that do not allow learning difficulties to be an excuse for underachievement. The school is a recognised leader in supporting students whose first language is not English and these students make outstanding progress. Students from all ethnic backgrounds achieve outstanding results.
- Qualifications other than GCSE have been used appropriately, and those who study part time on vocational courses at another provider are closely monitored. Early entry to GCSE courses has been used very effectively to help boost the confidence of students and further raise their overall results.
- The attainment of students on entry to the sixth form is lower than the national average. This is partly because these students have not had the full benefits of the outstanding provision that is now in place in Key Stages 3 and 4. It also reflects a non-selective policy of allowing all students who might benefit to attempt A level courses. Overall results are a little below the national average but most students make good progress. There is little variation between subjects, although results in AS level English literature are particularly strong.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Almost all the teaching observed by inspectors was either good or outstanding. This closely matches the school's own assessment and inspectors found that leaders had a very accurate understanding of what makes for good learning.
- The headteacher and senior team have led by example and set out very clear minimum standards for all teachers. These were explained individually to each teacher by the head in a discussion which emphasised that support and training would be provided where necessary, but that unwillingness to try would not be tolerated. Regular monitoring through lesson observations, learning walks, book scrutiny and, most effectively, the progress of students in each group, has ensured that there is a remarkable consistency in the learning experience of students.
- Lessons are characterised by prompt starts, clear learning objectives, plenty of opportunities for students to discuss their work and appropriate activities to support learning. In some cases, for example in an outstanding Year 10 mathematics lesson observed by inspectors, teachers use a very accurate understanding of the progress that students have made to tailor the tasks exactly to need. A choice of work leading up to 'A' grade was offered to the students with most choosing the more challenging work as they knew it would extend their progress fastest. Even in the weaker lessons observed, it was normal for the work to be provided at different levels to suit the differing needs of students, but in some cases not enough allowance was made for the full range of ability or need.
- Most marking is regular and of high quality. Teachers identify areas where students' work can be improved and in most cases, students then make the necessary corrections or extend their work using a green pen so that a written learning dialogue is visible in books. Not all teachers are equally skilled in this, but even where 'green pen' work was less good, marking was regular.
- The relationships between staff and students are highly professional and supportive. Students feel that they are respected and that the teachers are genuinely interested in their progress. This creates a collaborative climate for study and hard work and helps students to persevere even when the learning becomes difficult.
- Teachers rarely talk for longer than necessary and are able to use outstanding subject knowledge to shape interesting learning tasks. In nearly all lessons, students were given ample opportunity to discuss and ask about their learning and so help to understand it better. Teachers are skilled at asking questions that deepen understanding. They normally choose students to answer questions so that that all participate, but in some cases observed, the student was chosen before the question was asked, allowing other students not to have to think about it.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and provide excellent support in classes and in the student support centre. Sometimes, however, opportunities to target their support in particular lessons on small groups or on specific elements of learning are missed.
- Teaching in the sixth form, although good, is sometimes too structured with not enough time to allow the depth of discussion necessary to ensure understanding of more advanced concepts or opportunity for students to build their independent learning skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of students in the school is outstanding and it makes a very significant contribution to the quality of learning. The school introduced a new motto, PRIDE (Pride,

Respect, Involvement, Determination and Endeavour) which has been important in helping to raise the standards of behaviour this year.

- Students' pride in themselves and the school shows in their excellent appearance. They all wear their new uniform correctly and without complaint. Students also talked with pride about their progress and how much they enjoy school. The respect that students show towards each other and adults helps learning to be highly effective. For example, when asked to work in pairs or groups, students quickly get on with the task. When other students or the teacher is talking, students listen attentively. Students are polite and considerate around the school and have excellent manners towards visitors.
- The rewards system is highly effective, and recognises involvement, determination and endeavour. Students are able to trade their reward points for articles in a rewards shop, operated by students. They are clear that this system, together with effective support for students with more challenging behaviour has brought about a significant improvement in the school. Disruption to learning caused by student misconduct is extremely rare.
- Students also feel extremely safe. There is very little bullying and students feel confident that the school will be able to deal with any that does occur effectively. Inspectors spoke to several students who had transferred to President Kennedy School after the start of Year 7, sometimes because they had been bullied in other schools. All of these students explained how much better this school was. In one case, a student explained how they now liked school where previously they had not wanted to go. Another student described school as "like home" because they felt so well supported.
- The support offered by the school to students whose circumstances make them vulnerable is exceptional. Challenges presented by out-of-school events are not accepted as reasons for lower attainment, and concerted action is taken to bring about improvement.
- The climate of respect and tolerance and the school's commitment to equality mean that despite its diversity, the school is a very harmonious environment. Students of different faiths and backgrounds show respect for each other and their beliefs. Students are not reluctant to be themselves and, for example, boys are happy to choose subjects or activities that might traditionally be regarded as just for girls.
- Involvement, determination and endeavour are promoted through an extensive programme of enrichment. Students are actively encouraged to try new activities and extend their horizons. The school's involvement with the Children's University is used very effectively, leading in Years 7 and 8 to 'graduation' ceremonies for those who have participated in a wide range of activities through the year.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides strong and highly inspirational leadership. This has empowered other leaders to take on responsibility and to gain confidence and autonomy. Leadership is outstanding at all levels. A very able senior team provides excellent information to teachers, leaders and governors and also regularly checks on the quality of the school's work. Subject leaders and other middle leaders are efficient, hard-working and clear about their areas of responsibility and accountability.
- The school has adopted an innovative and highly effective approach to curriculum organisation. All students now join the school in Year 7 by entering 'The Bridge', a dedicated area of the school where the bulk of their learning takes place. The learning in history, geography and

religious education is combined into longer, more substantial projects which supports the development of students' literacy and their independent learning skills. It is also a very safe and supportive environment which helps students to make the transition from primary school to secondary school. Teachers provide extremely skilled and effective intervention to quickly improve reading, handwriting, spelling and grammar or numeracy skills that might hold students back in other subjects.

- In Year 8, students move to 'The Gateway' and extend more of their learning into subject areas. These stages, however, are not isolated and self-contained, as the overall curriculum works to support and promote good results at the end of year 11. The content and skills taught have been carefully developed to build the skills, confidence and knowledge of students from the start. Care is taken to ensure that the needs of all, including the most able, are fully addressed. Additional activities such as 'The Brilliant Club' and 'Team Brunel' help to provide challenge and every opportunity is taken to lift the aspirations of those with the ability who might not normally have considered university.
- The determination of leaders to tackle disadvantage and promote equality is shown through a very rigorous analysis of the progress and achievement of all the different groups of students in the school. The school has created its own additional groupings to ensure that every form of potential disadvantage is challenged. The evidence of the impact of pupil premium funding is clear in the excellent achievement of the students it is intended to support.
- The school has made good use of the support offered by the local authority. An example of this was the review of behaviour and safety undertaken in October 2012 which helped the school to address one or two minor shortcomings in provision.
- The performance management of staff is highly effective. Driven by a mantra of 'students first', where teachers and others are identified as not having the 'skill' to deliver expectations, high quality training and support is provided, which staff speak highly of. Conversely, if there is a lack of 'will' to improve, decisive action has been taken. This has included withholding salary progression in some cases.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a very strong focus on holding the senior leadership team and the headteacher to account. Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths of the school and are provided with high-quality information on a regular basis so that they can monitor the progress of groups of students and the quality of teaching.
 - Financial management is strong and the governing body has checked carefully to ensure that pupil premium funding has been effectively used and that teachers' pay is closely matched to their performance. All statutory functions are carried out well.
 - The Chair of the Governing Body has a clear vision about the development of the school in the future. The performance management of the headteacher is highly effective.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103736
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	400650

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1206
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Crisp
Headteacher	Peter Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2010
Telephone number	02476 661416
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