

# Kingsmead Academy

Wiveliscombe, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 2NE

## Inspection dates

9–10 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students achieve well. They make good progress from their different starting points to gain GCSE results that are significantly above the national average.
- Teaching is typically good and some lessons are outstanding. Lessons are observed regularly by leaders and there is good provision for training and development so that teachers can continue to improve their skills.
- Students behave well and feel very safe. They have a good understanding of the academy's high expectations of behaviour and attitudes to others.
- The good curriculum meets the different needs of students very well.
- The headteacher provides effective leadership and the academy is well placed to continue to improve. His vision and determination to provide a high quality education for all students are shared by the whole school community.
- The governing body provides effective governance and, through careful review of all activities, ensures there is a good balance of challenge and support.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and ensures that students develop well into informed, reflective and rounded individuals, suitably prepared for their future lives.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to raise achievement higher and ensure that all subjects enable students to excel and gain the highest levels.
- The quality of leadership is inconsistent across the school and this means the pace of improvement overall is not as rapid as it could be.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons, of which five were joint observations with a member of the academy’s senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and six other governors, as well as a range of academy staff including senior and middle leaders.
- By the end of the inspection visit, 76 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) had been collected and analysed. The academy’s analysis of its own parental surveys was also taken into account.
- Inspectors analysed 36 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors observed the academy’s work including the quality of provision in the designated resource base. Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the academy’s own information on students’ current progress, its self-evaluation, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, documents relating to safeguarding, and students’ work.

## Inspection team

Karl Sampson, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Pauline Robins	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Malcolm Davison	Additional Inspector
Cliff Mainey	Additional Inspector
Shahnaz Maqsood	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Kingsmead Academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- It converted to become an academy in April 2011. At its last inspection the predecessor school was judged to be outstanding.
- Most students are of White British heritage and almost all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families, is half that found nationally.
- The proportion of school action students (those who require extra help with their learning) is above average.
- The proportion of students supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- There is a designated resource base for students with a range of complex special educational needs; currently, there are 12 students attached to the base.
- A small number of students access alternative provision at The Taunton Centre which provides support for students who are at risk of permanent exclusion.
- The academy 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?

- Strengthen the overall quality of teaching, to achieve greater consistency of good or outstanding practice by:
  - ensuring that all lessons challenge all students regardless of starting point, ability or special educational need to achieve as well as they can
  - enabling students' ideas and contributions to have a greater capacity to shape lines of enquiry and drive learning forward
  - demonstrating what high quality work in each subject looks like so that students produce more detailed and sophisticated written responses which show how much they have understood and help more of them to gain the highest levels
  - giving students frequent opportunities to respond to teachers' feedback and make the suggested improvements.
- Improve the impact of leaders by:
  - ensuring that planning for improvement and training focuses sharply on the progress of groups of students so that leaders can evaluate the impact of teaching more effectively and swiftly adjust their programmes of support where necessary.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Almost all parents and carers are pleased with the progress made by their children and a wide range of inspection evidence confirms the accuracy of this view.
- While students achieve well at the highest levels in English and science, these successes, although increasing, are not yet replicated across all subjects.
- Students join the academy with standards that are in line with the national average. An analysis of students' achievement over time and detailed information provided by the academy offer firm evidence that students make good progress in most subjects. Consequently, by the time they leave in Year 11, the proportion of students who achieve five good GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, is significantly above the national average.
- Analysis of progress for boys shows that in 2012 they were significantly outperformed by girls, particularly in English. A sharp focus on improving literacy skills and a more sophisticated approach to tracking performance have helped to quickly close the gap in achievement. As a result, boys' progress in 2013 appears once again to be back in line with that made by girls.
- Students read well. Year 7 catch-up premium funding and the academy's accelerated reader programme have been well targeted in helping younger students to develop a love of reading whilst ensuring that they gain quickly the skills they need.
- A small group of more able students are entered early for the mathematics GCSE examination. Those that meet their challenging target are able to follow a further free standing mathematics qualification, whereas the rest are supported to take the examination again in the summer to gain the higher grades.
- Effective use is made of additional funding received through the pupil premium. Despite performing much better than similar students nationally in 2012, the achievement for these students in English and mathematics was a grade below those of other students in the academy. However, information for Year 10 and Year 11 students shows these students are closing the gap quickly and securely.
- The progress made by students supported at school action and school action plus is less rapid than their peers because teaching is not always tailored specifically to maximise their progress. A range of inspection evidence, including the latest analysis of current performance, indicates that progress for these students is accelerating.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs in the resource base make good progress thanks to well-planned programmes of support provided by highly trained staff. Work is carefully planned to meet each individual's needs, enabling students to be fully integrated into the life of the academy.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Inspectors agreed with the academy's evaluation of the quality of teaching. Teaching in most subjects, including in English, mathematics and science, is mostly good and a small amount is outstanding. There is a good range of support and training for teachers within the academy.
- Good teaching is found across all subjects, although inspectors observed adequate learning more frequently than that which was outstanding. Academy leaders recognise the need to continue the process of strengthening the quality of teaching as the next significant step on the journey to excellence.
- The most effective teachers are skilled in tailoring activities that stretch and challenge all learners, regardless of their starting point, so that their progress is consistently good or better. For example, in an outstanding Year 9 English lesson, students enjoyed being challenged to create their own noir fiction and were supported superbly to produce very sophisticated responses. They delighted in working together and with the teacher, and their engagement was

exemplary throughout.

- Good teaching engages students fully in their learning. Teachers in these lessons ensure that students understand what they have to do and regularly check their understanding during lessons. Where teaching assistants work best they mirror this practice so that individual students who find work difficult are supported to rectify their mistakes and keep pace with other students.
- In the small minority of lessons where teaching was less effective, there was a tendency for teachers to over-direct proceedings. Consequently, opportunities to stretch and challenge all learners within the lessons were limited and progress was slowed. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to model what writing and work of the highest quality will look like.
- Marking in most subjects is thorough and some teachers and subjects are beginning to expect students to engage in a discussion about their learning and respond to their comments. Inspectors observed outstanding assessment practice in textiles which demonstrated excellent impact on students' learning and progress over time. All students were meeting their challenging targets and able to talk explicitly about how regular discussion with the teacher had helped to develop their skills, extend their thinking and build their confidence in relation to the forthcoming examination.
- Where students are not expected to respond routinely to written feedback and/or engage in a discussion about their learning, the impact on progress is diminished.
- Students and their parents and carers rightly express great confidence in the quality of teaching overall, but recognise that there is still some variation in quality at individual teacher level. Parents and carers expressed a desire to see a greater amount of more 'stretching and challenging' homework from all subjects.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Attitudes to learning and the behaviour of students are good, and occasionally exemplary. Students respond well to good and better teaching; they are courteous and well mannered and most arrive at lessons promptly, ready to start learning.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because when the pace of teaching slows some students lose focus and interest in their work. On other occasions students are not given the opportunity to drive their own learning forward and do not make the rapid progress they are capable of.
- Students are confident and happy, both around the academy and in lessons, and are emphatic that they feel safe and well cared for. They know whom to turn to for help and guidance.
- Effective steps are taken to ensure that students understand their role in tackling prejudice and bullying of all kinds. They speak knowledgeably about contemporary issues with respect to racism, homophobic bullying, the dangers of social networking sites and how to stay safe on the internet.
- Academy leaders ensure there is an appropriate programme of support for the small number of students whose behaviour might otherwise exclude them from education and examination success. The few students who attend off-site provision at The Taunton Centre achieve and behave well.
- Parents and carers who completed Parent View questionnaires were all positive about behaviour and the way that bullying is dealt with. The academy's own larger survey of the views of parents and carers supports the findings of the inspection.
- Attendance is broadly average. The academy is working extremely hard to improve attendance rates, but with mixed success currently.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The relatively new headteacher is inspiring, astute and principled. He has a clear vision for the future of the academy, which he has successfully shared with the school community.

- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate and honest understanding of the academy strengths and weaknesses. They have set in place a culture for continuing improvement based on high expectation and ambitious targets.
  - A process for restructuring staffing for September 2013 has been carefully considered and widely consulted upon. This structure has been designed to build in clearer and consistently applicable lines of accountability for all staff and provides a greater focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
  - A strengthened cycle of performance management has been put in place. This includes regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and the tracking of students' progress which are linked to teachers' salary progression and identify training needs. This system is yet to be fully embedded.
  - The curriculum is broad and balanced with a wide range of subject choices available at Key Stage 4. Having recognised that the vocational courses on offer were not suitably demanding of students, the academy now teaches courses which provide students with an enhanced level of qualification (equivalent to GCSE).
  - The Challenge Days, which take place once in each two-week cycle, make a strong contribution to students personal, social, moral and cultural development and provide an opportunity for in-depth study to support students' progress in specific subjects. The academy makes good use of its overseas links to provide regular opportunities for students to work with partner schools in France, Germany and Zambia. As a result, students' experiences are enhanced and they are keen to embrace new challenges and cultures.
  - Students are clear that the academy is rigorous in promoting equality of opportunity. They are adamant that no form of discrimination is tolerated.
  - Since becoming an academy the school has maintained links, and buys back some services from the local authority. As a result, partnership working with local schools continues. For example, the headteacher is a member of the local headteachers' executive, the academy is part of a raising attainment programme and actively involved in county-wide training days for teachers.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors are effective, experienced and bring a range of professional and personal skills to their roles. They understand the part they play in holding leaders and managers to account for the continuing development of the academy and do not shy away from their responsibilities. They are prepared to ask the challenging questions and have a comprehensive system for monitoring performance based on a secure understanding of the analysis of students' achievement and the quality of teaching which is not solely reliant on reports from school leaders. They recognise that schools cannot 'rest on their laurels' and are supportive of the restructuring and how this will lead to clearer lines of accountability for all staff. Governors follow appropriate procedures relating to safeguarding and financial management. They understand how the academy is using the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding to support eligible students and monitor the impact that the use of this funding is having on students' achievement. Decisions about teachers' pay are taken after careful analysis of their performance in relation to students' progress; where teachers move to the upper pay band there is an expectation that they will also make a significant contribution to a whole-school area of development.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136639
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	413303

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy Converters
<b>School category</b>	Secondary
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	804
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Allan Sutton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Griffin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2–3 December 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01984 623483
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