

# Kings Norton Girls' School

Selly Oak Road, Birmingham, B30 1HW

**Inspection dates** 3–4 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers provide lively and exciting tasks that enable students to build their learning step by step.
- Students' behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school. They are polite and welcoming, and keen to talk positively about their school.
- The headteacher, senior team and governing body take a strong lead in driving improvement. Rigorous checks on teaching, with good training and support where it is needed, maintain the quality of classroom practice and improve achievement.
- Students' achievement is good. Their attainment is above the national average when they start in Year 7. They make good progress to leave with even higher attainment.
- The range of subjects that students follow is extensive and subjects are well matched to their individual needs.
- The sixth form is good and students make good progress on their post-16 courses. Students receive helpful information, advice and guidance which help them to make well-informed decisions about future employment, education and training.
- Good provision and guidance for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are central to the school's work.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few lessons, teachers take too long to explain to students what they need to do to improve.
- The quality of written marking is not consistently helpful and students are not given enough opportunity to respond to the advice given when teachers mark their work.
- Some teachers, particularly in Key Stage 3, do not always make enough use of information about what students already know to move them on quickly with new learning.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 43 lessons, including four shared observations with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors observed a school assembly, listened to several students read and looked at samples of their recent work.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, heads of subject departments, teachers, and members of the governing body. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the School Improvement Partner.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of school documents, including: the school's self-evaluation; the school development plan; behaviour records; governing body documents; and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- The views of the 119 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. Inspectors also considered the views expressed in 57 questionnaires returned by school staff and four letters and a telephone call received from parents.

## Inspection team

Steven Cartlidge, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Huw Bishop	Additional Inspector
Terence Payne	Additional Inspector
Julia Morris	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and others, is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for secondary schools, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The sixth form share facilities with Kings Norton Boys' School.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding, so that progress rates rise further, by:
  - making sure that teachers' checks on students' learning, especially in Key Stage 3, are used to provide harder work where needed
  - checking that staff always involve students in the assessment of students' own work, so that they are clear about what they need to do to improve
  - giving students time to respond to the advice given in written marking of their work
  - ensuring that teachers' explanations are not too long, so that students have more time to work independently.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students start at the school with above-average attainment in the basic skills of reading, writing, communication and mathematics. The headteacher and senior leaders have done a great deal since the previous inspection to improve the organisation and use of assessment information to track the progress made by individuals and groups.
- As a result of the positive action taken by leaders, Year 11 students, including the most able, achieved high levels of attainment in their GCSE provisional results in 2013 – a notable improvement on 2012. In 2012, the proportion of students attaining five or more A\* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics was already well ahead of the national average. Most-able students regularly attain a high proportion of A\* and A grades in GCSE examinations.
- The improved standards and rates of progress in Key Stage 4 are also reflected in Key Stage 3, where standards and rates of progress for all groups of pupils are improving rapidly.
- There is no significant difference between the achievements of students from different ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language.
- Lesson observations show that students are well motivated and keen to do well in the large majority of their lessons, resulting in their positive progress. For example, in a Year 11 drama lesson students displayed great enthusiasm demonstrating to their classmates their drama skills interpreting aspects of the Trojan War. They then became totally engrossed in small groups, where they identified and corrected their own mistakes.
- The school has entered students early for GCSE examinations in mathematics in order for them to gain their best possible grade. This has been successful for the students, 84% of whom gained grade C or above in 2013. Early entry is proving helpful and the school is ensuring that students, including the most able in mathematics, have the opportunity to improve even further by offering extra tuition and homework clubs.
- The school is using its pupil premium funding effectively for extra staffing, one-to-one tuition and funding for additional educational resources for eligible students. The school achieved two years of improvement prior to 2013 in narrowing the gap between pupil premium students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics and that of their classmates, from over one-and-a-half GCSE grades behind two years ago to one grade behind in 2012. There was in 2013, however, an increase of less-than-half a GCSE grade between pupil premium students and others in their year group, partly because of the absence from school of some individuals. The situation has been thoroughly investigated by the senior leadership team and well-directed measures put in place to accelerate current students' progress. Inspectors' careful scrutiny of school data on these students' current attainment indicates improvement. Currently, Year 11 pupil premium students' performance is on course to narrowing the attainment gap further by 2014 and students observed during the inspection were seen to be making good progress alongside that of their classmates.
- For the students in Year 7 who are eligible for support through the catch-up premium for those struggling with literacy and numeracy skills on entry, the school has accurate tracking systems which are used to direct specific support. As a result, the school's reliable data show that these students are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to that

of others because staff have identified students' individual needs and arranged the right additional help. Teachers and teaching assistants support students, providing challenge and encouragement, and helping them with subject-specific vocabulary.

- Achievement in the sixth form is good and results are improving strongly. By the end of the sixth form, results are at least in line with, and often above, the national average for most subjects. Better use of data assessing students' progress and attainment to set targets and subsequent robust tracking of students' performance are ensuring they are making good progress.

## **The quality of teaching** is good

- The quality of teaching is good. The vast majority of teaching observed during the inspection was good or better, and records of leaders' checking and students' past performance show that this is typically the case.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Teachers are successful in motivating students, including the most able. They provide a range of tasks that encourage students to want to succeed. Students are also keen to live up to the expectations of the adults around them and their positive attitudes to learning contribute much to their good progress. This was particularly noticeable, for example, in a history lesson, where students in Year 8 had the opportunity to practise their historical investigative skills. The students demonstrated outstanding understanding of the character of Mary I – 'Bloody' Mary – by investigating increasingly complex evidence and were able to show a clear understanding of the strategies needed to develop their work to reach the highest level.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively and help is matched well to students' needs. This close coordination among staff ensures the students make good progress in all subjects.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers use questioning well to check students' understanding, asking searching questions and encouraging discussion. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 10 where teaching was good, students worked cooperatively in pairs to develop their understanding of character Quadratics. They clearly enjoyed the task and responded positively to the teacher's probing questioning. However, occasionally, teachers' introductions to learning go on for too long when students are capable of moving on more quickly. This reduces the time available for independent work.
- Although teachers often provide clear feedback for students during lessons on how well they are doing, not all provide clear, written feedback on how students can improve their work and reach their targets. Opportunities are being missed in many subjects to enable students to respond to advice by practising skills, correcting mistakes or being set an additional challenge.
- There is some inconsistency in the quality of teachers' planning. In Key Stage 3 in particular, lessons are not always well organised and, consequently, activities are not closely enough matched to the students' individual abilities. As a result, some pupils do not understand clearly what they need to do and others, mainly the most able, have to undertake tasks that are too easy for them before moving on to more challenging work.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers ensure that students understand key subject ideas at the level of depth that will enable them to achieve the higher grades. The sixth form share

facilities with another local school and students take responsibility for monitoring their own progress and collaborate well in helping each other to achieve. Consequently, sixth formers are making good progress.

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

- Students are keen to learn in almost every lesson. Their behaviour during lessons is almost always good and has a positive impact on their learning.
- A strong anti-bullying culture has been created throughout the school. Students say that there is almost no bullying in the school and that they are very well supported on the rare occasions it occurs. They are well informed about different forms of bullying and other aspects of safety, including internet safety.
- Attendance is above average and pupils arrive punctually. The school works effectively to maintain these standards. There are helpful procedures to monitor and support students who have difficulties in these areas.
- Work is usually neatly presented, and students take pride in themselves and their school.
- Students conduct themselves well. They are polite and courteous to visitors. They willingly talk to adults and are honest about their feelings about the school. Students from a wide range of ethnic groups work and socialise well together both in and out of the classroom. The school is a harmonious community that celebrates the diversity of its students' backgrounds and heritage.
- Sixth formers, in particular, make an excellent contribution to the life of the school, for example, as mentors to younger students.

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

- Teachers and governors are ambitious for the school to do well. The headteacher provides very determined leadership, promoting a clear focus on continual improvement. She drives school improvement, with a clearly articulated vision for the future.
- During the past year, the leadership team has established rigorous procedures to check on the quality of teaching and provide support for any staff identified as underperforming. As a result, standards in 2013 have risen in, for example, mathematics, science and history. Likewise, in the sixth form, a strengthening of leadership and management has benefited students, who have, consequently, shown improved attainment and progress in the majority of their post-16 courses.
- The analysis of students' progress and accurate self-evaluation of the school's work provide all teachers, and the governing body, with a clear understanding of the school's performance, including that of the sixth form. This information ensures that improvement planning is sharply focused on identified weaknesses. The benefit can be seen, for example, in the successful action taken last year to raise attainment in mathematics, and demonstrates the school's capacity for continued improvement.
- The leadership of teaching is good and the school places a high priority on improving teaching through good-quality training. Teachers' performance is checked and information is used from

lesson observations and from information about students' progress to set teachers targets for improvement. There is a clear understanding that decisions about promotion and pay rates will be based on the impact of teaching on students' progress.

- Pupil premium funding is used effectively and has helped develop the role of the teaching assistants. Students identified as in need of additional support, including those eligible for pupil premium funding, Year 7 eligible for the catch-up programme, and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are well supported. The school evaluates its expenditure on the support provided through data showing how well students achieve, which show that all groups are now making similarly good progress to that of their classmates.
- School leaders ensure that different groups of pupils have an equal chance to succeed, and they tackle effectively any instances of discrimination.
- The range of subjects and topics taught promotes a positive attitude to learning among students in all subjects and leads to students achieving well. The curriculum has been carefully designed around students' interests and abilities. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. They receive helpful information, support and guidance to enable them to make choices of career and of higher education.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted by a broad range of arts, drama, music, science and sports activities, as well as by visits and visitors.
- The school commissions the support it needs very effectively. For example, the School Improvement Partner, a headteacher of a secondary school, has provided well-targeted support for school leaders, who acknowledge that her practical advice, focusing them more on effective teaching, has led to the school improving its results. Subject leaders are well supported in developing their leadership and management skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is well informed. It challenges school leaders and holds them to account for students' achievement. By using the data available, it compares school performance with that of schools nationally. Governors also strongly support the school and its leaders. They have a deep insight into the quality of teaching and its impact on students' learning. They manage the performance of staff effectively and are rigorous in ensuring that the salary progression of staff is justified by the outcome of students' progress and achievement. Governors check carefully on the use of additional funds from the pupil premium in improving the achievement of eligible students. Explanation and action from school leaders and managers are called for when performance does not advance as intended. The governing body oversees the management of finance and resources expertly. Governors rigorously check safeguarding practice and, as a result, safeguarding procedures meet current legal requirements.

## 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>	136590
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	427190

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	915
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	170
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Hollies
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gill Fox
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 6751305
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