

Kingsmead School

Kings Avenue, Littleworth, Cannock, WS12 1DH

Inspection dates 25–26 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Standards and rates of progress for all groups of students are rising strongly after a dip in 2014.
- Leaders have ensured that the gap in achievement between disadvantaged and other students, and between boys and girls has rapidly closed during this academic year.
- The quality of teaching is good and much is outstanding. Students greatly value the extra help and support that teachers provide for them including through Saturday School.
- Students behave well in lessons and are polite and courteous to adults. They are keen to do well and show great enthusiasm for their learning. They say that the school keeps them safe and that they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- The sixth form is good. Strong leadership has ensured that the quality of teaching has improved and that courses meet the needs and interests of students well. This is leading to rising achievement.
- The headteacher, well supported by the senior team and the governing body, has been swift to address the fall in achievement in 2014. Rigorous steps have been taken to improve the quality of teaching and to raise expectations of what students are able to achieve.
- There is a strong focus on literacy across the school and on the development of basic skills through the constant focus on being a 'Kingsmead Learner.' This has had a rapid impact on students' learning throughout the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of marking is inconsistent so that some students are not aware of what they need to do to reach their targets. Teachers do not always check that students are acting on the advice they receive.
- Some science teaching requires improvement because activities are not sufficiently exciting to fully engage students in their learning.
- Procedures employed by subject leaders to check on the quality of teaching and learning lack rigour, so that they are not fully holding teachers to account for students' progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students' learning in lessons across all year groups and subjects. One of the lessons was seen with one of the school's senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with students, members of the governing body and staff. A telephone conversation took place with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at policies, the school's own assessment of its strengths and weaknesses and its plans for development. They also looked at minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of lesson observations, information about students' progress, safeguarding documents, and samples of students' work.
- The views of the 47 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. Inspectors also considered the school's own survey of parents' views, together with two phone calls from parents. The 76 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Mary Davis, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Richard George	Additional Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Additional Inspector
William Morris	Additional Inspector
Neil Morris	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school. There is a larger proportion of boys than girls on the school roll.
- Most students are White British. Less than one in twenty students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- Part-time, off-site alternative courses are currently provided for six students in Years 10 and 11 at Nova Training, Alpha Hair and Peak Pursuits.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- There has been a large turnover of teaching staff since the previous inspection; two new deputy headteachers started in January 2014 and two assistant headteachers and a new leader of English were appointed in September 2014.
- The school provides a voluntary Saturday school throughout the year.
- The sixth form is provided in partnership with Norton Canes Maths and Computing College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Share existing outstanding practice to further raise the quality of teaching, so that all students make rapid progress by ensuring that:
 - all teachers consistently provide students with clear advice on how to improve their work in order to achieve their targets and check that students follow this advice
 - all teachers in science provide tasks that fully engage students in their learning
- Increase the rigour with which subject leaders check on the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility in order to fully hold teachers to account for students' progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, well supported by the senior team and by the governing body, has been swift to address the fall in achievement seen in 2014. Together, they forensically examined the causes of this dip and quickly took action, holding all to account for driving rapid improvement.
- The headteacher has established his high expectations of both teachers and students through the introduction of the 'Kingsmead Learner' to promote positive attitudes to learning. This has contributed to an increased willingness of students to respond to staff feedback, to accept challenges and to take risks in their learning in order to develop resilience. This has been supported by the setting of more challenging targets for all students. These strategies have already shown an impact on quickening rates of progress for all groups of students.
- The progress of students is regularly checked and analysed and underachievement quickly addressed. This high quality analysis enables the comparison of the performance of all groups of students so that gaps between, for example, the achievement of boys and girls can be quickly tackled. Regular 'Reviewing Achievement Group' (RAG) meetings are held, where teachers are required to account for how they are addressing any underachievement of individual students. In this way leaders are ensuring that all have equal opportunity and that there is no discrimination.
- Support for underachievement includes close mentoring of students and the provision of revision classes, including 'Saturday School', which is voluntarily attended by students who want extra help.
- Robust systems are in place to ensure that the quality of teaching continues to improve. Extended support programmes are put in place for any teacher experiencing difficulty and a wide programme of training is provided, much of which is delivered by outstanding practitioners from the school. Staff show a strong willingness to improve their practice.
- Leaders, including governors, check that pupil premium funding is having sufficient impact on the achievement and wellbeing of disadvantaged students. As a result, the achievement gap is closing rapidly across the school. The persistent absence rates of this group in 2014 have reduced considerably as a result of the creation of an Attendance Intervention Team, including a newly appointed Attendance Intervention Officer.
- The curriculum is well matched to students' interests and abilities. All have the opportunity to take E-Bacc subjects and students are well guided onto the most appropriate courses. A range of off-site courses is provided for a small number of students. The attendance and well-being of students following these courses are very closely monitored. Year 7 catch-up funding is used appropriately to support all who enter the school with low basic skills and the provision for developing literacy skills across the school is particularly strong. Citizenship lessons are a key strength of the school's provision, promoting tolerance and respect, and ensuring students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Additional opportunities to debate current issues are provided through tutor time, preparing students well for life in modern Britain.
- Students value the careers guidance that is provided throughout the school. This includes external speakers from the world of business, and the professions.
- Students and parents speak highly of the enrichment opportunities provided in sport and the arts including opportunities to compete in a wide range of sporting activities at home and abroad.
- Safeguarding procedures fully meet statutory requirements. Students facing challenging circumstances are very well supported.
- The local authority has provided good support since the 2014 results, for example, in providing support for the leadership of mathematics. In addition, the headteacher commissioned a recent external review of teaching to support them in their drive for improvement.

- Senior leaders increasingly hold subject leaders to account for students' achievement and ensure they are fully involved in the appraisal of staff performance, where procedures are well established. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning by subject leaders sometimes lacks the rigour and formality required for driving improvement, so that teachers are not fully held to account for student progress.
- The monitoring of teaching and student progress in the sixth form is rigorous.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors communicate high expectations and ambition for students. This is exemplified by their high profile around the school through regular visits and strong curriculum links. They have ensured that their variety of expertise is fully utilised to monitor the quality of all aspects of the school's work. They give a strong lead in the direction of the school and provide a good balance of challenge and support.
 - Governors have a thorough understanding of performance data and how the school compares to others nationally. They express their determination in this regard, following the 2014 results, and fully challenge and support senior leaders in their drive to prevent any future dip. They ensure that they have regular training to enable them to carry out their role effectively.
 - They have been particularly vigilant to ensure that additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is used effectively and robustly monitor its impact. This has included the impact of additional funding on reducing persistent absence. Ensuring that students and staff are safe is a real strength of their work and, through their monitoring of the curriculum, ensures that the school promotes tolerance and respect for all faiths and characteristics.
 - Governors have a strong role in monitoring and supporting teaching and learning. They ensure that teachers' pay rises are linked to the achievement of their students and the whole-school targets set for teachers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students enjoy their learning and are keen to contribute their ideas and volunteer to undertake the next challenge. They respond very quickly to teachers' instructions and work particularly well when encouraged to work collaboratively. They say that they have a good understanding of the school's sanctions imposed to manage any poor behaviour and say most teachers apply these strategies consistently so that occasional low level disruption does not prevent them from learning.
- The spread-out nature of the school site and some areas, where lack of space restricts movement, is managed well by most students, so that usually behaviour around school is calm and sensible. Students report however that there is occasionally some pushing and boisterous behaviour. There is no graffiti or litter and students present themselves well. They are polite and courteous to adults.
- The new staff appointed to promote good attendance have had a dramatic impact in reducing persistent absence. Rewards, such as 'pizza parties' have contributed to rising attendance figures. Students show a greater understanding of why full attendance is important for them.
- Exclusion rates have fallen as a result of the Learning Support Centre where students can be set work and their behaviour monitored. Parents are closely involved and governors check that poor behaviour improves and offer congratulations when this is achieved. Students told inspectors how valuable this support has been in improving their behaviour.
- Students are punctual to lessons despite often having had a long way to walk across the site. Punctuality to school is improving as a result of consistently applied sanctions and a change to the school day.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students told inspectors how well student services support them and said that the school always keeps them safe. They say that they value the 'time-out' cards that enable them to seek help during a lesson if they become stressed or upset.
- Students have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take, but say that this is rare and that the school manages incidents well. They have a particularly good understanding of e-safety and how to deal with cyber-bullying.
- The school is a cohesive community where diversity is celebrated. Homophobic and racist language is rare and is strongly challenged, often by other students, and dealt with firmly by the school.
- The safety and well-being of those students on alternative provision is very carefully monitored and frequently reviewed, and their attendance daily monitored.
- Sixth form students provide good role models for younger students and support them through mentoring. The school council provides opportunities for younger students to take responsible roles.
- Most parents and staff agree that the school keeps their children safe and that students behave well.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Senior leaders rigorously monitor all aspects of teaching throughout the year. The results show that teaching is good in both the main school and in the sixth form. This was confirmed by observations of students' learning during the inspection and looking at their books.
- Students told inspectors how much they value the teaching they receive. One commented, 'Teachers are passionate about wanting you to do well' and another, 'This science teacher is beyond good!' Another student said that she feels comfortable asking for extra help if she needs it, knowing that staff will take the time to explain further. Warm relationships between teachers and students are evident.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and passion for their subject often inspires students to want to learn more, and teachers' expert understanding of examination requirements gives their students confidence in how to succeed. Many teachers provide clear success criteria or information as to how students will be assessed. This enables students to check for themselves how well they are doing.
- Most teachers use assessment information well to plan work of the right level so that students do not find the work too easy or too difficult. This often includes a special challenge to stretch the most-able students. Students are frequently given the opportunity to choose their level of challenge, however teachers are quick to guide students to the task that will stretch them most. The attributes of the Kingsmead Learner are constantly referred to so that students are encouraged to 'have a go' wherever they can.
- Teachers across the school place a strong focus on the development of literacy, highlighting key words and encouraging students to use the technical language for the subject. They show high expectations of students' understanding of complex vocabulary. Numeracy skills are not currently being developed to the same extent.
- Additional adults are used well in lessons, particularly to ensure that disabled students and those who have special educational needs are fully included and are able to achieve the tasks set for them. They are fully aware of teachers' planning and take an active role in lessons, working closely with the teacher.
- Although students were observed totally engrossed and excited by their learning in some science lessons, in others, the tasks set were dull and failed to engage their interest. In this subject too, sometimes infrequent marking has led to untidy work and evidence that students are not making an effort to improve, leading to insufficient progress over time.

- Leaders' insistence on high quality feedback has resulted in rapid progress being seen in many books. However this policy is not yet fully embedded across the school. Teachers do not always provide clear or detailed information about how to improve or check that the advice they have given has been followed to improve students' work.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students start at the school with skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics that are typically average, although the 2014 Year 11 cohort entered with above-average skills. In 2014, the proportion of students gaining five A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics dipped to just below average. The school had a significant number of examination papers across different subjects successfully remarked. This is not shown in the published unvalidated data. The school's tracking data indicates that there will be a significant rise in 2015.
- The proportion of students making nationally expected progress in English and mathematics was also below average in 2014. However, the overall progress data for these subjects in 2014 was depressed as a result of a significant proportion of students in that year group facing very challenging circumstances. Some were therefore educated off-site. The school's current progress tracking and assessments show a dramatic rise in progress rates during 2015 as the result of a range of well focused strategies to improve teaching and learning. In 2014 there was a gap in both attainment and progress between boys and girls. Leaders have rigorously tackled this and the progress of boys closely checked throughout the school. This has resulted in a strong improvement and the achievement gap closing for current year groups. There is no significant difference between the rates of progress of students from different ethnic backgrounds or the very few who speak English as an additional language.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make equally good progress as a result of the good teaching and support they receive, including the excellent support provided by specialist teaching assistants. Students following alternative provision achieve well in their work-based courses.
- In 2014, early entry in mathematics was a contributory factor to the published examination data showing low attainment in this subject. The final entry figures show a greater level of success. However the school recognises that this policy led to too many boys being satisfied with their first result and not aiming to achieve a higher grade through re-sitting. This in turn contributed to the gap in boys' and girls' achievement in 2014. The school is now only entering students for mathematics at the end of Year 11.
- Year 7 'catch-up' funding is used effectively to enable students to improve their reading skills. This is a strength of the school's provision and students and staff share their great enjoyment of reading.
- Teaching consistently stretches the most-able students. The school tracks the progress of the most-able students carefully and in all top set lessons they are provided with tasks that will fully challenge them appropriately.
- In 2014, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students and other students in the school and those nationally was wide. In English, disadvantaged students in Year 11 were a GCSE grade behind others in the school a grade and a half behind other students nationally. In mathematics, they were one and a half grades behind others in the school and two grades behind students nationally. There were similar gaps in rates of progress. The school's rigorous assessment data confidently indicates that this situation is likely to improve significantly for disadvantaged students in the current Year 11 as the result of the improved support they are now receiving, including for attendance.
- Students achieve well in the sixth form, making good progress in both academic and work-based courses.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Strong new leadership of the sixth form since the previous inspection is resulting in rising achievement. This has been rapid over the current year because students are benefiting from consistently high quality teaching, which they say is often inspiring. Students are keen to stay on at school after their GCSE

courses. The proportion staying on to complete their courses in Year 13 is above average.

- In 2014, academic attainment fell slightly to just below national figures. The school's rigorous assessment and tracking indicates that this will rise in 2015. Attainment in work-based courses has been above that nationally over the past two years. There is no significant difference between the performance of the small proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs and other students. Disadvantaged students achieved above their peers in 2014. All students are expected to re-sit their GCSE English and mathematics examinations until they achieve at least a grade C.
- Students speak very positively about the feedback they receive on their work. They show strong engagement in their learning, showing enthusiasm to research the topics they are studying and contribute their ideas. Students appreciate their teachers' good subject knowledge and the passion they show for their subjects. Teachers provide appropriate challenge for the most-able students.
- The leader of the sixth form ensures that all receive high quality advice and guidance to support their subject choices and students speak highly of the ongoing support they receive to ensure that they achieve their goals. The school has high expectations of students and works to raise their aspirations through a variety of university visits. As a result, a high proportion of students go on to higher education and the proportion not in education, employment or training is very low.
- Sixth form students contribute well to the life of the school. The mixed-age tutor groups help promote sixth formers as positive role models. Year 12 provide academic mentoring to support younger students. Students lead the school's strong involvement with charity fund-raising and there are many opportunities to develop leadership skills through sport, the arts and business and enterprise.
- Study programmes are now well matched to students' prior attainment and aspirations and ensure that they are well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment. All students undertake work experience during their courses.
- Sixth form students have a thorough understanding of British values including a strong sense of right and wrong and respect for others. There are numerous opportunities to discuss issues around democracy and personal liberty through the tutor programme, preparing them well for life in modern Britain.
- Although there is good collaboration between the leaders of the school and the partner sixth form, difficulties in travelling from one site to another restrict the timetable, so leaders have decided to end the partnership arrangement from the end of this academic year. This will enable the school to take direct charge of all teaching and to ensure that attainment rises at a faster pace.

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	124397
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	456272

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	1240
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Heath
Headteacher	Ian Bryant
Date of previous school inspection	2-3 May 2012
Telephone number	01543 512455
Fax number	01543 512481
Email address	office@kingsmead.staffs.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2015

