



King's Norton Boys' School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103562
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276955
Inspection dates 5 December 2005 to 6 December 2005
Reporting inspector Davinder Dosanjh HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Northfield Road
School category	Foundation		Birmingham
Age range of pupils	12 to 18		West Midlands B30 1DY
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	0121 6280010
Number on roll	747	Fax number	0121 6280080
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Sue Wright
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Roy Baylis

Age group 12 to 18	Inspection dates 5 December 2005 - 6 December 2005	Inspection number 276955
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one HMI and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

King's Norton Boys' School is a comprehensive school of 728 pupils aged 11–18, with 113 in the sixth form. The school is very popular and oversubscribed. A large majority of boys come from White British backgrounds, with 16% from a broad mix of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is in line with the average. However, the proportion with statements of special educational needs is above the average. The collaborative arrangement with King's Norton Girls' School at sixth form level brings about 65 girls into the school daily. The school became a specialist college for science in 2004.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is providing a satisfactory education overall and some aspects of its work are good. The headteacher's strong leadership has placed the school in a good position to raise standards further. The parent questionnaires used as part of the inspection praised the headteacher and his presence around the school. Parents are very pleased with the school's work and in particular transition arrangements from Year 6 to Year 7 and the range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils' personal development is good. The school is a safe environment where pupils' achievements are regularly celebrated. The school has a clear grasp of the areas of strength and weakness in both standards and achievement. The sharp analysis of data is not only a powerful tool for the school's leadership but also inspires confidence in the school's capacity to meet its own targets for further improvement. The departmental review process is a key driver for monitoring, evaluating and planning for improvement. Standards have improved but the progress made by some pupils could be better. Whilst teaching is improving, more still needs to be done to ensure that most teaching is of the highest quality. In lessons, work does not always meet the needs of the most able pupils. There has been improvement in most of the issues identified at the last inspection but homework remains a concern. The school has good capacity to improve further and provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The effectiveness and the efficiency of the sixth form are satisfactory. The collaborative arrangements with the local girls' school are good and broaden the choice of A-level and AS-level subjects on offer. Regular management meetings ensure planning for joint events and effective sharing of information about student progress. The work of the sixth form is not rigorously monitored and evaluated, and standards have been declining. Some aspects of teaching and learning do not sufficiently develop independent learning and motivate pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise Key Stage 3 standards by ensuring that work is more closely matched to the needs of the more able students and that homework is set consistently.
- Monitor and evaluate the work of the sixth form more rigorously to ensure that standards improve through better teaching and learning.
- Consolidate and monitor the impact of the school's new strategies for raising achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards across the school as a whole are average and improving across Key Stages 3 to 4. After the last inspection, results in English, mathematics and science in Year 9

fell significantly below the national average. Since 2002, however, results have improved and in 2005 are in line with national averages. In the core subjects, despite satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9, the achievement of higher-attaining pupils is significantly worse, and that of lower-attaining pupils significantly better, than expected. In Years 7 to 9 generally, lower-attaining pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make satisfactory progress. Over the last three years, results at GCSE have been in line with national averages, having risen in line with the national trend. Of the core subjects, English stands out for good results in both language and literature. Pupils also do well in design and technology, art and physical education. Results are below average in mathematics, science and French. The progress of pupils in Years 10 to 11 is significantly above the average in the last two years. Some underachievement by higher-attaining pupils continues but is less pronounced than in earlier years. Standards in the sixth form are in line with national averages but have been slowly declining. Not all students make the progress expected of them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They are happy to come to school, where they feel safe and well cared for. Behaviour is good. The school has recently revised its behaviour policy, and this sets out clear expectations, with a structured system of merits and sanctions. Pupils report that since its introduction there has been a marked improvement in behaviour. They value the rewards system, in particular the 'magic moments' celebration assemblies and the 'praise postcards' sent home for particular achievements. Relationships throughout the school are good. When pupils have concerns, they feel comfortable about approaching a member of staff or senior student, knowing that they will be taken seriously and treated fairly. They report that bullying is rare and appreciate the 'bully boxes' provided for them to report any incidents. Their views are sought through the School Council, which has helped bring about improvements, for example, the introduction of a one-way system around the school buildings.

Provision for the pupils' spiritual awareness is good with greater emphasis on focused and planned assemblies, some of which involve local religious leaders. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and moral awareness. Many take part in extra-curricular clubs, and accept responsibilities as school councillors, prefects or peer mentors. They regularly show their concern for others through the significant amounts they raise for charities, and explore ethical issues through religious education. Their multi-cultural education is not as well developed. Attendance is good. Through a range of incentives, pupils are encouraged to attend regularly. The school does everything it can to support those whose irregular attendance is a problem. Attendance figures for some sixth form groups in Year 13 are low. The school makes a significant contribution to pupils' health and well-being through physical education and numerous sports activities. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the wider

community through their involvement in local musical events and voluntary work in primary schools.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

During the inspection, teaching and learning were judged as satisfactory. This did not confirm the school's evaluation of teaching and learning as good. However, teaching is improving in the school as teachers work hard to implement a number of strategies. In the best lessons, work is structured to match the abilities of different groups of children within the class. Good examples were seen of effective strategies being used to support the progress of the least able pupils. In other lessons, the teachers' expectations of pupils are lower, and the work does not always meet the needs of the most able pupils. Questions do not always provide sufficient challenge and extend pupils' learning. Homework is not set consistently across subjects, and does not always promote independent study. In general, pupils' behaviour in lessons is good and attitudes to work are positive. This is particularly the case when the work is stimulating and the teacher sets a good pace within the lesson. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with English as an additional language are well supported in the classroom by teaching assistants and mentors, but subject teachers do not always take the needs of these individuals into account when planning their lessons. In some lessons, there is very good practice of sharing assessment information with pupils so that they know exactly what is expected of them in their work in order to achieve a particular level or grade, and they are able to make good progress as a result. In other lessons, this information is not shared with pupils, and they do not know how to make progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Currently, the school provides a satisfactory curriculum for its pupils, and recent developments are strengthening curriculum provision. The school's designation as a science college is having a positive impact on developments in the curriculum, including improving curriculum links with primary schools. A range of vocational courses has been introduced recently at Key Stage 4, broadening the opportunities for pupils and more effectively meeting the needs of a wider range of learners. In the sixth form, students have a good choice of academic courses, which is enhanced by the collaboration with a neighbouring school. However, there is no provision of vocational courses in the sixth form so the curriculum does not yet provide coherent progression from 14 to 19. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities within the curriculum to develop basic and personal skills to achieve future economic well-being. Regular physical education makes a good contribution to the development of healthy lifestyles, and there is a very good extra-curricular programme in the school, including many sporting opportunities and outdoor pursuits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The school is a very caring community with the welfare, health and safety of pupils at its heart. Support for pupils' personal development is good. The recent appointment of achievement team leaders now offers the opportunity for better monitoring of academic progress. Pupils value the school's recognition and celebration of their achievement, which is a central part of pastoral provision. The school is consistent in its application of procedures to ensure their pupils' safety. Careers advice and guidance are in place within a programme of personal and social education. The school meets, and goes beyond, the minimum statutory requirements for child protection. Care and support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and pupils at the early stages of learning English are good. In discussion pupils confirmed that what they value most about the school is its care and support for all pupils. Monitoring and tracking of students' progress in the sixth form is not rigorous enough to ensure they achieve their target grades.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Homework remains an area for improvement and a concern for some parents. The headteacher, who has only been in post for just over a year, has a clear vision, focused on raising standards. He has made a number of significant changes which have not yet had sufficient time to become embedded in the school. The extension of the leadership team has led to improved communication and better sharing of strategies for raising standards. The weekly publication of the 'learning times' is a key mechanism in reinforcing the key priorities for the school. The departmental review process is rigorous. Subject curriculum leaders are held accountable for their results. The reviews lead to targets and actions for improvement. However, the monitoring and evaluation of the sixth form is not sufficiently rigorous, and data is not used effectively. The performance of middle managers is satisfactory across the school, with some subjects performing particularly well. As yet there is no formal mechanism for sharing good practice across curriculum teams. The observation of teaching and learning by senior managers informs the departmental review process and gives a clear overview of the strengths and areas for development for each subject area. The school's self-evaluation is too generous but the school has identified accurately the issues for development. Some of the strategies to raise achievement are new but are beginning to have a positive impact on pupil progress in Key Stage 3. The school's capacity to improve further is good. The school seeks the opinions of pupils, parents and teachers and acts on their responses. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are committed and well informed about the work of the school. They perform their responsibilities efficiently but are not as involved in the strategic development of the school. Finances are managed well.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	insufficient evidence

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

King's Norton Boys' School Northfield Road Kings Norton Birmingham West Midlands B30 1DY

7 December 2005

Dear Pupils

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. First of all, however, I would like to thank you all, on behalf of the inspection team, for your co-operation and assistance during the visit. We very much enjoyed talking with you, watching you working with your teachers and we appreciated your comments and opinions.

The inspection found a good deal that the school can be pleased about. You are happy to come to school, and feel safe and well cared for. Many of you take advantage of the wide range of sporting opportunities and outdoor pursuits provided. Your behaviour and attendance is good. We enjoyed finding out about the rewards system and, in particular, the 'magic moments' celebration assemblies. Your teachers give you good support and guidance during your time at school. Your headteacher has brought in some useful changes to help improve the school further and achieve higher standards. Your parents agree and are very pleased with the headteacher and the work of the school.

The school is clearly on the upward trend. We have asked your headteacher, his senior team and the rest of your teachers to do the following things:

- in Years 7 to 9 the work set in lessons needs to be planned to allow the most able students to achieve the higher levels and grades and homework needs to be set more regularly across all subjects
- ensure that the new changes that have been introduced are working and performance in examinations and tests is getting better
- more could be done to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form; some of you are capable of doing better.

We are confident that the school can continue to improve and we wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Davinder Dosanjh (Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools) Lead inspector on behalf of the team