



Kendrick Girls' Grammar School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110042
LEA Reading LEA
Inspection number 278357
Inspection dates 19 October 2005 to 20 October 2005
Reporting inspector Valerie Pearson HMI

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

Type of school	Grammar (selective)	School address	London Road
School category	Foundation		Reading
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		RG1 5BN
Gender of pupils	Girls	Telephone number	01189015859
Number on roll	699	Fax number	01189015858
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Allan Currall
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs M Elms

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Kendrick Girls' Grammar School is oversubscribed, recruiting students from a wide geographical area in and around Reading. It is a small secondary school with 699 students, of which 221 are in the sixth form. The number of students from ethnic minority backgrounds is slightly above the national average. The number of students whose first language is not English is also above the national average but all students are fluent in English. The number of students with learning disabilities and difficulties is well below the national average as is the number of students entitled to free school meals. The school has specialist school status in science and mathematics.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Kendrick Girls' Grammar School is an outstanding school. It richly deserves its reputation as a thriving learning community seeking to do the very best for all its students. Standards are consistently very high and progress is good for students in years 7 -11 and excellent for those in the sixth form. Teaching is good with some outstanding features. Students are highly motivated and share with staff a love of learning. The school successfully balances strong academic performance with excellent personal development for students. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school. The school is not complacent however, and the governors, headteacher and senior leaders have a clear understanding of what needs to be done next to take the school forward. The school has accurately identified its strengths and weaknesses and set appropriate priorities for improvement. Of particular importance is work being undertaken to track more closely individual students' progress and make sure that every student has sufficiently challenging personal targets. Inspectors also agree with the school that raising standards in information and communication technology (ICT) remains a priority. Specialist school status in science and mathematics has had a positive impact on raising standards in these subjects. It has strengthened the status of the subjects and has led to more students studying them in the sixth form and in higher education. It has also led to improvements to accommodation and resources. The school has improved since the last inspection, demonstrating that the leaders will not rest on past achievements but keep striving for the good of the school community. The school uses resources well and provides excellent value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The school judges the effectiveness of the sixth form to be outstanding and inspectors support this evaluation. Students make excellent progress and standards are consistently high with exceptional numbers of students gaining the highest grades at A level. The students provide admirable role models for the rest of the school. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and mentoring contributes strongly to the students' confidence, independence and motivation. Students are very well prepared for their higher education and careers. There is wide choice of A level courses and students feel that their wishes are taken into account when options are decided. The sixth form is very effectively led and managed and provides exceptional value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

* Ensure that the processes for setting appropriate targets and tracking individual student progress are consistently applied across all subjects* Improve standards further in ICT through extending its use across all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are consistently very high in all subjects except ICT. Students enter the school with standards well above the national average. They make good progress and this is reflected in excellent results in national tests and examinations. At the age of fourteen, students' standards are all well above the national average, with progress in science and mathematics being particularly strong. At sixteen, 94% of the students achieve the top two grades in five or more GCSE subjects. Standards are high across all subjects but those with particularly good results include mathematics, science, French, German, and history. Necessary work is, however, being undertaken by the school to improve assessment to make sure that every individual has challenging targets for each subject. Monitoring students' progress against these, to help them know how well they are doing and what to do next to make the best possible progress, is a priority that has been correctly identified by the school. Standards in the sixth form are also consistently very high, with students making excellent progress. This applies to those students who have been in the school since the age of eleven and those who join at sixteen. Standards are high across the board but particularly strong subjects at A Level are English Literature, sociology and history. Students from different ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well and those with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. The school comfortably meets its specialist school targets. The school appropriately identified raising standards in ICT as a priority. Students enter the school with standards in the subject above the national average, but below those in English, mathematics and science. Improved standards at fourteen and sixteen demonstrate the initial impact of steps taken by the school. However, there is still scope for further improvement before standards in ICT match those in English, mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students' personal development is outstanding. They enjoy all aspects of school life and are keen to learn. Their behaviour is excellent and their attendance and punctuality very good. Students told inspectors that they feel safe and secure in school. If they have a problem they cite a range of people they can go to for help and they are confident that matters will be dealt with swiftly and effectively. The school has a strong sense of community. This is evident in the support not only that the teachers give students, but that the students give to each other, particularly older students to younger ones. The latter told inspectors that the head girl and her team provide valuable help and advice to them. Relationships between all members of the school are based on mutual respect and care. Sixth form students display high levels of maturity and responsibility. They make significant contributions to the life of the school including helping with tutor groups and lessons and running clubs and activities for younger students. Students feel that they are listened to and that their views are welcomed and valued. The School Council is an important forum for raising issues and concerns. It has successfully addressed various matters including those relating to the school

uniform. The creation of the post of head girl and her team resulted from the students' desire to have the voice of the sixth form more clearly articulated in the life of the school. The school places a strong emphasis on the emotional well-being of students, which, together with the very good promotion of healthy eating and exercise, is helping students adopt healthy lifestyles. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is outstanding. The school successfully nurtures students' personal development through the excellent provision it makes in the personal, social and health education programme.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that teaching is good with some outstanding features. The excellent lessons inspire already highly motivated students with challenging and thought provoking ideas and activities. The teachers set high expectations and sustain students' interest with varied tasks set at appropriate levels. In addition students become successful independent learners. In these lessons students have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve their work. However, greater consistency in tracking individual students' progress across subjects is needed to strengthen assessment in the school. It is taking measures to improve this area of its work. This includes more rigorous setting of individual subject targets for every student. Following a recent detailed review of teaching and learning, the school accurately identified ways in which each subject can improve its teaching. As a result teachers are already successfully beginning to tackle issues such as continuing to match work more closely to individual student needs and improving students ICT skills through more creative use of this in lessons. Learning is enriched through whole school events such as the excellent mathematics week observed during the inspection.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school offers a broad, academic curriculum which meets the needs of its students very well. Additional challenge for students is presented in various ways, for example Latin for all those in years 8 and 9. The school's focus on improving ICT has led to the introduction of this as a separate subject for all students up to the age of sixteen. Students are offered a very good range of examination options at GCSE and A Level and staying on rates in the sixth form are high. Some subjects, for example A Levels in physical education and classical civilisation, have been introduced in response to student demand. Students clearly enjoy the subjects they study and the excellent range of clubs and activities the school offers which undoubtedly enrich their learning. Education for health, safety and citizenship is excellent. Students are well

prepared for further stages in their education and their future careers. The school keeps the curriculum under regular review and has considered the introduction of vocational education options. It decided not to introduce them after taking into account the views of students, parents and carers. The school is, however, developing links with other schools and industry with a view to giving students greater opportunities and choice for work-related learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school believes that it offers outstanding care, guidance and support for its students and this judgement is supported by inspection findings. Systems for safeguarding students' health and safety are well established. There are successful procedures for eliciting students' views on such matters as bullying and staying safe as well as on learning options at the end of each Key Stage. The pastoral system is well organised and effective, and students' academic progress is regularly assessed. The school reports carefully on students' progress and parents are invited to respond to teachers' comments. There is very good support for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Students are very well supported by the school's provision in personal, health and social education and the school nurse is providing appropriate individual care and guidance. Careers advice is readily available for older students. Students in the sixth form benefit from an excellent mentoring programme which provides them with very strong support in their academic work as well as in their preparation for higher education and careers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school continues to flourish because of the strong leadership of the headteacher and senior managers. The school's vision of itself as a reflective learning community, with an unswerving commitment to the personal development of every student, is shared and understood. This gives direction and energy to the work of the school. The school's understanding of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate. It is based on a wide range of evidence including the perspectives of students and their parents and carers. The school initiates and welcomes external reviews to complement its own processes. The school's priorities are based on honest questions it asks of itself. It knows what it wants and needs to do to keep improving. The inspectors agree with the priorities the school has identified. The school has highly qualified and committed staff. Good subject leaders with a passion for learning are constantly seeking ways to improve students learning. Senior leaders are rightly focusing on raising standards through the work of these key people. The governing body has an excellent understanding of its role and provides appropriate support and challenge to the headteacher and senior leaders of the school. The headteacher and senior managers are outward looking and embrace local and national initiatives to strengthen the work of the school. The school's capacity to improve is excellent. The senior leaders have demonstrated this in a variety of ways, not least

through the impact of specialist school status and innovation that led to the Healthy Schools Gold Award.

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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?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
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?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

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?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

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

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me and my colleagues during our recent visit. We enjoyed meeting you and listening to your views about your work and the school.

It is our judgement that your school is outstanding and deserves its excellent reputation. You all make a significant contribution to the success of the school. You are highly motivated, enjoy your learning and participate with enthusiasm in the wide range of activities and clubs offered to you. You all make good progress in your work and those taking national tests and examinations consistently achieve very high results. Your academic success is matched by the impressive way in which you develop personally. It was good to see how you care for each other. We particularly noted the mature and responsible way in which sixth formers helped and supported younger students in the school. You told us that you feel safe and secure in school. You also told us that if you needed help you knew who to ask and you were confident that you would receive good support.

Your school provides an excellent education for you all and is determined to keep improving. We agree with the school that it needs to make sure that the progress of all of you is carefully tracked in every subject so that you know exactly how well you are doing and what to aim for next. We have also recommended that you have more opportunities to use ICT in lessons.