



Kingstone High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116939
LEA Herefordshire
Inspection number 279955
Inspection dates 17 May 2006 to 18 May 2006
Reporting inspector Meg Buckingham HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Kingstone
School category	Community		Hereford
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Herefordshire HR2 9HJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01981 250224
Number on roll	680	Fax number	01981 251132
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs I Wilkam
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr R Ridout

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	17 May 2006 - 18 May 2006	279955

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Kingstone High School is situated in a rural location approximately five miles outside the city of Hereford. Consequently, many students travel to school by hired coaches and public transport buses. It is smaller than average for an 11–16 comprehensive school. Nearly all students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is much lower than the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much higher than the average. The school has specialist language college status and is designated as an extended school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Kingstone High School is an effective school with some strong features, providing good value for money. The school's aim, to help all students and the community make the most of their potential, has led to crucial changes within the last two years, and is firmly guiding future planning. The inspection evidence confirms that the school's self-evaluation is accurate. There is an improving trend in standards and achievement. Students are making good progress. Factors that are contributing to this include good teaching, with some that is outstanding; a curriculum that is better matched to all students' needs and aptitudes; and effective structures for students' care, support and guidance. Students grow in confidence and contribute to the life of the school in a mature way. Parents acknowledge the progress made by their children, and the vast majority of students say they enjoy being at school.

The school is in a secure position and has the capacity to improve its performance still further. This is demonstrated in the action being taken by the strong senior leadership team, under the clear sighted leadership of the headteacher, with the support of the governing body and staff. The senior leadership team has a coherent view of the school's strengths and has accurately identified its weaker areas. Appropriate action is being taken to tackle inconsistencies that exist in the performance in some subjects, including improvements to students' literacy skills to maximise their achievements. Language college status has increased the modern foreign languages on offer, broadened students' cultural experiences and is extending opportunities in the community. The majority of issues from the last inspection have been successfully addressed; those few outstanding are being systematically tackled.

What the school should do to improve further

Disseminate the good examples of teaching and learning that improve students' literacy skills. Improve the quality of teaching and learning in those subjects where pupils do not make good enough progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards and achievement taken together are generally good because students, including those with additional needs and difficulties in learning, make good progress in the majority of lessons. When students enter the school in Year 7 their attainment is in line with the national average. This is maintained and in some areas improved upon by the end of Key Stage 3. Standards were generally average in 2005 and not quite as good as in the two preceding years, when they were above and in some areas significantly above average. The school is aware of this unevenness and has been quick to analyse and take effective action with individuals to tackle any dips in attainment.

By the end of Year 11, a much higher proportion of students than average achieve five or more passes at grades A*–G in GCSE examinations, including English and

mathematics. This illustrates the school's efforts to match the curriculum to the aptitudes of students of all abilities. A broadly average proportion of students achieve five or higher GCSE grades and indications are that the school is on course to reach the higher targets it has set, and could exceed them this year. Both boys and girls achieve highly in many subjects, including art, science, German, religious education and English literature. The school has rightly identified that boys of average ability underperform compared with girls of similar ability, who achieve very much better than average. The school is aware that attainment is not high enough in history, physical education, and design and technology and measures are underway to raise standards in these subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good. They show a growing self-confidence; older students, for example, take their responsibilities as prefects and peer mentors seriously. Students are developing the social skills and personal qualities they need for adult life. The valuable opportunities provided by vocational courses, work experience and productive links with local industry contribute to preparing students well for their future economic well-being. The vast majority of students enjoy coming to school, are eager to learn and say that it is a friendly place. They welcome the increasing opportunities to take part in making decisions about aspects of school life, and explain their views about matters that are of concern to them in a mature way. Through the school council, students and the catering manager are working together to extend further the positive innovations to encourage healthy eating. Many students participate in the good range of sporting activities, contributing to healthier lifestyles. Attendance is just below the national average and improving; the school is well on the way to meeting its target. Behaviour is good in the majority of lessons and around the school generally. This results from examples of good classroom management and persistence on the part of staff. The number of fixed-term exclusions is high, affecting a relatively small proportion of the student population. Numbers of incidences show a decreasing trend. The school's thorough analysis of information on attendance and behaviour is bringing about improvements. There are clear strategies for the detailed tracking of individuals, good support systems and a more relevant curriculum.

Spiritual, social and moral elements are good. Students make a good contribution to charities and show consideration for others. Opportunities exist for good cultural experiences through a wide variety of activities such as an extensive range of music groups, drama, art and design, theatre outings and activity days. The school's language college status brings a strong European dimension to the cultural life of the school. Less strong are opportunities for students to develop greater awareness and deeper understanding of the diversity of cultures in British society today.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, with some outstanding teaching seen. As a result, the majority of students make good progress. In the very best lessons, teachers set work in imaginative ways that challenge all students, including the highest attainers. Information and communication technology (ICT) is very well employed to speed the pace of learning. Students respond readily to well focused questioning; they think carefully and this allows higher ability students, in particular, to explain their views in some detail. In outstanding lessons, strategies for improving literacy skills for students of all abilities are to the fore, focusing on English language generally and subject specific vocabulary in particular. In these lessons, students, including lower attainers, make significant gains in their vocabulary and comprehension. The few incidences of low-level disruptive behaviour were well managed. These characteristics enable all students to contribute actively to their learning, to amplify and consolidate their knowledge and skills, and, as a consequence, make good progress. These features were largely absent from those lessons that were satisfactory or borderline.

Most lessons are organised well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and positive relationships exist between staff and students. Assessment is used well to improve learning. Marking contributes satisfactorily to this knowledge. The vast majority of students say that they enjoy learning and understand the various subject targets that are set and where they are at in terms of their progress. Teaching assistants make a good contribution in supporting learning, particularly for those students who have learning difficulties. The effectiveness of rigorous strategies already in place to improve teaching and learning can be seen in the good progress of students of all abilities in the majority of subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets national requirements and, because of a number of recent developments, increasingly matches students' aptitudes and potential. The imaginative introduction of vocational GCSE courses, for example in construction, childcare and applied art, has led to the better motivation, attendance and achievement of the students who might have struggled with more conventional choices. The arrangements made for supporting students with additional learning needs are also well judged, with the 'Le Coeur' learning support unit doing so outstandingly, and enable them to make better than expected progress. Personal, social and health education together with a citizenship programme contributes well to students' personal development and well-being.

The impact of the school's specialist college status in modern foreign languages is evident and beneficial. Students can and do choose courses and gain qualifications in more than one language. Some go into primary schools to advance younger pupils'

understanding and enjoyment of French. Courses for adults are part of the enhanced provision in the school. These examples indicate how the curriculum is increasingly planned to give opportunities to people beyond the immediate school community.

Students' experience is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. The recent production of the musical *Bugsy Malone* enabled large numbers of students of all ages, and staff, to come together to take an active and hugely enjoyable role. Although many students have to leave by bus at the end of the timetabled day, there is nevertheless a good take up of activities in sport, music, and a variety of clubs because of the extensive provision at lunchtime.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for its students. This has a positive benefit on their academic progress and personal development. Pastoral managers, form tutors and peer mentoring are examples that make up a wide-ranging support network across the school. Outside agencies, for example, Connexions, make a valuable contribution to students' guidance. The Year 10 work experience programme is well supported by local contacts.

Support for students with learning difficulties is outstanding. The 'Le Coeur' unit is at the heart of the school's determination to help students of all abilities to achieve their potential. The very small numbers of students who join the school with little or no English receive good support, so that they progress well. Students know how well they are doing because of the exceptionally good use of assessment information to monitor their progress. They are involved in setting their own targets and appreciate the help teachers give them in doing so.

Suitable health and safety procedures are in place and risk assessments are carried out. However, the school is aware that a few matters require urgent review. Child protection procedures are securely in place. Students say they feel safe and incidents of bullying, which are few, are dealt with by adults they can turn to in confidence if they need help. Appropriate links with parents are maintained through newsletters, reports and parents' evenings. There is a happy atmosphere in the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and the senior leadership team have an unwavering focus on improvement and know the school extremely well. Their judgements about its strengths and weaknesses are accurate and well founded. The monitoring of teaching is rigorous and has had a clear impact on improving standards. The development of systems for tracking students' progress has been instrumental in giving students and teachers a grasp of current levels of achievement and what to do to improve them. This is an outstanding feature of the school's work. The forthcoming introduction of a house system to provide more effectively for students' academic and personal welfare gives a good example of principled leadership

and management. The principle, which is consistently argued for and justified, is how to optimise chances of success for students, for staff, and for the wider community. The careful management of finances connects with this. Hence the appointment of a community officer, the impressive improvement in the school's sports facilities and the ongoing refurbishment to the school's buildings.

The school is supported well by its governing body. The committee structure has been recently revised and training undertaken to give a sharper focus to governors' oversight of the school's work. Governors link with departments and actively fulfil a supportive and critical function. This aspect of management has improved considerably since the last inspection.

Most subject leaders manage their departments well and are fully committed to the school's strategies for improvement. The effectiveness of leadership at this level is uneven. However, an appropriate focus on sharing best practice including using assessment to promote effective learning, is ensuring the effectiveness of leadership is more consistent.

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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

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 being so courteous when we came to inspect your school recently. You made the inspectors feel welcome at Kingstone. You were helpful in telling us about your work and what you enjoy doing at school. We enjoyed watching you work with your teachers.

Your teachers give you good support and guidance during your time at school, and you told us that you appreciate this help. When the teaching is particularly good, you are enthusiastic in your learning, give thoughtful answers and make good progress in lessons. We were particularly impressed with the way the standard of your work is tracked and analysed, so that you and your teachers have a clear idea of how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve further. The different types of subjects that you can study now are helping the curriculum to be more interesting to all students. You enjoy taking part in the many musical groups, sports and other activities that are on offer. You have a mature attitude in helping to make decisions that affect your life at school and talk in a sensible way about the things that concern you. The behaviour of the vast majority is good and the school is working hard with those of you who find this difficult sometimes. Your attendance is improving. All these things contribute to your overall good achievement and progress.

The inspectors believe your school is doing well and some things are very good. Your headteacher, his senior team and the rest of your teachers have thought carefully about those areas that can be improved still further. We have asked them to continue with these and, in particular, to do the following: continue to improve literacy skills in all subjects, so that you can achieve even more continue to check that all teaching and learning are as good as in the best lessons, helping you to show what you can achieve, particularly in those subjects where you do not do as well.