



Kingsmead Technology College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124397
LEA Staffordshire
Inspection number 281713
Inspection dates 25 January 2006 to 26 January 2006
Reporting inspector Sue Harrison HMI

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Type of school | Comprehensive | School address | Kings Avenue |
| School category | Community | | Littleworth Hednesford |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 | | Cannock, Staffordshire WS12 1DH |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01543 512455 |
| Number on roll | 1297 | Fax number | 01543 512481 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mrs Barbara Heath |
| Date of previous inspection | 1 November 1999 | Headteacher | Mr Christopher Andrew Hilton |

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The college is located in a former mining town and serves an area with several pockets of high deprivation. It became a technology college in 2002. It operates a joint sixth form with two other local schools and is a member of the Chase Collegiate, a collaboration of nine schools and one college of further education. The number of students from minority ethnic groups is small and the proportion of those whose first language is not English is very low. The percentage of students with special educational needs is above the national average but the percentage of students with identified learning difficulties is below average. The school is oversubscribed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The college's effectiveness is satisfactory and it offers satisfactory value for money. The college's own assessment matches that of inspectors. The recently appointed headteacher and senior leadership team provide a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising the achievement of learners. They have recognised the need to sharpen the focus of the school improvement plan to achieve these objectives. Since the last inspection the college has improved the progress of students with learning difficulties and disabilities and has made some progress to raise the standards achieved by boys, although this has not been consistent. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory and students make satisfactory progress but higher attaining students are not always challenged enough. The college has in place a number of strategies designed to raise achievement further, for example to ensure clearer targets are in place for individual students and to develop a curriculum that is appropriate for all students. The majority of students enjoy college and have a positive attitude to learning. Attendance is above average and behaviour is generally good in lessons and around the school, although a minority of parents feel it could be improved further. Most students feel they are in a safe, stimulating environment where they are encouraged to learn and achievements are well celebrated. The college offers a wide and popular programme of extra curricular activities and students are developing good personal and social skills. The college has a strong culture of inclusion and systems for guidance and support about future courses and careers are good. However, students are not always given sufficient guidance on what they can do to improve their work further. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, with particular strengths at Key Stage 3. In keeping with the college's technology specialism, there is effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the college. The college has identified the need to broaden its curriculum for older students. The new leadership team has developed robust monitoring procedures for checking the quality of provision. The college has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. There is a clear vision for the future based on raising the aspirations and achievement of individual students. The headteacher and senior team have been successful in harnessing the support of staff to support this vision and the college has good capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The efficiency and effectiveness of the sixth form are satisfactory. Recruitment has increased and retention is good; the small number of students who leave early do so because of personal circumstances. Young people enjoy their courses. Standards are broadly in line with national averages and learners' progress is satisfactory. The college is part of a consortium arrangement with other schools and a further education college. It works effectively with two neighbouring sixth form providers to ensure the viability of group sizes. The curriculum is satisfactory. Recently, collaborative arrangements have improved the availability of vocational and work related courses but the college

acknowledges the need to develop these further. Electronic systems for tracking progress are good and networked across the consortium so that up-to-date information and targets are immediately available to all staff and students. There is a good understanding of the strengths of the sixth form and what the college and consortium can do to bring about further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement by ensuring the curriculum is appropriate for all students and lessons present an appropriate level of challenge, especially for the most able.
- Ensure assessment and marking consistently provide students with clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- Ensure the school improvement plan is sharply focused on the key actions needed to raise achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The standards achieved by students have fluctuated in recent years. Standards are broadly in line with the national average at Key Stage 3 and have varied at Key Stage 4 from above to below the national average. The majority of students make satisfactory progress during their time at the college when measured against their previous attainment. Results of 2005 national tests at the end of Year 9 showed that progress was better in mathematics and science than in English. GCSE results, however, show that progress through the school is satisfactory in English. GCSE mathematics results continue to improve and show above average progress. In line with its technology specialism, the college achieved good results in its vocational information technology (IT) course. The GCSE results show that the progress of lower attaining students is better than that of more able students, although both fall within the satisfactory range. In an effort to improve achievement further, the college has introduced a number of measures aimed at better target setting for individuals and groups of students. Systems to support students with learning difficulties and disabilities have been strengthened since the last inspection and these students are now making satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The college has a strong commitment to ensuring the personal development and well-being of its students and this aspect of its work is good. Students enjoy school and are responsible and positive about their learning. They attend school regularly and behaviour is generally good, although there are small pockets of inappropriate behaviour. Spiritual, moral and social development is good because the teaching programmes for these aspects, including assemblies, religious education and the personal development programme, are well planned. Students' understanding of diversity in society is satisfactory but there is scope for this to be further developed. Students appreciate being able to take responsibility and to contribute their views

through the school council and regular surveys including those on the school intranet. They are helped to adopt a healthy lifestyle by the wide choice of healthy foods in school meals and healthy living being a key theme in personal development programmes. They participate in an extensive range of sporting and fitness activities. They make an important contribution to the community through a range of activities including fundraising, for example for the Tsunami appeal. Students' preparation for future economic well-being is good. They benefit from well organised work experience and helpful careers guidance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, enabling students to make satisfactory progress. The substantial minority of good teaching is lively and stimulating, and students respond with enthusiasm to the high level of challenge presented. In these lessons, skilful questioning enables students to make thoughtful contributions to class discussions; students make good progress, because planning is based on a close knowledge of what they need to improve. Well planned use of ICT to develop communication and creative skills is a strong feature throughout the college, demonstrating the positive impact of technology college status. Most lessons are enjoyable because of the good relationships between students and their teachers. However, planning is frequently insufficiently precise about the purpose of lessons and, in a substantial minority of lessons, work is not sufficiently diversified to meet the needs of all students. In particular, it lacks sufficient challenge for the most able students, and fewer students than should achieve the highest grades in public examinations. Less successful lessons are characterised by teachers talking for too long with insufficient opportunities for students to actively engage in problem solving, sometimes resulting in boredom or lack of understanding. In some subjects, useful feedback is provided to students in class and through marking on how to improve their work and reach their short-term targets, but this is not happening consistently across all subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The college provides a satisfactory curriculum for students in Years 7 to 11 with good features at Key Stage 3. Provision in the sixth form is satisfactory. In the first three years, students study the National Curriculum together with additional programmes. The school teaches drama, business studies and learning skills as well as offering theme days with in-depth study, for example, on career options. There are also innovative approaches to help some students accelerate their progress in modern foreign languages. In Years 10 and 11, core and optional subjects meet statutory requirements. There is some vocational provision in ICT and health and social care but the college recognises the need to create additional pathways to meet the interests and educational

needs of all its students. All subjects are enhanced with opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning. The satisfactory and improving sixth form curriculum is offered in co-ordination with other schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The college systems for care, guidance and support are good. There are several ways in which students can access support, including counselling expertise where appropriate. The college has good links with a range of external agencies to enhance the support services it offers. There are effective arrangements to give students information and guidance to help them make choices for subject options, careers and further study. Day-to-day guidance on how to improve work, however, is not so consistently strong. The college has satisfactory procedures in place for child protection, and risk assessments are thorough. There is a strong culture of inclusion at the college; systems are in place to ensure students who need extra support can participate in lessons. The college is constantly seeking to improve the effectiveness of procedures for monitoring students' progress. An electronic system in the upper school is proving particularly effective and the college is considering extending it across all year groups. The college is working hard to develop its communication with parents and the majority of parents are very positive about this aspect of its work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory with some good features. Under the guidance of the recently appointed headteacher, new senior managers are clear about the college's strengths and the further changes needed to improve student achievement. They have focused on changes needed to develop the curriculum and teaching and learning and there are early signs of a positive impact. Responsibility for improvement is shared widely and underpinned through effective performance management. The work of governors to support and challenge the college is good. There is a good range of expertise among governors, and managers draw appropriately upon their professional skills. The college has made satisfactory progress in addressing issues identified at the last inspection. Statutory curriculum requirements have been met and better support is given to pupils with learning difficulties. However, improvement in the performance of boys has not been consistent. The college is clear about the need to improve the performance of all its students by stretching the more able and by providing a more appropriate curriculum for some students. It is currently revising its school improvement plan to ensure actions are more clearly linked to achievement of curriculum targets. The headteacher and senior team have a clear vision of what needs to happen to address weaker areas and the capacity for the college to improve is good. Managers and staff are successful at providing a supportive and enriching environment. There is good rapport between students and staff and a strong commitment to make all students feel valued. The technology college status has greatly improved the learning environment with students and teaching staff using ICT

extensively. The provision of resources on line is progressing well and is beginning to achieve a transformation of learning. ICT is also providing new routes for consultation with students and greater involvement of parents. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory and the college is responding well to the challenge of offering provision coordinated with a number of other schools.

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Inspection judgements

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

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 | 2 | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| 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 | 2 | |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 | |

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 | 2 |

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 | 3 | |
| 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 | 2 | |
| 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

27 January 2006 Dear Students As you know, a group of inspectors recently visited your college. Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us and your help in finding our way around and giving us your views about the college. I am writing now to tell you about our findings. We think that the college provides a satisfactory quality of education. Most of you enjoy college; you attend regularly and try hard in lessons. There are good relationships between staff and students and you particularly enjoy the wide range of activities available outside lessons. Behaviour is generally good but there is a minority of students who sometimes do not behave well. The majority of students make satisfactory progress at the college but we think some of you could do even better. The college is aware of this and the headteacher is working hard with staff to try and ensure lessons have an appropriate level of challenge for all students and that marking makes it clear what you can do to improve your work further. They are also looking at ideas for new courses to extend the curriculum on offer and at how to make plans for improving the school more focused. We think that the systems in place to support you are good, that there are several ways you can get help if you need it and that the college gives you information and guidance to make choices. There are good opportunities to develop your personal skills; you appreciate the chance to contribute your views in college and to participate in the wider community, for example by fundraising. The technology specialism has led to extensive use of computers across the college and many of you are developing good ICT skills that will help you in the world of work. Yours faithfully Sue Harrison Her Majesty's Inspector