

President Kennedy School and Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103736
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	286739
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Smith HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1277
6th form	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Crisp
Headteacher	G Payne
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2002
School address	Rookery Lane Coventry CV6 4GL
Telephone number	024 76661416
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Age group	11–19
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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

President Kennedy is a larger than average school and community college. It has been a specialist humanities school since September 2005. A large proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with the largest group being of Indian origin. A significant number of students are learning English as an additional language.

The proportion of students with learning difficulties is well above the national average and the school is a local authority centre for students with speech and language difficulties. There is also a large number of students who need additional support for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school serves a population that has significant social and economic deprivation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

President Kennedy is a satisfactory school which is improving quickly. It is at the heart of the community, and as one parent said, 'Its community/family ethos has a very positive effect on my child and it has been the making of her.' The school has not yet met its aim 'to achieve the full potential for all in a caring and supportive environment' but it has shown through its strong leadership, accurate self-evaluation and strong track record of improvement that it has an excellent capacity to improve further. The school has worked well to provide the good care and guidance linked with effective support to make sure students are now better placed to achieve well.

Standards, although below average, are improving and the school has been particularly effective in improving the achievement of boys, who now attain above expectation. The school's emphasis on inclusion is demonstrated well by the proportion of students who gain five or more GCSE passes, which has risen markedly over the last three years and is now in line with national figures. Achievement overall is improving and is now broadly satisfactory. Results in GCSE mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) have been particularly weak, although the school has been successful in improving student's achievement in mathematics.

Students generally feel safe in school and healthy living is well understood by them, with many eating the healthy meal options and either walking or cycling to school. The majority of students enjoy taking part in sporting activities outside of timetabled lessons. Teaching is improving with much being good, or better, but it is satisfactory overall because in a number of areas the work does not fully engage students in their learning, and marking does not consistently show how to improve. Classrooms offer a good working environment with good use of display to help overcome the poor state of the buildings. Behaviour has improved and is now good. There are very few exclusions and most students value the recognition and rewards for good work and behaviour. The curriculum meets students' needs well but the school recognises that it requires a full review to ensure it remains up to date.

The headteacher and deputy give very strong leadership, well supported by the senior team. They have identified the key areas for improvement through an effective self-evaluation, which included inputs from departments, students and governors. This has been used well to formulate an appropriate improvement plan. The school works hard to ensure it gains views from both parents and students but a few parents feel they are not listened to sufficiently. Good subject and pastoral leadership generally ensures departments and year teams are well organised and are improving. Subject leaders feel empowered to lead their areas. Where subject leadership is less good, the senior team are supportive and challenging to ensure all areas meet the high standards expected.

The impact on the school of its specialist status has been highly beneficial in a large variety of ways, not least in developing excellent partnerships. For example, links with local primary and special schools have been enhanced and the much improved ICT equipment has been instrumental in securing greater engagement with the local community. More able students from primary schools have benefited from specialist teaching, and the history curriculum for Year 9 in one special school is lead by specialist school staff, assisted by students.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is good because students respond to good teaching and have achieved well, gaining results broadly in line with national figures. The good curriculum offers a broad range of courses at a variety of levels to suit the needs of young people.

Leadership and management of the sixth form are good with a very accurate overview of all aspects of sixth form provision, including taking appropriate actions to improve those subjects where students do not achieve consistently well. Students' progress is rigorously monitored and, where necessary, additional support is given to ensure they achieve well. Tracking systems are effective in providing the information that teachers need to support students to achieve challenging targets.

The social accommodation has been greatly improved since the previous report and is now good. Students develop into good citizens, well prepared for the world outside school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in GCSE mathematics and ICT.
- Remove inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning, so that all lessons are at least good, by improving the engagement of students and ensuring marking shows students how to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students enter the school with standards significantly below average for their age. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are improving and, although they remain below average they are getting closer to national figures. Students' achievement has continued to get better and is broadly satisfactory. Results in GCSE examinations in 2006 improved for the third successive year. However, standards and achievement in mathematics were low and this adversely affected the proportion of students who gained five or more higher level GCSE passes including mathematics and English. Results in ICT were also low. The school's very good system for tracking students' work and recent 'mock examination' results show that they now make better progress in mathematics, although standards are still below average. Students with learning difficulties or disabilities and students from minority ethnic backgrounds generally achieved in line with their peers.

In 2006, standards at Key Stage 3 improved with the number of students who gained the higher levels increased and are broadly average overall. The school set itself some very challenging targets in 2006 and was close to meeting them. It met its targets related to being a specialist school.

In the sixth form, students generally achieve well. Although standards are broadly average, this is good progress for students who enter the sixth form with standards below average. The vast majority of students who start advanced level courses complete them and the increased range of appropriate courses ensures that they achieve well.

The school is not complacent and it analyses results carefully to see how it can improve on previous years. It is being imaginative in trialling ways to improve the results in mathematics,

including successfully using adult literacy and numeracy courses to help students gain appropriate expertise and better prepare them for the world of work. It also has a comprehensive overview of how students have completed coursework and organises targeted support to make sure students are not disadvantaged by poor or incomplete work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good because the school has a calm and purposeful atmosphere and students have a good understanding of their role within the school and beyond. They have good moral awareness and respect each other and their environment. They work well in teams and have a good understanding of different faiths and cultures which leads to a racially harmonious atmosphere. Behaviour has improved and is good and often outstanding but can be weaker when students are not fully engaged in their learning.

Attendance is satisfactory and improving through determined and effective measures that target and support students with poor attendance along with clear rewards for those who attend well. Students enjoy school a lot. They especially like lessons where the work is interesting and relevant and where they are actively involved in their learning. They enjoy the many clubs, trips and visits on offer, which encourage good social development.

Students feel very safe in school. They say that the rare incidents of bullying are quickly and effectively resolved. Students can confidently turn to an adult at school with a problem knowing that their concerns will be sympathetically dealt with. They have a clear understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and are committed to keeping fit, and most attend sports clubs after school. Swimming is having a significant impact on students' fitness and liaison with local schools has helped pupils improve their swimming prior to their transfer. Students are keen to eat a healthy diet and regularly choose the healthy school meal option. Community and charitable contributions are good, which supports students' good spiritual development. Students take responsibility on the school and year councils and they are currently looking at ways to improve the toilets, some of which are very poor. Students are prepared well for the future, with all gaining a qualification in literacy and numeracy and an effective competency in reasoning, speaking and listening skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching is improving rapidly in the school with a high proportion of good and outstanding teaching observed. It is, however, satisfactory overall because it does not always engage students and there are still many inconsistencies which mean it has not yet maximized the progress students make. In the best lessons, and in the sixth form, where teaching is good, teachers use a wide variety of teaching methods and use marking and assessment well to engage students in learning.

Warm, respectful relationships along with interesting displays are used well to create a good learning environment despite the poor state of the buildings. Good use is made of clear learning

objectives, which are shared with students, and in better lessons these are returned to at times to consolidate learning. Good practice from the school's specialist subjects is beginning to be disseminated effectively across other areas. The school has gained a national reputation for its work using ICT in a wide variety of ways to enhance learning, including 'podcasting'.

Students are actively involved in assessing their own and others' work and so generally have a clear understanding of how to improve. This is further enhanced by teachers' regular informative marking, although this is inconsistent. In some lessons marking is poor and fails to show students how to improve. Students are encouraged to work together in groups, which effectively develops their reasoning skills and allows them to express their own ideas as well as work independently. Good use is made of paired and group discussions, and 'hot-seating' is used well to develop students' speaking and listening skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good because the great majority of learners are well served although the school recognises that it needs a careful review if it is to remain relevant and up to date. It is suitably flexible to allow individual needs to be catered for as the school puts the needs of the child before the timetable. Good arrangements are made via the highly effective federation of schools and colleges to enhance the opportunities for students in the sixth form and Years 10 and 11, including a variety of vocational courses.

The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 allows students to follow courses well matched to their needs, including all studying for GCSE religious education which gives that subject more relevance. A number of students attend local colleges, including a group who are taking the young apprenticeship course. There is also good support for gifted and talented students as well as lessons in critical thinking.

In Years 7 to 9 students' work is enhanced by very effective cross-curricular ICT which is linked to the specialist school subjects and technology. This specialism has also enabled students of all ages to have much better access to the curriculum and their teachers for support through the high quality portal available to them and their parents. This, along with the very effective provision in 'PK Extra', is used extensively. Students have access to, and many enjoy, a rich variety of clubs and sporting opportunities outside of lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The care, guidance and support for students are a strength of the school. They are good overall with outstanding work in partnership with a variety of agencies to promote learners' well-being. There is a strong emphasis on academic and pastoral support. Students are set challenging targets with good advice on how to reach them. The progress students make is very carefully checked and when it slows, effective measures, such as personal help and booster classes, remedy matters. The school provides very good support for examination work through revision classes and coursework clubs. It also runs classes to help parents support their children with examination preparation. The full impact of these arrangements is only now being seen, with the improvements in progress of students.

The Student Support Centre provides excellent support for a large number of students. For example, effective counselling helps students with behaviour difficulties to avoid exclusion and support for those with attendance problems helps them come to school regularly. As a result, vulnerable students who previously may not have achieved success in examinations are now gaining more passes. The centre also provides sensitive care for students with learning difficulties or with speech and language difficulties, so that they take full advantage of all that the school offers and make similar progress to their peers. Good support is provided for students learning English as an additional language so that they quickly acquire skills in English and are better able to access the full curriculum. Child protection arrangements are robust. Health and safety procedures are good and ensure the school can respond quickly to any difficulties.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. The highly effective headteacher and deputy give an excellent steer and direction to the school, ably supported by a very capable senior leadership team. They empower middle leaders and staff to ensure they deliver improving lessons and raise standards. Leaders at all levels effectively monitor the work of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. With the support of the local authority, they have improved the quality of teaching. All staff have appropriate targets to improve their own practice and these are monitored regularly to hold staff to account for their work.

All students are valued and the school works hard to ensure they all have an equal chance of success. Although recent results have been below average, the strong drive to improve is now very evident within school and students are now starting to make better progress and beginning to achieve as well as they can. The school is extremely well placed to improve further.

Governance is good and rigorously challenges and supports the school, and ensures that resources are deployed well to meet the school's objectives.

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Annex A

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	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	3	
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
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 to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
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	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

We visited your school recently and met with some of you at lunchtime and talked to others during lessons and at break. We were very pleased with the friendliness you showed us and how helpful you were. Your school is satisfactory overall. It has improved recently and has outstanding potential to become better still. Your sixth form is good.

Staff support and guide you well, and this is helping you prepare for your examinations and tests this year. We were very impressed with how you are helped to complete your coursework so that you are not disadvantaged when you come to sit your examinations later this year. Standards are broadly average and your progress satisfactory, but the school needs to improve the results in ICT and mathematics. Many of you told us how much you enjoyed the many activities and sports after school and how you found 'PK Extra' a real help. We were impressed with the work you did with other schools, and for many of you, with younger students in your own school. The school has worked very hard to improve your attendance and it is a shame that it is still only satisfactory because a number of you fail to attend school as often as you should. This is an area where you can help improve your school.

Teaching is satisfactory and often good or better. Behaviour is generally good and you know how to remain safe and healthy. Many of you said how much you enjoyed swimming and how you thought this was an important activity within school. You also told us how the school council has plans to improve the quality of your toilets. We agree with you that these are not satisfactory at the moment.

The curriculum is good and really meets your needs well. You value the work done in Years 10 and 11 and we thought your needs were very well met.

We feel your school is well led and has a good understanding of its main strengths and areas it needs to improve, such as the quality of teaching and learning, so that in all lessons you are all suitably engaged and your work is marked so that it helps you improve.

We wish you well in this improving and supportive school and thank you again for your cooperation.