



The Kingswinford School a Science College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103872
Local Authority Dudley
Inspection number 286796
Inspection dates 28 February –1 March 2007
Reporting inspector Gwendoline Coates HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Water Street
School category	Foundation		Kingswinford
Age range of pupils	11–16		DY6 7AD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01384 296596
Number on roll (school)	923	Fax number	01384 401098
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Janice Daines
		Headteacher	P Limb
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2002		

Age group 11–16	Inspection dates 28 February –1 March 2007	Inspection number 286796
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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

The Kingswinford School is a smaller than average school that is consistently oversubscribed. Its students come from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds and the proportion of students eligible for free school meals is much lower than average. Just over 6% of its students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is much lower than average. The number of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is much lower than average. The school achieved specialist science college status in 2003 and recently became a Badminton England Academy School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Kingswinford is a good school. Its students achieve well because the good leadership and management of the school ensure that they benefit from good teaching, a good curriculum and good care, guidance and support systems. 'They are helping to develop all students, irrespective of their capabilities', is a typical comment from parents, who are impressed with how well the school meets the needs of individual students.

Students enjoy school, find lessons interesting and participate well in the range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Attendance is good and behaviour around the school and in lessons is excellent. Students feel safe when they are at school and arrangements to assist Year 7 students settle in are excellent. This is confirmed by parents who say that their children were welcomed into the school and quickly felt part of it. Students are encouraged to be healthy by the provision of a wide range of physical activities. They make effective contributions to the community by raising funds for charities and as a result of the extensive personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme, they develop important financial and enterprise capabilities that prepare them well for their life after school.

Achievement is good overall and standards are above average but the attainment of, and progress made by, students in Years 10 and 11 do not match those of students in the lower school. This is mainly because students at this level are not always encouraged to reflect sufficiently on their own progress and how they might improve. However, the highly effective monitoring and tracking systems that have been put in place and the comprehensive intervention strategies that have been introduced are having a positive impact and are leading to improvement.

The school's work with its partner primary and secondary schools and other external agencies is outstanding and is having a very positive impact on students' achievement and their well-being. Its specialist science status and its reputation as a local centre of good practice in science teaching contribute to this. For example, supported by the school's specialist status, its science teachers regularly teach science lessons in local primary schools, ensuring that when students join the school in Year 7, not only are they well prepared but they are also able to settle in quickly and make good progress.

The school's self-evaluation is good and its review system, with self-reviews at departmental level feeding through to that at whole-school level, ensures that continuous improvement takes place. The school knows itself very well, is aware of its strengths and the priorities for its development. It takes very good account of the views of students and parents. Parents note that any concerns raised with the school are dealt with quickly and effectively and say 'The headteacher has an excellent rapport with students. He asks students' views and listens to their opinions'. There are many examples of changes that have been put in place that stem directly from issues raised by the student council, including the availability of drinking water and the refurbishment of the girls' toilets.

The school has good capacity to make the necessary improvements. Effective steps have been taken to bring about improvement since the last inspection, in particular

in relation to improving teaching and learning through the sharing of good practice. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher and the commitment and dedication of staff at all levels within the school contribute very well to the school's good capacity to bring about further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the good progress made by students in Years 7 to 9 is continued consistently across all subjects in Years 10 and 11.
- Consistently provide opportunities for students in Years 10 and 11 to reflect on and assess their own progress, and identify what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall, standards are above average and students meet challenging targets. When students arrive in Year 7, their attainment is above average. By Year 9 their attainment is significantly above average and is exceptional in mathematics and science, indicating that they make good or better progress during these years.

Attainment on entry to Year 10 is well above average. The percentage of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C has been significantly above the national average for the last five years but there has been a downward trend. In 2005, progress in Years 10 and 11 was good overall and in mathematics, but satisfactory in English. However, according to school data, in 2006 progress was satisfactory. As a result of the introduction of rigorous monitoring processes and highly effective intervention strategies, the progress students are making this year in Years 10 and 11 is good and improving. This is confirmed by the school's own tracking of students' performance in Years 10 and 11, the progress students made in lessons observed during the inspection and evidence from students' work.

No individual groups of students are underperforming. Students from minority ethnic groups are making good progress, as are students with learning difficulties and disabilities and those from vulnerable groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Students enjoy coming to the school. They are punctual, attend well, care for and respect each other and the adults with whom they work. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students look forward to their lessons, and speak positively about the range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Their behaviour is outstanding, both in lessons and around the school. Students make a good contribution to their school community through their involvement in charity work, the parent-teacher association and by

taking on additional responsibilities. For example, in one after-school club, older students support younger ones in developing their reading skills.

The school council is active and is valued by most students as an effective means by which their views are heard. Students listen well to others and contribute effectively to the making of decisions within the school. Students are able to express their opinions politely, work well in groups and learn how to take on leadership roles. This results in positive attitudes to learning. Older students conscientiously fulfil prefect duties and are good role models to others.

Parents and students say 'bullying is treated seriously by the school' and if it does occur it is dealt with promptly and effectively. The Healthy Schools programme within the school is good and students adopt lifestyles that reflect a clear understanding of the need to be safe and healthy. They have a good understanding of the basic skills needed for the workplace and their roles as citizens within the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers set challenging learning objectives for their students based upon good subject knowledge and a thorough understanding of their students' capabilities. Learning objectives are presented clearly so that students are in no doubt as to what is expected of them. The activities planned for students are varied, both in content and style; they are delivered at a good pace and allow students to learn independently and from each other. As a result, students maintain their interest, enjoy lessons, behave very well and make good progress.

Teachers use assessment effectively as a tool to help students to learn. They ensure that students know the grades they are capable of, the grades they are working at and what they need to do to improve. Teachers have very good relationships with students and ensure a safe environment in which students are encouraged to report back from group activities. Consequently, students report back with confidence and listen well to each other. Some lessons, particularly in Years 10 and 11, whilst being good in most aspects, do not always involve students in assessing their own progress and in identifying what they need to do to improve their performance with sufficient rigour.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The extensive PSHCE programme is comprehensive and includes good advice on careers and further education. Additional lessons for all students in English and mathematics enhance the development of literacy and numeracy in Year 7. This has a positive effect on the progress students make in their first three years in school. The range of subjects and courses in Years 10 and 11 provides appropriate

opportunities for work experience, vocational courses and alternative, work-based education and this provision is improving. Specialist status has contributed to science and mathematics being strengths of the school and students all receiving a good grounding in information and communication technology (ICT). The school meets the needs of all students by offering, for example, courses in performing arts, motor vehicle maintenance, construction and hair and beauty. There is a wide range of enrichment activities, notably in music and stage productions as well as sport. Gifted students are well catered for and provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is very good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for students are good and nurture their academic progress and personal development well. Transition arrangements from primary school are excellent. Form teachers are pivotal in this programme, having an oversight of the progress of every student in their care throughout their time at the school. This enables good relationships to be formed. Senior staff take a very strong lead in directing this work and have a very hands-on approach in tracking students' progress and monitoring the effect of intervention strategies. Careers advice is good at all stages.

The school's ethos is one of considerate behaviour and hard work. Students feel safe in the school and there is a happy atmosphere. There are good arrangements for looked after children and those students most at risk. The school makes excellent use of external agencies to enhance these arrangements. The school shows its concern for the well-being of students by the good provision of external seating areas, water fountains and the improvements to toilet facilities. Good links are maintained with parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's outstanding leadership, supported by a very strong team of senior leaders, is providing the school with a very clear sense of direction – to improve the achievement of every student. A distinctive feature of the school is the way in which good practice in teaching and learning is shared at all levels and the staff of the school rightly see themselves as a professional learning community.

Rigorous and well planned systems are in place to monitor the performance of departments and teachers, and extensive support strategies are introduced where underperformance is identified. Thus the disappointing GCSE results in 2006 quickly led to the introduction of a range of highly effective intervention strategies to improve the performance of departments and individual teachers that are bringing about the improvements now evident in students' progress.

Inclusion and the needs of every student are a major focus for the school. The rigorous tracking system in place to monitor the performance of every student throughout their time in the school ensures that every opportunity is provided for students to achieve as well as they can.

The school makes very good use of the accommodation available. The impact of specialist status has allowed the school to improve its ICT resources such that nearly every classroom is equipped with an interactive whiteboard and there is a sufficient supply of computers. Teachers are well qualified specialists and all staff receive very effective training in aspects of teaching and learning. The good financial management provided by the bursar ensures that the school's resources are employed to achieve good value for money and has resulted in the school achieving the Financial Management Standard.

Governors are well informed about the school's strengths and development priorities. They hold the school to account and are very committed to supporting it and moving it forward. Procedures for safeguarding students meet current government requirements.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for contributing to the inspection that took place recently. This letter explains the main findings of the inspection and what you and the school can do to bring about further improvement.

Kingswinford is a good school where you achieve well as a result of good teaching, a good range of courses to meet the needs of all of you and good guidance and support. You have good relationships with teachers in the school and your form tutors, who know you well, and who provide you with good pastoral care. Your behaviour both in lessons and around the school is excellent. The school provides a safe place for you to learn and one where you are encouraged to be healthy and active. The headteacher and his senior team lead the school very well, listen to your views and act upon them, for example in the availability of drinking water and the refurbishment of the girls' toilets that you told us about. Kingswinford has excellent links with other schools and organisations and this and its specialist science status contribute very well to the good quality of education that you receive.

Your academic achievements and the progress you make are good but, although GCSE results are above the national average, the progress students make in Years 10 and 11 could be better. We have therefore asked the school to ensure that students make as good progress in Years 10 and 11 as they do in Years 7 to 9. To help this we have also suggested that students in Years 10 and 11 be provided with more opportunities in lessons to reflect on and assess their own progress and to identify what they need to do to improve. Year 10 and 11 students can help the school by working as hard as you can at trying to improve on your existing performance in order to meet, and wherever possible exceed, the targets you are capable of reaching.