



The Kingsway School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106141
Local Authority Stockport
Inspection number 287428
Inspection date 24 January 2007
Reporting inspector John Ashton

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Foxland Road
School category	Community		Cheadle
Age range of pupils	11–16		Cheshire SK8 4QX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 4287706
Number on roll (school)	1586	Fax number	0161 4914335
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Ian Roberts
		Headteacher	Mr Mike Gledhill
Date of previous school inspection	15 April 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Kingsway School is a larger than average, 11 to 16, comprehensive school set on two sites. It is a training school for teachers and a specialist mathematics and computing school, catering for a broad social, economic, racial and cultural mix of students. A higher than average proportion of its students are from minority ethnic groups, the largest of which is of Pakistani origin. Around one in eleven students has a home language other than English but very few are at an early stage of learning English. Attainment on entry is broadly average and a broadly average proportion of students has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly moderate learning and emotional difficulties. The school receives additional resources to fund the education of three students with severe learning difficulties in each year group. The present headteacher has been in post just over two weeks.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

It provides a good standard of education with some outstanding features. Parents note that the most important thing their children gain is a fantastic sense of aspiration for the future. Other comments note the friendly and enthusiastic staff, the exceptional guidance their children receive and the school's strong and effective leadership. The school's specialist status has an impact beyond the immediate mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) departments, although both of these are also considerable strengths of the school. The school has excellent curricular links with other schools and colleges, especially its partner primary schools.

All the various groups of students represented in the school achieve well overall and their standards of attainment are significantly above average, from a broadly average starting point on entry to the school. They achieve less well in some subjects than others, science is the most significant of these. In 2006, students' overall achievement was high in comparison with other schools in the local authority, reflecting the generally effective teaching the students receive and their good personal development. The students feel safe. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment/training. They make effective contributions to their own school community and give excellent support to a namesake school in Kenya.

Most of the teaching they receive is at least good and much of it is outstanding. The very small amount of satisfactory and occasionally unsatisfactory teaching, mainly in science, is the subject of effective and on-going monitoring and is well supervised and supported by skilled leadership. Curricular provision is good, notable for the strength of its support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for the way it offers all pupils access to all aspects of the curriculum. Support and guidance are outstanding, not just because of the assiduous and thoroughly inclusive care all the students receive, but also because of the thorough systems for keeping track of every student's progress, whatever their level of achievement or individual needs. The school is oversubscribed and well regarded by the great majority of parents. Parents' main concerns are about the possible dangers of the subway between the two sites and also about some of the teaching in science. The school's action on the subway has already been effective but improvement in science will take longer to resolve completely.

The quality of the school's leadership is outstanding, with considerable strength in depth at all levels throughout the school. The exceptional honesty, openness and accuracy of the school's collaborative self-evaluation procedures is breathtaking, well illustrated by the publication of its full self-evaluation document on the public part of its web site and by the secure match of judgments between the school and inspectors as they jointly monitored lessons. The resulting professional trust and shared knowledge between school and parents contributes significantly to the high morale and creative teamwork which permeate the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and standards in science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Students enter the school with broadly average levels of attainment and make very good progress such that by the end of Key Stage 3, test results are significantly above average, especially in mathematics. GCSE results at Key Stage 4 are also significantly above average, particularly in English and mathematics. Some subjects perform better than others, such as ICT, technology, music and drama. Other subjects perform relatively less well, science for instance. The school is working hard to raise standards in this subject, which, though above average, are not as high as they should be. There are no significant differences in the relative performances of boys and girls. Pupils of Asian heritage achieve slightly better than their peers, reflecting their diligence in learning. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress compared to their starting points because of the excellent individual care and guidance they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being and their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development are good. This makes a positive contribution to the quality of their learning. Students enjoy being at school. Their participation in extra-curricular activities is high and their attendance is consistently above the national average. They show good consideration of others as they move around the large site in a safe manner. Relationships are good, students behave well and have positive attitudes towards their learning. Through the personal, health and social education programme, work experience and strong links with schools abroad, they gain an increasing awareness of the wider world and the world of work. They respond positively to the opportunities provided for them to take on responsibility. Older students act as mentors for others in the school's anti-bullying initiative, students from each year group play an important role in representing their peers through the year councils. The students are imaginative and generous fundraisers for charity.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is well paced and has high expectations of what the students can accomplish. This provides challenge to which the students respond well. Teachers make very good use of computer technology right across the school so that students' interest is engaged and they are able to rapidly understand new ideas. Planning is concise and clear, shared with students and enables them to build effectively on previous learning. Assessment, though variable in quality, generally focuses not just on giving credit for effort but on why a piece of work is

good, or on what students need to do to improve. As a result students are well motivated, hard working, keen to contribute to lessons and enjoy their learning. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and support students well through effective questioning. The result is that pupils make good progress and achieve above average standards by the time they leave the school.

The very few weaknesses in teaching, in science for instance, are accurately diagnosed and measures are being taken to put things right. Students say that the better teaching in the school is characterised by friendliness, strictness but fairness too. They say that teachers give help when needed, give students time to absorb the work and they explain it clearly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Students enjoy a varied curriculum. It is regularly evaluated and is well tuned to their needs, aptitudes and aspirations. Although provision for religious education is much improved since the last inspection, the time devoted to it as a core subject is too low to do justice to the locally agreed syllabus. The school plans to offer a short GCSE course for all students. As students move up the school, opportunities progressively widen. In Key Stage 4 the school works creatively with local colleges to offer the opportunity for vocational courses. The excellent provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to progress as well as their peers, and students with English as an additional language make equally good progress. The quantity, quality and popularity of extra-curricular opportunities make a good contribution to students' personal and academic development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for all its students. Procedures to ensure health and safety are very good. For instance, the school is well aware of parents' concerns about the subway between the sites and has put in place a number of effective initiatives to ensure students' safety. Also, staff place high priority in persuading all students to use the fast reaction button which controls the pedestrian crossing at one end of the subway. Arrangements to support vulnerable students are excellent. Child protection procedures are in place. Staff are very sensitive to students' needs. They use a very wide range of external agencies extremely effectively, adding to their own expertise and ensuring all students achieve well. The presence of, for instance, Year 11 buddies for Year 7 students or Year 10 and 11 peer mentors who work with all students for the anti-bullying initiative, means that students are able to talk to a variety of people when facing difficulties.

Teachers provide very clear information about examination courses and comprehensive careers guidance is available to help students make important choices. Students know how well they are doing and what they have to do to reach their potential. This is because the school sets challenging targets and tracks their progress rigorously. The

school keeps parents very well informed about their child's progress and involves them fully in decision making.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. Inspectors found it better than the school's more modest assessment. The leadership team has a very secure appreciation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The newly appointed headteacher has inherited from his excellent predecessor collegiate teams of exceptionally able senior and middle leaders who work together very effectively. The regular and very perceptive monitoring of performance leaves teachers in no doubt as to how well they are doing and the extensive professional development of staff is a noticeably productive feature of the school's work.

The specialist school status is having a very positive impact on the work of the school, for example, in equipping every classroom with an electronic white board and training staff in how to use them. The teacher training role of the school also enhances the professional development of all staff. In addition to this, very effective links have been created with other schools and the community through the school's excellent outreach work in both mathematics and ICT.

The result of the outstanding leadership and management is high staff morale and a very popular school where students of all cultures and abilities achieve well from an average starting point on entry. Governors are well led by experienced and knowledgeable senior governors who challenge the school positively as well as support it. The school gives good value for money and has a very good capacity for improvement. The relative weaknesses in science have been accurately diagnosed and are being energetically followed up.

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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	1
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	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?	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?	1

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?	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	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, 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

Mrs Tolley and I wish to thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit yesterday. All of you that we met and talked with were polite and helpful and a credit to the school. We listened attentively to what you told us and also read carefully the letters and questionnaires sent to us by yourselves and your parents. These were very helpful to us.

Your school's exam results are good and the school provides a good standard of education. Your teachers and other staff look after you exceptionally well and you are positive about your time in school. You are well taught and have a good range of courses and extra activities to choose from. We think that your school is exceptionally well led and managed.

You should take a great deal of credit for this. You have a clear sense of right and wrong attend regularly and behave very well. We were impressed with how hard you worked and how seriously you take your learning. Older students play a valuable role when they support younger students. Your charity work is exceptionally good.

We have asked Mr Gledhill and your teachers to make The Kingsway School even better by raising standards in science. Also, you can play your part in improving things in a very straightforward way. The pedestrian crossing at the lower school end of the subway needs to be taken more seriously by all of you. The staff and all of your parents would breathe more easily if you did this.

I wish you all a happy and successful time at The Kingsway School.