



King Edward VI School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124408
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 292987
Inspection dates 22–23 November 2006
Reporting inspector Kevin Sheldrick HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Upper St John Street
School category	Community		Lichfield
Age range of pupils	11–18		WS14 9EE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01543 255714
Number on roll (school)	1097	Fax number	01543 418118
Number on roll (6th form)	301		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Vacant Position
		Headteacher	Kevin Maycock
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	22–23 November 2006	292987

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

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

Description of the school

King Edward VI is an above average sized comprehensive school that includes a leisure centre on site. It has a history extending back over 500 years. It is a popular and over-subscribed school serving a large area that extends from the south and east of Lichfield to the northern boundaries of Birmingham. Pupil attainment on entry is above average and the level of social deprivation is low. The school has low numbers of pupils from various ethnic minority backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than average. The school has recently appointed a new headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

King Edward VI is a good school. Standards have been high for a long time and this has contributed to the good reputation of the school in the local community. Achievement is good. Progress has been above the national average for the last three years. It is especially strong in Key Stage 3, particularly in science. The good curriculum experienced by all pupils coupled with the exemplary care and support are key reasons pupils achieve well in this school. This strong support, particularly for the vulnerable and the lower attaining, also means that pupils' personal development is outstanding. As a result they show a mature attitude and arrive in lessons motivated to learn, irrespective of the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, teaching is satisfactory overall. The school is understandably very proud of its record in ensuring all learners are included and enabled to achieve. All take advantage of excellent opportunities to develop skills which will be of use to them in their adult lives. All pupils gain qualifications at GCSE, exclusions are very low and attendance is high.

Outstanding provision related to work and community placement also makes a significant contribution to the outstanding personal development of pupils. Pupils are thoughtful, reflective and contribute a great deal to the success of the school through their active participation in the school council and in wide range of extra-curricular activities. The vast majority of pupils are opting to eat healthily and are participating in physical activity through the leisure centre on the school campus and in Physical Education (PE). Behaviour is good, even in the narrow corridors in some of the buildings.

These positive outcomes illustrate the impact of the school's good leadership and management. They have been achieved with funding that is significantly lower than average. The governors and the school's leadership team are actively trying to further raise standards and are now setting more challenging targets. There is a realisation that though progress is above average, it could be better and that individual pupils' targets, too, need to be higher and more carefully monitored. The school has recognised the need to improve its use of data to more rigorously monitor its work and to improve the target setting process.

The fact that the school has identified most of the areas for improvement, its track record in working with others, establishing higher aspirations and ensuring consistent achievement for all learners, indicates good capacity to improve. Well-led, recent discussions about becoming a specialist school for science and languages have contributed substantially to the development of a shared vision.

Although self-evaluation is sound, monitoring of teaching has not been sufficiently rigorous. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good and outstanding practice. Pupils enthused about lessons in which they were actively involved, for instance using information and communication technology (ICT) to present their ideas on an interactive whiteboard. Pupils contrasted these challenging and enjoyable experiences to a minority of lessons in which they were very passive and did not feel involved.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The sixth form provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Standards are average, and pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory. Pupils' personal development is excellent and they make an outstanding contribution to the school community. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The curriculum is good, with a large range of AS and A level courses, but few vocational opportunities. Pupils have access to a wide range of extra curricular activities, some of which they organise for younger pupils, such as house events. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve monitoring and evaluation to raise the quality of teaching to that of the very best.
- Make better use of aspirational targets to raise the achievement of all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Achievement is good. Standards are significantly above average in the main school at both key stages and average in the sixth form. In 2005 Key Stage 3 results showed achievement in the top 10% of schools and 2006 results suggest this has been maintained. Until recently progress was stronger at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4, but 2006 results show an improvement at Key Stage 4.

The school has an above average ability intake with a significantly greater than usual proportion of higher attaining pupils. However, the number of lower attaining pupils is comparable to the national average. The majority of pupils stay on and enter the open-access sixth form where they make satisfactory progress. The progress of vulnerable and low attaining pupils is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The personal development of the pupils is outstanding. Pupils enjoy coming to school and above average attendance levels reflect this. Although there is some inconsistency across the school in how teachers manage behaviour, standards of behaviour are good, both in lessons and around the school. Exclusions are very infrequent. The pupils feel safe; all the statutory requirements in this respect are implemented. Incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with promptly through a very effective pastoral system. The pupils have positive attitudes and the wide range of extra-curricular activities is well supported. The pupils adopt healthy life styles as a result of the school's outstanding health education programme which includes healthy eating options and

taking part in physical activity both in lessons and after school. The pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community through the school's community service programme. In addition there are many cultural activities through music and drama. The pupils undertake many charitable activities, and often organise them themselves. This contributes strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which overall is good with social and cultural aspects being particularly noteworthy. The preparation for the pupils' economic well-being is outstanding. Pupils achieve high standards and make good progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' general studying skills. Good opportunities to experience the work environment and an emphasis on enterprise also prepare the pupils very well for the world of work. Good advice for the eventual transition is provided through an effective careers guidance programme.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are well planned, teachers have good subject knowledge and only a few teach outside their own specialism. The pupils find most of the lessons enjoyable, particularly in practical lessons and those where there is good use of ICT. There are examples of good and outstanding teaching. However, in a minority of lessons there is a lack of pace and an over-reliance on teacher talk. Nevertheless, the pupils are so well motivated to learn that they compensate for such shortfalls, and achieve well.

Homework is used effectively to support learning. The school's learning resource centre plays an important role in developing the pupils' capability for independent learning, for example by setting up customised websites for particular topics which the pupils are researching. Pupils are usually made well aware of how they are doing. Much of the marking is very detailed and helpful but some is cursory and not done promptly, indicating some inconsistencies in assessment practice.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features. All pupils undertake a wide range of academic subjects. The school is taking an imaginative approach in developing the curriculum to better meet the needs of its pupils. It has, for instance, introduced a language course appropriate for lower attainers, and AS critical thinking for the most able pupils in Years 10 and 11. An innovative approach is evident in plans, as part of the specialist school status, to teach some pupils in Year 7 their PHSE in a foreign language.

The curriculum is enriched by a very extensive and popular range of clubs and sporting activities, and a variety of local and overseas residential trips and visits. Pupils have good opportunities to develop skills which will be of use to them in their adult lives, for example through the outstanding community placement scheme for pupils in Year 10.

There is a wide range of GCSE subjects and a small number of vocational courses. Pupils say that they would like more vocational opportunities. There is a large choice of academic AS, A level courses and developing collaboration with other local providers offers the prospect of more vocational opportunities 14 to 19 in the future.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Although aspects of care and support are outstanding there are weaknesses in guidance for pupils who are not receiving learning support.

The senior management team, year heads, form tutors, mentors and learning support assistant provide a wide-ranging support network across the school. The ways in which the school identifies pupils who may be vulnerable or at risk are thorough. There is outstanding liaison with outside medical and social support agencies including the local authority. Child protection requirements and procedures are securely in place and safeguarding procedures meet government requirements. This high quality of care and support is a key reason for the good achievement in the school.

Guidance for pupils receiving additional learning support is good. These pupils have precisely focussed targets which are reviewed regularly and this contributes to the good progress they make. However, while the majority of pupils know their class target, most do not have personal targets related to their previous attainment. As a result, some pupils have targets that are too low, and potentially demotivating. Some pupils do not have the opportunity to discuss progress towards targets with an adult in school. Parents have also indicated that they would appreciate more frequent feedback on the progress being made. The school has recognised how the planned improvements in the use of data provides an opportunity to improve this aspect.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Leadership and management of the school are good. The recent appointment of a new headteacher has had a positive impact on setting the future agenda of the school. For example the bid for Specialist School status has acted as a catalyst for generating a sense of cohesion in school management, involving governors, staff, and leadership.

The school leadership has been particularly successful in removing barriers to learning, ensuring that all pupils in the school achieve at least what is expected. The school is working to remove barriers in the sixth form, by ensuring lower attainers can recognise clearer pathways of progression from Key Stage 4 onwards.

Governance is good. Governors are committed and supportive, have been fully involved in setting the strategic direction of the school, and are well informed. They have used the appointment of senior staff to ensure they develop a clearer vision for the future direction of the school. They now recognise the need to hold the school more fully to account in setting more challenging targets. Increasingly leaders are using data to challenge under-performance and there is a commitment to further enhance its use to increase accountability in the school.

The school self evaluation is satisfactory overall because senior leaders have recognised most of the aspects of the school that need improving. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is not robust and systematic enough and as a result the school's assessment of its quality is over-optimistic.. The many interesting initiatives to improve teaching and learning are not evaluated sufficiently to determine their consistency and impact.

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

<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?	2	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
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?	1	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	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

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?	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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	3
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	3	
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	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us welcome during our recent visit to your school. Your behaviour was excellent and you gave thoughtful and honest responses to our questions. We thought you were very perceptive and agree that King Edward VI is a good school that is well respected in the community.

The good things about the school include the very good care that ensures all pupils can succeed and gain qualifications at GCSE. Some of you mentioned how the school really tries hard to overcome any learning difficulties and ensure you are supported when school is missed through absence. We were impressed that so many of you continue take a wide range of subjects, including a modern foreign language, and stay on to enter the sixth form. The school's examination results continue to be high and have improved significantly at Key Stage 3 and 4. The school really does a good job on ensuring nobody misses out on their education.

There are some aspects of the school that could be even better. We agree with you that there is too much variation in the quality of lessons. You clearly enjoy playing a more active part in lessons and particularly relish the opportunity to present your ideas in a variety of ways and participate in practical and work related activities. Our observations also support your view that a minority of lessons are 'dull', largely because the teacher talks without asking many questions and then you have to write. We think there are many teachers trying some really interesting activities but that these are not being shared so that all lessons are good or better.

As well as the target associated with the set you are in we think you should all have individual targets that you can discuss regularly with adults in school as well as your parents.

The staff of the school agree with our findings and will work with you to further improve. We think King Edward VI has a well respected reputation, a good positive atmosphere and has a tremendous opportunity to become an outstanding school.

Once again thank you for the important part you played in making our visit so pleasant.