

Kingsley College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132823
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	294036
Inspection date	13 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Brian Cartwright 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	13–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	857
6th form	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Middleton
Headteacher	Lesley McGuigan
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2003
School address	Woodrow Drive Redditch B98 7UH
Telephone number	01527 523088
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Age group	13–19
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Kingsley College is one of two new schools formed in 2001 from the amalgamation of three former high schools. It became a specialist arts college in 2003. There is a low proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. Specialist resources are provided for students with learning difficulties and disabilities, including a mainstream autism base and a centre for students with moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of students with statements of special educational need (SEN) is higher than average, although the proportion of students on the SEN register is average. Fewer students than average are eligible for free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Kingsley College is delivering a satisfactory quality of education. Students make at least expected progress during their time at the school, with good progress achieved by students with learning difficulties and disabilities. The high profile of performing arts and physical education makes a key contribution to a delightful working ethos that ensures students much enjoy school and behave well. The diversity of opportunities in the formal and extra-curricular programmes further contributes to good personal development and well-being.

The standards reached by learners of all ages are broadly average. Compared to their starting points this represents satisfactory achievement, and standards are much better now than at the time of the school's formation. Almost all students in Year 11 move into full-time education, training or employment. About half of them enter the College's sixth form.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school was slightly optimistic in its earlier evaluations of teaching quality, but recent improvements to the rigour of its monitoring have improved its awareness of strengths and areas for improvement. A key strength of the teaching are the good teacher-student relationships in classrooms, which encourage the positive attitudes and loyalty to the school expressed by students. But in general, teachers are not using the rich and detailed information about students' attainment and progress to consistently plan lessons that address the wide range of learning needs in lessons. Although students know their target grades, and their current working level, they are less sure what they should do to meet the targets. The overall coordination of this progress data to ensure students meet challenging targets is inconsistent.

Given the challenges of establishing a new school to this level of success, strategic leadership and management of senior leaders and governors are good. They have dealt effectively with previous pockets of underachievement, and the school has comfortably exceeded its specialist school targets. These were quite low because they were based on the low attainment data of the precursor schools. The school is not yet fully meeting its overall performance targets agreed with the Local Authority. But it has unequivocally demonstrated a good capacity to improve. The school's accuracy of its monitoring and evaluation has been inconsistent because it was not securely rooted in the outcomes for students, which reflects weaknesses in its systems for tracking the progress of students. The school works well with its local partners, particularly middle schools and local further education colleges.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Students gain broadly average standards at Advanced Level, and make satisfactory progress during their time in the sixth form. The school does have an accurate view of the quality of its sixth-form provision. Students very much enjoy their education. The variety of pathways that include vocational advanced level courses and intermediate courses helps meet student needs well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use information about students' attainment and progress to consistently plan lessons to meet their range of learning needs and interests.

- Make sure marking, assessment and reports inform students of what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the consistency of academic monitoring and guidance to ensure students stay on track to meet challenging targets and to improve the rigour of the school's evaluation of its performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average in all key stages, including the sixth form. The Year 11 students of 2006 achieved slightly lower than national average standards when they took Key Stage 2 tests in 2001 and essentially average when they did Key Stage 3 in 2004. Standards on entry to the school have risen since then and are now average. Their GCSE standards were slightly lower than the national average, most noticeably in the proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades including English and mathematics, which was 36% compared with the national average of 45%. Nevertheless, these results are the highest so far in the short history of the school, and early indicators for the present Year 11 confirm they are on track to do even better and match the national average. In comparison with students in similar circumstances nationally, the results represent satisfactory achievement. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress as a result of good support from the specialist staff in the school.

Standards in the sixth form are broadly in line with the national average for Advanced Level. Students are making the progress expected based on their attainment at the start of their courses.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The pleasant working 'buzz' evident throughout the school is a strong testimony to the good personal development and well-being of students. This can be traced to good teacher-student relationships, and an extensive and dynamic range of in- and out-of-school experiences driven by the arts and physical education. As a result, students much enjoy school, are involved in all kinds of interesting activities, and behave well around the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is their positive contribution to the community. Attendance has improved to above average and there are very few serious disciplinary incidents requiring exclusion. Students feel safe and consider the school handles their concerns well, although they are not convinced the student council has made much of an impact. Their high level of participation in sport and performing arts and good provision for healthy eating ensure healthy lifestyles.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory across the school, which leads to the satisfactory achievement of the students. Good features of teaching include effective teacher-student relationships that create a positive classroom ethos and permit constructive dialogue and discussion. There is a comprehensive central database of students' attainment and predicted grades. Students know their targets in all their subjects, and also their current working level, but are not clear what they should do to bridge that gap in every subject. Lesson planning is not routinely taking students' prior attainment into account, so that not all students experience challenging tasks matched to their capability. Tracking of students' progress is not sufficiently accurate to identify and support students who are falling behind, although this does work well for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Tracking systems in the sixth form are better developed than in main school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good, because it has continued to develop provision to better match student's interests and future needs. The school is right to be proud of its inclusive philosophy, evident in a variety of pathways open to students both pre- and post-16 that include vocational courses. The 'Enterprise' course in Key Stage 4 is in part a response to students' request for better 'life skills' education and is much appreciated. The way that this course is planned to involve the students actively in their lessons motivates them well. The staff's commitment to running trips, visits, sports events, performing arts sessions and other clubs enables the students to participate in a wide range of activities, which is a key reason for their positive attitudes and good personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Care for the well-being and safety of students is good. Statutory requirements for ensuring the protection of students are in place. Students experience good career advice and almost all continue to education, employment or training when they reach 16. Good systems to help students when they are experiencing personal and social difficulties help all learners to be included in the school's day-to-day life. But overall monitoring of academic progress is inconsistent; for example, some students are already working above their predicted level, without obvious action to re-assess their potential.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. From weak standards at the outset of the school, standards have risen, attendance has improved, staff turnover is low, and resources have been found to resolve the issues noted at the previous inspection. The strategic direction has been maintained, with inclusion of all learners effected by a continually improving curriculum. Prudent financial management has made the most of limited funding. The premises vary in standard, with some well-worn areas a legacy of previous provision, but new building is taking place, and classrooms are generally well decorated with display. For example, the art faculty has made effective use of its area, resulting in some high quality spaces despite quite old accommodation.

There are good links with middle schools that include collaborative teaching arrangements. This gives middle school pupils experiences of specialist teaching that are beyond the resources normally available.

Governors have done well to develop the school since amalgamation in 2001. The chair of governors is a frequent visitor to lessons and faculties, and departments report annually to governors with a formal review paper. However, the overall accuracy of the school self-evaluation has been too generous, particularly in respect of achievement and teaching and learning in the main school, because it was not securely based on performance outcomes for learners. Recent changes in the systems for monitoring, including better arrangements for tracking students, show signs of giving more realistic information to the school to focus attention on where it really matters.

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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	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?	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	2	

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	3	

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?	3	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	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 your positive discussions during our visit to your school. Overall, Kingsley College is providing a satisfactory education. Your enthusiasm and straightforward opinions helped confirm our view that the school is doing well in helping to develop good personal qualities that will benefit your future. Your high level of commitment to extra activities, particularly sports and performing arts, is a good indicator of your enjoyment of school. We were impressed by the calm and good-humoured working ethos around the school. The staff have worked hard to give you a good range of subject options, and they listen to your requests for particular features, for example, the enterprise course.

Most students are making the progress to be expected based on your performance in previous schools. The school looks after you well, and staff go the extra mile in providing you with a rich range of interesting opportunities.

The most important steps the school should take to improve further are related to how teachers plan lessons and monitor your progress. We think lessons would be more effective if you were assigned tasks that really matched your abilities, and at the same time challenged you to reach for high standards. Although we know your tutors help you with setting grade targets, there needs to be better clarity in giving you advice on how to actually reach them. This should be happening in the marking of work as well as in regular progress reports, and the school is developing consistent ways to monitor your progress.