



Kirkby College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122826
Local Authority NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Inspection number 295429
Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Andrew Cook HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Tennyson Street
School category	Community		Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottingham
Age range of pupils	11–18		Nottinghamshire NG17 7DH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01623 455925
Number on roll (school)	693	Fax number	01623 455923
Number on roll (6th form)	51		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Susan Reast
		Headteacher	Ms Lynn Parkes
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2006		

Age group 11–18	Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007	Inspection number 295429
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The number on roll is below the national average for secondary schools and colleges. Most students are of White British origin. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above average at approximately 40%, although the percentage with a statement of special education need is below average. The academic standards of students on entry to the college have been well below average in the past but are changing and in the current Year 7 they are broadly average. The college was granted Specialist Sports College status in 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Over the last year Kirkby College has improved and now provides a better education for all of its students. These improvements, led by the senior leadership team (SLT) under the direction of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, have put students' achievements as the most important factor to get right. As a result, the amount of progress students make, which a year ago was judged to be inadequate, is now satisfactory. Standards, which are currently below average, are beginning to improve. The college has moved on and is right to judge its overall effectiveness as satisfactory, with aspects of its work being good. The value for money the college provides is also good. Therefore, in accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall but are improving because the SLT provide good leadership and are acting as role models for other leaders. Improvement work has been accelerated in the last year and change has happened quickly. The role of the middle leaders is developing. Although there are some inconsistencies in the quality of this tier of management, there is good evidence that this role is increasingly becoming more effective in raising standards. The governors' work is satisfactory. Governors have taken on board the focus on achievement and standards and are now working more closely with the SLT to measure how effective the school is.

Teaching is now good as a result of the SLT's drive for improvement. Good teaching effectively tackles the demands of students' learning and personal needs and ensures they make satisfactory progress. Key to the effectiveness of teaching is the way in which students are helped to clearly understand what they need to learn so that the standards they reach improve.

Underpinning the improvement in students' achievement is their satisfactory personal development. It is noticeable that students are often polite, helpful and considerate around school. The school's specialist sports college status is also adding effectively to students' personal development by raising the profile of healthy lifestyles and good attitudes to work across the school. Although most students enjoy college, inadequate attendance is still an issue. The high levels of student exclusions are also a cause for concern. However, attendance is slowly improving and exclusions are falling, especially as a result of the work of members of the SLT and progress and guidance middle managers.

The curriculum is good and is increasingly becoming more diverse to meet a wide range of interests and needs. The college provides good academic guidance for students in choosing the right courses and also in helping students to constantly improve. This good support is matched by the good care the college provides.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Students make satisfactory progress in the sixth form in relation to their lower than average attainment on entry. Many students now progress to higher education, which is an achievement in nurturing aspiration in an area where there is little history of entry to higher education in previous generations. Very few students fail to complete the courses they begin. The range of courses, subjects, and work-related experiences are now improving and meeting the needs of students due to the successful consortium arrangements. The majority of teaching is good where active learning takes place and with an emphasis on achievement of aspirational targets. Students are engaged, keen to learn and positive about the challenge and support given. Homework consolidates the learning in school. Students are well informed both about their options on entry to the sixth form and their future options, and they feel they have good tutor support. Students are very upbeat about the college and attendance is good. Students are given very good opportunities to gain leadership skills through peer mentoring, supporting younger students with their work, lunchtime duties and especially through sport where they can gain coaching qualifications and teach KS3 lessons alongside the staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards so that all students achieve their potential.
- Ensure attendance continues to be monitored and that systems focus on changing the attitudes of those students who are persistent non-attenders.
- Ensure the consistency and effectiveness of middle leaders.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The amount of progress students make from their starting points is satisfactory. Students continue to make slightly better progress in Key Stage 3 compared to Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Standards are below average but are slowly rising and, at the end of Key Stage 3 and at the end of Key Stage 4, improved in 2006. In Key Stage 4 there was significant improvement compared with the 2005 results. The school is right to recognise that standards at the end of Key Stage 3 and 4 will need to improve consistently over the next few years because the standards students have achieved when they start Kirkby have risen. However, throughout the school, good teaching is beginning to address this. Extra classes for more able students and those that find work very challenging are now in place and are having a positive impact. There are some differences in the achievement of boys and girls. For example, more able boys do not do as well as more able girls at the end of Key Stage 4. The considerable proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities, just under 40%, also make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall in the college, and good in the sixth form. Social development is stronger and working relationships are good. This helps to set a positive atmosphere for learning, particularly in the sixth form, which promotes students' sound attitudes and conduct well. Students understand the need for rules and codes of behaviour. They treat each other with increasing respect, and many students support each other very well through the peer mentoring system. Exclusions are for good reasons, but the exclusion rate, although falling, is high. New systems to promote attendance are very good, and are gradually having the desired impact. Attendance remains unsatisfactory because of the continued poor attendance of a small minority of students with personal or social problems. Nevertheless, the underlying attendance rate is now satisfactory for other students. Those who do attend regularly enjoy their work and show positive attitudes to learning. Specialist status provides students with particularly good opportunities to develop healthy lifestyles and responsible attitudes through sporting activities. The school council is making an increasingly important contribution to decisions affecting school life. Such activities are being linked well to their development as citizens. Students who work as mentors for younger students take their role seriously and show good levels of maturity. There are good opportunities for work related learning, but weaknesses remain in key literacy and numeracy skills. Overall, the school places a strong emphasis on ensuring the self-esteem of its students. This is at the heart of its increasingly successful approach to the students' personal development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching is good because it provides effective support for students who have a range of learning and personal needs that present significant challenges. As a result of good teaching these challenges are overcome so that students make satisfactory progress. For example, classroom management is usually strong and the behaviour of students in many lessons is good.

The striking feature of many lessons is the way teachers help students to have a very clear understanding of what grade or level they are working at and how they can improve. In the best lessons teachers use this very effective strategy to give students challenging targets which are reviewed regularly to ensure progress. Students respond very well to this and know exactly what they have to do to improve.

Lessons are usually planned well, with students being actively involved in learning activities. Where teaching is satisfactory, the level of challenge and pace is limited and is not matched well enough to individual learning needs. In a few lessons there is often too much teacher talk or direction. This undermines students' independence in their learning and results in insufficient progress. In some departments the marking of students' work is inconsistent. However, in the best practice, work is assessed in detail and students are given targets to give a clear understanding of how they might improve to reach the next level or grade. Where teaching assistants are allocated to classes they support students well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good because it is tailored well to meet the diverse needs and interests of all groups of students both in the school and in the sixth form. The curriculum is flexible and has well thought out and planned 'pathways' for different students, which include a wide range of vocational courses and work-related learning opportunities. Good links with local colleges also provide an additional range of learning options. The school ensures appropriate time is allocated to different curriculum areas and continues to make increasing use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support and enhance learning across the curriculum. However, the school has rightly identified that not enough emphasis is currently given to how younger students' literacy skills can be better developed in different subjects of the curriculum. Good quality intervention and support programmes are in place to support students with emotional difficulties. The curriculum promotes safe and healthy lifestyles through a good quality personal, social and health programme. This is significantly embellished by the school's sports college status, which is having a positive impact on many aspects of school life such as student enjoyment and self-esteem, partnership with other schools and in raising the profile of the school and students within the local community and beyond. The very good choice of clubs and activities that are on offer outside of school hours, together with a wide range of visits, enhance students' learning as well as providing a good insight into life after college.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The care and guidance provided for students has improved since the previous inspection, and is now good for the whole school. This is aiding well the gradual improvements in students' personal development and the progress they make. Academic guidance is developing well since the introduction of new progress and guidance teams. The tracking of students' progress is now much sharper, and monitored more effectively, at all levels. Increasingly challenging targets are being set for students, who now know their levels and potential grades. Some Year 7 students were particularly proud when they explained exactly why they knew how well they were achieving. Provision for

students with learning difficulties and disabilities is good where there is specialist support. However, elsewhere in the college it is satisfactory overall. This is because good practice in planning work to meet the needs of both lower and potential higher attaining students is not applied consistently by all teachers. There are very good arrangements for safeguarding students, and ensuring their safety and security. Transition between the various phases of education is managed well, and there is good provision for work-related learning. There is effective liaison between the school and a wide range of agencies to support both the students' pastoral and academic welfare. There is a particularly excellent community partnership with the local police. Overall, students receive good help and advice from the school within a supportive and encouraging setting.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Over the last twelve months there has been clarity, purpose and determination to get the school back on track. Good leadership from the SLT has ensured that the school has focused on students' achievement and, in doing so, has overcome many of the challenges that the school faces. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are the driving force leading the SLT and have been instrumental in shaping the direction the school has taken. The SLT have made an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and areas that need to be developed. The rise in standards, the quality of teaching, and the focus on helping students to achieve proves that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

The effectiveness of middle leaders is improving and is satisfactory. There are systems in place so that they effectively monitor teaching and the progress students make. This work is rigorously checked for quality by senior staff who very effectively provide both challenge and support. Middle leaders are held to account and about every six weeks they report on the progress their department has made. These checks ensure that the SLT know where there are still inconsistencies in the quality of middle leadership.

An effective development in leadership and management is the role of progress and guidance co-ordinators. This role has been successfully set up to track the progress students make and to think creatively about how students can be supported and encouraged.

The work of the governors is satisfactory. Governors have recently set up a satisfactory programme of monitoring the school's work so that they can evaluate provision.

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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	2	2
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	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	4	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
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?	2	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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
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	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
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

9 March 2007

Dear Students,

Kirkby College, Tennyson Street, Kirkyby-in-Ashfield, NG17 7DH

Following the recent inspection of your college, I would like to inform you of our findings. You will know that your college was last inspected in January 2006 when it was judged that it needed significant improvement and was given a notice to improve. I am very pleased to report that your college has improved and now offers you a satisfactory education. In fact, some aspects of the school are better than satisfactory. For example, teaching is good and is helping you to accelerate the progress you are making. All of the inspection team were impressed with the way that teachers help you to understand the level and grade you are working at and how you can achieve the next level or grade. We also judged the range of subjects and courses offered to you as good and the increasing options given to you in Years 10 to 13 are helping to widen your horizons. Your sports college status is an important part of all of this and provides you with lots of sporting opportunities as well as having a positive impact on the whole of the college.

The inspection team agreed that in many lessons and around school your behaviour was good. Everyone I met was polite, opened doors, said good morning, and one student enquired if I had had a nice day. The inspection team also saw some of the very responsible behaviour of peer mentors and those on the students' council. All of this behaviour is an indicator of your personal development. However, there are some students who have attendance rates that are still not good enough. Those of you that do not attend regularly need to take up all the support and advice you are given so that your attendance improves and you have a better chance of doing well. There are also too many students being excluded. They are excluded for good reasons but nevertheless this again means some of you are missing college days when you could be learning.

We have asked your college to keep on improving with a focus on three main areas. The first is to improve the standards you reach so that you make at least good progress. You will already know, thanks to the way you are taught, what you need to do to improve these standards. Secondly, to improve attendance rates. Finally, we found that your headteacher and deputy headteacher along with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), are doing a good job. The inspection team have asked the SLT to make sure that this good practice is taken on board by all other leaders and managers.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Cook - Her Majesty's Inspector