

Kingsbury School and Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103526
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	298523
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Rashida Sharif 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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	900
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Beverley Roberts
Headteacher	Sally Coulton
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2006
School address	Kingsbury Road Erdington Birmingham B24 8RE
Telephone number	0121 3731080
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Age group	11–16
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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

Kingsbury School and Sports College is an urban school. Over one third of its students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The two largest groups are of Black Caribbean and Pakistani heritage. The number of students identified as learning English as an additional language is well above the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is above the national average. Students' attainment on entry at age 11 is just below average. The school gained Specialist Sports College status in 2003. It works in partnership with a local sixth form college and other schools in the delivery of the 14 to 19 curriculum. The headteacher was appointed in September 2006. When it was last inspected, the school was issued with a Notice to Improve because significant improvement was required in relation to students' overall standards and achievement.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement because its overall effectiveness is now satisfactory. The school has made some important improvements since the last inspection. Results in GCSE and GNVQ in 2006 rose and the proportion of students attaining at least five grades A* to C was in line with the national average. However, results in GCSE mathematics have been very low for a number of years and remain a cause of concern. Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory as is their care, guidance and support. Students have a sound understanding of adopting healthier lifestyles and many participate in a wide range of sporting activities to keep themselves fit. Students report that they feel safe in school and that there are very few incidents of bullying. When and if these occur, they say that the staff act swiftly when the problem is reported to them. They are aware of what they need to do to remain safe. Attendance rates, though below average and uneven across the year groups, have improved slightly in the last year. Students, when they attend school, enjoy their experiences. Specialist sports college status and the developments in the areas of community education have increased the range of lunch time and after school activities, of which there is a good take-up. The students comment on how much they enjoy attending the many extra-curricular opportunities that the school offers, particularly in Physical Education (PE). Students are also keen to be active members of the school council and hope to contribute more to school improvement. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher and the senior leadership team have worked hard to set about improving the school since the last inspection and have shown notable success in a very short time. For example, the curriculum is good and meets well the needs of the majority of students, particularly at Key Stage 4, and improved data and assessment systems are having a positive impact on students' progress. School leaders are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They know they now need to further develop the leadership capacity of middle level leaders because their monitoring and evaluation does not focus sharply enough on targets for achievement. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving but it is not consistent across all subjects. The school is beginning to develop this by sharing good practice that exists in the school. Lessons are well planned and are characterised by sound classroom management and organisation. However, the questioning skills used by teachers do not extend the students' knowledge and understanding enough. Students do not, in some lessons, have enough opportunities to work independently. Similarly, marking in books does not always tell the students what they need to do to further improve their work. There are good relationships, and in the best lessons, activities are well paced and suitably challenging. Although examples of good practice were seen in some subjects, the proportion of good teaching across the school is not high enough and there is not enough that is outstanding. Areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been tackled effectively. Outcomes for students have improved since the last inspection, and, as a result, the school now provides satisfactory value for money and has good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the drive to raise standards and improve achievement, particularly in mathematics and the teaching of technical language through literacy.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching through consistent, rigorous and systematic monitoring and by sharing good practice that exists in the school.

- Ensure that assessment and marking procedures are applied consistently and help all students to understand what they have to do to make progress.
- Ensure that plans for improvement are more sharply focused on specific and measurable targets. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in the school are rising but, in some subjects, they still remain significantly below national averages. Students are now making better progress than at the time of the last inspection and their level of achievement is now satisfactory. In the 2006 GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils gaining five A* to C grades was similar to the national average. Students did best in art, information and communication technology (ICT) and PE where the Sports College targets have been exceeded. However, results in mathematics were low, meaning that the proportion of pupils gaining five A* to C grades including English and mathematics was well below the national average. Although the achievement of boys is improving, it still lags behind that of the girls. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly those from African Caribbean and Pakistani heritage are achieving satisfactorily. They are making better progress than they have been doing in the last few years. The results in end of Key Stage 3 tests in English, mathematics and science have been disappointing. In 2006, students did not reach their targets and their achievement was unsatisfactory. However, the school's own assessment and tracking of current Year 7 and 8 students show that most are now making the expected levels of progress. Much has been done in the last year to address areas of underperformance. Evidence provided by the school shows that these steps are helping to raise standards. The historic weaknesses in the mathematics department are being resolved and students are now making better progress. Across the school, there has been a big improvement in the way assessment is used to monitor students' performance and identify and support those who are falling behind. This is already helping to demonstrate a rise in standards this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Students from different backgrounds get on very well with each other. This is a strength of the school, and means that students feel safe. As one student said, 'We all get on well here.' A project where students researched their family history helped them to reflect on their origins and place in the world. The school has done much to promote good behaviour. Students and staff work together to create an orderly environment in which they feel safe and secure and enjoy their work when they are in school. However, where lessons fail to engage students' interest, some students can be disruptive. Permanent and fixed-term exclusions have fallen significantly in the past year as a result of the school's intervention programme, led by the inclusion team. The team have been working hard with students to ensure that their specific needs are being met, particularly those in danger of exclusion. Although attendance in some year groups is improving, particularly in Year 10, it remains below the national average despite the school's good efforts. As a result of the strong emphasis on sport, and activities such as mountain biking and football during lunch breaks, students are increasingly participating in and recognising the importance

of physical activity and being healthy. However, the healthy eating message promoted by the school has not been taken up so enthusiastically by the students when making choices about what they eat. Members of the school council and form representatives feel their views are valued. Students contribute to the wider community, particularly primary schools, through sport. Although there are good links through work experience with local companies that support students' preparation for the world of work, their enterprise skills remain underdeveloped.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There have been significant staff changes and specialist staff are now in place, which is contributing to better teaching. Teachers know their subjects well. Where lessons are good, teachers have clear objectives and plan stimulating and varied activities. As a consequence, students' interests are engaged whilst both consolidating and taking their learning further forward. Relationships are good and teachers know their students well. There is now a good focus on the use of levels and grades to help students understand how well they are doing. However, the quality of day-to-day marking is variable. Students do not always know what they need to do to improve their work. Since the last inspection, the school has taken steps to share good practice in teaching. Teachers have undertaken joint observations and team teaching, for example in ICT and PE, where teaching and learning are good. The school is improving the way in which it monitors teaching, but there remain some inconsistencies. The school has identified that not enough opportunities are given to students to work together in groups or to promote their independent learning. Many lessons do not take sufficient account of the individual needs of students which, on occasion, results in low levels of disruption.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Significant changes have been made to the curriculum at Key Stage 4 which is already showing a positive impact. The range of vocational options has been increased and this is providing broader and more appropriate opportunities for students. It is an important factor in the improving proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades at GCSE. Good links with local schools and a college help the school to offer a further range of practical courses involving about a third of students in Year 10. Together, these measures are helping to improve both the motivation and the attendance of students. The innovative reorganisation of the timetable on Wednesday for Year 10 creates the flexibility the school needs to offer these opportunities. Arrangements are in place to extend this approach into Key Stage 3. In Year 7, a new 'learning to learn' programme is helping students to adapt more quickly to life at secondary school and to make better progress. Many subjects are also changing the content of what is being taught in Year 7 to engage students more with their learning. The school has rightly identified that not enough is done in this respect as students move through Years 8 and 9. The good range of extra-curricular opportunities, particularly in sport and trips, for example to Wales, is appreciated by students. There are relatively few opportunities for developing enterprise skills. The school's specialist status in sport is beginning to have a positive impact on the wider school curriculum with projects running in English, mathematics and science, which are improving student motivation.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Students are confident that if they need help they can always go to staff. Statutory requirements for safeguarding students are met, and care is taken to ensure that all necessary checks are up to date. The recent improvement in the way students' academic progress is monitored means that students and their teachers have a much clearer idea of how well they are doing. Students who are underachieving are identified and appropriate support is put in place. This has contributed to the improved progress that students are now making. Since the previous inspection, the wide range of initiatives to improve attendance has been extended even further but attendance remains significantly below the national average. There have been some notable successes with vulnerable groups, such as 'school refusers', who have been successfully reintegrated back into school. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support from the recently formed inclusion team, other staff and external agencies. This enables them to make good progress in their personal development. Students who speak English as an additional language are also making satisfactory progress in their learning. However, the school does not distinguish sufficiently between those students who are at early stages of learning English and those who are fluently bilingual so that they receive the most appropriate support. Students are aware of what they need to do to secure their future economic well-being and undertake a wide range of activities such as work experience placements and careers education through the school and Connexions.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory with some growing strengths. Rigorous measures have been put into place to tackle key priorities. The headteacher has provided strong and purposeful leadership through a period of significant change. Her vision and approach to school improvement is shared by the newly formed senior leadership team. They have worked with tenacity and determination to tackle longstanding weaknesses, and have had some success in ensuring that students who are underachieving are promptly identified and provided with appropriate support. Significant changes to the curriculum, especially for older students, have helped to improve attitude and behaviour. The quality of faculty leaders and directors is satisfactory and improving. More are beginning to take on leadership responsibilities with growing confidence. School leaders have demonstrated a relentless drive for improvement. Whole-school planning now provides a clear, strategic direction for school improvement, engaging a wide range of people, including the governors. The next stage is to ensure that self-evaluation is rigorous and that plans for improvement are more sharply focused on specific and measurable targets. Difficulties in recruitment and retention of skilled teachers have been an issue for the school. This has been reflected in the unevenness of students' performance in some subjects, particularly mathematics. Recent appointments mean that the staffing position is now much better. A restructuring of roles and responsibilities, linked with a good training programme, is helping to further strengthen and extend leadership capacity in the school. The newly formed governing body is beginning to support the school well and has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for further development. Governors challenge aspects of the school's performance when they feel able to do so. They are becoming more actively involved in response to the training they have undertaken. An important issue facing the

governing body and the senior leaders is to ensure that provision within the school continues to improve at a more rapid pace.

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Annex A

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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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
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	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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
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?	3

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?	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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

- 15 June 2007 Dear Students Inspection of Kingsbury School and Sports College, Birmingham B24 8RE Thank you very much for your positive contribution to the inspection and for making us feel so welcome during our recent visit to your school. We were impressed by how some of you were helpful, and the sensible way that you spoke with us. At the last inspection, just over a year ago, the school was given just over 12 months to improve in a number of areas. This has been done with your help. We think the school is now making satisfactory progress overall. The most obvious improvements are in:
 - the whole learning environment of the school and the curriculum it now provides, particularly at Key Stage 4
 - the way the students in Years 10 and 11 are making much better progress and last year's overall GCSE results are much improved. Many of you told us how much better the school is, and how much you appreciated some of the improvements made by Ms Coulton and her senior leadership team. Most of you are now making the progress that we would expect. However, there is still a long way to go before standards are as high as they could be, particularly in mathematics. The school recognises this and is continuing to work at the areas that need strengthening. These include:
 - raising standards and improving achievement, particularly in mathematics and literacy
 - increasing the proportion of good and outstanding teaching through the sharing of good practice that exists in the school
 - making sure that teachers mark your books in the same way and help all of you to understand what you have to do to make progress
 - making sure that the evaluation of the improvements is more sharply focused on specific and measurable targets. You all have an important role to play, not only by attending more regularly, working hard and cooperating, but also by having your say and supporting one another in bringing about improvement. We wish you every success in the future. Rashida Sharif Her Majesty's Inspector