

Ken Stimpson Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110882
Local Authority	City of Peterborough
Inspection number	310451
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Kenneth Thomas

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1032
6th form	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Bridget Holland
Headteacher	Mr David McPartlin
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2007
School address	Staniland Way Werrington Peterborough Cambridgeshire PE4 6JT
Telephone number	01733 765950
Fax number	01733 765951

Age group	11-19
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2008
Inspection number	310451

© Crown copyright 2008

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 four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ken Stimpson Community School is an expanding specialist school for business and enterprise. Following the reorganisation of secondary school provision in Peterborough, an additional 250 students and a proportionate number of teaching and support staff, joined the school in September 2007, after the closure of two other secondary schools. Students' attainment on entry to Year 7 has risen over recent years and, although there is a wide range of ability, is now average overall. Students come from broad mix of social and economic circumstances. Students are mainly White British with a below average proportion of who are from minority ethnic backgrounds or learning English as an additional language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities, as well as those in receipt of free school meals, is also below average. The school holds the Health Promoting Schools award. The sixth form is a key partner in the Team Peterborough Post-16 Federation comprising all secondary schools and the Regional College.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Ken Stimpson Community School is a satisfactory school, which has some good features. It provides satisfactory value for money. The principal, senior leadership team and governors responded positively to the challenge of the school being given a Notice to Improve just over a year ago, and have worked hard to improve it. Effective strategies have been put in place to promote improvement. As a result, steady progress has been made on the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report and the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further. Therefore, in accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (HMCI) is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team have been redefined and strategic appointments have been made to focus more intensely on standards and achievement. More challenging targets are being set and new tracking systems allow all concerned to keep a continuous watch on students' academic progress. The positive impact of this is beginning to be seen and the 2007 Year 9 national test and GCSE examination results showed improvement. However, the improvement was not consistent and there was underperformance by some students who were capable of achieving higher GCSE grades.

The process of self-evaluation has improved and takes account of the views of all concerned. As a result the school has a clear view of its strengths and where improvement is needed. However, inconsistencies in the implementation of some of the strategies for improvement indicate that the impact of self-evaluation is not yet as effective as it should be. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with many examples of good and occasionally outstanding practice. In the better lessons, students are helped to understand the learning objectives and how to achieve them, and work is well matched to their capability. In these lessons the school's new behaviour management strategies are used effectively and this is contributing to students making better progress, because they focus more effectively. However, this is not consistent in all lessons. While there are examples of teachers' marking providing students with clear guidance on what they need to do in order to improve the quality of their work, this practice is not consistent across the school.

The curriculum is good and continuing to improve, particularly at Key Stage 4. It is being extended to give students of all abilities increased opportunities to succeed. Care, guidance and support are also good. A real move forward has been in the use of personal targets for performance in national tests and examinations. Students, parents and staff now have a much clearer understanding of how well students are progressing and this is having a positive impact on performance. Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Students have a good understanding of what they need to do to be healthy. Many students, particularly in the upper years, make a good contribution to the school and wider community.

A shared vision in relation to the school's business and enterprise status encourages a common sense of purpose both in the school and in its partner schools. This leads to an enterprise ethos that permeates all aspects of the school and is having a positive impact on preparing students for their future economic well-being.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form's effectiveness is good. Students have positive attitudes to study and contribute vigorously to the main school community. The very large majority complete the courses they begin. Standards of AS and A-level courses are broadly average, but students achieve well, given their generally below average attainment on entry to the sixth form. Almost all pass the courses they follow and those who choose to continue to higher education do so successfully. Some gain university places for which there is very stiff competition. Students receive helpful guidance throughout their courses and in making choices for the future. Teaching and learning are good, and contribute well to students' academic success. Those following intermediate-level courses also achieve well, and many continue to further study. Leadership is good and systems to coordinate provision with the Team Peterborough North consortium of schools are managed well. Consequently, students are provided with a good range of course options, the quality of which are ensured by effective systems that are systematically applied by sixth form management.

What the school should do to improve further

- Within the current drive to raise standards, ensure that there is a clear focus on the need to increase the proportion of students gaining higher grades in the GCSE examinations.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good and that students are given clear guidance on how to improve through the marking of their work.
- Ensure that the school's behaviour management strategy is implemented consistently in all lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' achievement is satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form.

In the 2007 Key Stage 3 national tests, the school achieved the statutory targets set for English and mathematics and results rose to be above average. Students made slower progress in science and information and communication technology (ICT), where the targets set for the year group were not achieved, although results were broadly average. In the 2007 GCSE examinations, the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades rose by 8%, although there was underperformance by both girls and boys. Results remained below average and below the school's target for the year group. When English and mathematics are included the proportion was broadly average. The school achieved the target set for five or more A* to G grades and results were average. The school is taking systematic action to raise standards and achievement. In ICT, where the need to raise standards is most urgent, new subject management is having a positive impact and there are clear signs of improvement in standards. More generally, inspection evidence shows that the majority of students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are making the progress expected of them and are on track to meet the higher targets set for this year. The school's Business and Enterprise specialism has a positive impact on students' progress in business and related subjects.

In the sixth form, the proportions of students gaining higher grades in the 2007 AS and A2 level examinations were below average, while the proportion gaining pass grades was average. These results represent good achievement when standards on entry are taken into account.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The improved facilities provided by the school's new buildings have had a positive impact on students' feelings of well-being and self-esteem. Students say that they enjoy school and this is reflected in the improving rate of attendance, which now matches the national average. The school is doing much to improve standards of behaviour and the vast majority of students behave sensibly both in lessons and around the school. As a result the school is an orderly community and, through the success of the inclusion unit, the number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen from 10% in the last school year to under 1% in the present year. However, there remains a small minority of students, mainly boys, who display unhelpful attitudes and behaviour. Most students say that they feel safe in school and know that they can go to any member of staff if they need help.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Much effort goes into providing opportunities for collaborative work in lessons and this supports students' social development. Students have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and healthy lifestyles and this is supported by wide participation in sport. The school makes a good contribution to students' future economic well-being through the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and, in particular, through the school's specialist activities. Through the 'student voice', students are able to express their opinions and contribute to the school community and, through a variety of charitable activities; they make a good contribution to the wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form. The school has developed a consistent approach to planning lessons and this is having an increasingly positive impact on their quality. Most lessons have clear learning objectives with structured tasks that engage students in active learning. Expectations have risen and lessons are generally conducted in an effective working atmosphere. This reflects the positive impact of the school's new behaviour strategy. However, this strategy is not consistently applied and in some lessons progress is slowed by the immature behaviour of, in most instances, a small number of boys.

There are rigorous procedures for assessing and recording students' attainment and these are contributing to the better progress they are now making. However, there is too much variation in the guidance given to students through the marking of their work. In many instances, marking is not designed to bring about improvement and requests for work to be completed are often not followed up. In the most effective lessons, good use is made of assessment information to match learning activities to students' attainment levels, but this is not consistent. In many satisfactory lessons, the learning tasks are not challenging enough for higher ability students.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is well suited to the needs and aspirations of students of all abilities, both in the main school and in the sixth form. The school's specialist status is creating additional opportunities for students to increase their knowledge and understanding of business and enterprise features as part of the curriculum for all year groups. A good mix of academic and vocational courses in Key Stage 4 is increasing students' motivation and contributing to the better progress many are now making. The extension of the range of vocational subjects and other options available in Key Stage 4 is helping to maintain positive attitudes to school in students less suited to more traditional GCSE courses. All students benefit from a work-related learning programme, which includes two weeks work experience in Year 11. A well constructed personal and social education programme contributes successfully to students' understanding of responsible citizenship. Students with learning and other difficulties have good access to the curriculum and the choices within it. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of enrichment activities. Good numbers of students participate in a wide range of sporting activities, other clubs and educational visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are good. The needs of students who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are met well. Parents speak highly of the good support available for students with particular behavioural needs. The school makes all the required checks to ensure the safety and protection of students. Strong links with primary schools ensure that transition arrangements for students entering the school in Year 7 are effectively supported and well prepared for the change. New and highly rigorous procedures for setting students academic targets and for monitoring their academic progress have been introduced. Through regular updates on performance, students, teachers and parents have a clear understanding of how well students are progressing and the school is able to identify and act on potential underachievement. This is having a significant impact on the better progress students are now making. Appropriate careers advice and guidance help to ensure students are given suitable information on further and higher education and on employment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leaders and managers at all levels show a keen sense of purpose to improve the school. Educational direction is clear. Senior leaders have brought the school through the challenges of reorganisation and rebuilding effectively. Their determination to raise standards is beginning to have a beneficial impact, as shown by improving test and examination results. Expectations are higher and more challenging academic targets set. Roles and responsibilities have been redefined to enhance support for teaching and learning and ensure that there is clear accountability for performance. Because rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating

performance are now in place, managers at all levels have a much clearer picture of the school's strengths and where improvement is needed. The school is aware that in order to boost the drive for improvement, these procedures need to be firmly embedded in all areas.

The opportunities provided by the school's specialist status are managed well. Provision is enhanced by the school's specialist status and good links with other schools, colleges, businesses and the community. School governance is good. Governors capably fulfil their strategic role in guiding the school's work and providing challenge for further improvement.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	3	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
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?	3	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	2
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	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

27 February 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Ken Stimpson Community School, Peterborough, PE4 6JT

Thank you for welcoming me and my team of inspectors to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and joining you in your lessons.

We found that the school is now satisfactory and with a number of good and improving features. Your principal, governors and all of the staff at the school do things with your best interests in mind. You enjoy your education and are part of a safe and caring community. The vast majority of you behave well both in lessons and around the school. Your teachers work hard to provide you with lessons that interest you and we have asked the school to ensure more of your lessons are like this. But in some lessons progress is slowed because of the immature behaviour of a small number of boys, which demands too much of your teachers' time. To improve this, we have asked the school to make sure that the new behaviour code is applied in all lessons. The range of courses available to you, particularly at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, is enhanced by the school's specialist status and ensures that all of you are able to find something suitable for your needs and to prepare you for the future.

Achievement by students is satisfactory but it could improve, particularly for those of you in Key Stage 4 who are capable of gaining higher grades in the GCSE examinations. We have asked the school to do all it can to make sure that you all achieve your full potential in the GCSE examinations. Your teachers spend a lot of time marking your work and we have asked them when they do this to make sure that you are given clear guidance on how you can improve.

You can help your school and yourself by working hard, following the advice teachers give you and having high expectations about your own capabilities. This applies particularly to those of you who find it difficult to behave as well as you should in lessons.

With best wishes for your future success.

Dr Kenneth C Thomas

Lead inspector