

Kimberley Comprehensive School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122856
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	314423
Inspection dates	17–18 January 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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1195
6th form	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Wilson
Headteacher	Mr C Teal
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2003
School address	Newdigate Street Kimberley Nottinghamshire NG16 2NJ
Telephone number	0115 9383961
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Age group	11-18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Kimberley Comprehensive School serves the community of Kimberley, but with a significant proportion of students drawn from some of the most disadvantaged wards in the City of Nottingham. The school is larger than the average for secondary schools with broadly similar numbers of boys and girls. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage, with small numbers from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average, while the proportion with a statement of special educational need is below average. Pupils' socio-economic backgrounds vary considerably, but the proportion who claim an entitlement to free school meals is below average. The school gained specialist technology college status in September 2006. A new headteacher took up post in September 2007. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 7, while covering a wide range, is average overall. Attainment on entry to the sixth form is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to standards and achievement and therefore the school's overall effectiveness.

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that overall effectiveness is inadequate. Consequently, the school does not give satisfactory value for money. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 11 have declined since the time of the last inspection and there is considerable underachievement in Key Stage 3 and in GCSE examinations. This is impairing students' preparation for their future economic well-being.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, with strong local authority support, has quickly and accurately identified where improvement is needed and is taking determined action to raise standards. The overwhelming majority of parents are supportive of the direction the school is moving under the strong leadership of the headteacher. As one parent wrote, 'the new headteacher is transforming the school and it is getting better'.

Senior and middle leaders are now monitoring and evaluating work in their areas more systematically and staff at all levels are more accountable for performance. Concerted action is being taken to raise expectations, improve teaching and learning, and pupils' behaviour. Although there are areas in which there are inconsistencies in practice, the early indications are that these strategies are beginning to have a positive effect on raising standards. Governance is satisfactory. The chair of governors is working closely with the senior team to ensure that standards are raised. The clear sense that all staff are working together towards common goals gives the school sound capacity for further improvement.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some examples of good and occasionally outstanding practice. Improved classroom management strategies have contributed to improved behaviour and students making better progress. Nevertheless, not enough use is made of assessment information in lesson planning to ensure that learning tasks are closely matched to students' attainment levels. In many subjects, teachers' marking provides students with clear guidance on what they need to do in order to improve the quality of their work, but this practice is not consistent across the school.

The curriculum is satisfactory and continuing to improve. It is being broadened to make it more relevant and give students of all abilities the opportunity to succeed. Specialist technology status has improved resources and links with other schools, but the full impact has yet to be seen across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory and a real move forward has been made in the use of personal academic targets. Closer monitoring of students' academic progress is enabling underachievement to be identified at an early stage and appropriate support provided. Students feel safe and well looked-after, their well-being is underpinned by effective protection procedures. Personal development is also satisfactory. Students' good enjoyment in their education is reflected in their improved attendance. They make a good contribution to the community and are aware of the need to develop healthy lifestyles.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

This inclusive sixth form provides a satisfactory education for its students. Although the standards attained are below average students make satisfactory progress from their below average starting points. The sixth form lessons seen during the inspection were all at least satisfactory, with some examples of good practice. Students receive good guidance about opportunities beyond school but are less well informed about their course choices when entering the sixth form. As a result, some students make inappropriate option choices and have difficulty coping with the demands of advanced level courses. Personal development is satisfactory. Students have positive attitudes and say they enjoy their sixth form experience. They organise charitable events that benefit the wider community. The curriculum is satisfactory. The range of academic and vocational courses is extended through collaboration with another school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in both key stages, to enable students to achieve the outcomes of which they are capable.
- Make sure all teaching is consistently good or better and that more effective use is made of assessment information to match learning activities to students' attainment levels.
- Ensure that in all subjects, teachers' marking provides students with clear guidance on the standards of their work and how to improve.
- Ensure that leaders at all levels make certain that the school's strategies for raising achievement are implemented consistently in all subjects.
- Ensure that sixth form option choices are better matched to students' abilities to improve their progress and provide successful outcomes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Grade for sixth form: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that achievement and standards are inadequate.

Standards at the end of Year 9 are broadly average in science, but below average in English and mathematics. Although the statutory targets set for 2007 were achieved in science and mathematics they were not achieved in English. The targets set were too modest and progress through Key Stage 3 is inadequate.

At Key Stage 4, the GCSE results in 2007 were below both the school's modest statutory targets and the specialist college targets set for the year group. The percentage of students achieving five or more A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics dropped from just below average in 2006 to significantly below average in 2007. There is underperformance by both girls and boys, although girls slightly outperform boys on most measures. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress.

The school has set much more challenging targets for 2008 and 2009, and the early indications are that the action being taken by the school to raise standards is beginning to have a positive impact.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The personal development and well-being of students, including their spiritual, moral and social development, are satisfactory. Students' cultural development is good and they make good contributions to the community. This is exemplified by their involvement in many charitable activities and the work done to support a school in Africa. Students say that they enjoy their education and this is reflected in the improving attendance rate, which is now just above the national average. They view the school as a safe and caring community. As a result of the introduction of strategies to improve behaviour, exclusions have fallen and behaviour in most lessons is good. However, incidents of inappropriate behaviour sometimes occur when students are unsupervised in the public areas of the school. Students say that incidents of bullying have decreased and any that do take place are dealt with efficiently and effectively. Students are willing to undertake responsibility. This is shown through the well-established year and school councils, students' contribution to school improvement and their increasing understanding of responsible citizenship. They understand the need for a healthy lifestyle and many take advantage of the healthy meals and varied opportunities for involvement in extra-curricular sport. Through work experience and the school's 'access to work programme' students develop a variety of work-related skills. Because too many students do not achieve the examination results of which they are capable they are not adequately prepared for their next stage of education or for working life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school is giving the improvement of teaching and learning a high priority and the benefits of this are seen in the many good and occasional excellent lessons observed during the inspection. Most lessons are well planned, with good use of technological resources and conducted in a good working atmosphere. This reflects the positive impact of the school's behaviour strategy and the beneficial effect this is having on students' progress in lessons. Expectations have been raised and students receive good verbal encouragement in lessons. A developing feature in many lessons is a better use of assessment to give students clear information on what they need to do in order to improve. 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 not followed up. This is more likely to occur in the work of boys rather than girls. In the best lessons, effective use is made of assessment information to match learning activities to students' attainment levels, but this is not consistent. In many satisfactory lessons, progress is slower because the work is not challenging enough and students spend too much time listening to the teacher.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with several good and developing features. Although the full impact of the school's specialist status has yet to be seen in many areas of the curriculum, additional opportunities are being created. For example, all students study one aspect of technology and information and communication technology to examination level. The benefits of extra technology resources are also seen in many lessons. Consistent with the drive to raise standards there is an appropriate emphasis on the development of literacy skills in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4, the school provides a good range of academic subjects, but the range of vocational subjects and options available for students less suited to more traditional GCSE courses is more restricted. The personal and social education programme contributes well to students' understanding of responsible citizenship and helps to prepare them for life after school. Students with learning and other difficulties have full access to the curriculum and the choices within it. The curriculum is enriched by educational visits and visitors to the school, and a significant link with a school in Africa helps students to understand differences in children's life experiences. Many students participate in a good range of sporting activities, other clubs and educational visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Arrangements for students' pastoral care are effective, with a genuine concern to raise students' aspirations and self esteem. As part of this process there is a new emphasis on the recognition and celebration of students' good work and behaviour. This, together with greater clarity about the sanctions students face if they fall short of the school's expectations, is having a positive effect on behaviour. Students are encouraged to have healthy meals at lunch time and to take part in physical activity. The school makes all the required checks to ensure the safety and protection of students. Procedures for setting students academic targets and for monitoring their academic progress are much improved. As a result students know what they are expected to achieve in tests and examinations and the school is better placed to identify and act on potential underachievement. The pastoral needs of students with learning difficulties or disabilities are met appropriately. 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: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly appointed headteacher is providing strong leadership and a clear direction for the school. As a result of the changes he has introduced, communications and accountability have been strengthened. Roles and responsibilities of the senior leadership team have been redefined, improvement priorities have been quickly identified and there is a much greater sense of purpose. Good use is being made

of local authority and external consultancy advice to improve middle management. Middle managers are now more involved in evaluating work in their areas of responsibility, although equally rigorous evaluation procedures have yet to be fully embedded in all subjects. Staff feel that they are now more able to contribute to school improvement because they receive firm guidance on their roles and accurate feedback on their performance. This is contributing to a sense of the whole school pulling together. Governors are responding positively to issues that face the school. They keep a close watch on how the school is performing and are committed to raising aspirations and standards.

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
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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?	4	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	3
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	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
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	4	

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?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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	4	
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?	Yes	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21st January 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Kimberley Comprehensive School, Kimberley, Nottinghamshire, NG16 2NJ

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

Here are some of the things we found out about your school. Your headteacher and all of the staff at the school do things with your best interests in mind. They want to improve your examination and test results and to improve the opportunities available to you. This is shown, for example, in the school becoming a Technology College. You enjoy your education and are part of a safe and caring community. You are responding well to the ways in which good work and effort are now celebrated and your behaviour in the lessons we observed was good. Taking everything into account, we have decided that the school needs to improve further. We have asked the school to:

- improve your Key Stage 3 test and GCSE examination results
- make sure that you make good progress in all of your lessons and that the tasks that you do in lessons really extend you
- let you know how well you have done and how you can do even better when teachers mark your work
- make sure that all the very good systems that have been introduced to improve the school's performance are applied in all subjects
- give those of you entering the sixth form the best possible advice and guidance on the option choices to which you are best suited.

The headteacher, governors and all staff are united in their determination to improve the school's work. All of you have an important part to play by working hard in lessons so that you can make good progress in your learning. Inspectors will visit again during next year to see how the school is getting on.

With all good wishes for your future at Kimberley Comprehensive School.

Dr Kenneth Thomas Lead inspector