

Kingsbury High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101559
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	323476
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Samantha Morgan–Price HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	2013
Sixth Form	430
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms R Haussman
Headteacher	Mr C Chung
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 February 2006
School address	Princes Avenue Kingsbury London NW9 9JR
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 38 lessons, and held meetings with senior leaders, middle managers, governors, teachers, students and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at students' performance data, student support records, planning and curriculum documents, financial information, governing body minutes and information from management meetings. Inspectors also looked at 239 parent questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following questions.

- What are the outcomes in 2009 for lower-ability girls, White British, Black and Black British students?
- How effective is assessment for learning in improving outcomes for students?
- Are leadership and management effective at all levels, especially middle leadership?
- How effectively has the school maintained and built on its strengths of pastoral care, students' personal development and well-being and the sixth form?

Information about the school

Kingsbury High School is a larger than average school with a large sixth form. It received Mathematics and Computing specialist status in September 2004. The number of students eligible for free school meals is above the national average. A far higher proportion of students than is typical nationally come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students for whom English is not their first language is significantly higher than the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although the proportion with statements of special educational needs is above. Many of these students have dyslexia or behavioural, social and emotional needs. Seventeen students attend the visual and hearing impairment unit in the school.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

4

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(3) 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 the school's need to meet current safeguarding requirements.

Kingsbury High School's overall effectiveness is inadequate. The governing body and school leaders have not ensured that the school fulfils current safeguarding requirements. Safeguarding procedures are ineffective. As the governing body has not fulfilled this key statutory responsibility, governance is inadequate. School leaders have a clear understanding of what actions need to be taken to remedy the situation, but the pace of action in this area has hitherto been too slow.

Students enter the school with average levels of attainment and all groups make good progress so that their attainment is above average by the end of Year 9. However, progress for all students slows considerably in Years 10 and 11. Evidence provided by the school's own data indicates that the large majority of White British students will not achieve their GCSE targets this year. Black African students are now making good progress, while Black Caribbean students' rate of progress is satisfactory. The progress made by lower-ability girls is satisfactory. Although students' attainment is above average by the end of Year 11, students make no better than satisfactory progress in too many lessons. With the variations in students' progress at different key stages and with some groups not making as much progress as their peers, overall achievement is satisfactory. However, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with visual and hearing impairment, make good progress.

The majority of students feel safe around the school, although a few students did express some concerns about their safety when they move between the two sites. Behaviour is satisfactory, although inspectors did observe some poor behaviour in a few lessons and students were not always orderly when moving around the school. Students adopt good healthy lifestyles; there is excellent provision for sporting activities and students' participation is high. They are appreciative of the healthy food options available in the school and they make good use of the counselling services and agencies. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is

good; they appreciate the cultural diversity within the school. They enjoy celebrating multiculturalism through whole-school themes such as 'We are Britain'. Extensive work-placement opportunities, team-building and enterprise activities, along with above average standards in English and mathematics, enable them to develop good workplace skills. Students' attendance is satisfactory.

Overall, teaching does not enable students to make good progress. Relationships between staff and students are good, and teachers possess good subject knowledge. In the best lessons, the pace of activities is good. Effective questioning techniques allow teachers to assess learning well, which results in students participating well. There is some excellent practice in English. However, in many lessons, poor assessment of learning hinders students' progress. In a few lessons, this resulted in poor behaviour. Students know their targets, but not how to achieve them, because marking and guidance in their books is insufficient to move them on to the next steps of learning.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, although the good support for vulnerable students is a strength of the school. The school has developed good partnerships with many agencies that enable barriers to learning to be removed so that they achieve well. The work to support students in the hearing and visual impairment unit is effective.

Leaders and managers understand what needs to be done to improve outcomes for students; the school's self-evaluation is broadly accurate. However, the precise manner in which priorities are to be tackled, or how success will be measured, is not always clear. The school has maintained above average standards at GCSE, AS and A level. There has been some improvement in the achievement of Black African students, which demonstrates that there is satisfactory capacity to improve. There are many initiatives in the school that are focused on engaging groups within the community. For example, the school has worked with a local Jewish school to explore religious differences, and students participated in a Holocaust Day. The school's initiative to use parent governors to engage Somali parents is now established and working well. However, the school has not undertaken an analysis of its community in any context; the school's promotion of community contribution is inadequate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure, as a matter of urgency, that current safeguarding requirements are fully met.
- Conduct an audit to determine the needs and aspirations of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups it serves. Devise and implement a strategic plan to work with these groups to promote community cohesion at school, local and national levels.
- Improve students' achievement, especially across all subjects in Key Stage 4, by:
 - ensuring that teachers and managers make better use of performance data to assess student progress more accurately and to enable them to make timely interventions

- assessing learning more accurately to provide effective guidance for students on how to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The achievement of the majority of students is satisfactory. Students' attainment is generally above average at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Standards in mathematics and English at the end of Year 9 remained above average in 2008, and while students did not attain as highly in science, the school predicts improvement in 2009, especially at Level 5. There is evidence that leaders and managers are addressing underachievement at GCSE; although applied science results were low in 2008, predictions for A*–G for 2009 are more positive. Students' learning and progress in lessons is satisfactory overall. Learning and progress of Black African students is good, while for Black Caribbean students it is satisfactory. White British students did not make satisfactory progress in many lessons observed.

Students demonstrate a satisfactory regard for others in lessons and around the school. Students from the wide range of ethnic, religious and social backgrounds mix well with each other. They understand the consequences of their actions. They appreciate that religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE) give them opportunities to understand the needs and interests of others. Through such clubs as the Debating Society, they can argue their moral opinions and develop a greater depth of understanding. Students have an awareness of and insight into the values of others. They have developed a good cultural awareness. For example, art displays by Year 7 show totem poles and work inspired by artists from other cultures and periods. The rich cultural interaction leads to tolerance and understanding of others. Students appreciate the good events organised by the school such as Excel Week, and the opportunities to take the initiative and secure their own work placements to develop their workplace skills.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	3
How well do pupils behave?	3
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?
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2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching does not always provide students with the platform needed for them to do their best. There are inconsistencies across and within subjects in planning and assessment of students' performance. In the best lessons, teachers plan well and lesson objectives are clear. In mathematics, mental starters are used well and the pace of learning is appropriately challenging. Students' progress in lessons is checked well and individual support is given to enable students to work at their own pace with effective and appropriate extension exercises. In the less successful lessons, the pace of learning is slow and students have to wait for others to finish before they can move on. They are not involved in their learning and teachers do not use questions which probe students' understanding effectively. Although inspectors saw some excellent marking and assessment, there were too many occasions when marked work did not give students an understanding of what they needed to do to improve. Many students knew their targets but could not identify the next steps in order to achieve them.

The curriculum is satisfactory, although the extensive extra-curricular activities are a strength of the school. Information and communication technology is now taught as a separate subject across the curriculum. There is little evidence of the impact of the school's specialist status in other subjects. In Key Stage 3, the cross-curricular Learning 2 Learn programme is enabling students to develop research and analysis skills, but the full impact of this programme is yet to be realised. The fast track GCSE in mathematics in Year 9 is proving effective in moving able students to A level programmes earlier. In Key Stage 4, each curriculum pathway incorporates appropriate vocational provision. The school has provided personalised programmes for groups of learners, although there is little evaluation of the impact of these.

The school provides a welcoming environment. Mentors and learning support assistants work well with students. Future courses, and careers advice and guidance, are integrated well into PSHE programmes. There are good strategies to improve attendance throughout the school, although there is a lack of rigour in the absence follow-up procedures for students who are not seen as a priority.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers communicate ambition and drive improvement satisfactorily throughout the school. Many staff are aware of the key priorities and their part in improving the school's performance. Performance management structures enable senior leaders to hold subject managers effectively to account for the performance in their areas of responsibility. However, action planning by middle leaders is variable, as priorities for improvement in some areas are not specific and methods of monitoring the impact of actions are sometimes absent. Target setting for improvement is driven by senior leaders. They have introduced challenging targets throughout the school in relation to students' achievement, although not all teachers are using these targets as a basis for assessment nor is teacher assessment always reliable. The school has not been rigorous enough in monitoring teaching and learning. It has been slow to address key priorities such as how effectively teachers assess students' learning in lessons so that they achieve well. The majority of targets in the school's specialist subjects have been met and there has been some success in raising the achievement of Black African students. The school promotes equal opportunity satisfactorily. Leaders have effectively identified the underachieving groups within the school and actions have been taken to attempt to narrow the gap for different groups. However, there has been little impact on the achievement of White British students. Some equal opportunities policies and action plans have not been reviewed.

Governors know the school well. The governing body has been effective in supporting the school's work. For example, the chair convenes the student forum. The governing body's members are robust in their challenge with respect to most areas of the school's work, although there has been insufficient challenge in respect of students' achievement. The governing body has not fulfilled its statutory responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. The school is engaged in local community projects which have benefited students, such as providing a curriculum for students who have just arrived in Britain with no formal qualifications. However, it has not clearly identified the make-up of its community, or undertaken any strategic analysis to enable it to promote community cohesion more effectively. Partnerships to extend extra-curricular opportunities are extensive and the school works well with many agencies to provide good care and support for vulnerable students. Partnerships in the school's specialist subjects are, however, limited. The school achieves satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3

The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Students enter the sixth form with above-average standards in their GCSEs; they make good progress to achieve above-average standards in both AS and A levels. In 2008, the proportion of A and B grades achieved by students for both AS and A level was significantly higher than seen nationally. This can be attributed to good teaching and learning, and a good curriculum. Progress and learning are good and improving, as the unevenness of students' achievement in subjects at A and AS level is being tackled well. School data indicate that the students are making good progress. Although, in 2008, students' achievement in art and design, and physical education, was not as good as in other subjects, the school's own data indicate that achievement in both subjects is set to improve. Teachers assess students' learning well. They plan carefully to address the differing learning needs within the classroom, and work is assessed well. Good monitoring and support systems have enabled the majority of students to progress to higher education.

Leaders and managers work well to tackle underachievement in subjects. However, leaders and managers throughout the school have not paid sufficient attention to current safeguarding requirements. Leadership and management and the overall effectiveness of the sixth form are thus inadequate.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	4
Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	4

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents felt happy with the school's work.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Kingsbury High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 239 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 3468 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44%	48%	8%	0%

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



17 June 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Kingsbury High School, London, NW9 9JR

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to inspectors when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you. We know that you enjoy school and that the majority of you feel well cared for. You know how to adopt healthy lifestyles and your spiritual development is good. We acknowledge that a few of you have expressed some concerns over your safety while walking between the two school sites.

We judged that your school has some strengths, such as the pastoral care and support you are given, and the extensive extra-curricular opportunities that help you develop culturally. This has enabled you to attain at an above-average level in both the main school and the sixth form. The progress you make up to Year 11 is satisfactory. In the sixth form it is good. The school has lots of good partnerships to help support you. Nevertheless, governors and your senior teachers have not kept up to date with current safeguarding practices. We have therefore given the school a 'notice to improve', which means that other inspectors will be visiting the school to see how well it is improving. The things we have asked the governors, senior and other managers to do are as follows.

- Focus their immediate attention on ensuring that all safeguarding procedures are up to date and in place.
- Raise your achievement, particularly in Key Stage 4, by:
 - improving the use of data about your performance, so they can intervene quickly and effectively to keep you on track
 - improving the way that teachers assess your learning in lessons so that they can give you more support and better feedback, to show you how to improve more quickly.
- Undertake an analysis of the backgrounds of the school's students and the wider community and use this information to devise and implement a plan to promote community cohesion at school, locally and nationally.

We wish you every success; you can help the school to improve by supporting each other and always doing your very best.

Yours faithfully

Samantha Morgan-Price
Her Majesty's Inspector

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