

# King's Norton Boys' School and 6th form centre Science Specialist College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103562
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	323863
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Caroline McKee

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	750
Sixth form	132
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sue Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Roy Baylis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 December 2005
<b>School address</b>	Northfield Road Birmingham B30 1DY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01216 280010
<b>Fax number</b>	01216 280080

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

King's Norton Boys' School and Sixth Form Specialist Science College is a popular, though smaller than average, college. The large majority of students are of White British heritage and there is a small minority of students from a range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average but is higher for students with a statement of special educational needs. Students eligible for free school meals are in line with the average. The sixth form combines with a number of schools to provide wider curriculum opportunities.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory college. The senior leadership team has been successful in improving the personal development of the students and improving standards in some subjects, particularly in English. However, there remain weaknesses in science, and achievement in Key Stage 3 has been unsatisfactory for the last three years. For this reason achievement overall is not better than satisfactory. Students start in Year 7 with standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science. By Year 11, overall standards are significantly above the national average. Although there is a growing interest in sciences, as a direct influence of the specialist science college status, the recruitment of staff in science has been difficult and this has undermined the continuity of students' learning. The school has done all it can to improve recruitment, but the leadership team acknowledges that a lack of rigour in monitoring the progress of students taught by supply teachers contributed to this underachieving trend in Key Stage 3 science. In addition, there are pockets of underachievement across some other subjects. In the improving sixth form, students reach standards that are broadly in line with the national average, and achievement is satisfactory. In lessons, they are now starting to make good progress because of improved, good teaching and their positive attitudes, but this has yet to have a long-term impact.

The college provides satisfactory care, support and guidance for its students. It is inclusive and works very hard with other schools to ensure that students in danger of exclusion are accepted and given the support to continue their education at the college. A very small number of parents expressed worries about bullying and felt that they were not always kept informed and supported about their concerns. Nevertheless, students were confident that the college dealt effectively with the rare cases of bullying and there are satisfactory procedures in place for tracking these incidents and other complaints. The majority of parents who expressed an opinion were very supportive of the college. One parent wrote 'The school provides a very caring environment for the boys.' The good leadership of the special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, a number of lessons are good. Improvements can be linked directly to some effective monitoring of lessons and good support given to teachers. This has improved the level of challenge in some lessons but is not uniform enough across all lessons. There is a good programme for tracking progress but teachers do not always use and share with their students the finer levels of detail, so they know what it is they need to do to improve. Some teachers do this very well and the college is ensuring that this good practice is further developed.

Students' personal development and well-being and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Students develop positive relationships in class and around the college and behaviour is good. They take good advantage of the many activities provided in the outstanding extra-curricular programme. The college recognises the need to broaden the satisfactory curriculum with more vocational options and has begun to develop this aspect. The students feel safe and well prepared to cope with the world of work and possible dangers in life.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, though there is no doubt about the leadership's commitment and desire for improvement, and in their success in some areas. Monitoring of teaching is effective, but there has been limited rigorous attention to some other

aspects such as students' progress and analysing results. As a result, development has been slowed and aspects of the college's self-evaluation are over generous.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

Students enter and leave the sixth form with standards that are broadly average and they achieve satisfactorily. In 2007, they reached higher standards at AS level than A level and performed particularly well in history and sports science. They did less well in mathematics and chemistry. Unvalidated data for national examination results in 2008 show a decline in overall achievement, with mathematics remaining weaker. There has been, however, a significant improvement in biology and chemistry. Teaching is currently good and students are now making good progress because of improved and stimulating teaching and a common desire to reach higher standards. The vast majority stay to the end of their two years. Their personal development is good. They have very positive attitudes to their work and enjoy responsibilities in the college, such as helping younger students with their learning. They have good attendance, enjoy the additional extra-curricular activities available and have good attitudes to participation in sport and living a healthy lifestyle. There are fewer planned enrichment activities than could be expected to support the curriculum, which is satisfactory. Joint provision with the girls' school provides a greater range of opportunities and there are now more vocational courses on offer. Students felt that there was satisfactory guidance given for the next stages of their education or for work. Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. Although the systems for tracking progress are good, the data are not analysed early enough or in sufficient depth to fine tune priorities for improvement.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve achievement in science.
- Ensure that the best practice of challenging students of all attainment levels and actively engaging students in their learning is more consistent across the college.
- Improve the rigour of monitoring, particularly the analysis of students' performance data and monitoring of progress by leaders at all levels, to secure accurate self-evaluation and ensure timely action to improve.

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**

GCSE standards in 2007 were significantly above the national average, and students achieved well in Years 10 and 11. Unvalidated results in 2008 suggest that standards remain high, though the data also suggest achievement is satisfactory. Results in applied and double science improved in 2008. Students reached their challenging targets in English but not in mathematics. Progress is satisfactory overall; however, there are some variations between subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress throughout the school because of the well planned and good support provided.

Results in the 2007 national tests in Year 9 showed improvement from the previous year and students reached standards that were significantly above the national average overall. Students reached average standards in science and have significantly underachieved in science over a period of three years. Despite this, achievement overall was satisfactory and good in English. Results in 2008 show improvements again in English, but mathematics and science remain the same with some variation in the attainment of different groups of students. The college's focus on improving the achievement of higher attaining students has led to a greater number of students gaining the higher levels in science and English but still not sufficient numbers to improve achievement overall.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

There is a positive atmosphere in the college and students are welcoming and develop positive relationships. A good rapport with teachers means that learners question readily during lessons and reflect on spiritual ideas. They acknowledge each other as leaders and enjoy responsibility. The college council is enthusiastic and well organised. It is effective in making a difference to college life. Learners are motivated to represent the college in local community projects and all students fund raise for a school project in Gambia. Behaviour is good with most groups responding quickly to sanctions although some learners are slower to comply in a small number of lessons. A few younger students occasionally feel concerned when moving around the school. However, bullying is rare as are racial incidents and students have responded well to action directed at reducing exclusions. Attendance is satisfactory, with only a few persistent non-attenders. Most learners enjoy college, work well together on group tasks and take pride in their learning. They have a good understanding of the need to behave safely and the principles behind a healthy lifestyle. They participate in large numbers in the extensive extra-curricular sports programme and make sensible choices for a balanced diet. A good proportion of learners enrol for education beyond the age of 16.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

There are examples of good and outstanding teaching in the school but there is too much variation. In the best lessons, for example in physical education or English, students are excited by their learning, taking the lead and working at a rapid pace. Most teachers plan appropriate learning outcomes for their classes. However, not all teachers ensure that all students learn at a sufficiently rapid rate or aspire to high enough standards. Where classes contain a broad range of ability, teachers too often set work pitched at the lower and middle ability and do not challenge higher attaining students sufficiently. Senior leaders are supporting teachers to use data more effectively for planning and to introduce a broader range of learning activities that engage students more actively in their learning. This is happening in a growing number of subjects where students are motivated and excited by their learning. Nevertheless, this improvement has not yet had sufficient impact across the college to ensure students make good progress overall. Effective use of the behaviour policy has helped to reduce the number of disruptions in lessons leading to an improvement in the students' learning. Where learning is too teacher-led and activities lack challenge, students become bored and occasionally this can lead to minor behavioural issues. The new independent learning challenges, set in Key Stage 3, are enjoyed by the students, but some parents feel that they were not sufficiently

consulted on this change and prefer the more traditional homework approach. Teachers deploy learning assistants well and they effectively support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, ensuring they make good progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The college provides a satisfactory curriculum for its students. In Key Stage 3, the learning to learn programme, introduced as part of the college status, is improving awareness of global issues and creating links between subjects. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 has an academic bias and the vocational provision, whilst improving, is rather limited. The college is working with other schools and colleges to broaden the range of subjects offered. This is currently available to small numbers of students but is successful in engaging those involved. Specialist science college status has led to the introduction of a wider range of related courses.

Many students benefit from the outstanding range of extra-curricular activities, including study support, music and visits abroad. There are also many opportunities in science, enterprise and work related areas. The outstanding outdoor adventure opportunities, such as sailing on a Tall Ship, give students the opportunity to develop a range of skills needed for life. The extra-curricular provision is developing students' confidence, self-esteem and enjoyment of college.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care for students is a positive feature of the college with most parents agreeing that their children are safe. The college promotes students' well-being effectively through its own provision but less successfully with outside agencies. For example, despite the college's best efforts, changes of agency staff have made liaison less effective in helping with attendance. The college supports students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well and the inclusion unit is effective in reintegrating students into the main college. Requirements for safeguarding and child protection are in place but procedures and communication with parents who have concerns do not always meet with their expectations or allay their worries.

Arrangements for transition of Year 7 students from surrounding primary schools are good and specialist college links have successfully improved academic achievement in science at primary schools. The written and verbal feedback students receive from teachers does not always explain how well they are achieving and how they can improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership of the senior team, including that of the sixth form, has a drive and purpose that has led to improved standards, particularly at GCSE and in English throughout the school. There is a healthy realism of what still has to be achieved and an openness to improve further. Challenging targets have been set at all key stages and the improvements in teaching have been secured through an effective programme of lesson observations and training. The college has a good programme for recording progress but managers at all levels do not check the accuracy of the teachers' assessments recorded, and in particular those of supply teachers', at

key points in the year. This has contributed to the lack of rigour in tracking. Analysis of results and how this is reported to governors are not as rigorous or as detailed as could be expected.

The development of responsibility for pastoral and academic middle managers has had a positive effect on the students' personal development and on their academic achievement in some subjects. The college's work to include all students, despite their exclusion from other schools, is commendable in helping these students gain qualifications and skills for the world of work. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. There are good community links with other educational establishments and also with the business community to advise students on their future plans. There is less focus on encouraging parents to contribute actively to their children's learning.

The governors offer adequate support and are becoming increasingly involved in analysing the college's performance. They have highlighted the need to understand data more fully so that they can ask appropriate questions to secure better achievement. They have a good financial awareness and have helped to balance a deficit budget.



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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	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
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?	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	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/or disabilities make progress	2	

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	2
The attendance of learners	3	2
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3	2
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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

10 October 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of King's Norton Boys' School and Sixth Form Specialist Science College, Birmingham,  
B30 1DY

Thank you all very much for the way you welcomed the inspection team to your college. We appreciated the time you took to talk to us and we enjoyed hearing your views and ideas. This is a letter to tell you what we found.

Your college is providing you with a satisfactory and improving education. The senior leadership team has a clear idea about what to do to improve it further. The overall standards you reach are significantly above average by the time you finish Year 11 and average in the sixth form but you have been slower to improve standards and achievement in science at Key Stage 3. The satisfactory and improving teaching is helping you to improve and become more independent as learners, but teachers could give you more help to ensure that you achieve even better. You have worked hard to match your challenging targets in English but now need to mirror this in science and mathematics in particular. The college provides you with satisfactory care, support and guidance. Your personal development is good and we were impressed with how you discussed sensitive issues. You have good attitudes to learning, though a few of you and a small number of parents are concerned about some disruptions to learning when behaviour is not managed well. Your behaviour is good, but we would ask older students to be more careful of younger, smaller students in the corridors. The college provides you with a satisfactory and improving curriculum with many opportunities outside of lessons. A high number of you participate in these. You have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. We were particularly interested to hear about how you shape decisions in the college and that you enjoy your roles of responsibility. In order to improve achievement we have asked the college to:

- Improve your progress in science.
- Ensure that the best practice of actively engaging you in your learning and the good challenge for different groups of learners is carried out by all teachers.
- Ensure that leaders at all levels regularly monitor and evaluate how you are doing and take timely action.

We would ask you to work with your college to secure these improvements.

With best wishes for your future lives,

Caroline McKee Lead Inspector