

# Kingsmead Technology College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124397
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	328129
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mary Davis

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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	1298
Sixth form	145
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Barbara Heath
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christopher Hilton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 January 2006
<b>School address</b>	Kings Avenue Littleworth Hednesford Cannock WS12 1DH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 512455
<b>Fax number</b>	01543 512481

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

The inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

The college is located in a former mining town and serves an area with several pockets of high deprivation. It was re-designated as a technology college in 2007. It operates a joint sixth form with two other local schools and is a member of the Chase Collegiate, a collaboration of nine schools and one college of further education. The number of students from minority ethnic groups is small and the proportion of those whose first language is not English is very low. The proportion of students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average as is the proportion of students that have a statement of special educational needs.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Kingsmead Technology College provides a satisfactory standard of education. It is an improving specialist college with a good sixth form and is highly regarded by parents for the quality of its pastoral care and the support for students preparing for examinations, including the provision of Saturday classes. 'Teachers appear to go the extra mile for the pupils. I have found the school very supportive of all my child's needs,' have been typical of the comments made by parents. Student progress has however, shown a declining picture since the last inspection and the impact of actions taken by the leadership to reverse this trend is only just beginning to be seen.

Over the past two years the number of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grade C or above, including English and mathematics, has been significantly below the national average as has the number of passes at the highest grades in many subjects. The rate of students' progress has been slow, particularly in English. The impact of new leadership in this subject is now being seen and the college predicts that the current cohort will exceed their targets. The college leadership correctly identified that the curriculum was not meeting the needs of all students, and that as a result some students became disaffected. Curriculum provision was radically changed to better suit the needs of all students. School tracking data indicates students are in line to achieve the challenging targets set for them. Students achieve well in the sixth form where standards have improved over the last three years and are now broadly average.

Students' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy coming to school and particularly value their relationships with teachers. As a result, they feel safe and that there is always someone who will listen to them. They particularly value the work of the student support assistants who are always there to help them, both emotionally and academically. Older students, including those in the sixth form, support younger ones and they feel that the college listens to and acts on their views so that they have a voice in the college community. They behave well in lessons and around the college.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and has been correctly identified by the college leadership as a key area for development. Although the outstanding practice seen in art, music and specialist college subjects is being used to raise the quality of teaching across the college, lesson observations during the inspection showed that too many lessons were only satisfactory. Some teachers are not making effective use of assessment information to plan lessons so that students' individual needs are met and the most able students are sufficiently challenged. Students know their targets in all subjects but the quality of the feedback they receive during lessons informing them how to reach them is inconsistent, with the result that too many do not progress well enough.

The curriculum provision is good. Students value the variety of courses they are offered at all key stages and particularly enjoy the 'Challenge days' that enrich the curriculum and contribute to their good personal development.

The impact of technology college status is good, not only on the curriculum, but also in the strong partnerships with arts subjects that lead to inspirational work and techniques that enrich teaching and learning across the college.

The college is rightly proud of its caring ethos. Students are effectively supported as they transfer from one key stage to another through to the sixth form. Vulnerable students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are particularly well supported. Although student progress is tracked effectively enabling underachievement to be identified and

monitored, guidance provided through the marking of their work is inconsistent so that not all students know how to improve their work or what they need to do to achieve their targets. Care, support and guidance are therefore satisfactory overall.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, well supported by his senior team, is deeply committed to securing quality in every aspect of the college's work. Actions taken to improve the quality of teaching however, have not yet had sufficient impact on improving students' progress. The leadership team is well supported and challenged by the governing body, who take an active role within the school.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The sixth form provides a good quality of education. Standards are satisfactory and have consistently improved over the last three years. Students' achievement is good as verified by the consortium's rigorous and effective monitoring and tracking systems. This is a consequence of good teaching, born out by the recent student and parent surveys. Students express total confidence in their teachers and in all aspects of their education. They particularly value the good curriculum provision offered through the partnership with two other local schools and the wider consortium and the extensive enrichment programme on offer. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The students say that they can go to their teachers as a friend for help. They all receive regular reviews of their progress and guidance on setting their individual targets and are well supported by the sixth form cohort worker. Students' personal development and well-being are also outstanding. Students act as mentors for younger students and play a wider role in the local community. Their attendance is good and they enjoy taking a leading role in college life, showing considerable maturity and providing feedback that enables the college to continually improve the provision. The consortium director, supported by a strong team, demonstrates outstanding skills in improving consistency and continuity in the quality of student support and teaching. As a result, the numbers of students going on to university are increasing. In 2008, all the students gained places in higher education, training or employment.

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

- Raise standards and achievement by:
- Ensuring all teachers make full use of assessment information to inform their lesson planning so that work is precisely matched to the needs of all students and that high ability students are effectively challenged
- Ensure that feedback in lessons and the marking of students' work is of consistent high quality so that they know how to develop their work and to reach their 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**

Students join the school having reached average standards in the national tests in English, mathematics and science in their previous schools. By the end of Year 9 in 2008, standards were still broadly average in all three subjects with students performing best in English achieving

above average results and being closest to their targets, particularly for the higher ability. Teachers' assessments indicate that the current Year 9 are on track to meet their targets in English and science but are currently a little below target in mathematics. GCSE results over the last three years show a declining picture. Standards in English fell to significantly below the national average in 2007, and in 2008 results in both English and mathematics were below average. Students' rate of progress from Key Stage 2 to 4 is significantly below average and shows a decline during Key Stage 4. Contributing to this decline has been poor progress in English where the rate of progress from Key Stage 3 to 4 was in the bottom 1% nationally. The new leadership of the English department has introduced a variety of strategies to address this, including the introduction of a new syllabus for the current Year 11 which is more effectively engaging students' interest. As a result, the college predicts that the current cohort will exceed their targets in English. Current assessments and results of modular tests indicate that in 2009, 63% of students are on track to gain five or more GCSE A\* to C passes including English and mathematics, so meeting their targets. Unvalidated results show that students who have just completed vocational courses have all passed. There is no significant difference between the performances of different ethnic groups. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the good support they receive. In the sixth form, standards are average with students making good progress, particularly in art and design, the Diploma in Child Education, information and communication technology (ICT), textiles, health and social care and psychology.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Students enjoy coming to school because of their good relationships with their teachers and each other. They behave and collaborate well and particularly enjoy lessons where they undertake a variety of active tasks such as in music, art and drama. Students take their roles as mentors or college council representatives seriously and value the way the college responds to their ideas. They are clear about how to stay safe and older students take care of younger ones. This is particularly effective through the 'buddies' scheme. Students are aware of the need for a healthy lifestyle and there is a good take-up for extra-curricular activities including a wide range of sports. However, they do not all eat as healthily as they should, though the college has done much to raise their awareness and ensures healthy options are available. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Their social and moral development is a particular strength and is enhanced by the valuable contribution that they make to the community. Their understanding of life in today's multicultural society is less well developed. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. A variety of enterprise activities and the college's focus on ensuring all students achieve adequate skills in literacy, mathematics and ICT prepare them well for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The good relationships that exist between teachers and students result in positive attitudes to learning. Students respond well when provided with a variety of active tasks where they can work in groups and take responsibility for their own learning. They are inspired by the outstanding role models teachers present in some practical subjects such as the arts and physical education (PE). However, active opportunities are not always provided so that some lessons

are too 'teacher-led' resulting in students becoming passive. Lessons involve good use of technology which motivates students and supports their learning. Lesson objectives shared with students sometimes fail to explain how progress will be made. In the best lessons teachers had planned different activities or resources to support the less able or to challenge the more able in their classes. There were too many occasions, however, when all students were set the same work with the result that not all were able to make good progress. Too often, key opportunities to check students' understanding and evaluate their learning are missed and they do not always get advice on how to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

At Key Stage 3, students are offered a broad curriculum that reflects the technology specialist status. It includes a strong focus on developing learning styles to enable students to become more independent. Support is provided for those in Year 7 with weak literacy skills through the nurture group, enabling them gradually to access the full curriculum.

The pathways offered at Key Stage 4 have broadened choice and include an alternative course that provides opportunities for work experience for students who are in danger of being excluded, enabling them to remain at school and to achieve. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of well-attended activities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. The PE department provide a variety of sporting clubs such as rock climbing as well as the more traditional sports. The citizenship programme is effective in enabling students to acquire and develop the skills needed to become responsible and active members of the community.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The college has strong links with primary schools and good procedures to identify the strengths and needs of students before they arrive. Systems to track the progress of students are robust enabling cohort and progress leaders and support workers to identify underachievement and to implement support such as mentoring, booster classes and Saturday classes. Parents are closely involved and value the level of care and support provided. Vulnerable students are well cared for involving a variety of outside agencies. Arrangements for safeguarding students and child protection meet statutory requirements and risk assessments are thorough. Students know their targets in each subject and the level at which they are currently working. However, inconsistencies in the quality of day-to-day assessment information provided to students during lessons or through informative marking result in them not making the progress they should in all subjects.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The college has a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses and through rigorous monitoring of progress is working to ensure that all students have equality of opportunity. All middle leaders are held to account and are involved in the accurate self-evaluation process. Subject leaders monitor the work within their areas and work in partnership with the specialist college leadership to promote the use of technology to enhance learning. Those new to the leadership role are well supported and their impact is beginning to be seen, such as the improved team

work within the English department. Innovations in the Key Stage 4 curriculum are beginning to show a clear impact on the improving progress in this key stage. The college is quick to respond to the needs of individuals and is providing a flexible curriculum. Other actions to address underachievement including the range of booster and revision classes are valued by students and parents but there has been less focus on ensuring that the rigorous assessment information is used effectively by teachers so that the needs of individual students are met in the classroom. Challenging targets are set and high achievers are well supported by mentors but in lessons some teachers fail to challenge them sufficiently with the result that they do not progress as fast as they could. Governance is good and governors hold the college strongly to account and work to promote positive student outcomes. They are working to promote community cohesion, and partnerships with other schools and the local community are particularly strong. Links with the national and global communities are less well developed.



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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**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	2	2

**Achievement and standards**

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

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<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	1
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	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
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

<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?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	1
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	2	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	

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

15 June 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Kingsmead Technology College, Cannock WS12 1DH

My colleagues and I enjoyed our visit to your college. We were particularly impressed by your mature comments and the pride you show in the college. These are our main findings.

- Standards by the end of Year 11 and in the sixth form are broadly average, but over the past few years your progress has not been good enough, particularly in English. This is beginning to improve, however, and sixth form students make good progress.
- You enjoy school, particularly when lessons are active and you value the relationships you have with your teachers and each other. Your attendance is satisfactory and improving and your behaviour in lessons is good.
- The teaching you receive is satisfactory but tasks in lessons are not always matched closely enough to your needs. You do not always get the information you need to know how to improve your work.
- The curriculum that you follow has improved and is now good, enabling you to follow courses that match your interests and abilities. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- The good care you receive enables you to feel safe and well supported and you particularly respect and value the support assistants.
- The leadership is working satisfactorily to ensure that things improve in the future.
- The personal development and well-being of sixth form students are outstanding as a result of the excellent care, support and guidance provided by the outstanding leadership and the good curriculum provision within the partner schools.

In order to take your learning to new heights, we have asked the school to ensure that teachers challenge you effectively according to your individual ability, especially those of you who find learning easier, and that you are kept informed in lessons and in the marking of your work as to how you can reach your targets. You can help by always working hard to achieve your targets.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Mary Davis

Lead inspector