

Kesgrave High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124849
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328232
Inspection date	12 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Lindsay Hebditch HMI

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 (total)	1734
Sixth form	332
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Marion Catling
Headteacher	Mr Nigel Burgoyne
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2005
School address	Main Road Kesgrave IP5 2PB
Telephone number	01473 624855
Fax number	01473 612317

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. It also investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records. Other evidence included completed parental questionnaires, the scrutiny of curriculum and planning documents, observation of the school's work and interviews with staff and students. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a large and popular school which serves the small town of Kesgrave to the east of Ipswich. The school has grown significantly in recent years. The percentage of students entitled to free school meals is low. Most students are from White British backgrounds and few speak English as an additional language. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school achieved specialist technology status in September 2004 and became a specialist training school in April 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Kesgrave High School is an outstanding school. It provides an excellent learning environment in which students enjoy their education and thrive. Specialist accommodation is first-rate. Parents praise the school for the quality of their children's education and the constant drive to improve standards still further. One parent summed up the views of many by commenting that: 'I feel a real buzz of enthusiasm as I enter; I only wish I was back at school!'

Achievement and standards are outstanding. Students enter the school with above average standards. They then make excellent progress through Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. The consistency of this progress by different groups of students and within different subjects is a strong feature of the school. The progress made by students who find learning difficult matches the excellent progress made by others. The proportion of students who achieve five or more GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics is well above the national figure and improving. Students display very high standards in their work throughout the school and this is celebrated in the outstanding corridor displays.

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Students enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their excellent attendance. The school provides a safe, calm environment for students to work in and they respond positively to it. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Incidents of bullying are extremely rare and, when they do occur, are dealt with swiftly and decisively. Students make excellent efforts to adopt healthy lifestyles. They choose their meals and snacks carefully and more than half of them regularly cycle to school. Students make a good contribution to the community at school, and at local and national levels. Elections for the House Councils and Student Council are keenly contested and elected students take their responsibilities very seriously. Spiritual, cultural, moral and social development is outstanding and there are excellent opportunities to develop economic understanding through business activities and work experience.

Inspectors agree with the school that the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teaching is highly effective because teachers have excellent command of their subjects and use their expertise well to provide stimulating lessons. Teachers are making increasingly effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enliven their lessons, and using the 'breakout' spaces imaginatively to enable students to participate in different activities during the same lesson. Teachers' high expectations of students mean that work is demanding for everyone and students work hard to rise to the challenges presented to them. In most lessons teachers plan carefully to ensure that learning outcomes are clearly identified and check during lessons that they are being met. However, in a minority of lessons, planning lacks this detail and teachers find it more difficult to judge whether students have achieved what they are capable of. Marking of students' work is thorough and provides helpful suggestions on how it could be improved. Students' self-assessment also forms an integral part of highly effective learning.

The curriculum is outstanding and meets the needs of all students. Students speak highly of the three period day and say that they are able to develop their work in greater depth because of it. The extension of students' literacy and numeracy skills is at the heart of curriculum planning and has been very effective in helping to improve standards of literacy and numeracy throughout the school. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is much improved since the previous inspection and now provides an appropriate balance of time allocated to each subject. The

expansion of work-related programmes in Key Stage 4, including those developed in partnership with a local further education college, has been very successful and is greatly appreciated by students who wish to follow a mixture of academic and vocational subjects. There is an extensive range of enrichment activities and participation levels are high, adding greatly to students' enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school has comprehensive systems for ensuring that all students, including the very vulnerable, are looked after well. There are effective procedures for safeguarding students that meet current government requirements. The generous staffing for the pastoral curriculum demonstrates the high priority the school gives to this work and students say how much they appreciate the help they get from their teachers and tutors. The outstanding support for students who find learning difficult helps them to make excellent progress. The school also works with a broad network of external agencies to provide more specialised support when it is needed. The school's on-line 'Flightpath' system for tracking and evaluating student progress is an outstanding development and well used by staff. Students receive excellent advice on career choices and progression.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and a clear vision of how to take the school forward. He shares this ambition with a talented senior leadership team and receives good support from the knowledgeable and highly experienced governors. Departmental management is very good. The school is making excellent use of its specialist training school status to provide training for its middle leaders, both within the school and in other institutions. The school has revised its planning procedures to identify short and longer term goals more accurately. It sets challenging targets and generally meets them. Quality assurance procedures are well considered and highly effective. Subject reviews are robust and provide an appropriate level of challenge to areas of relative underperformance. The lesson observation programme provides a detailed and accurate assessment of the quality of teaching. The school has made excellent progress in the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. This, together with the school's meticulous approach to self-assessment and quality review, gives the school outstanding capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The sixth form is outstanding. The number of students who choose to stay on into the sixth form, or join it from other schools, is increasing rapidly. Sixth formers benefit from the positive attitudes to work that they develop lower down in the school and maintain excellent progress in relation to their starting points. Standards are high. Teaching is outstanding. Teachers make good use of the excellent accommodation and resources in the sixth form block to develop students' powers of independent research. The curriculum is excellent, providing a good range of GCE AS and A-level subjects together with a small but well-chosen group of applied A levels. Excellent and impartial advice and guidance help ensure that students are well equipped by their time in the sixth form to make a smooth and successful transition into employment or higher education. Leadership and management are outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of lesson planning so that the learning needs of all students are addressed.

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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?	1	1
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?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
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	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
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

13 November 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Kesgrave High School, Kesgrave, Ipswich, IP5 2PB

Thank you very much for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed talking to you and have made sure that we have reflected your views in this inspection report. You clearly enjoy coming to school and appreciate how well you are being prepared for your future lives. Lots of your parents took the trouble to complete the questionnaires we sent out and I would be grateful if you could pass on our thanks to them for replying.

We agree with you that your school is outstanding in all respects. We are very impressed by the part which you play in making it so successful. We think that your behaviour is excellent and in all of the lessons we observed you were working hard and achieving well.

Your headteacher is keen to make the school even better. We identified one thing that we think would help.

- Improve the consistency of lesson planning so that the learning needs of all students are addressed.

I wish you all the very best for the future. Well done!

Yours sincerely

Lindsay Hebditch

Her Majesty's Inspector