

Kingsmead School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135345
Local Authority	City of Derby
Inspection number	329088
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Susan Aldridge

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	15
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Les Allen
Headteacher	Ms Sue Bradley
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2006
School address	Bridge Street Derby Derbyshire DE1 3LB
Telephone number	01332 715970
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Kingsmead School caters for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties who have been excluded from mainstream and special schools in the city. The school opened in September 2007 in new purpose-built accommodation. For most, standards on entry to the school are well below average because students have often missed much schooling, occasionally more than a year. All 15 students currently on the school's roll have a statement of special educational needs. Almost all students are boys and are mainly from White British backgrounds. The proportion eligible for free school meals is well above average.

Through the local authority, the school has submitted an application to the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) to merge with the Derby City Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Currently, the school and the PRU are led and managed as a single institution with one headteacher and one governing body. Students on the roll of the school receive their education at the main site, Kingsmead, as well as at other of the PRU's bases located around the city. Students in Years 7 to 9 are taught mostly at the main site, whereas those in Years 10 and 11 are taught at Key Stage 4 bases and visit the main site to gain access to specialist facilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Kingsmead School's effectiveness is satisfactory, which is how it sees itself. It provides a satisfactory quality of education and a good quality support for the students. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There is an increasing amount of good teaching but an occasional lack of challenge distinguishes the satisfactory from the good. While standards remain well below average for most, students make sound progress in their time at the school and their achievement is satisfactory. As the school has been open for just over a year, it has little data to show the standards reached by Year 9, and there were no Year 11 students or results last year. Although students have personal academic targets, and the school monitors their progress towards these, it has not measured the proportion of targets successfully achieved by each student. Therefore, there is not a useful indicator of achievement for individuals and the whole school. However, data is being collected and the headteacher is evaluating systems currently available for comparing the school's performance with similar schools nationally.

As the number of students on the school's roll is small, the strong partnership with the PRU, local schools, local authority and services is a bonus. Students benefit from these well-established links in a number of ways. In particular, the organisation of a team of professionals within the organisation secures high quality additional support and care for students and their families, which greatly enhances students' well-being. As a result, students improve well their attendance, behaviour and social and emotional adjustment and their personal development is good. These improvements are evident in the data on attendance and exclusions, and in the steady reduction of incidents, more so as students settle in. Personal behaviour targets are monitored regularly and form the basis for the school's rewards system, which students value. However, success in meeting these targets, although checked, is not analysed. Students clearly enjoy school. They are well informed on matters of healthy and safe living. They eat and drink healthily at school and enjoy the opportunities that they have for physical exercise. For the most part, they behave safely and sensibly. Given their difficulties and the fact that the school is growing, they make a good contribution to the school and wider communities.

The partnership arrangement also enables the school to provide a wide range of learning experiences, particularly in work-related learning at Key Stage 4. It gives a great deal of flexibility so that students' timetables can be tailored to their individual needs. However, the curriculum does not fully meet requirements as there is no modern foreign language taught at Key Stage 3 and no religious education (RE) at Key Stage 4. In addition, not all the statements of special educational needs identify the school as the placement. As a result, the curriculum is satisfactory rather than good, and the school has identified this as an area for development.

There are several strengths of leadership and management. As a new school, Kingsmead shares its staff with the PRU, and there is not yet a full complement of subject leaders. However, leaders for the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology (ICT) have been appointed, although some are new to their roles. Those subject leaders appointed are suitably involved in the processes of checking the school's effectiveness. Governance is satisfactory. There are vacancies for parent governors that have not yet been filled whilst the organisation awaits the outcome of the application to merge with the PRU. As not all statutory requirements are met, leadership and management overall are satisfactory rather than good. Nevertheless, the school's self-evaluation is accurate, draws well on the views of stakeholders and enables the school to identify all the major areas in need of development. While the school is presently satisfactory, the pace at which the leadership and

management are tackling the most important concerns, particularly students' personal development, indicate good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of education by ensuring that students are given challenging tasks and personal targets, and are taught all the required subjects.
- Strengthen school self-evaluation by making effective use of the full range of data that the school already has on improvements in students' progress and behaviour, and establishing a means of comparing the performance of the school with similar schools nationally.
- Ensure that vacancies on the governing body are filled.
- In conjunction with the local authority, ensure that students' statements of special educational needs name the school as the appropriate placement.

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

Most students enter the school with knowledge and skills well below those expected at their age, mainly because they have had poor attendance at other schools or because of the nature of their difficulties. They improve their basic skills at a sound rate, although most do not reach the standards expected by Year 11. The school sets challenging long-term targets for students by the end of Years 9 and 11. Last year the very small number of students who took tests in Year 9 were mostly successful in reaching the levels that the school identified in their targets. Five students in Year 10 were successful in achieving passes in entry level English, mathematics and science. Students are generally successful in reaching the short-term academic targets set for them within the intended timescale, but occasionally these targets are not challenging enough.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They steadily develop their self-awareness, including an appreciation of their personal strengths, weaknesses, skills and qualities. They also grow in self-confidence and self-esteem. Their ability to understand and control their emotions improves significantly and shows in their much improved and more socially acceptable behaviour. Most attend well, with a few achieving 100% attendance. However, a small number of persistent non-attenders brings the overall statistic down. Good relationships between all members of the school's community create a calm, racially harmonious atmosphere. Students enjoy the opportunities provided for them to take physical exercise. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions and students make healthy choices. The school's environment is respected, and students help others in the wider community. For example, they have raised funds through enterprises, joined in with preparations for the local carnival and improved the external environment at school bases. Good guidance and experiences of the world of work help them to make decisions about what to do on leaving school. The progress they make in improving their basic skills prepares them satisfactorily for the next step.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

While teaching and learning are satisfactory, there are some strengths. Staff establish good relationships with the students and get to know them well. They use this knowledge effectively to manage students and to provide tasks that they are confident the students will enjoy. Lessons often start with a motivating and interesting task that gets students settled and engaged in learning. Teachers wisely provide preliminary tasks that students can manage, and which stimulate confidence. Most lessons, but not all, move on to more challenging tasks that lead to students to increase their knowledge and skills. Occasionally, the work set is not matched closely to the students' capabilities and progress is limited. In most instances, staff ensure that students know the purposes for each lesson and then review these later so that students have a sense of their own learning. However, they are not consistent in reminding students about their behaviour targets or reviewing these at the end of the lesson. When this is done, it gives students valuable feedback and encourages them to behave well. This is particularly effective at Key Stage 4 when students earn points in lessons that accumulate towards rewards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum places a suitable emphasis on the core subjects and personal, social, health and citizenship education. It reflects most of the provision described on the students' statements. The exception is that most statements require that students have access to the full National Curriculum and there is no modern foreign language taught at Key Stage 3 and no RE in Key Stage 4. Additional breadth is added at Key Stage 3 with a thematic curriculum, which includes history and geography. Visits, such as a ghost walk, linked to one of the themes add enjoyment for students. The school recognises that subject leaders need to audit the themes to be certain that all the required content is taught. A very strong feature at Key Stage 4 is the extensive choice of opportunities for work-related learning. There are good methods for students to develop their interests, such as fishing, composing and performing music. A suitable range of accredited courses caters for students of all abilities, and provides pathways for them to follow once they leave school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Well-established links with a wide variety of external services contribute to the very good support that students and their families receive. Within school, there is an effective support team, including the school nurse, a drama therapist, and counsellor. They coordinate and secure sources of support for the students, thus assuring improvement to their well-being. Students gradually grow to trust the adults in school and feel that there is always someone to turn to. Vulnerable students are closely monitored. All students have the support of an individual plan, which contains precise behaviour and academic targets. General progress is monitored as well as students' success in achieving their personal targets. However, monitoring does not always detect the lack of challenge in targets set. There are good procedures to support students in developing better attendance and improving their behaviour. Constructive links with the Connexions careers service provide good guidance for students on training and employment

opportunities, and at Key Stage 4 there is a strong emphasis on promoting students' knowledge and understanding of types of accreditation and how they can build on these.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a very precise vision for the organisation and its role in meeting the needs of excluded and vulnerable students in the city. She provides very clear direction for staff and demonstrates a strong commitment to developing the provision further. Both deputies provide good leadership, playing a pivotal role in ensuring that despite its complex organisation the school runs smoothly on a day to day basis. The management structure, whilst clearly defined and well-constructed to cope with the complexities of school organisation, is not yet complete. Some recently appointed middle managers, particularly subject leaders, are new to their roles. There is a clear plan and timetable for monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, shared amongst all those with leadership roles. Governors are most supportive and between them have a very good range of pertinent skills and backgrounds. They are well informed and hold the school firmly to account. They are aware of the need to ensure that the curriculum meets requirements and that parents are represented on the governing body.

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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
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
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
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**

14 November 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Kingsmead School, Derby, DE1 3LB

I was pleased to be able to meet many of you during my recent visit. I would like to thank those of you who spoke to me about school life. I enjoyed my time at Kingsmead and was pleased to see and hear that many of you enjoy yourselves at school too.

I came to the school to see how well you are all getting on and find out whether there are any things that could be improved. The way that most of you have increased your attendance and improved your behaviour at Kingsmead are impressive. These two things are very important as they are helping you to learn, and show that you are making progress in developing key skills. You are very well cared for and supported by a good number of people. It was pleasing to hear that you feel safe in the school and able to turn to adults for help. You show respect for each other and the school environment. I noticed that you have healthy eating habits at lunchtime and that you behave sensibly and safely. I hope that those of you who were raising money for Children in Need by designing and making burgers had a successful day.

Your school is new and a good start has been made in its first year in managing its very complex organisation. Your headteacher, the governors and staff know what they need to do to make the school a good one. They know that they need to make sure that you are taught all the subjects that you should have on your timetables. You will have work in lessons and personal targets that will help you to make better progress. Staff will collect information on how many targets you reach so that they can measure how well you are doing. The school will recruit more governors and work with the local authority to make sure that your statements name this school. You can help to improve the school by attending as regularly as possible and taking responsibility for reaching your personal targets. I wish you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sue Aldridge

Lead inspector