

King's School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132382
Local Authority	Service Children's Education (SCE)
Inspection number	331012
Inspection dates	3-4 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Steve Isherwood HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Mixed comprehensive
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	715
Sixth form	101
Appropriate authority	Service Children's Education
Chair	Brigadier Nitsch
Headteacher	Mr G Trott
Date of previous school inspection	November 2005
School address	Mansergh Barracks Gutersloth Germany
Telephone number	00495241842226
Fax number	00495241842310

Age group	11-18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

King's School provides education for students aged 11 to 18 and is the largest secondary school for service children. It serves the military communities of Gutersloh, Munster, Paderborn and Bielefeld. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage with a small number from minority ethnic groups. The school has 56 students boarding on a weekly basis. A lower than average percentage of students has a learning difficulty and/or disability and no students are entitled to a free school meal. The school achieved Healthy School Status and Investors in People Status in 2008.

In common with all Service Children's Education (SCE) schools, it is subject to the frequent transfer of students into and out of the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'Since joining the school my daughter is a changed child in all aspects of her school life. She has become a confident, self-motivated and a successful learner'. 'The school is enabling my son to enjoy his schooling'. These sentiments expressed by some parents and echoed overwhelmingly by others are at the heart of why King's is a good, rapidly improving school with some outstanding features. Students' achievements are good. They reach above average standards in their work and make good progress in their personal development. They behave well, have positive attitudes and get on well with each other. This is demonstrated by their improving attendance and their enthusiasm for the wide range of activities that the school provides. As one student said, 'There are always activities and events going on and these encourage you to take part and enjoy school more'. Students have a good understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise and a balanced diet. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe and free from harm because of the excellent range of guidance and personal support they receive from staff. When asked to identify the best things about the school, students emphasised that their problems are swiftly resolved and that their views are always listened to and acted upon. There was also strong praise for the high levels of care they receive from staff.

Students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are making better progress in their work at Key Stage 3 and 4 as recent procedures to improve their achievement are now bearing fruit. By the end of Year 9 and Year 11, students are reaching above average standards. Given their below average standards on entering the school this represents good achievement from their starting points. In contrast, standards for some of the higher ability students across the school and in the sixth form are proving more difficult to turn around and are not yet high enough. This is because the level of challenge in some lessons is variable which means that some students do not always achieve as well or as rapidly as they should.

A significant factor in students' better progress is the good quality teaching they receive. The amount of outstanding teaching has improved since the last inspection. In the highly successful lessons, the range of teaching styles allows students to flourish within a variety of independent and challenging activities that encourage them to think about how they learn and to think of different ways to tackle their work. Where teaching is less strong, including in the sixth form, too many work sheets are used, students are less engaged and opportunities that allow students to learn independently are not always taken.

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher spearheads the good quality of leadership at all levels. His vision for improving the school is crystal-clear. Following a period of much change and reorganisation, the new leadership team is having a huge impact on raising morale and in fostering a collective approach amongst staff. Everyone pulls in the same direction; staff give of their best and there is an excellent understanding of the strengths of the school and where further improvements are required. The school's rapid response to potential under-achievement is a very strong feature of its work. As a consequence, and along with its other strengths, the school has excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form is satisfactory, although there are some good and outstanding features. Standards are average and most students make satisfactory progress. The school is aware that this is not good enough and measures are in place to improve provision. Personal development is good. Students have very positive attitudes. Many of them support younger learners to help develop their skills and knowledge. Attendance is good. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory; there is some good teaching, but much of it is satisfactory. In the main, this is because teachers tend to dominate lessons and there is insufficient challenge, especially for the most able learners. The curriculum is satisfactory and improving; there is a reasonable range of subjects offered at GCE, AS and A level. An increasing number of vocational subjects are offered at intermediate level for those sixth form students who are not yet ready for academic study. A small number of students have taken up apprenticeships with an army trainer. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Target setting and monitoring students' progress, which were weaknesses in the last inspection have improved greatly and are now robust. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. The acting head of sixth form has an accurate awareness of the strengths and areas for improvement. Measures to tackle weaknesses are in place. Much progress has been made in raising expectations but it is too soon to judge the overall impact on achievement and standards.

Effectiveness of boarding provision

Grade: 1

The boarding provision is outstanding and has improved substantially since the previous inspection. All previous issues have been rectified and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools are all met. There is a comprehensive range of written information for boarders and their parents. The boarding induction booklet is particularly helpful for helping new students become established quickly and overcome homesickness. A strong feature is close liaison with parents, including encouraging boarders to communicate regularly with parents on active service. Boarders' views are actively sought, and students feel that they can make a positive contribution to the ongoing development of the boarding facility through the boarders' council.

The students at King's Hall greet visitors with a smile and say how happy they are to be boarders. They feel valued, well supported and able to relax and develop in a welcoming and vibrant community. The excellent leadership of the house parents has been instrumental in creating an atmosphere of warmth and homeliness within a stable structure of routines, which are well established and work efficiently. There are high expectations of the house tutor team for whom excellent support and coaching is provided. There is a good range of organised activities for boarders especially for younger students. However, sixth formers could be more proactive in organising their own activities and taking on greater responsibility for the organisation of the boarding house.

Most students share a bedroom. Their accommodation is spacious, clean, bright, warm and comfortable. They look after their environment well and their rooms have been attractively personalised. There is a rolling programme for redecoration and refurbishment. The public accommodation has been thoughtfully organised into areas in which boarders can work, exercise, play or socialise, and these are very well equipped and furnished. The arrangements for evening prep are very good. Boarders are supervised appropriately and have ready access to laptops and other resources to support their learning, including tutorial support. The mentoring system is a particular strength. The house parents and mentoring tutors are well aware of each boarder's academic progress and targets and monitor them closely. This enables them to provide effective support for anyone who may be underachieving. Healthcare is effective and well organised. The nurses are proactive in providing both routine healthcare and in running group sessions on lifestyle choices both for boarders and contributing to programmes in the school. Liaison between the boarding house and school is strong.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and accelerate progress for higher ability students in the main school and in the sixth form
- Find ways to engage students, including those in the sixth form, more actively in lessons so that they develop the skills of independent learning

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and students' achievement is good. Students join the school in Year 7 with skills and abilities that are generally below that expected for their age. By the end of Key Stage 3, standards are above the national average in all core subjects, at the expected Level 5. This was reflected in the latest national tests results for 2008. A notable success was the improvement in the proportion of students achieving a Level 5 in mathematics, which rose to 93% and was 15% above the national average. Whilst above average numbers of students reached the higher Level 6 in mathematics and science, not enough did so in English: results were disappointingly below national and SCE averages and several students did not reach the standards of which they were capable.

Students' current work, together with the school's own data shows that students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as they move through the school to Year 11. In 2008, standards rose significantly at Key Stage 4. The percentage of students achieving five or more A* to C grades at GCSE increased from 53% to 66%. In addition, the proportion of pupils for whom these good grades included English and mathematics went up by 6% to 54%, which is above the national average. Nevertheless, the school acknowledges that the progress made by some of the more able students is not yet rapid enough.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good and have a strong impact on their good progress. They enjoy coming to school as can be seen by their positive attitudes and good behaviour. This can also be demonstrated in their attendance, which whilst improving, remains satisfactory. Relationships are positive: students settle in well and make new friends very swiftly. As one student said, 'it is a very friendly place and there's always help for you, no matter what'. Students have a good understanding of healthy eating and many take advantage of the wide range of opportunities for physical activity provided by the school. They have good attitudes to avoiding misuse of drugs and alcohol. In their written work and discussion, many show increasing confidence in expressing their own feelings and in understanding the feelings of others. They learn the importance of making a positive contribution to society through their personal and social education and many opportunities for supporting charities. The school council makes a strong contribution to decision-making on such matters as the appointment of senior staff, approaches to anti-bullying and the extra-curricular enrichment programme.

Students have good awareness of life beyond their immediate community. They learn about life in Germany from joint activities with students in German partner schools. They also have a good understanding of society in the United Kingdom and of events in the countries to which their parents may be deployed. Older students understand the career options open to them and have a working knowledge of managing their personal finances. As a result and along with their good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills, they are well prepared for their economic well-being on leaving school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall with some elements of outstanding practice that enables students to make good progress in their work. Routinely, lessons are structured well, conducted at a brisk pace with effective use of resources such as information communication technology (ICT). Lively repartee keeps students on their toes. Teachers are enthusiastic, well organised and demonstrate good subject knowledge. In the very best lessons, teachers ensure that students are actively engaged, providing a variety of stimulating and exciting activities that challenge and spur learners to make excellent progress. Questioning is sharp, expectations are high and students are given every opportunity to direct their own learning whilst discussing and sharing their ideas with others. For example, in an outstanding history lesson on the causes of World War 1, students in Year 9 were able to develop their understanding of nationalism and the role of alliances in carefully crafted activities that promoted high levels of discussion and independent thinking. Elsewhere in Year 7, students with additional learning needs made excellent progress in using and

applying their scientific knowledge by devising their own experiments to test for different gasses.

Where teaching is less strong, in the main school and in the sixth form, there is an over-reliance on worksheets and students' work is over-directed. Consequently, students are not always prompted to think for themselves and show initiative. Sometimes, students' understanding is not checked sufficiently well and teachers do not always provide enough challenge for learners that are more able.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and improving. It fulfils statutory requirements. There is a good range of opportunities for students in Key Stage 3. Changes are being made to the Key Stage 4 curriculum to better meet the needs of all learners by expanding the range of courses available. Vulnerable students and those requiring particular support are well catered for through intervention strategies and small group activities. There is some 'fast tracking' for more able students, but the school is aware that further work is required in this area. All students benefit from extra-curricular clubs and activities which add extensively to students' experiences and are well attended. Many subjects include field trips, residential visits, and enrichment activities in their schemes of work. These contribute positively to students' enjoyment of learning and enable them to extend their skills and interests. For example, a recent and very successful 'Holocaust day' enabled Year 9 students to discuss sensitive issues with a Holocaust survivor.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. All required systems and checks are in place to safeguard the students' health and well-being. This is a school that takes exceptionally good care of all its students who confirm that they are well looked after and feel safe and secure. Parents' questionnaires overwhelmingly support this view. Support for all learners including boarders, those most at risk and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very well organised. Students' needs are identified early and they are provided with outstanding personal support. For example, the excellent work of progress managers has brought about significant improvements in students' behaviour and in reducing persistent absenteeism. In addition, the health clinic, smoking cessation sessions and the 'Chillax' group provide students with an outstanding level of guidance and support to equip them for healthy lifestyle choices.

At the time of the previous inspection, the school was data-rich but made too little use of the information. This is no longer the case as the school now analyses its data critically and intervenes swiftly and effectively. This ensures that all staff, pastoral and academic, are fully aware of each student's progress and targets. The assertive mentoring scheme for Year 11 is an excellent programme of early intervention and close mentoring, which picks up underachieving students and makes a significant impact on improving their progress, enabling students to achieve their potential.

Students are given good guidance about making choices at key points in their school careers and every effort is made to settle new students quickly. Careers advice is

outstanding: students are very well supported through individual interviews, bespoke guidance, and information packs. Students are also well aware of their targets and their progress towards them. However, the quality of teachers' marking is variable. There is some outstanding practice, which offers encouragement and clear advice for improvement, but this is not replicated across all subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management lie at the heart of the school's continual improvement. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership, works with energy and commitment and is leading the school in the right direction. In doing so, he has successfully ensured that the work of the school has been clearly focused on raising achievement, improving the quality of learning and on promoting a clearer ethos. Since his appointment, no time has been lost. The pace of change has accelerated, expectations have been raised, staff are accountable for their work and tough decisions have been made to eliminate inadequate performance. He is very well supported by an equally committed team of senior leaders and middle managers who share his vision and sense of purpose. As a group, they have an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They actively seek out ways to improve further the current position through a cycle of self-evaluation and constant review. There are regular checks on how well departments are performing and detailed analysis of students' progress. This means that priorities are identified accurately and senior leaders have a clear focus of how well the school is performing. The school promotes community cohesion well through a range of community-based events and activities at school, local and global level. The governing council fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. Its members are very committed and offer good levels of support to the school.

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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?	2	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?	2	2
The effectiveness of boarding provision	1	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	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	1	
How well 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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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	2	
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



6 February 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Kings School, Mansergh Barracks, Gutersloh, BFPO 113.

Thank you for the contribution you made to the recent inspection of your school. We really enjoyed chatting to you around the school, in your classrooms and in the interview with the school council. You stated your opinions very clearly and they were very helpful to us. I am writing to let you know what we found out.

Firstly and most importantly, we would like you to know that you go to a good and improving school. You make good progress in your work and are well taught and very well looked after. Those of you in the sixth form make satisfactory progress. This is because some of your teaching lacks challenge so that some of you do not always make the progress you should.

We were very pleased to see how well you behave and were impressed with the friendly atmosphere in the school and the good relationships that exist. You make a positive contribution to this success by your positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning. It was a pleasure to see that your attendance has improved and we were impressed with your positive comments about how swiftly staff deal with your problems and that, as a result, you feel the school is a very safe place to be.

The headteacher and all the staff work very hard to make the school as good as it can be and we are confident that it will continue to improve. They are committed to your success both in terms of examination results and in terms of supporting your wider personal development into confident and mature adults. To help them, we have asked them to ensure that more of you in the main school and in the sixth form reach higher levels in your work. We also asked them to ensure that more of your lessons across the school are like the very best ones we saw when you were very enthusiastic about your learning. You can help by telling your teachers what makes your lessons interesting and what helps you to learn.

Keep trying hard. I wish you and your families all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE