

# Kingsbrook School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122060
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	331581
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robin Gaff

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>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	884
Sixth form	134
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Allen Walker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Cox
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Stratford Road Deanshanger Milton Keynes MK19 6HN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01908 563468
<b>Fax number</b>	01908 262905

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Kingsbrook is an average size school. It recruits most of its students from local village primary schools. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and of those who have English as an additional language is well below the national average. The school was awarded specialist status in business and enterprise in September 2005. At its last inspection, it was given a notice to improve since it was performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The current, interim, headteacher was appointed in September 2008. A permanent appointment was made in February 2009 and the new headteacher is due to take up her post this September.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Kingsbrook provides a satisfactory quality of education for its students. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Since the appointment of the interim headteacher, the school has improved rapidly. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

The school now accurately evaluates its own effectiveness and leaders have acted decisively to bring about improvement. Inadequate teaching has been largely eliminated. Urgent action has been taken to address underperformance in specific areas, and to improve the effectiveness of middle leaders with subject responsibilities. The Interim headteacher and senior team have ensured that staff focus clearly on key strategies for improvement such as accurate assessment and tracking. They have restored the belief that students at Kingsbrook, when taught well, can attain high standards and achieve well. Governors now monitor the schools' performance much more closely, and are prepared to hold leaders to account. Many members of staff and students said the atmosphere in the school is much more positive, and that students' attitudes to learning have improved considerably. One sixth form student commented that staff are now working well together; the school had 'lost its way', but has found it again. These improvements have not yet been recognised by all parents, a significant minority of whom express concerns, particularly about behaviour.

Achievement and standards in all key stages, and including the progress made by students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are now satisfactory. Students' performance at GCSE declined in recent years. The proportion of students gaining five passes at grade C or above including English and mathematics was above average in 2006. In 2008 it was below average, and students' progress from the time they joined the school was unsatisfactory. This was particularly the case for boys. It is clear that the school has arrested and reversed the decline in standards, which are now rising across the school. The attainment of current Year 11 students as demonstrated, for example, by GCSE module results and assessed coursework, is well above that of the previous cohort. This is because the teaching they received has improved, and because the school has focused relentlessly on identifying those students who were at risk of underachieving, and on providing them with effective individual support. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The proportion of good and outstanding lessons has improved, and the amount of inadequate teaching has been greatly reduced. However, the quality of teaching is not consistent throughout the school, and the school's specialist status for business and enterprise is not yet having a fully positive impact on the school's curriculum and on students' learning.

Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sound, but they do not have enough opportunities to learn about the lives and traditions of people living in other parts of the country or the wider world. Students are increasing their understanding, if not yet their adoption, of healthy lifestyles. They feel very safe in school. The school's procedures for safeguarding children and young people are now secure. Students say that they have little concern about bullying or racist incidents because the few that occur are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Students are well cared for by the school, but there are inconsistencies in the application of systems to ensure they know their academic targets. They have a number of opportunities to contribute to the school community, for example by acting as receptionists, but they say they would like more. The skills and qualifications they gain are giving them a sound preparation for future study and employment.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 3

Standards in the sixth form are in line with national averages, and students make satisfactory progress. Their personal development is good. Students say they enjoy their sixth form experience, because they have good relations with their teachers, who are approachable and willing to give them extra help when they need it. Teaching and learning, and the sixth form curriculum, are satisfactory. The school provides a good range of academic courses, but the lack of vocational options means that some students follow courses to which they are not entirely suited, which limits their progress. Care, guidance and support in the sixth form are good. Students receive good help in preparing to apply for higher education, and the school now has better systems for advising those students who intend to proceed directly to employment. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Sixth form leaders are strongly committed to students' welfare and their academic progress. They closely monitor the performance of individual students, as well as the quality of teaching they receive, and have acted effectively to bring about improvements.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards by spreading good and outstanding practice in teaching more widely, in order to ensure greater consistency in learning and progress.
- Increase the impact of the school's specialist status on the wider curriculum and thereby on standards and achievement.
- Ensure that the school contributes more effectively to community cohesion by giving students more opportunities to develop their understanding of different traditions and ways of living in this country and the wider world.

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 attained standards that are broadly average. By the end of Key Stage 4, their attainment is in line with national averages. This represents satisfactory progress. The school has strengthened its procedures for tracking the progress of individuals and groups, and has introduced a range of measures, including out-of-school classes, to tackle underachievement. As a result, the gap between the performance of boys and girls has narrowed, and is now in line with national averages. Standards in subjects which were underperforming, such as mathematics, have improved substantially, and students are on course to gain much better GCSE results than their predecessors. At the end of Key Stage 3 standards are also in line with national expectations, indicating satisfactory achievement. The rate of students' progress in lessons is improving, because teachers are better informed about their students' prior attainment, have a more realistic view of the standards they are reaching, and are planning activities which are more appropriate to their abilities.

Students join the sixth form with standards that are lower than those attained by sixth form students elsewhere. They make sound progress and gain qualifications which equip them for future study and/or employment.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Most students are courteous to adults, work well together, and behave well. They feel confident enough to raise matters of concern and suggestions, for example about improving the school environment, and rightly believe that their voice is listened to. The school provides a range of healthy options in the canteen but many students do not take advantage of them. Students' enjoyment of school is satisfactory. Attendance is above the national averages, and has improved steadily in recent years. Students have satisfactory opportunities to learn about living in a multicultural society, for example by studying different world faiths. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Students from different backgrounds relate well to one another, but they do not consistently demonstrate a good understanding and appreciation of other cultures. Students receive sound preparation for future economic well-being through structured work-related activities and their satisfactory development of literacy and numeracy skills. Sixth form students have good opportunities to contribute to the school community, for example by acting as mentors for younger students, and to develop their teamwork and problem-solving skills by organising their own social events.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Across the school, teachers plan lessons carefully to ensure that students understand what they are going to learn, and not merely what they are going to do. Teachers include in their lessons a greater range of activities which are suited to students' interests and abilities. As a result, students' engagement in lessons has improved, and the number of occasions when bored or disaffected students disrupt others' learning has substantially reduced. In many lessons, teachers' expertise in and enthusiasm for their subjects enables them to model challenging topics well, and organise activities which interest and involve students. For example in an outstanding Year 7 English lesson on the use of stage directions, students made excellent progress because the teacher used well-directed questions to develop their understanding, and enabled them to assess accurately their own and others' quality of work. In weaker lessons, teachers do not use enough questions that enable students to develop their own answers. Most teachers are confident in using modern computer-based technology to enhance their presentations, but they do not give students enough opportunities to learn from using it themselves. The quality of teachers' marking is variable. Some teachers provide students with clear written indications of where they have succeeded and what they should do to develop their work. In other cases marking is too brief or too infrequent to enable students to improve their performance.

## Curriculum and other activities

### Grade: 3

The school curriculum in Years 7 to 9 meets national requirements, including citizenship and personal, social and health education. For Years 10 and 11 the school has moved to introduce much greater flexibility in what students may study, and the timetable is structured to match individual requirements where possible. In Key Stage 4, the school provides an extended range of applied and vocational subjects, including health and social care, and travel and tourism. The school understands that it must improve provision further in subjects linked to the school's

specialist status. Enterprise is a thread throughout the curriculum but it is not yet contributing to raising achievement in all areas of learning. Students have insufficient opportunities to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills. The school offers a satisfactory range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities but the take-up is patchy. Students' participation in sporting activities is good. There are fewer opportunities for students to join clubs linked to academic subjects or to take part in residential visits or trips abroad.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Students say that they feel safe and secure because the staff know them and respond quickly to their needs. Although academic guidance and tracking of students' progress have improved, there are some inconsistencies in the application of these systems. This results in some students not knowing enough about what they need to do to reach their targets. Most staff show a high level of commitment to meeting students' needs, often using the students' perspective to help them reflect on and improve practice. For example, the school is responding positively to students' suggestions about improving strategies to improve behaviour. It has established good relations with outside agencies, who give additional support to students who need it. The inclusion unit is efficient and effective. Students understand why they are there, and work to plans which are developmental and innovative. This is resulting in a decline in the number of students who have to be excluded because their behaviour limits their own and others' progress. Sixth form students are very appreciative of the support they receive from their tutors, and the good opportunities they have to review their own progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

There has been significant improvement in leadership and management during the current school year. The impact is evident in students' improved progress and attitudes. The interim headteacher and his successor are cooperating effectively, together with the senior team and managers at all levels, to further accelerate the pace of improvement. They are not complacent, and are setting increasingly challenging targets for the future. Extensive, ongoing support provided by the local authority has helped staff at all levels to improve learning, the behaviour of students and the rigour and accuracy of assessment. Leaders have a clear understanding of what constitutes good and outstanding teaching. Robust monitoring and honest appraisal of the quality of teaching are now well established, and the school is beginning to disseminate good practice more widely. Not all the initiatives that leaders have taken are as yet bearing fruit, and the school has not yet been successful in communicating to all parents the improvements that have taken place. Managers have taken steps to promote community cohesion to develop students' knowledge and appreciation of other cultures and traditions, especially those not strongly represented in the ethnic profile of the school. However, students have too little direct contact with their peers in different cultural contexts. Governance is now a strength. The work of the governing body has underpinned that of managers and the local authority. Together they have developed an ambitious, determined and increasingly successful vision for the school's future development, which indicates its satisfactory capacity to improve still further.

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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	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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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	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**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	3
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	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3	

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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>	3	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
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	3
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	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3	
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**

19 June 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Kingsbrook School, Deanshanger, MK19 6HN

I am writing, on behalf of all the inspectors that visited your school recently, to thank you for the warm welcome you gave us, and for the help you gave us in getting to know your school.

Kingsbrook is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education. Many of you told us about how much it has improved recently, for example in the teaching you receive, and in pupils' behaviour. You are right to think you can help the school to improve still further, because the school is listening to your suggestions. Because teaching is improving, standards throughout the school are rising, and pupils are now making progress that matches their abilities. The school takes good care of you, but you do not always receive the information you need to improve your work.

You say you feel very safe in school because bullying and racist incidents are rare, and are dealt with well when they do occur. You understand the importance of healthy lifestyles but many of you do not take advantage of the healthy options now available in the school canteen. Your attendance is above the national average – well done! You say you enjoy lessons most when you are given plenty of opportunities to learn for yourselves and from each other. There are a number of ways in which you can and do contribute to the school and wider communities, and you say you would like more. The skills and qualifications you gain give you a satisfactory base for future economic well-being. Much of the teaching in the school is good or better, and in many lessons you have the chance to take part in activities which help you to progress well. The curriculum is satisfactory, but you do not have enough opportunities to develop your ICT skills, or learn about how people live elsewhere in this country and in the wider world.

- The school's leaders and the governors all want to make the school even better. To help them to do this, we have asked them to concentrate on the following areas.
- Spread good and outstanding teaching more widely throughout the school.
- Make sure you benefit more fully from the business and enterprise specialism.
- Give you greater opportunities to learn about different ways of living in this country and elsewhere in the world.

We all wish you all the very best for the future. Yours faithfully

Robin Gaff

Lead inspector