

# Kingsdale Foundation School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100844
<b>Local Authority</b>	Southwark
<b>Inspection number</b>	335603
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clare Gillies

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>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1198
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs N Gibbes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr S Morrison
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Alleyn Park Dulwich London SE21 8SQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8670 7575
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<b>Email address</b>	info@kingsdale.southwark.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. Meetings were held with groups of students, governors, parents and many members of staff. The number of lessons observed was 47 and 45 teachers were seen. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at monitoring records, the school development plan, the school improvement partner's and other external consultants' reports and documents related to attendance, standards and achievement and support for students with learning or social needs. The team analysed 154 parental questionnaires and those completed by staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the key factors that have generated the sustained improvements in standards and achievement and present standards and predictions for results in 2010
- the quality of the Every Child Matters outcomes for all groups of students
- elements of teaching and learning such as the use of new technology, targets set for students and their understanding of how to improve their work.

## Information about the school

This is a large, over-subscribed school, housed in award-winning buildings. The school's intake is from a diverse range of cultural, ethnic and social backgrounds. Currently over 70 languages are represented in the school, over 40% of the student population is of African or Caribbean heritage and boys outnumber girls in all years. The intake for September 2010 has more girls than boys and the largest ethnic group is White British. The number of looked after children, refugees and asylum seekers is declining. The school has a small designated unit for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties and a high but decreasing percentage of students with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties or disabilities. The school has specialist status in the performing arts and, responding to parents' wishes, a sixth form will open in September 2010, a year after the school celebrated its 50th anniversary. It has received numerous awards and accolades, including an Inclusion Quality Mark and, for several years, letters from government ministers recognising the school's sustained improvement in achievement.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

This outstanding school gives every student the opportunity to make rapid progress and to achieve success at the end of Year 11. GCSE results have risen every year since the last inspection; close to half the students attained five or more A\*-C GCSE grades including English and mathematics in 2009. In the same year, over 95% of students continued into further education. This represents outstanding progress for these students because their attainment when they arrived in Year 7 was well below average. As a parent wrote, 'The school is a magical place and makes dreams come true.'

Students also receive outstanding care and support to become confident young adults and to cope with any personal issues that may prevent them from enjoying school life and learning well. With good teaching, an extremely flexible high quality curriculum and superb facilities, it is not surprising that the school is very popular and could fill its Year 7 places many times over.

All students who responded to the questionnaire feel that they know how to improve their work and that teachers are interested in their views. It is the dedication of every member of staff, combined with students studying the best subjects to suit their abilities and aspirations, that generates the outstanding achievement seen in recent years.

Leadership and management of teaching and learning are good, though there is not yet a sharp enough focus in lesson observations on what really makes teaching and learning outstanding, and in some middle leaders' analysis of examination results, to secure the highest possible standards in the future. The predominantly good teaching in lessons is reinforced by residential trips, and extra classes before and after school and on Saturday mornings. Complementing these is the excellent work of specialist staff for students with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties and disabilities, those who do not speak English as their mother tongue and the declining but large number of students who arrive at the school after Year 7.

Students' behaviour in lessons is often exemplary and they move calmly around the large site. Practically all of them are punctual to lessons, study hard and work very well together in groups. Although mostly attentive in personal, social, health and citizenship lessons, they are not always absorbed because some teachers have not yet developed the knowledge and skills to deliver inspiring lessons in this subject. A few students commented that some topics seem to be repeated too often.

Students feel very safe and observe that bullying and racist incidents are very rare indeed. This reflects one of the school's vision statements: 'Think of a community enriched by the power of diversity, respecting rights and reflecting responsibility.' Attendance is consistently high and exclusions are very rare. In assemblies and thought

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for the day and in all subjects, especially the performing arts and religious education, students' rich cultural backgrounds and languages are celebrated, contributing to their excellent awareness of social, moral and spiritual values, and their self-esteem.

Students are expected to voice their opinions and take on positions of responsibility, both of which they do willingly. They know their views are taken seriously. Year and school council meetings, a pupils' forum twice a month, positions such as prefects and house and sports captains are all ways in which many students contribute to school life. The school is linked with many local organisations and its contribution to community cohesion, locally and beyond, is outstanding.

The impact of the specialist subjects is not just seen in the high GCSE music and drama grades but in the numerous musical groups and successful dramatic and dance productions. Many of the school's teams perform very well in matches in a range of sports. Eight Year 11 students were offered contracts with football clubs in 2009. Provision for gifted and talented students in all academic and vocational subjects is excellent and they are encouraged to excel.

Students appreciate the enormous number of activities which take place beyond the school day and that, if necessary, funding is arranged so that they can participate. Recently, the chamber choir performed in four concerts at the Queen Elizabeth Hall. The school runs a Trip of a Lifetime programme which offers destinations including USA, Namibia, China, Japan and the French Alps.

The enthusiastic governing body holds many meetings and its members have much relevant professional experience which informs their probing questions and demands for even higher standards. Governors generate an effective balance between challenge and support. The school gives outstanding value for money, for example successfully balancing the number of non-teaching and teaching staff to have enough teachers for small class sizes.

The headteacher welcomes the strong role parents play in the school's activities, development and progress. All the parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that the school listens to their concerns and suggestions. They meet once a month for discussions and instructive sessions, for example on cyber-bullying or other topical issues. By careful monitoring of attendance at events and excellent support for those families who need it, the school maintains excellent relationships with parents and carers from all backgrounds.

The highly respected headteacher leads the school with imagination and dedication; he is very well supported by the deputy headteachers, other senior staff and middle managers. The school's capacity to improve is excellent, as its consistent record of improvement in recent years demonstrates. Weaknesses are tackled promptly, self-evaluation is honest and realistic, management is efficient and effective, staff morale is high and the relentless pursuit of the highest standards is evident in all the school's work.

A parent observed that all decisions are made for the benefit of the children and a Year 9 student wrote that 'Our school is the best in the world.' Many other students, parents and staff described it with a range of compliments. Similarly, numerous adjectives, such

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as 'inspirational and passionate', have rightly been linked to the headteacher. What strikes visitors is the warm welcome offered by every single member of the community, the purposeful buzz, accompanied by hand bells at lesson changes, as students move through the large central area, and the sense that enjoyment of school life is just as important as achievement. The reality here is that the two are intertwined.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the delivery of personal, social, health and citizenship education and review the balance of topics in each year in order to strengthen students' understanding and appreciation of the value of this course.
- Refine evaluation processes by focusing on the features of outstanding teaching and learning so as to raise standards and achievement even further.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

Early entry GCSE and vocational qualification results for present Year 11 students are already higher than those recorded at the same time in 2009. Actions taken to improve achievement in subjects which did not perform so well have been positive, with improved standards in all of them, particularly science. Even though boys' GCSE results are not as high as girls', progress is outstanding for practically all groups of students. The school continues to try different arrangements, such as boys' groups, to improve their grades.

Students enjoy their lessons and work hard because they are happy and proud to be at the school and rightly confident that they will be given help if they have any difficulty learning. They know that teachers want them to do well and respond by concentrating and behaving extremely well. As a Year 11 student wrote, 'I thank God I am at Kingsdale because Wow!'

With attention to all aspects of health in several subjects, high participation rates in many sporting activities and high quality food in the canteen, students know how to lead healthy lives, which most of them do. They particularly enjoy achieving well in music, drama, sports and competitions, going on trips and visits and contributing to the local community, for example helping primary schools or performing in a home for the elderly.

A student wrote: 'The school has got opportunities for me to succeed and get prepared to face the outside world.' With a focus on literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, social and learning skills, two weeks work experience in Year 11 and high aspirations, students are extremely well prepared for the future.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Students from overseas learn English very fast. Refugees and asylum seekers, many of whom are looked after children, and students who enter after Year 7 make exceptional progress because the arrangements for them to settle into school are so thoughtful and well planned. A student wrote: 'Kingsdale staff are so caring when you are upset', which confirms the diligent work of many members of staff to treat all students as individuals. Almost all students are aware of their target levels and grades. Teachers often include descriptors of these in lessons so students know what they have to do to improve their work. Teachers' marking is thorough and helpful, and learning is particularly successful when they plan lessons based on their assessment of the next steps students must take, or ask students to evaluate their own or others' work.

Teachers use technology such as video clips, audio and interactive software effectively to make learning interesting and lively. They plan work carefully and include many groupwork sessions. In a few lessons, these were not complemented by different ways of learning so that the pace slowed down a little. A lack of varied teaching styles was evident in a few lessons as well although no inadequate lessons were seen. Nevertheless, in an increasing number of lessons in all years, teachers' enthusiasm, vitality and skilful questions and responses to answers generate outstanding teaching and learning.

In addition to the numerous clubs, activities and residential trips, students can study a large number of musical instruments and choose from the wealth of musical groups, ranging from a jazz band to a classical guitar group. The curriculum is further enhanced by the successful engineering diploma course and the popularity of the other vocational

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courses, the individual personal programmes arranged for students both in school and off-site, and the options choices in all years. For example, Year 7 students can choose which, and how many, foreign languages to study.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

All members of staff support the headteacher's vision for the future and made comments such as 'I have watched the amazing transformation of the school' and 'It is a brilliant school to work in.' Such sentiments are reflected in the warm and respectful manner in which all staff speak to students and the excellent role models they provide for them. These generate the positive relationships which underpin how well students learn and respond to teachers. They also reflect the headteacher's and governors' success in having ambitious students and staff who work together to drive improvements.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are exemplary, followed meticulously and kept fully up to date. Regular training ensures that staff are alert to their importance. Refugees and/or asylum seekers, looked after children and those with child protection plans are monitored carefully and sensitively, and contact with their families is regular and supportive.

The school functions as a totally cohesive community, with many ethnic groups represented on the governing body and the staff as well as among the students. Equality of opportunity and the recognition that students must be prepared to tackle discrimination in the future are embedded in the school's actions, curriculum and support mechanisms and the way it nurtures all students to achieve their best.

Senior leaders understand the needs of the local community well. Excellent relationships exist between the school and local residents and members of the community. Their views are actively sought through regular meetings. For example, when locals complained about the noise generated by the many local church groups using the school's facilities in the evenings, the school came up with accepted solutions.

Partnerships with several schools in different circumstances, both in the UK and overseas, provide exceptionally rich opportunities for students and contribute very well to their understanding of cultural diversity. The school is an active member of the local authority independent/state school learning partnership and has strong links with several local primary schools.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are extremely positive about all aspects of the school's provision, with all of them being confident that their child enjoys school and is making enough progress. Many wrote comments on the questionnaires and practically all of them were complimentary, saying for example 'The school goes the extra mile for pupils' and that 'The performing arts are outstanding.' One singled out the new engineering diploma for praise and many mentioned the high quality support for students with special learning needs. Less than 15% of parents responded to the questionnaire, probably because they had recently completed a similar one for the school. Their responses to that questionnaire were at least as positive as those received by the inspection team.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Kingsdale Foundation School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 154 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1198 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	90	58	63	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	88	57	66	43	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	84	55	69	45	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	83	54	71	46	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	82	53	72	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	81	53	72	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	76	49	74	48	4	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	68	44	81	53	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	81	53	70	45	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	96	62	56	36	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	79	51	70	45	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	95	62	58	38	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	95	62	58	38	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



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24 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Kingsdale Foundation School, London SE21 8SQ

We thoroughly enjoyed visiting your outstanding school and thank you for your welcome and kindness and your willingness to talk to us about life at Kingsdale. I am sorry that we could not talk to more of you. Practically all of you who responded to the questionnaire agreed with every statement and the staff and your parents and carers did the same. Apart from three comments, everything you wrote told us about good things about the school; we were not surprised, as we found many exciting things happening.

These include the wonderful extra lessons, trips and activities, particularly in the performing arts, the wide range of courses and choices you have about the subjects you study, the very best care and support you get for any personal or learning problems you have and, of course the excellent leadership of your headteacher and many other staff.

On top of all this, you are taught well and we were particularly impressed with how well you concentrate and work in lessons and behave around the school. Teachers treat you respectfully and you get on well with them and with each other. Even outstanding schools have things that could be even better and so we have asked senior leaders to improve the delivery of personal, social, health and citizenship lessons and review the balance of topics in order to strengthen your appreciation and understanding of this subject. We have also asked the school to focus on the features of outstanding teaching and learning so as to raise standards and achievement even further.

We are confident that results this year will be at least as good as last year and that you will play your part in making this happen. We wish you all the best for the future and hope you have good holidays, which are not far away!

Yours sincerely

Clare Gillies

Lead inspector

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