

The Kingsway School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106141
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	336625
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Susan Wareing HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Roberts
Headteacher	Mr Michael Gledhill
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2007
School address	Foxland Road Gatley Cheadle SK8 4QX
Telephone number	0161 4287706
Fax number	0161 4914335
Email address	m.gledhill@kingsway.stockport.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 44 teachers, visiting 44 lessons and three form-tutor periods. Three of the lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, governors, staff and students. They observed the school's work, and looked at information from the school's systems for monitoring and evaluating performance and for tracking students' progress. They also looked at records of governors' meetings, school policy documents and records of external evaluation of the school's work. Completed questionnaires from 430 parents and carers were received and analysed.

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

- how well the students achieve, especially in science
- the quality of teaching, especially the consistent use of assessment information
- the extent to which the curriculum meets requirements and the needs and aspirations of all students
- the quality of leadership and management at all levels, especially in identifying and tackling underperformance.

Information about the school

The Kingsway School is a large comprehensive school set on two neighbouring sites in Stockport, on the edge of South Manchester. The majority of students are from White British backgrounds, with average proportions of students from other cultural heritages, the largest group being those of Pakistani origin. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is broadly average. The proportion of students who are entitled to free school meals is lower than average. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average, but is increasing. The proportion of students who have a statement of special educational need is above average. The Kingsway School is a resourced school with provision for 16 students with severe learning difficulties.

The school gained specialist mathematics and computing status in 2002. It gained High Performing Specialist Status in 2008 and the additional specialism of science. The school has been a Training School since 2003. The school was the North West Winner of the Giving Nation Charity Award in 2008. The school has gained a number of other awards and partnerships including the Healthy Schools award in 2008 and the International Schools award in 2010.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The Kingsway School is a good school that provides students with a caring and secure learning environment and its strongly inclusive ethos permeates every aspect of its work. Under the strong leadership of the very capable headteacher and senior leaders the school has developed some very systematic and rigorous approaches to its work. The impact of these systems is most evident in the above-average attainment of the students and the good progress they make from their starting points, both in academic and personal development, during their time in school. The fact that students with special educational needs achieve as well as, and sometimes better than their peers is characteristic of the school's inclusive nature. The school's recently improved system for tracking students' progress is enabling a sharper focus on students at risk of failure, but the school recognises that information is not yet consistently well used across the school to target support as accurately and quickly as it could.

The school has set in place more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of its performance, leading, for example, to the successful tackling of weaknesses in science identified as an area for improvement in the last inspection. As a Training School, The Kingsway School places great emphasis on promoting the professional development of both teaching and non-teaching staff and improving classroom practice. This has increased the proportion of good or better teaching since the last inspection. In most lessons teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and have good relationships with their students. Lesson planning is detailed and well structured and the impact of the school's specialist status in computing is evident in the enhancement of learning through the effective use of new technology. In the minority of merely satisfactory lessons, teachers' expectations of students are not as high and planning is less well tailored to the needs of individual students.

The staff know their students very well and provide very effective care, guidance and support to students. Work in collaboration with a very wide range of partnerships to support its most vulnerable students is a strength of the school. Parents are particularly grateful for the highly effective transition arrangements for Year 7 students, which helps them to settle quickly into school. One parent's comment is typical of many who responded to the questionnaire distributed during the inspection: 'There is brilliant support for both children and parents: my child's transition from primary school was handled brilliantly.'

Overall attendance is improving although there is a small number of groups that have a very poor record of attendance. Safeguarding is good. Procedures are very robust and all policies are in place and rigorously applied. The school faces a considerable challenge from its location on either side of a major road. Inspectors found that the school was

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doing its utmost to tackle this issue, within the limitations of its site. The school's track record of improvement since the last inspection, the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and the rigour of its planning for improvement indicate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement further by:
 - increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching, ensuring that work is always precisely matched to the learning needs of all students
 - refining the whole-school tracking system to ensure that the progress of all students is tracked consistently well, in order to identify any underperformance and inform timely intervention.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Students enter school with broadly average attainment. By the time they leave school the attainment of all students is above average, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, due to the very effective support they receive with their learning. This reflects the school's significant investment in the achievement of students whose circumstances have made them more vulnerable and is characteristic of its inclusive nature. The imbalance in the attainment of girls and boys has also been reduced. The percentage of students who gain five or more GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, at grade C or above has been consistently significantly above average for the last three years. This represents good progress from students' starting points. Value-added measures showed a dip in overall progress in 2009, due to a fall in performance in English. This was quickly identified and energetically tackled by the school, so that in lessons seen during the inspection most students were making good progress. Achievement in the school's specialist subjects of mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) is good.

Students say they feel safe and that there is a wide range of adults or older students to turn to whenever they need help. They say that bullying is very rare and that it is dealt with well when it does occur. A few parents and some teachers express concern about behaviour. However, the majority of lessons observed show that most students behave well and have good attitudes to their work. They enjoy good relationships with their teachers and their peers and the quality of their learning is good. Students feel that the school works hard to encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyles, through the pastoral curriculum lessons and the whole-school sponsored walk for charity and other events such as the 'Get fit for Kingsway day'.

The students make good use of the powers they are given to influence decisions, effect change, and ensure that others benefit from their efforts. The school council has influenced healthy eating options in canteen menus and they readily accept real responsibility for the school's strong focus on its outstanding charitable work, which has

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raised over £225,000 in support of local, national and international projects. The school also supports a partner school in Kenya, for example by building new classrooms. While students say that fund-raising is fun, it is underpinned by a strong moral sense of responsibility and a desire to help others. This makes a very effective contribution to students' good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Students say that they feel well prepared for the next stage in their lives. The school equips them with relevant skills for their future working lives by helping them to reach high academic standards. They develop sound financial skills through Enterprise Days and charitable work gives them a real context in which to learn how to research a project and communicate formally in a business setting. Very few students do not enter further education, employment or training when they leave Year 11.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and the school gives its development a high priority. Therefore, most lessons are well planned, engage students in their learning well and enable them to make good progress. In the best lessons, there

¹ 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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are appropriate activities for the whole range of student abilities. A wide variety of stimulating activities successfully engage and motivate students and give them space and time to think, work and discuss their learning independently of the teacher. Good use is made of the school's recently improved tracking and monitoring data, so that students are well informed about targets and know exactly what they need to do in order to improve their work. In lessons that are merely satisfactory, the level of challenge does not allow students to progress as rapidly as they could. While there are some good examples of detailed marking giving advice to students on how to improve, there are also some inconsistencies within and across subjects.

The school's curriculum effectively promotes students' good academic progress and personal development. The mainly academic range of subjects caters well for the needs and aspirations of its current students. There is alternative provision of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and work and college placements for a small number of students at Key Stage 4 for whom GCSE courses would not be an appropriate option. A small number of vocational subjects have also been introduced and Theme Days and Enterprise Days provide opportunities for creative and independent learning. The impact of the school's specialist status in computing is very evident in the good quality provision of cross-curricular ICT. Cross-curricular literacy and numeracy are not yet as well established across all subjects. Gifted and talented students enjoy a rich programme of subject-related activities.

Students participate very enthusiastically in the outstanding range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school, including a wide variety of sports and opportunities to be involved in high-quality musical performances, trips and visits abroad. Students make a very active contribution to the life of the school and its wider community; for example as members of the school council, junior sports leaders, peer mentors and 'buddies' supporting younger students, including pupils from their partner primary schools.

Students are very well cared for and good relationships with a range of external agencies are used to support students' personal development. The school provides well for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have to make significant strides to overcome barriers to learning. There is an effective team of staff whose expertise has brought about significant changes for a number of the most vulnerable students.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The school is well led and collaborative leadership and management are driving forward improvements. The headteacher and senior leaders have a very clear vision of continuous improvement for the school and this is shared enthusiastically by middle managers. They appreciate the many opportunities for professional development. One middle leader typified this view: 'You never get stuck here. There's always a chance to move forward and try something new.' Clear targets are set for whole-school and individual performance, with clear lines of accountability and support throughout the school. The school is strongly supported by a group of very knowledgeable and experienced governors who bring a wealth of expertise. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and are proactive in challenging the school robustly on aspects of its performance when necessary.

The whole-school data tracking system has improved since the last inspection and now provides more detailed information about students' progress, although the school recognises that there is scope for further refinement. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are good. The school has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning, while acknowledging that there has been greater success in some subjects than in others in securing consistently good learning.

The school has a positive relationship with parents with appropriate systems in place to ensure that parents and carers are informed of progress. The school uses a range of strategies to gather the views of parents, at parents' evenings, through regular surveys and electronic communication, which is particularly popular with parents. Nevertheless, the school is seeking ways of involving parents and carers more fully in decision-making about matters that affect them and their children.

The school is highly committed in its focus on promoting equality of opportunity for every student. This is evident in students' achievement, particularly of the most vulnerable, and in the narrowing of the imbalance between the performance of girls and boys. The school is keenly aware of the nature of its community and its extensive range of partnerships has forged many links with local, national and global communities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Most of the responses to the questionnaire were supportive of the school but a few parents expressed some concerns about behaviour. Inspectors judged that behaviour was good but that the school's behaviour policy should be reviewed more regularly and that parents and students should be more involved in evaluating its impact.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Kingsway 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 430 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,450 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	124	29	279	65	21	5	4	1
The school keeps my child safe	152	36	257	60	10	2	2	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	191	45	216	50	20	5	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	159	37	234	55	30	7	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	138	32	267	62	17	4	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	105	25	266	62	48	11	2	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	74	17	278	65	58	14	4	1
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)	141	33	249	58	24	6	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	135	32	249	58	33	8	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	139	32	226	53	38	9	11	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	94	22	267	62	36	8	6	1
The school is led and managed effectively	164	38	240	56	11	3	4	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	179	42	225	53	19	4	3	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



19 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of The Kingsway School, Cheadle, SK8 4QX

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome at your school. We all enjoyed talking with you and you helped us to find out about the school. The school provides you with a good quality of education overall and has some notable strengths.

The school is an inclusive community and good care, guidance and support ensure that the staff know all of you very well.

The school curriculum meets your needs well and prepares you well for your further study and employment. During your time at school you make good progress and your attainment is above average. Because you are a specialist college for mathematics, computing and science, your school is very well equipped. We saw how much you and your teachers enjoyed working with the interactive whiteboards in your lessons. You benefit from the many strong partnerships with local schools, colleges, businesses and other agencies which enhance your learning and the support that the school gives you.

You enjoy school and feel safe. You are particularly pleased about the excellent range of activities that the school organises for you, including sports, music and trips and visits including travel abroad. You make a good contribution to the school and wider community through the student council, sports leadership, and musical performances. We thought that the charity work that you do is outstanding.

The school's arrangements for keeping you safe are good. Your school is well led at all levels and your headteacher and the senior leaders are keen to improve it further. The quality of most of the teaching that you receive is good, but we think that the school could help you to do even better.

We have asked the school:

to help all of you to make even better progress in your learning by:

- making sure that more of your lessons are as good as the very best ones and that the work you are given is always at exactly the right level for each of you
- improving the way that the school uses information about how well you are doing so that you can get help to improve as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely

Susan Wareing

Her Majesty's Inspector

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