

Kingsmeadow Community Comprehensive School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108410
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	337069
Inspection dates	1–2 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Gillian Salter-Smith

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	636
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Keith Teasdale
Headteacher	Mrs Barbara Rouse
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 39 lessons and observed 37 teachers. They spent almost two thirds of the time available looking at students' learning. They held meetings with governors, the School Improvement Partner, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, reports from the School Improvement Partner, case studies of vulnerable students and policies relating to safeguarding. Questionnaires were analysed and included 145 from parents, 119 from students and 39 from staff.

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

- the attainment, learning and progress of current students especially in English and mathematics and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- how well students are prepared for their futures, including their attendance and punctuality
- the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum in improving students' literacy skills
- the effectiveness of the use of assessment and tracking systems
- the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation particularly by middle leaders
- the impact of community cohesion on students' awareness of others nationally and internationally.

Information about the school

Kingsmeadow is smaller than average. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well above average, as is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is just below the national average. A small proportion of these students is in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language and a small number are refugees or asylum seekers. A well above average proportion of students leaves or joins the school at times other than the usual start and finish in Years 7 and Year 11.

The school has collaborative arrangements for post-16 courses with a local college and other schools. The school has had Business and Enterprise specialism with a rural dimension since September 2006. The school is supported through the National Challenge programme.

The school is Gateshead Local Authority's nominated Full Service School. Awards gained include the local authority's Annual Lifelong Learning Award, Healthy Schools Award, Basic Skills Award, National Inclusion Quality Kite Award, Investors in People status, Sports Mark and Financial Management Standards in Schools.

Dunston's Surestart Children Centre and the Beehive Club provide child care on site for children from age 3 to 18 years. A separate inspection of this provision will be carried out.

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

Kingsmeadow is a good school. It has improved significantly since the previous inspection and has a good capacity to improve further. Strong and effective leadership of the headteacher, well supported by leaders and governors, has been closely focused on ensuring that every student, whatever their backgrounds or circumstances, is safe and secure in school and has a good chance to succeed. The good teaching, assessment and curriculum and the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support have resulted in students taking pride in their school, behaving well, taking more responsibility for their learning and having greater aspiration for their futures. The excellent partnership with post-16 providers and the provision of courses on the school site is a very real incentive to encouraging students to continue their education. Students achieve well and make good progress from low starting points. Attainment is rising and is broadly average with English and mathematics not as strong as other subjects. Recent improvements have been managed very effectively alongside the move into the new school building that in itself provides a welcoming environment that is well respected by the students.

The school's work within the specialism is contributing well to students' achievement and preparing them well for their futures. There is good take up and achievement in business and information and communication technology (ICT) courses and students' wider skills are well developed through carefully planned enterprise activities.

The school has been highly effective in encouraging good attendance. They have looked carefully at what motivates students to attend regularly and considerable care is taken to find courses that suit students' needs, especially in Key Stage 4. This, alongside the positive experiences in classrooms, where students increasingly take responsibility for their own progress, and the high levels of adult support, particularly for more vulnerable students, is making school a more enjoyable experience for students. As a result students' attendance and punctuality have improved considerably and attendance is now in line with the national average.

The school has a secure understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and is aware of the need to improve the provision for community cohesion. Students' progress and classroom provision is monitored rigorously and effectively by senior leaders. Middle leaders monitor students' progress effectively but checks on teaching and learning are not always rigorous enough to result in consistently improved provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further, especially in mathematics and English by:

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- ensuring assessment information informs the planning of every lesson so that tasks are well matched to students' needs
- making sure that students are fully aware of what they need to do to reach the next level or grade
- taking more opportunities to share the good and outstanding practice that exists in teaching and assessment between departments.
- Ensure that heads of subject are consistently effective by:
 - bringing greater consistency and rigour to the departmental systems for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning
 - increasing the accountability of every teacher for the progress of the students they teach.
- Further develop the provision for community cohesion by:
 - ensuring students gain a greater understanding of people's different cultures and backgrounds both nationally and globally.

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

Students enjoy learning and are well motivated in the vast majority of lessons. They settle down to tasks quickly and engage well with a good variety of tasks. They particularly enjoy working in pairs and groups, and carrying out practical tasks that they say helps them to learn. Students thoroughly appreciate the support they get from teachers and other staff and say that most of these staff are prepared to go that extra mile to help them to succeed. In the outstanding lessons, because students know exactly what they must do to reach the next level or grade, they are fired up by the incentive to succeed and readily discuss what they need to do to get there.

Pupils from all different groups make good progress and achieve well. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning to speak English as an additional language achieve well because they receive very carefully planned support and all staff are aware of their needs. Those students arriving mid year and mid key stage often have had difficulties engaging in education or are deemed to be vulnerable. They are very carefully supported and monitored by academic and pastoral staff and they often make at least satisfactory progress. However, in the past the high number of these students has had a negative impact on the school's results. Since the local authority implemented a Fair Access Plan, whereby schools in the area cooperate in managing the transfer of students, the number of these students arriving at the school has decreased considerably.

Attainment is rising and students reach particularly good standards in vocational courses, including those related to the specialism for business and ICT. In 2009 challenging targets were exceeded for most indicators. Results in English and mathematics have been weaker but are improving strongly. With many students already having secured at least a C grade at GCSE, the school is on track to exceed both national minimum targets for English and mathematics and its own challenging overall

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targets in 2010.

Participation and engagement in physical education and additional sporting activities are good. Students know how to eat healthily and a high proportion stay for school meals. Movement about the school is calm and orderly. Very occasional incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are sorted out quickly, usually to everyone's satisfaction. Students take on responsibilities willingly and particularly enjoy their roles as 'supportive friends' and in the school council. Students are aware of the cultures of new students entering the school from places such as Poland and Africa. These students are welcomed and respected. However, students' awareness of others from different backgrounds and cultures, both within the United Kingdom and further afield, is not fully developed. Attendance, including the reduction in the number of persistent absentees, has improved year-on-year and punctuality is good. Students increasingly apply their satisfactory basic skills in different learning contexts. They regularly use laptops and computers for research and the presentation of their work. The involvement in 'real work' situations through the broadened curriculum has had a significant impact on improving aspirations for the future, particularly for some boys.

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	3
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

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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How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching ranges from outstanding to occasionally inadequate. The large majority of lessons are good and a few are outstanding. Relationships are good and pupils' behaviour is well managed. Students respond positively to teachers' high expectations of learning and conduct. There is a good focus on improving students' literacy skills across subjects. In most lessons a well planned variety of activities helps learners to make progress. Teaching assistants work effectively to support students with additional needs. Electronic whiteboards are used well to stimulate learning and are often used interactively by students. Outstanding teaching is characterised by the excellent use of assessment criteria and individual targets to ensure that students know exactly how they can improve. As a result students take responsibility for their own progress, work independently and are highly motivated to succeed. Excellent use of resources and probing questioning by teachers ensure that students are fully challenged.

Assessment is used well to track students' progress, identify underachievement and provide effective support. Students are increasingly motivated through their involvement in assessing their own and others' learning. Most students know their targets; however, where teaching is less securely good, students are not fully aware of their target grades or levels nor do they know what they need to do to reach the next grade or level. Assessment information is not always used fully enough by all teachers to ensure that tasks are well matched to students' needs.

A carefully planned curriculum supports students' good achievement and personal development. The enterprise specialism has a positive influence in broadening experiences of business and enterprise, ICT and geography. A wide range of courses in Key Stage 4 matches individual needs very well with an appropriate emphasis on vocational work and the development of key skills of literacy and ICT. The development of numeracy skills across subjects is in its infancy. The Young Apprenticeship courses have been successful in engaging many students. A series of Learning for Life days focuses on different elements of personal development and wider skills and is highly appreciated by students.

The school is a very welcoming environment. The Centre, The Learning Zone and the Learning Support Centre all provide highly effective additional care and support to ensure that every student, particularly those deemed more vulnerable, feel safe and secure and able to succeed. Excellent transition arrangements at all points help students, especially those arriving mid key stage or mid year, to settle quickly as they move into and through the school. The arrangements for transition into post-16 education are particularly effective. Highly effective partnerships with external agencies ensure that students with additional needs and their families get the help that they require.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders share a strong commitment to improvement. Leaders have high expectations of students, staff and themselves. They have successfully raised students' aspirations such that challenging targets for students' achievement are met. The school has been well supported by National Challenge advisers and National Strategy consultants. Monitoring systems at governor and senior level are rigorous and result in greater accountability of senior and middle leaders for students' progress. The school's effective systems to monitor teaching are clearly focused on students' learning and have resulted in overall improvement in the quality of teaching. However, the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation at department level is less consistently effective than at senior level. As a result some inconsistencies in practice remain, for example, in the effective use of assessment to support learning and the accountability of every teacher for individual student's progress. Professional development and training have been well focused on priorities but opportunities to share best practice in teaching and the use of assessment have not yet been fully explored.

Governors are well informed of the school's performance. A number visit the school regularly and gain a good perspective of the school's work. Well structured in-house and local authority training prepares them effectively for their role and they fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They are not yet fully aware of the implications of their responsibilities for promoting community cohesion. Governors ensure that statutory requirements for safeguarding students are fully met. They fully support the systems in place that ensure students are safe and that all staff are trained to the right level. There is good communication within the school with regard to safeguarding and arrangements to assure students' safety when taking part in off-site provision are secure.

Highly effective partnerships with local providers ensure that students follow courses that interest and motivate them both in Key Stage 4 and into post-16 education. The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination robustly. The gap between the achievement of different groups of students, for example, between pupils on school action and others, is being reduced significantly.

Students joining the school from global communities are invited to share aspects of their culture with students, for example, during assemblies. However students' awareness of contrasting communities nationally and globally is more limited. The school is in the early stages of planning a strategic approach to community cohesion.

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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	1
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire are supportive of the school's work in all respects. A very small minority do not consider that the school helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle and a few have concerns about behaviour and bullying that is not dealt with effectively. Inspectors found that the school does a great deal to encourage students to be healthy, particularly in taking up physical activities. There is a good choice of school meals but the school does not always monitor students' choices. Inspectors found behaviour to be good overall and are confident that the systems in place to sort out the occasional incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are effective.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kingsmeadow Community Comprehensive 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 145 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 636 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	22	100	69	10	7	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	41	28	92	64	9	6	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	50	35	88	61	5	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	34	84	58	9	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	27	97	67	7	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	24	92	64	14	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	17	93	65	23	16	1	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)	41	28	95	66	3	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	27	99	69	5	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	23	89	62	14	10	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	15	100	69	18	13	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	20	106	74	8	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	33	86	60	6	4	2	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 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"> ■ 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.



3 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Kingsmeadow Community Comprehensive School, Gateshead NE11 9NX

Many thanks for welcoming the inspection team to your school. We enjoyed the discussions we held with you and appreciated seeing you hard at work in lessons across the school.

You are right to be proud of your school. Kingsmeadow is a good school that has improved significantly in recent years. You achieve well and you leave school with worthwhile qualifications. Attainment in mathematics and English has not been as strong as in other subjects, but it is improving quickly. You are well taught and increasingly you are better motivated because you know exactly how to improve your work and reach higher levels or grades. Overall you behave well and show respect for one another and the new school building. The school's specialist status provides many business and enterprise experiences that help to improve your wider skills and prepare you well for the future. The curriculum gives you plenty of choices in Key Stage 4 and you are guided carefully to find the right courses for you. As a result more of you are coming to school regularly and attendance has improved and is in line with most other schools. The outstanding partnerships arrangements with the local sixth form college have led to sixth form provision on the school site and it is encouraging to see that more and more of you are staying on in education. Your school provides excellent care and support for you. The headteacher has been well supported by governors and other leaders in making improvements. We have asked the school to make these further improvements.

- Raise standards further, especially in mathematics and English by ensuring that tasks are well matched to students' needs in all lessons and that every student knows what they need to do to reach the next level or grade.
- Ensure that leaders of subjects are more rigorous in checking on the quality of work in classrooms.
- Ensure that students gain a greater understanding of people from cultures and backgrounds different to their own both nationally and globally.

You can support these improvements by continuing to attend regularly and enjoy school. Take an interest in how well you are doing and make sure that you put all your efforts into doing your very best. I wish you all well for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith

Lead inspector

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