

# King Edward VI High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124445
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	340572
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 February 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Roderick Passant

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	950
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	120
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Andrew White
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Colin Elstone
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	Westway Stafford Staffordshire
<b>Telephone number</b>	01785 258546
<b>Fax number</b>	01785 224231
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@kingedwardvi.staffs.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The majority of time was spent looking at or finding out about students' learning. Thirty-four teachers and lessons or part lessons were seen. Meetings were held with members of the school leadership team, a sample of progress leaders and heads of department, small groups of students from Years 7, 9, 11 and the sixth form, and a group of representatives from the governing body, including the chair and vice chair of governors. Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation including that relating to the safeguarding of students and the school improvement plan. In addition, questionnaires from 203 parents and carers, 129 students and 19 members of staff were scrutinised.

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

- the relative performance of boys and girls
- the effectiveness of the school's evaluation and school planning for improvement
- the impact so far of becoming a specialist language college
- what systems are embedded in the sixth form to sustain improvement.

## Information about the school

The school is average in size. There are few students from minority ethnic heritages or whose first language is not English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is about average. The school is a member of the Stafford Collegiate, which is responsible for the sixth form curriculum across the town. The school operates an inclusion unit for short-term placement and reintegration of students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. The school was designated as a specialist language college in July 2007. It was awarded Healthy School status in 2007 and International Award intermediate status in 2008. It has also gained other local authority awards for aspects of its personal and social education.

**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 school has improved in all aspects of its provision since it was last inspected. It now has a number of outstanding features. Standards show steady incremental improvement and are broadly average. External data indicate that students make good progress and achieve well over their time in school. Current progress in the large majority of lessons is also good. The school is highly inclusive and staff work hard to minimise any barriers to learning. Students feel exceptionally safe; they move around the school purposefully and, in lessons, their behaviour is good and it is sometimes outstanding when they engage with their work at a particularly high level. The school is friendly and students are confident that if there is something troubling them, staff will sort it out. Students know the staff because, as one student expressed it, 'They're not locked in the staffroom but are out and about.' This adds to their sense of security and, because they feel that they know the staff, relationships between staff and students are very good and underpin the learning and the school's ethos.

Staff are very committed to the students. There is a consistent promotion of a 'can do' attitude, creativity and a broadening of students' horizons stemming from the school's international dimension and the impact of the work of its specialism. This, coupled with the school's outstanding care, guidance and support, successfully raises students' aspiration so that almost all students gain at least five A\* to G grades with every student gaining at least one pass. The result is that almost all students go on to full-time education or employment with associated training when they leave Year 11. These outcomes indicate that students' develop the skills for their future economic well-being extremely well. In addition, the work in citizenship and the consistent emphasis on developing respect for others, again supported by the international dimension, ensures that not only is the school very cohesive but also that students make an excellent contribution to the school and local community, with the school council being particularly active and effective.

Students make good progress because teaching is good or better in the large majority of lessons. It is sometimes outstanding and none was inadequate. Learning was less effective in a small number of lessons where tasks were less varied and there was an overreliance on whole-class teaching with common expectations rather than targeting the work to meet the needs of individuals or groups of students. Although not a consistent feature of teaching across the school, in many good lessons, students were often given clear success criteria, such as GCSE grade descriptors. This developed their independence by encouraging them to take greater responsibility for their learning because it allowed them to assess the quality of their work and progress. These lessons successfully fostered the partnership between teacher and student.

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The school has a common sense of purpose because staff have a sustained focus on students' achievement and there are strong lines of accountability. Leadership is good across the school and there are good systems of self-evaluation through departmental reviews so that the school has a very clear idea of its strengths and what it needs to develop. The school sets challenging targets for students. However, because the success criteria in departmental and whole-school planning are not always defined sharply enough, initiatives can lack focus. That said, the key issues in the previous report have been tackled successfully. The school's good track record of development shows its good capacity to sustain further improvement.

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

- Raise standards further by ensuring that students make good progress in all lessons, by teachers consistently
  - planning lessons to challenge and meet the needs of individuals and groups of students
  - encouraging students' independent learning skills and sharing with them the criteria to judge their progress and achievement in the task.
- When planning departmental and school improvements ensure that the impact of the initiative is identified with precision, and quantified when appropriate, so that the initiative is clearly focused and its success can be easily measured.

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

Students make good progress in the large majority of lessons. This is because students are interested in their work and want to do well. They concentrate and remain on task, work at a good pace and listen to their teacher attentively with both boys and girls responding well. They are often actively engaged in practical tasks and encouraged to reflect on and articulate the progress that they have made. Praise is usually targeted well to foster their academic confidence.

The proportion of students gaining A\* to C grades was close to the national average. The proportion of students gaining A\* and A grades was broadly average in 2009 and in English Literature students did particularly well. The school has effective strategies in place to support these more able students. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities currently make good progress. Students attending the inclusion unit are helped to reintegrate into mainstream classes, having had nurturing support and one-to-one counselling. The school monitors the progress of all students carefully and uses a variety of strategies to support, challenge and enable them to catch up. In a mathematics lesson, for example, a support team from Keele University worked intensively with five girls to raise their achievement. In lessons, there is little difference in the attitudes or involvement of boys and girls, although data shows boys making somewhat better progress over time.

The relatively recently acquired specialist language status has already made a significant

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contribution to students' personal development. Students in the lower part of the school make good progress and have positive attitudes towards learning a language, and these positive features are now permeating through the school. As one Year 9 student put it, 'I want to take French at GCSE because it ties into [a career in] finance which is what I want to do when I leave.' Although the percentage of students gaining A\* to C grades in the full modern foreign languages courses was below average in 2009, the proportion gaining A\* to G grades in the short course was just above the national average. However, direct comparisons need a health warning because the school enters a higher proportion of students than is generally seen.

The school works hard to challenge some students' low self-esteem and the school's success in this is evident in older students' mature confidence. Students develop the skills of empathy, seeing things from another point of view, and respect for others. The school has a framework of consistent values, which students actively support and there is a good range of social opportunities. Students' cultural development is particularly strong. Attendance is above average. Students have a good understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle and respond to the school's systematic initiatives. Take-up of the healthy meals and participation in physical and after school sports activities is high.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<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	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</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>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<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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## How effective is the provision?

Typically, teachers plan their lessons well and use a range of learning resources to make lessons interesting and interactive. Teachers usually share 'learning objectives' with students, although these sometimes tell the students what they are to do rather than what they are expected to learn. Students made good progress in the large majority of lessons because they are actively involved in a variety of tasks that offer appropriate challenge to learners of different abilities. Less consistent, is sharing the success criteria for the lesson and the learning to enable students to develop their independence so that they can assess the quality of their own and each other's work. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for example, by highlighting key words and providing writing frames for pupils with weaker literacy skills.

The curriculum is being increasingly tailored and made relevant to the needs of individuals. The policy of modern foreign languages for all is helping to raise students' aspirations and give them a broader world view but requires more time to work through the school in order to contribute to improved standards. There are some very strong aspects within the curriculum relating to students' personal, social and health education, citizenship and creativity, which have a particularly good impact on aspects of students' personal development and achievement. The social, emotional aspects of learning programme (SEAL) is made particularly relevant because subjects reinforce key objectives. The provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is mapped carefully and there are particularly effective structures such as the inclusion unit or the nurture group to support students who need additional support for their behavioural, emotional or learning needs.

The care guidance and support that the school provides for its students is a bedrock upon which academic achievement and personal development is built. It is a fundamental strength of the school. The school has a deeply embedded culture of sustaining and supporting individuals at all levels, making excellent use of partnerships with external agencies. Individual needs are known and the school works extremely hard to meet them.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

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The headteacher leads the school extremely well. Leadership is devolved and developing in strength across the school. The senior leadership team has personal and collective strengths and there is a sustained focus across the school to improving the school's provision and hence standards and progress. Governance is excellent, providing a clear strategic steer to the school and holding it to account. Governors are ambitious for the school and have robust systems for keeping the school's performance under review. They take their responsibilities for all aspects of safeguarding and the health and safety of students and staff extremely seriously and effectively. The school has thorough systems in place to secure the safety of its students and staff.

The school is highly inclusive and promotes equality of opportunity extremely well because it is a commitment shared by all staff. The school has successfully raised boys' achievement and is monitoring girls' performance carefully. The school's creed of 'everyone doing the best they can' is underpinned by very effective systems to monitor the progress of individuals and specific groups of students. This information is used extremely well to target specific interventions in order to raise achievement.

The impact of the school's work is very evident within the school's cohesive nature and local community. The links with the local community are very strong, supported by the outreach work of its specialism. International links are strong and growing. National links are not as strong, although discussions have commenced with a view to linking the school to another in Wolverhampton with a rich diversity of minority ethnic heritage students on roll.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Sixth form**



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

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The sixth form has improved since it was last inspected. This has been achieved through leadership and management identifying and successfully tackling the weaknesses in provision caused by inconsistencies in teaching. As a result, teaching has improved and is now good. The curriculum, offered through the Stafford Collegiate, provides a very broad range of subjects and is being further improved by the development of access courses and the introduction of greater monitoring of quality. There is a very good enrichment programme utilising citizenship at AS and A2 and Open University modules along with a range of activities matched to students' needs. Care and guidance have also improved so that students are supported very effectively in their learning. Students are very well informed about higher education and supported in their applications. Students' progress is tracked carefully so that underachievement is picked up early and action plans put in place. The result is that students make good progress from their starting points with most going onto higher education, and the remainder joining the services or going direct into employment.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents or carers are happy with their children's experience at this school. They agree that it is well led and managed, keeps their children safe, that their children are making enough progress, that teaching is good and that the school prepares students well for the future. Most parents and carers agree that their children enjoy school. A few parents and carers had concerns about the way the school manages unacceptable behaviour, information about their children's progress and the way it takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Overall behaviour in the school is good. There are a few students who present challenging behaviour but they are managed well. There are regular consultations with the parent body and a pattern of parents' meetings and reports to parents. Inspectors judged that the school had good links with parents and carers.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at King Edward VI High 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 203 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 950 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	28	131	65	14	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	30	138	69	3	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	52	26	121	61	22	11	4	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	72	36	120	60	6	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	26	143	72	4	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	18	132	67	26	13	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	18	143	72	17	9	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)	64	33	119	62	6	3	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	24	140	69	12	6	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	67	33	105	52	29	14	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	17	131	69	23	12	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	75	38	118	59	4	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	78	39	116	57	7	3	1	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 pupils' 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.**



12 February 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of King Edward VI High School, Stafford, ST17 9YJ

Thank you for making my colleagues and me so welcome in your school. We enjoyed our brief stay very much. My particular thanks go to those students who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to us. I thought I would share with you our findings.

This is a good school. It has continued to improve since it was last inspected. It now has a number of outstanding features, particularly relating to, and resulting from, the care, guidance and support that the school provides for you. Staff care about you a very great deal and want you to succeed. You behave well and are confident that if you do have problems they will be sorted out. The result is that you feel extremely safe in school. You also make an excellent contribution to the school and community and the school prepares you extremely well for your future. Teaching is good and you achieve well to reach broadly average standards. The sixth form has improved and its overall effectiveness is now good.

In order to improve the school further, I have asked the headteacher to work with the teachers to ensure that staff consistently use their knowledge of you as learners in their planning, so that they personalise the way they approach the lesson, interact with you, and set you work to ensure that you all are consistently challenged to make good progress. I have also asked him to ensure that teachers consistently foster your independent skills so that you are actively engaged in all lessons and are able to judge the success of your learning. Finally, I asked him to ensure that when staff plan to make further improvements that they are crystal clear what they are aiming to do, and the difference these improvements should make, so that they can evaluate more easily how successful they have been.

Sincere good wishes for your future educational careers.

Yours sincerely

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector

The normal convention in inspection reports is to use 'pupils' to describe 11-16 year olds who attend the school and 'students' to describe those who attend the sixth form. The

school's preferred term is 'students' to describe all who attend and this has been used throughout the report, although headings have not been changed.

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