

Serco Ltd  
Boundary House  
2 Wythall Green  
Lane  
Birmingham  
B47 6LW

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 01216832048  
Direct F 01216832020  
[victoria.mortimore2@serco.com](mailto:victoria.mortimore2@serco.com)



4 December 2009

Ms Sue Bradley  
Kingsmead School  
Bridge Street  
Derby  
Derbyshire  
DE1 3LB

Dear Ms Bradley

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 December 2009, and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks also to the chair of governors who, at short notice, made herself available to meet with me. I would also like to thank the pupils and those teachers observed during lessons. The central record of suitability checks on staff was scrutinised during this inspection and it meets the current government requirements.

Since the school's last inspection the local authority has undertaken reorganisation which led to the school's maximum capacity being reduced to 45 pupils. The school has its own unique reference number which distinguishes it from the pupil referral unit. The headteacher manages both provisions and the Governing Body has direct oversight of Kingsmead Special School. There is one body that acts as both a management committee for governing the pupil referral unit and as a Governing Body that governs Kingsmead Special School. This arrangement forms part of a local service agreement.

As a result of the inspection on 12-13 November 2008, the school was asked to improve the quality of education, provide challenging tasks and personal targets for the pupils, as well as delivering all subjects of the curriculum. The school was also asked to improve self-evaluation and the use of assessment data. Two other recommendations were made, one requiring the governors to fill vacancies on the Governing Body, and the other to ensure that statements of special educational needs named the school as the appropriate placement.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.



The quality of teaching, assessment and the curriculum have improved well. The headteacher and senior leadership team have undertaken more systematic and robust monitoring of lessons and pupils' work. This has resulted in greater consistency in teachers' planning. The increasing expectation that teachers will set more challenging work is placing greater demands on the pupils. In the lessons observed, pupils in Years 7 to 9 were engaged and interested in the challenging tasks provided for them. In an excellent science lesson seen, for example, pupils tested different substances to calibrate their acidity, which held their attention, extended their thinking and prompted them to ask searching questions. The use of pupils' personal targets is increasingly being adopted by teachers, although this rightly remains a priority to ensure that there is a more uniform and substantial use of targets to raise attainment and improve pupils' achievements.

The school's assessments of pupils' academic performance and attendance reflect an improving trend, particularly in Key Stage 3, although attendance rates in Key Stage 4 remain too low. The curriculum has been reviewed with a particular emphasis on expanding themes and topics that draw together a range of subjects. This has resulted in the delivery of a full programme of National Curriculum subjects, including modern foreign languages and religious education. The 'Junction 16' programme for alternative learning in Key Stage 4 continues to be a strength, leading to pupils studying for GCSE qualifications as well as combining work-related learning and college experience that offer them greater opportunities. Consequently, the most recent figures for the percentage of school leavers who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs) continues to decline on previous years.

The headteacher has set up an effective cycle of monitoring, audit and review. There is now a sharper oversight of pupils' performance and assessment data is more accessible and accurate in tracking how well individuals are doing. Assessment data includes information on achievement in the pupil referral unit. This provides valuable information about integrated provision but is less effective when tracking how well pupils in the special school with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties are doing when compared with similar groups nationally.

Governors remain very active and effective in shaping the direction of the school and are striving to recruit more parent governors. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that the pupils come from all over the city of Derby and many represent the most vulnerable and hard to reach families. This continues to be an issue, although there is good capacity amongst governors and staff to establish strong working partnerships with parents.

Statements of special educational needs are well organised and now include the name of the school as the appropriate placement for each pupil. The level of support identified for each pupil is being met and from the evidence of the lessons observed it is clear that support staff are skilled and well deployed.

The local authority has provided good support with regular reports from the school improvement partner that have helped to scrutinise the school's self-evaluation and monitoring reports. The school is now well placed to build on its improvements although there still needs to be clarification regarding the local service agreement that requires both the headteacher and governors to have oversight of the pupil referral unit whilst governing and managing Kingsmead Special School.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charalambos Loizou", with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Charalambos Loizou  
Additional Inspector