

Kingsbury High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101559
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	343737
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2010
Reporting inspector	John Kennedy HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2030
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	447
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rochelle Haussman
Headteacher	Jeremy Waxman OBE
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. They observed 47 lessons and 46 teachers, which included a wide range of joint observations undertaken with senior leaders. Lesson observations did not include Year 10 because they were on work experience placements or Year 11 and Year 13 because they had completed their examinations. However, inspectors were able to scrutinise samples of students' work. They held meetings with staff, governors, students and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of planning and evaluation documents, external reviews, analyses of students' progress, safeguarding documentation and other policies and some of the students' records. They evaluated questionnaires from 124 parents and carers, 56 staff and a representative sample of 124 students.

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

- the behaviour of students, especially boys, in lessons and around the school
- the effectiveness of the curriculum and the quality of care and support in meeting the needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- how well the school has tackled the key weaknesses identified at the last inspection relating to safeguarding and the promotion of community cohesion.

Information about the school

Kingsbury High School is a larger-than-average school on a split site, with a large and growing sixth form. Most students, far higher than average, come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the diversity of the local community. The largest single group is of Indian heritage but there are significantly increasing numbers of students from Pakistani, Sri Lankan and Somali backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is also well above average, although the number of students who are at an early stage of fluency in English is low. A higher-than-average proportion, slightly less than a fifth, is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Their needs are varied and primarily include behavioural, emotional or social difficulties, and moderate learning difficulties. The proportion in receipt of a statement of special educational needs is above that typically found in similar schools. The school has a hearing impaired unit, which has a capacity of 18 places, and currently five students attend there. The school gained specialist status for mathematics and computing in 2004. A new headteacher took up post in January 2010. When the school was last inspected it was judged to require significant improvement in relation to the school's need to meet safeguarding requirements and given a notice to improve.

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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Kingsbury High School provides a good education for its students and this is reflected in positive outcomes, particularly in their outstanding academic achievement and their good personal development. The school has rapidly improved since it was last inspected, tackling with immediacy the inadequacies relating to safeguarding. In a measured and planned way, it has also attended to the other areas of weakness, particularly in its promotion of community cohesion, which had been judged to be inadequate, and improving the quality of teaching, which had been judged to be satisfactory. The quality of care, guidance and support has also improved, as have all aspects of leadership and management and many of the other outcomes for students. Improvements extend to the sixth form, which is now outstanding.

Extensive improvements have been made to boost school security and consequently students say that they feel safe in school and when they are commuting between the two sites. They also comment positively on how their lessons, other activities and the guidance they receive help them to be more aware of e-safety and how to live in a healthy and safe way. The school now meets statutory safeguarding requirements. Kingsbury is a welcoming, inclusive multicultural school.

The attainment of students in most key success measures at the end of Year 11 has been consistently high and improving. There were significant improvements in end of year results in 2009, for instance, in students' average GCSE points score and in the proportion gaining five higher grades, and performance was significantly above the national averages. The school's data, confirmed by inspection evidence, indicate that students are on track to do even better this year. The school met its specialist targets in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Attainment has been consistently high in English and mathematics, more so than in many other subjects. There is some variation in how some other subjects perform and faculties are tackling this with evidence of success. Outcomes are highly positive in the sixth form where, for example the proportion of students gaining A or B grades at A level is consistently well above national averages.

The school has rightly given priority to improving the quality of teaching and this is reflected in what is happening in the classroom. Teachers are consolidating good practice or sharpening their skills where this is required. Although the majority of teaching is good or better, some pockets of inconsistency remain and the quality of teaching is not as strong in Key Stage 3 as further up the school. Some written feedback is of a high quality but it varies in quality among different teachers and between

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different subjects. Too much marking is sporadic or insufficiently constructive to help students know what to do to improve, and there are limited opportunities for students to reflect on and learn from the comments that teachers write.

Students say that if they are keen to get on, Kingsbury will open doors for them. Irrespective of ability or additional needs, they leave the school with a toolbox of skills and qualifications that prepare them well for their futures. Almost all those who leave go on to further education, employment or training. They develop high levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy by the time they leave. They benefit from good opportunities to study ICT and achieve well in this area. However, there are limited possibilities to use ICT across the curriculum and the school has not developed sufficient opportunities to integrate it within other subject areas.

Leaders, governors and staff, who are involved in self-evaluation, have an accurate understanding of where the school's strengths lie and the key challenges they face. This stems from their rigorous and systematic analysis of performance across all areas of the school and underpins the comprehensive three-year strategic plan. This is a school where complacency has no home and staff, galvanised by the headteacher, share a collective determination to fulfil their stated ambition 'to be the best school for miles around'. The school is firmly on its way and has good capacity to sustain the good work already begun. One teacher who responded to the Ofsted inspection questionnaire wrote, 'This school has great potential and it's lovely to see that finally shining through!' This view sums up the judgement of the inspection team and was echoed by most parents.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on current strategies to reduce remaining inconsistencies in teaching, by:
 - ensuring that good teaching is spread evenly across the school and between faculties
 - exposing staff to the best practice from within the school.
- Improve the quality of written feedback, by:
 - ensuring that work is marked in a consistent way across the school and in accordance with the school's marking policy
 - providing meaningful comments which help students know what their next learning steps are
 - creating opportunities for students to reflect on and learn from teachers' comments.
- Improve the curriculum, by:
 - creating more extensive opportunities for students to develop and consolidate ICT skills through other areas of learning.

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Classrooms are places where students come alive and enjoy their learning. This contributes to their above-average attendance. Students are motivated and keen to learn, and work very well in groups and with each other. They respond with enthusiasm, for example when in a Year 8 science lesson the teacher threw down the gauntlet, 'I expect you to rise to the challenge!' There are occasional lapses where the quality of teaching is not engaging enough or where a few students show resistance to learning, and they express this through low-level disruption. Inspection evidence is that behaviour is good in lessons and there are instances where it is exemplary. This was observed, for instance, in a number of 'learning to learn' lessons where Year 7 students showed their developing confidence in working together, shared ideas and produced constructive and perceptive comments on their own work and that of others. The rate of exclusion is low considering the size of the school and is reducing.

Students make good progress which accelerates as they move through the school and on to the sixth form. This positive picture emanates not just from the quality of teaching and students' own motivation. It is also because of the effective systems for tracking the progress of groups and individuals. These systems are more finely tuned in Key Stage 4. They enable staff to target a wide range of activities and programmes to boost the achievement of those who may be slipping behind. Consequently, there are no significant variations in the performance of groups. The progress that students make in English and mathematics is particularly strong and this has been consistent over time. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers because the curriculum is personalised to meet their needs and they receive good support. Students in the hearing-impaired unit are well integrated into the school, are highly successful in overcoming any barriers to learning and achieve very good outcomes in their examinations.

Students are confident and articulate and contribute proudly to school improvement in many ways, including providing feedback on the quality of teaching and learning. They feel listened to by staff, singling out the headteacher for particular praise. The impact of students extends beyond the school community as they enthusiastically embrace a range of volunteering and other opportunities to make a real difference. Racial and cultural harmony and positive social interaction, described by staff and students as 'the Kingsburian effect', is palpable around this richly diverse school community.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The majority of teaching is good and improving and some is outstanding. This is the result of a determined focus to raise the bar. Positive rapport between teachers and students are characteristic of lessons. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and they draw on very detailed knowledge and assessment of students' needs, potential and progress. In good and better lessons, teachers explain tasks carefully so that students know what is expected of them. Teachers use questioning skills effectively to gauge students' understanding and stretch their learning, and they provide continuous feedback throughout the lesson. In outstanding lessons, the pace of learning is relentless and the teacher's enthusiasm is infectious. This combination demands total concentration and students respond accordingly. In the minority of lessons which are not of this quality, tasks are less inspiring and lack clarity, and teachers tend to dominate. As a result, some students are more passive and in a few instances, their behaviour and attention wanes. Marking is sometimes of a very high quality and provides students with opportunities to reflect on and assess their own work. However, this is not always the case and in these instances, it does not provide sufficient pointers to help students.

A broad and balanced curriculum, enhanced by flexible pathways which enable students to learn in different ways, meets their needs, abilities and aspirations. Opportunities exist for early entry for GCSE examinations, for instance in mathematics, and this boosts their motivation. About one in three students gained an A or A* in GCSE mathematics and a third of these took the examination early. The wide range of targeted programmes helps students with their learning and personal development and the

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extensive range of extra-curricular activities adds variety and enrichment. Curriculum development is not as strong in Key Stage 3 as in Key Stage 4, despite the strong skills-based 'learning to learn' focus in Year 7. A recent curriculum review has justifiably identified the need to make it inspiring, creative and more integrated.

Staff look after the students well and the quality of their care and support, especially for the more needy, is a strength of the school. Effective transition and induction arrangements and good career guidance help students to move seamlessly between key stages. Where students have any concerns they know there are plenty of adults, they can turn to, including the teachers and other staff, a school counsellor and a police officer. Well-thought-out systems for promoting attendance and positive behaviour are having an impact. Intervention programmes, where the school works very well with external agencies and organisations, help students who struggle with their behaviour or attendance. A team of trained student mentors, including from the sixth form, helps younger students through what are referred to as 'moving forward conversations'. Despite these improvements a small minority of staff and parents indicated that behaviour management can be inconsistent at times.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Following the school's last inspection, the staff, with resolute and immediate determination, set out to bring about a step change in school improvement. The new headteacher has added fresh spark, passion and impetus to this and he has been highly successful in bringing staff together to agree and share a common set of values and vision for the future. More effective leadership is increasingly evident at all levels. Staff training and professional development have been well aligned to improving the quality of teaching and learning, which is the school's top priority. As a result, the majority of teachers feel they have developed their teaching skills this year. This and other priorities are underpinned by sharply focused plans, regular monitoring and effective systems to hold staff to account. Performance is now being analysed in depth across every area of the school. Support and, when necessary, professional challenge are targeted at areas and faculties where performance does not meet the high expectations.

The school takes effective action to promote equality of opportunity and inclusion. This is evident in the fact that there are no significant gaps in the progress that pupils make, and where differences start to emerge there is a concerted effort to close the gaps. For

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instance, a targeted programme for some Somali students, where historically this group was not achieving as well as others, has had a positive impact and almost all of the targeted group are achieving their challenging targets.

Governors, who have been consistently supportive, have recently shown that they are more equipped to ask searching questions about performance. They are becoming increasingly effective in their capacity to support and challenge in equal measure. They are systematically reviewing all their policies to ensure they are up to date. Staff are well trained in child protection and absolute priority is given to ensuring that where safeguarding concerns are identified they are followed up with tenacity. All aspects of safeguarding have been reviewed and tightened and the school is a place where promoting a safe ethos and culture is at the heart of everything it does.

The school works exceptionally well with a wide range of external partners for the benefit of students. It is outward looking and its contribution to partnership work can be seen in the impact of the mathematics specialism in feeder primary schools, its links with a local college and a local pupil referral unit. The school has taken the lead in setting up a network of schools serving families in the local area. This also contributes greatly to the promoting of community cohesion. The school's strategic planning is grounded in a thorough understanding of its community context and characteristics. It promotes a wealth of activities that are having an impact on the cohesiveness of the school and the local community. For instance, the Citizen School students are currently working with a number of the local residents, community and faith groups to hold a celebration of diversity at the school later this month.

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

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Sixth form

The passion and drive of sixth form leaders to secure relentless improvement can be seen in the high quality of education and the exceptional progress that students make. Quality assurance systems are deeply embedded and this is at the heart of much of the sixth form's success. Students are ambitious, learn exceptionally well and make first-rate contributions in lessons. They thoroughly enjoy their learning and respond enthusiastically to the opportunities and challenges that teachers create for paired, group and independent work and for honing skills in analytical and critical thinking and decision making. The curriculum meets their needs and aspirations very well and enrichment provides a multitude of leadership opportunities which a large majority of students eagerly embrace. They demonstrate high levels of responsibility in and around the school and are strong role models for younger students. They also contribute to the wider community through, for example, their volunteering work. Retention and attendance rates are very high. The progress of individual students is assessed and tracked closely. The comprehensive and tailored tutorial programme offers strong care, guidance and support, including high quality induction, and high quality study and examination preparation. Students at both ends of the ability spectrum are supported exceptionally well. Staff go the extra mile if there is a need to and students say they greatly appreciate this widespread generosity of time and effort. As a result, students are well equipped and prepared for life after sixth form.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

A low percentage of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The majority are positive about the overall work of the school. However, a minority raised concerns about a few areas and where comments were made, they mostly related to the frequency with which homework is marked and some inconsistency in the way teachers teach and manage students' behaviour. Reducing inconsistency in the quality of marking and further improving the quality of teaching have been identified by inspectors as an area for further development.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kingsbury 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 124 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 2,030 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	44	65	52	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	53	43	70	56	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	56	45	55	44	11	9	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	36	61	49	9	7	7	6
The teaching is good at this school	36	29	73	59	13	10	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	30	60	48	25	20	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	17	82	66	16	13	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)	37	30	63	51	10	8	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	20	77	62	19	15	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	27	71	57	13	10	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	11	79	64	19	15	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	30	24	78	63	9	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	42	65	52	5	4	2	2

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



8 July 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Kingsbury High School, London, NW9 9JR

Thank you for your warm welcome. We were particularly impressed with the trouble you took to welcome us in so many languages, for instance in Somali, 'sodawawow'. This is a true reflection of your incredibly rich, harmonious and diverse school community, and what you proudly refer to as the 'Kingsburian effect'.

You gave us lots of examples of how your school has improved and we agree. You attend a good school and this can be seen in the exceptionally good results that most of you get and, equally important, how well you develop into mature, confident, articulate and well-rounded young people. You hold your new headteacher in high regard because he listens to you and wants you to play your part in making the school a better place. But he would be the first to say that this is a team effort, and the staff as a whole now share a common passion to make the school even better. We believe that they have already made a big improvement in lots of areas since last year, and the school is well placed to go from strength to strength. A key issue last year was about safety. The school has taken strong steps to improve this and as a result the two sites and the route between them are much safer.

We think that there are a number of key things that the school should pay particular attention to, and these are:

- improve teaching so that there are more good lessons in every year and across all subjects
- improve the quality of written feedback that teachers give you, for example, when they mark your books, so that it will help you know what improvements to make
- give you more chances to use and develop your ICT skills across all subjects.

You can play your part by making sure you come to lessons motivated, ready to learn and determined to make the best of the time you have at the school. You welcomed us in many languages and I would like to sign off in my native language, 'Go n'eirigh an bothar leat', which roughly means in Irish, may you have every success on your journey.

Yours sincerely

John Kennedy

Her Majesty's Inspector

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