

The King's Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131547
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	341162
Inspection dates	10-11 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Gwen Coates HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	874
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Dixon
Headteacher	John Allin
Date of previous school inspection	6-7 December 2006
School address	Regis Road Tettenhall Wolverhampton WV6 8XG
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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

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors spent the majority of their time looking at learning. This included observing 38 teachers, visiting 41 lessons and observing two assemblies and one drama presentation. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing body, staff and groups of students from each key stage. They observed the school's work and looked at progress tracking and performance data, the school improvement plan, reporting procedures, governors' minutes, students' work and numerous policies, guidelines, plans and departmental reviews. Completed questionnaires from 26 parents or carers and 139 students were received and analysed.

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

- what the school is doing to raise achievement in English and maths, particularly among minority ethnic boys
- how well the school cares for and supports its most vulnerable students
- how successful the leadership team is in embedding high expectations and ambition among staff and students
- how effectively leadership and management of teaching and learning at whole school level is bringing about improvements in the quality of teaching and learning
- the extent to which middle managers are proactive in promoting improvement in their areas of responsibility

Information about the school

The King's Church of England school is a smaller-than-average comprehensive school. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is above average. Almost 70% of its students are from minority ethnic groups, with Indian, Pakistani and Caribbean groups being the largest. The percentage of students for whom English is an additional language is about three times the national average. The percentage of students with special education needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. 70% of students are not resident in the area where the school is located and travel by bus from other areas of the city of Wolverhampton.

The school is a visual arts specialist college, with additional specialist status in sports and science. It has achieved the Artsmark Gold award, Sportsmark award, Healthy Schools award and, in 2008, it was designated a High Performing Specialist School by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. The school is a member of the South West Wolverhampton Consortium, which enables sixth form students to access courses in each of the schools in the consortium.

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Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The King's Church of England School is a satisfactory school that is improving rapidly. Although attainment and the progress students have been making has been improving steadily over recent years, attainment in English and mathematics at Key Stage 4 is too low and the progress students are making in the sixth form is sometimes too slow. School leaders are keenly aware of this and have effective strategies in place to bring about improvement. The curriculum is good and further improvements are planned. The system of care, guidance and support students receive has improved significantly, and is now good. Teaching and assessment are improving but, despite many strengths and examples of outstanding practice in drama and geography, overall, teaching is satisfactory. This is because not all teaching activities stretch and challenge students of all abilities sufficiently. Although students know their target grades, the feedback teachers give students on their work does not always give sufficient guidance on how they can improve it. In the three-hour long sixth form lessons, teachers do not always set appropriate short term goals to enable students to make sufficiently rapid progress.

The quality of leadership and management is good and the new principal, who was appointed in January 2009, has had a significant impact on driving ambition and instilling enthusiasm among staff and students. A rigorous system of self review is in place that is bringing about sustained improvement. This is indicated in the good care, guidance and support, the improving teaching and learning and the good progress students are currently making in their learning. Senior leaders know the school and its strengths and weaknesses very well. Their improvement planning is very good and takes account of the views of students and external evaluation. They know what needs doing and how it should be prioritised. In a short space of time their track record indicates good capacity for sustained improvement.

High expectations, ambition, unity and harmony characterise this multi-cultural, multi-faith, Church of England school and provide a firm foundation on which it has built some outstanding features - including the extent to which students contribute to the school and the wider community, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve the level of achievement of all students and, in particular improve the level of attainment in English and mathematics at Key Stage 4 and the rate of progress of students in the sixth form
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school by:
 - developing teaching activities so that students of all abilities are effectively challenged to extend their learning and make good progress
 - improving the pace of learning in the sixth form 3-lesson blocks by making use of short term goals for groups and individuals
 - ensuring that feedback on students' work provides good quality advice and guidance about how to improve

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In 2009, 70% of students gained five or more GCSEs at grades C or above and the specialist subjects contributed significantly to raising attainment. However, although attainment in English and mathematics has shown continuous improvement from a very low base in 2006, only 37% of students gained five or more GCSEs at grades C or above including English and mathematics. Over time and given their starting points, students are making expected progress. However, in the majority of lessons observed, progress and the quality of learning was good. This supports the improvements that are suggested by the school's current attainment tracking data. Students have generally good attitudes to learning and enjoy their lessons. They work effectively when directed by teachers and often work well on independent and small group activities, where they take responsibility for their own learning. There is no significant variation in the progress made by individual ethnic groups of students, and the gap between girls' and boys' progress and in particular that of minority ethnic boys is narrowing as a result of the effective and well-focused intervention strategies in place. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress.

Grades for other outcomes are given below. Particular features include the following.

- Students are thoughtful in their behaviour towards others.
- All students in Key Stage 3 have swimming lessons in the school's own pool and there is good uptake of the many sporting opportunities offered.
- A large number of students take on responsibilities within the school and many are involved in supporting community activities through specialist

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- subject work, in particular the visual arts. Junior sports leaders work with primary school pupils. Many students helped to make the Christmas concert and dinner for 200 older local residents a success.
- There are lots of opportunities for spiritual development and the school has a strong ethos of care for others. Good moral development is evident with pupils knowing right from wrong. Social development is very strong with productive group work and a tolerance and understanding of different cultures. Cultural development is outstanding in this rich multi-cultural community.
 - Students develop good work-place and social skills. However, other skills contributing to students’ future economic well-being, including literacy and numeracy, are not as well developed, as indicated in students’ attainment in English and mathematics.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
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	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

In general, lessons are well structured and good relationships between teachers and students create a positive climate for learning. Although most lesson plans included learning outcomes matched to the different abilities of students, these failed to drive lesson activities so that often the most able students were not stretched enough and expectations were not always high enough. Assessment for learning is particularly good in some subjects, including English, history and geography, but is less well developed in mathematics. In too many instances, marking of students’ work was

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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superficial and written feedback failed to indicate how students might improve their work.

The best lessons were characterised by:

- a range of teaching strategies that met the needs of different learners and raised their aspirations
- appropriate pace and challenge so that all students were fully engaged in learning
- effective and imaginative use of resources, including information and communication technology, so that students enjoyed their learning and their imaginations were captured

The curriculum is good and meets all statutory requirements. Key Stage 3 is currently a traditional curriculum with sufficient flexibility to meet the needs of all students. Advanced plans are in place for an exciting, thematic skills-based curriculum linked to the planned new school building project. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is strong and offers a wide range of qualifications and experiences. There are excellent links with other schools and, as a result, students have access to the full range of 14-19 diplomas as well as a range of other vocational and applied courses that meet the needs and aspirations of all students. The visual arts specialism, in particular, makes an outstanding contribution to the curriculum. The personal, social, health and economic education programme is good and students' learning and well-being is enhanced further by a broad and varied range of extra-curricular activities.

Transition arrangements from one key stage to another are good overall and very good between Years 6 and 7. The care, guidance and support system in place for individual students is excellent and many striking examples were explored of how this had led to improved behaviour, attitudes to learning, confidence and achievement. The rigorous efforts to improve attendance have been successful in raising attendance to above average levels and bringing about a significant reduction in the rate of persistent non-attenders. Provision to support those for whom English is an additional language is highly effective and ensures that students who join the school with little or no English are integrated quickly and successfully. Provision for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good and this is evident in the good progress these students are making in their learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The new principal has an ambitious vision that is permeating the school and driving improvement. The vision focuses upon achievement and raising expectations, and harmony and diversity. The school is setting itself challenging but realistic targets. The principal and the senior leadership team are empowering middle leaders so that they are accountable for their areas of responsibility.

The school has robust systems in place, at both senior and middle leader levels, to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. The outcomes of this inform professional development opportunities and in-school training provision and are leading to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in English and the humanities. Students' progress is monitored regularly and tracked by the schools' comprehensive assessment and on-line reporting system. The speedy identification of underachievement and the prompt introduction of well-focused intervention and support are having a positive impact on students' progress.

The governing body is well informed and committed and is fully involved in deciding the strategic direction of the school and in tackling weaknesses. It discharges its statutory responsibilities fully, ensuring that all safeguarding requirements are met to a high standard. Resources are used effectively and satisfactory value for money is achieved.

The school has a generally positive relationship with parents and carers and regularly seeks their views. Increasing numbers of parents and carers now attend the school's drama productions and parents' evenings.

Very good partnership links exist to promote students' learning and their well-being. This is evident in relation to curriculum links with other schools, care, guidance and support links with external agencies and the very strong partnership links forged through the school's specialist status.

The school is passionate in its focus on promoting equality of opportunity for every student. This is evident in the improving progress students are making, the fact that any underachievement is quickly identified and effectively supported, and that the performance gap between different groups of students is narrowing. The school is very clear on where further improvement can be made and is taking firm and decisive actions to bring this about.

The school makes an outstanding contribution to promoting community cohesion. The visual arts specialism contributes exceptionally well to this, particularly through its dance and drama productions. One short, but extraordinarily impressive, drama presentation by sixth form students illustrated the multi-cultural, multi-faith nature of the school and how it seeks to promote community cohesion, overcome stereotyping and raise aspirations. The school's community cohesion policy provides a clear

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statement of vision. It evaluates how its work contributes to this vision and has an action plan in place to further promote its work in this area.

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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Overall, sixth form students make satisfactory progress. They have good attitudes to learning, know their target grades and generally know what they need to do to improve their work. There are many instances where students take responsibility, including mentoring and supporting younger students, involvement in the Youth Parliament and in a range of dance and drama productions.

Joint sixth form provision with other schools in the consortium means that over half of all sixth form students currently study courses in other schools. To facilitate this, lessons are blocked into three-hour sessions. The blocking of lessons sometimes inhibits faster progress because teachers' plans do not always contain strategies designed to help students maintain the pace of learning during such a long period. Students are happy with the level of support they receive in lessons and their relationships with teachers are good. The curriculum meets the needs of students. A wide range of level 2 and 3 courses are offered, including traditional academic AS and A levels as well as new diplomas and other vocational and applied courses. The consortium with other schools enhances the curriculum and increases students' choice. Students speak very highly of the help advice and guidance they are given by teachers in preparation for higher and further education and this is confirmed by the high retention rates and the fact that all students remain in education and training or go on to employment.

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Leaders in the sixth form are able to evaluate the progress students make in different subjects but do not yet fully understand the reasons for different rates of progress. Tracking systems clearly identify students who are underachieving and enable appropriate support to be put in place. Quality assurance systems across schools in the consortium are developing, but have not yet had time to impact on improving performance.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

The number of completed questionnaires returned by parents and carers was very small and thus cannot be considered representative of the views of all parents and carers. The majority of students, and therefore, parents and carers, are widely dispersed throughout the city rather than being resident in the immediate vicinity of the school. As a result, improving the engagement of parents is recognised as a priority by the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The King's Church of England 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 26 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 874 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	46	12	46	2	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	46	12	46	2	8	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	54	10	38	2	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	46	11	42	1	4	1	4
The teaching is good at this school	11	42	10	38	3	12	1	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	27	13	50	2	8	2	8
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	42	12	46	2	8	0	0
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)	11	42	9	35	3	12	1	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	38	12	46	3	12	1	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	38	11	42	1	4	3	12
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	27	11	42	3	12	1	4
The school is led and managed effectively	11	42	9	35	2	8	1	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	50	10	38	2	8	1	4

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 all 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 pupils' 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.



15 February 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of The King's Church of England School , Wolverhampton WV6 8XG

The inspection team really enjoyed visiting your school last week. We judged it to be a satisfactory but rapidly improving school. We identified the following strengths.

- Your contribution to the school and its wider community and your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding as is the way in which the school promotes community cohesion. In this multi-cultural, multi-faith Church of England school we witnessed great harmony and unity, which you should be very proud of.
- You feel safe at school, your behaviour is good, you adopt healthy lifestyles and your attendance is above average and improving.
- The curriculum ensures that you can all study courses that are appropriate to your needs, whether in school or in your partner schools. Systems ensure that all of you are very well supported, guided and cared for in this school where tolerance and understanding are key features.
- The leadership and management of the school are good and the new principal has brought a renewed enthusiasm and ambition to the school that is influencing both teachers and students.

We asked the principal and his team of senior leaders to improve the following:

- your level of attainment in English and mathematics – at present 70% of students attain 5 or more GCSEs at grades C or above, which is great, but only 37% of students gain the same result including English and mathematics
- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that in every lesson each of you is stretched and challenged to make as much progress as possible and that in every subject you get good feedback on your work so that you know how to improve and meet or exceed your targets.

We know you are very proud of your school and you can help by attending regularly, behaving well, having good attitudes to learning and working as hard as you can.

Best wishes for all your futures
Gwen Coates
Her Majesty's Inspector

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