

The Kingswinford School & Science College

Inspection report

Unique reference number	137773
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	393404
Inspection dates	30–31 May 2012
Lead inspector	Michelle Parker HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	909
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janice Daines
Headteacher	Bronwyn Hedley
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2007
School address	Water Street Kingswinford DY6 7AD
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Denise Newsome

Additional Inspector

Patrick Taylor

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Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 35 lessons taught by 33 teachers, including 15 joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. Meetings and discussions were held with groups of students and members of the governing body, parents and carers, and the school staff, including senior and middle managers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, minutes of the governing body's meetings, documents relating to safeguarding and teaching records. Inspectors analysed 129 questionnaires from parents and carers in addition to those completed by students and staff.

Information about the school

The Kingswinford School is a smaller than average-sized school that is constantly oversubscribed. It became an academy in January 2012. Students come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and the proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than average. Just over 6% of students are from different minority ethnic heritages, which is a much lower percentage than average. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs including those supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is much lower than average. The school achieved specialist science college status in 2003 and became a Badminton England Academy in 2007. The school has an observatory and recently took part in the BBC Stargazing programme. The school exceeds the current floor standards which are the minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It lives up to its motto of 'every child a scientist' because of its outstanding science provision. The school is not yet outstanding because, although it collects and analyses a wide range of data, systems are not sufficiently streamlined to ensure that students are always fully supported to make outstanding progress. Opportunities are sometimes missed in encouraging students to become independent and self-motivated learners.
- All groups of students achieve well and their progress is good. For the last three years attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has been well above that reached by similar students nationally. Students' achievement in science and modern foreign languages, art, design and technology, geography and mathematics is outstanding. Students find learning motivating and persevere to grasp challenging ideas.
- Teachers interest and motivate students well. Students enjoy learning, particularly when they are working in groups or pairs, and when encouraged to take responsibility for their own performance. Teaching assistants are briefed well and deployed effectively across subject areas, especially in the support of disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding. This is reflected in their excellent behaviour around school and their punctuality to lessons. Students enjoy coming to school and attendance is above the national average.
- Leaders and managers enable the school to perform well in all aspects. The impressive curriculum provides a broad and balanced range of opportunities leading to rich and memorable experiences. The use of the observatory to extend the science curriculum is an excellent example of this. Students benefit from varied programmes of trips, residential visits and invited speakers. These help ensure that students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted well.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Streamline data systems to support all students towards reaching aspirational targets.
- Ensure that students better monitor their own performance so that they work more independently towards ambitious goals.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The progress of all groups of students over the last three years has been good. Groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, those of minority ethnic heritage and disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. From many students' above average starting points on entry, their good progress has enabled the majority to reach well above average standards by the end of Year 11, including the achievement of five A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics. Students make outstanding progress in science and modern foreign languages, art, design and technology, geography and mathematics which enables them to reach well above average standards in these subjects.

Staff have systematically focused on improving the progress of both higher and lower attaining students. Students frequently benefit from well-planned opportunities to practise their above average literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. In a Year 10 business studies lesson, for example, careful support was provided to ensure all students could express themselves well in their written work through the use of a well-designed writing frame. In science lessons, students' literacy and numeracy skills were applied well in their experiment analyses. However, this good practice is not entirely consistent across the school.

Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are effectively supported in all lessons because teaching assistants understand how to help them engage with the work and encourage them to be independent learners. Careful attention is paid to these students' weaker reading skills and this enables them to make good gains. Consequently they make similar progress to other groups of students in lessons.

Staff carefully monitor the progress of all students. Students are appreciative of the time given by staff in providing extra help when they need it. Staff are particularly successful in raising the achievement of those students whose circumstances may have made them vulnerable. Their increased confidence as learners supports them effectively into further education or training. All students make at least good

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progress in lessons because work is carefully matched to their starting points and needs. There is a close focus on narrowing gaps in attainment and progress for any student identified as underperforming, and outcomes are invariably positive.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching across the school is good with an increasing amount that is outstanding. Parents, carers and students fully endorse inspectors' views of the quality of teaching. In the lessons observed, students enjoyed learning, particularly when in pairs or groups where they could learn from one another through discussion and collaboration. They were well behaved and made good gains in their understanding. In outstanding lessons teachers have exceptionally high expectations for example in an observed mathematics lesson students were encouraged to be independent and resilient learners. For example, in a Year 9 textiles lesson, students worked in groups on a variety of tasks. The pace of learning was fast. Students completed their initial tasks quickly and then moved on to learn from each other in order to carry out all the activities set. Students made rapid gains in their understanding and were able to apply this new knowledge to the garment they were making and explain how it would be developed. Work was completed to a very high standard. Similarly, in a Year 9 science lesson, students made rapid gains in understanding the use of materials through their own research. The teacher's skilful questioning ensured that students explained their thinking well and helped each other to understand concepts. Students' knowledge and understanding was further extended through helpful marking which effectively promoted their independent learning. In weaker lessons opportunities were missed for students to evaluate their own performance and they were unclear about how to improve their work to gain the highest grades. In these lessons teachers' marking was also more superficial and limited students' understanding of the improvements they needed to make.

Students' reading skills are well used and supported in all subject areas. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs have dedicated time with skilful teaching assistants to support the development of their reading skills. This gives them increased confidence in tackling more complex texts. These students explained how teaching assistants 'never give up on them and encourage them to complete work'.

Students are encouraged to consider and discuss current issues, such as stereotypical views in society, which effectively promotes their spiritual, social and moral development. The school is developing students' broader understanding of wider cultural issues across a range of subjects, and opportunities for cultural development are well embedded in the subjects of the performing arts. The school has been awarded the International award.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students feel safe in school and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions. This is evident in the courtesy and respect students show each other, staff

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and visitors. There is no litter around the site. Students appreciate and respect the high quality of work displayed around the school. Relationships both with staff and between students are excellent and reflect the positive school ethos. Parents, carers and students spoke about the care and support all staff provide, and the impact they have on students' confidence, learning and feelings of safety. Bullying of any kind rarely occurs and students are confident it is dealt with effectively. Students understand the different types of bullying and have given presentations to parents and carers about how to ensure their children are aware of, and safe from, cyber-bullying. A small number of parents, carers and students felt that behaviour in a few lessons did not meet the high standard expected by the school. Inspectors found students' behaviour for learning was almost always very positive. Students are keen to attend school, and to contribute, learn and work independently and with initiative. The school is aware of the rare instances when learning is adversely affected by individuals' behaviour. In such cases, a firm line is taken and the school's high expectations of behaviour are clearly re-iterated. Because students understand what is expected of them, the number of exclusions is significantly below the national average.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has been in post a short time and has already made a significant impact upon the school. For example, she has restructured the senior and middle leadership teams to give an appropriately closer focus on teaching and learning in order to raise standards further. She is ambitious for every student's achievement and knows students and their families well. The headteacher's passion and high expectations are shared by all staff. The senior leadership team is newly formed and an additional member starts in September. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development. They effectively support and challenge staff, and set high standards for quality and performance through effective professional development and performance management. A wide range of performance data is collected and analysed thoroughly to promote equality between all groups of students. This is not used systematically enough to challenge students to make outstanding progress. Recent appointments have strengthened leadership at all levels and many staff members provide outstanding leadership. The director of the science specialism deploys student ambassadors from across the attainment range and key stages to promote science both in school, which helps younger students, and in a wide range of activities in the community. For example, they share their knowledge of astronomy to assist groups of students to use the school observatory. Student participation contributes well to the excellent work the school does with its numerous partners.

The curriculum is outstanding because the school achieves its aim of providing a highly personalised curriculum for every student which drives their learning and wider understanding of social, moral, spiritual and cultural issues. The curriculum also underpins students' high levels of achievement, good and often outstanding behaviour and enjoyment in learning.

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The governing body is well-informed and monitors the school very well. Members of the governing body use their professional expertise to challenge the school and hold senior leaders to account. They use their knowledge of the school well to agree appropriately ambitious targets for improvement. The governing body robustly tackles discrimination through questioning and careful data analysis, and admission policies encourage access from all sections of the community.

Arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet all statutory requirements. The school promotes a culture of safety very effectively. It successfully attracts high quality staff and provides good opportunities for them to develop both their professional and leadership skills. This factor has contributed significantly to the school's track record of continual improvement. Together with the effectiveness of recent improvements instigated by the new head teacher, this indicates very good capacity for further improvement.

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



1 June 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of The Kingswinford School & Science College, Kingswinford, DY6 7AD

Thank you for the warm welcome and courtesy you gave us during the inspection of your school. Your comments were helpful in giving us an accurate picture of the school. Thank you, also, to those students who completed the inspection questionnaire. Your comments were very helpful. We were impressed with your positive attitudes to learning and your politeness.

We agree with you that you go to a good school, which provides you with memorable and rich learning experiences. Your school is well led at all levels. For the last three years attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has been well above that reached by similar students nationally. All teaching is good or better and provides you with good levels of challenge. The school collects and analyses a wide range of data and we have asked senior leaders to streamline this so that it can be used more effectively to promote even better progress. We have also asked the school to help you develop greater independence as learners.

The school provides you with an impressive range of leadership opportunities for example, your roles as prefects, ICT ambassadors, physical education and science leaders, and members of the parents and teachers association - well done for that. We were impressed with the wide range of extra-curricular activities and trips you are given.

You understand how to keep yourselves safe and have helped parents and carers have a better understanding of cyber-bullying. You said bullying was rare and usually swiftly dealt with. A small number of parents and carers are concerned about disruption in lessons but you told us poor behaviour was rare. We were impressed with your cooperation and good behaviour and respect for each other. You have above average attendance and are punctual to lessons.

You can help the school to continue to improve by keeping up your good work and positive attitudes, and developing your independence and initiative as learners. We wish you success in all that you do.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector

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