

# INSPECTION REPORT

**KING EDWARD VI CAMP HILL SCHOOL FOR  
BOYS**

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103554

Headteacher: Mervyn Brooker

Reporting inspector: David Morton  
13154

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> December 2000

Inspection number: 223930

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Grammar
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Male
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R. Evans
Date of previous inspection:	12 <sup>th</sup> December 1994

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys is a selective grammar school, smaller than most secondary schools, with 693 boys on roll, of whom 198 are in the sixth form. It is part of the King Edward Foundation. The school is greatly over-subscribed. Its population is stable, few boys joining or leaving except at the usual times. About a quarter of boys come from outside the Birmingham area, travelling some distance to the school. Around 45 per cent of boys come from ethnic minority backgrounds and English is, for 16.6 per cent of all boys, an additional language; this is a larger percentage than the national average. The attainment of boys when they enter the school at the beginning of Year 7 is high. The percentage of boys entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of boys on the register of special educational needs is well below the national average. The school has been granted joint technology college status.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an excellent school with many outstanding features. The boys achieve very high standards because they have very positive attitudes and teaching that is good overall, with much of it being very good or excellent. Therefore, boys achieve very well and make very good progress as they move through the school. The school receives strong and effective leadership from its popular headmaster; staff, boys and parents respect him and respond well to the sense of direction he gives and his management of necessary change. The school has established an effective culture of review, self-evaluation and continuous improvement and gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Boys achieve very high academic standards.
- The leadership of the headmaster and senior members of staff is very good.
- Teaching is good or better; two-fifths of teaching is very good or excellent.
- Boys' attitudes are very positive.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is a strength of the school.
- The boys participate enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

#### **What could be improved**

- Teaching is satisfactory rather than good or better in a fifth of lessons; this sometimes limits what boys can achieve.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Improvement since the previous inspection in 1994 has been very good. Results in national tests, GCSE and A-level examinations have been sustained at very high levels and have improved at rates above those found nationally. The school has successfully tackled all concerns raised at the previous inspection. There is now a comprehensive system of development planning. The overall curricular provision has improved. ICT is now a strength of the school.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A*	A*	A*	A*
A-levels/AS-levels	A*	A*	A*	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The A\* grades in this table indicate that its results place the school amongst the top five per cent of all schools in the country and the top five per cent of all selective grammar schools.

Results in 2000 and the previous three years in National Curriculum tests taken at the age of 14 have been consistently very high; results in English were not as good as those in mathematics and science in 1999. However, in 2000 the results in all three subjects were very high. Nine out of ten boys added value to their attainment on entry to the school. Results have improved at a more rapid rate than the trend observed nationally.

Similarly, results in GCSE examinations taken at the age of 16 in 2000, and in the previous three years, have been consistently very high. The proportion of boys achieving A\* and A grade passes was very high in 2000. The school exceeded the challenging targets set. The results in 2000 were the best of all maintained boys' schools in the country. Results have improved in recent years at a more rapid rate than that found nationally. Results in all subjects far exceeded national averages, the best of all being mathematics, French, German, biology, chemistry, physics and music. In comparison with these subjects art and design, design and technology, English, geography, history, religious education and double science were less successful, although still well above the national average. Out of 918 entries for GCSE examinations, only four did not achieve at least a C grade pass.

At A-level, results in 1999 and 2000 were very high. The proportion of sixth-form students achieving the highest A or B grades was very high. However, the school did not reach its challenging target. Results in all subjects exceeded national averages, the best being art and design, biology, economics, general studies, history, mathematics and further mathematics. Compared with these subjects, while still above the national average, the least successful were business studies, chemistry, design and technology, English, French, German, geography, computing, music, physics and religious studies. Students taking the examination in 2000 added value to their performance in GCSE examinations.

The school has set itself challenging yet achievable targets for 2001. Targets for boys and sixth-form students identified as gifted and talented are especially demanding.

The achievement of boys and sixth-form students is very good. Their literacy and numeracy skills are high when they begin school in Year 7, but all departments ensure that these are developed further as they move through the school. Those boys for whom English is an

additional language enter the school with a good command of English; this is enhanced further as they move through the school. These very positive features of the performance of boys are in a large part due to the attitudes they bring to their work, the support they receive from their parents and the very good guidance teachers give as part of generally good teaching. The five boys on the special needs register make very good progress. Standards of work seen in early December during the inspection, especially in English, mathematics, science and ICT, were well above average and sometimes high, notably in Years 10 and 11. Boys' achievement in relation to their attainment at the start of Years 7, 10 and the sixth form is very good. Boys are therefore on course to achieve very high standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 and when most leave the school at the end of the sixth form. Their achievement as indicated by GCSE examination results at the age of 16 and A-level results is excellent and indicates that value is being added at each of these stages in relation to their previous attainment.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Boys and sixth-form students show enthusiasm and interest in all aspects of school life. They have excellent attitudes to their work and are keen to succeed. The very good learning and progress of boys owes much to these attitudes. A minority of boys are careless in their approach to aspects of their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is almost always very good; sometimes there is some lack of politeness, especially to women, and sometimes boys become restless if a lesson does not fully engage their interest.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships amongst boys and with staff are very good; boys grow in responsibility and maturity at a fast rate.
Attendance	Attendance is very good and is well above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Overall, the quality of the boys' learning is good. They bring a sense of curiosity to their work and show a readiness to undertake independent study and research. They show a willingness to stick to tasks they find demanding and a feature of their achievement is the quality of discussion they bring to their learning, including making presentations to their classmates as a result of significant personal study. Boys respond well to questions asked by teachers, often structured to make increasing demands upon their thinking and analysis. Boys are good at recalling previous learning and applying it to new situations.

Boys learn well because teaching is good throughout the school. Teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons. Teaching is good or better in 81 per cent of lessons; in 31 per cent of lessons it is very good and in 9.5 per cent of lessons is excellent. The teaching of English is generally good and occasionally very good, that of mathematics almost always good and

occasionally excellent and the teaching of science is almost always good and often very good. The teaching of ICT is usually very good and sometimes excellent. Teachers of English improve skills of literacy despite these being generally high on entry to the school; as a result boys address extended reading and writing in all subjects confidently and accurately. Skills of numeracy are also developed well; boys use these skills effectively in a range of subjects, notably, design and technology, geography, history and ICT. Homework is set regularly, is purposeful and effectively marked, giving boys clear indications of how their work can be improved. A strength of teaching lies in meeting the differing learning needs of boys; the highest-attaining boys and sixth-formers, including those identified as gifted and talented, usually have additionally demanding tasks set for them, especially in mathematics and science. There are many examples of very accomplished presentation using skills of ICT.

In 19 per cent of lessons, whilst satisfactory, teaching does not expect a depth and richness of learning of which boys are capable. However, the marking in English is especially effective in developing an improved knowledge of language and accuracy amongst a minority of boys who are either careless or less secure in their writing. Hand-written presentation in most subjects is of variable quality; generally it should be better.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well designed to reflect the traditional aims and objectives of the school, providing an appropriate balance of opportunity and choice in proven areas of academic excellence. It meets the expectations of most boys and sixth-form students and their parents, using effectively the expertise of teachers. However, insufficient time is allocated to religious education in Years 10 and 11.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Learning support in the school has developed since the previous inspection and is good; it successfully meets the demands made of it. The five boys on the register of special educational needs make very good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Although English is an additional language for around 16.6 per cent of boys, their command of English is fluent. Their learning is monitored and teachers respond if particular attention to aspects of language is deemed to be necessary. This process is effective.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, provision for boys' personal development is very good. Despite good work in religious education, the spiritual dimension of boys' development across subjects is less effective compared with the moral, social and cultural development, arrangements for which are very good. Assemblies are dull and do not provide boys with a stimulating and reflective start to the school day.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of boys and sixth-form students. Procedures for child protection are in place. Regular health and safety checks are carried out. The pastoral system ensures that each boy is well known by teachers and their work undergoes effective procedures of assessment.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Parents believe Camp Hill Boys to be a very good school that provides a caring, challenging environment in which their sons learn well.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The management of the school is good. The headmaster provides outstanding leadership and has a clear sense of direction for the school in addition to the effective sustaining and improving of very high standards. Major achievements are the successful bid for joint technology college status and its related links to the local community of King's Heath. The headmaster is ably supported by his deputies.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed about the school's performance and take appropriate steps to hold the school to account. Statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A strength of the school is the quality assurance procedures it has put in place, especially in relation to boys' achievements and the performance of departments and individual teachers.
The strategic use of resources	The school strives for best value when making purchases. Expenditure is appropriate to meet the identified needs of the school through its development planning.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>A majority indicated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their sons enjoy coming to school.</li> <li>• They believe teaching to be good and their sons make good progress.</li> <li>• They consider behaviour in the school to be good.</li> <li>• In their view the school is striving for high standards.</li> <li>• The leadership of the headmaster is good.</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities is outstanding.</li> </ul>	<p>A small minority at the parents' meeting felt that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More demands could be made of the very highest attainers.</li> <li>• Not enough help is given to the school's average boys.</li> <li>• The setting of homework could be more coherent, especially in Years 7 to 9, so that the amount is more manageable.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with all the positive points raised by parents. Now that the school is identifying gifted and talented boys and planning enrichment and extension work for them, inspectors feel appropriate demands are being made of them. During the inspection, inspectors felt that the learning needs of all boys were being well met. Inspectors have no real concerns about homework, although they acknowledge that there might be occasional inconsistencies; it was not possible to identify these during this short inspection.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Boys achieve very high academic standards**

1. Results were very high in national tests for 14 year olds in 2000 and were well above national averages in English, mathematics and science. These high standards have been maintained over a number of years and are now very high in comparison with similar selective grammar schools. The trend of improvement has been above the national trend in recent years. Boys added value in their achievement is very good in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. In 1999, the examination board misplaced the English papers and they were only returned in the last week of term it was considered that a number of them merited re-marking, but the school felt unable to do so in the time available. The results at the age of 14 in English as reported, therefore, were inaccurate; the very high results in English in 2000 accurately reflected the achievement of the boys. The school's results overall at the age of 14 were amongst the highest five per cent of all schools and similar grammar schools in the country.

2. Results in GCSE examinations for 16 year olds in 2000 were also very high. This was an outstanding year for the school and these results were better than any other maintained boys' school in the country. The school exceeded the high targets set by the governors. The trend of improvement has been above the national trend in recent years. Boys added value in their achievement in relation to their attainment in the tests at the age of 14. The proportion of boys achieving the highest A\* and A grades was also very high. Out of all the entries for a GCSE examination, 918, only four failed to achieve at least a grade C pass. Good results in GCSE examinations have been a feature of the school for many years. All subjects scored highly and well exceeded the national averages; the very best results were achieved in mathematics, French, chemistry, German and biology. The overall results in GCSE examinations were also amongst the highest five per cent of all schools and similar grammar schools in the country.

3. Results in A-level examinations at the end of the sixth form in 2000 were very high. In the history of the school these results have only been exceeded once, in 1999, and there has been a steady trend of improvement since 1996. They were amongst the very best results of the top half-dozen or so state schools in the country. Sixth-form students maintained value in their achievements in relation to their performance in GCSE examinations two years earlier. All subjects scored highly and well exceeded the national averages; the very best results at A-level were in art and design, biology, history, mathematics and general studies.

4. There are some special features to be found in the high standards achieved by the school. Boys and sixth-form students' literacy skills are well developed. The quality of written work is particularly high, especially in Years 10, 11 and the sixth form. Pupils' writing is detailed, substantial and largely accurate. Its presentation when hand-written could be better, but very accomplished uses of ICT in the presenting of work are very evident. Boys and sixth-form students write successfully in a variety of forms; illustrations of some of these are seen in the current 2000 edition of the school magazine 'Chronicle'. Often, their writing reflects a good understanding of books by a wide range of authors. These qualities are seen in all boys, not just those of the highest attainment. In these cases, much of the work is

outstanding and being extended further through initiatives being taken through the gifted and talented strand of the Excellence in Cities programme. Boys' listening and speaking skills throughout the school are very good; they play a full part in discussions and talk fluently and purposefully in a range of situations. For example, in response to high quality, inspirational teaching in a film studies English lesson, boys in Year 11 showed they could identify and discuss imaginatively the nature of symbolism, metaphor and the ways in which images suggest meanings in the opening sequences of Spielberg's 'Empire of the Sun'.

5. In an upper sixth mathematics lesson students enjoyed academic discussion pulling strands of previous learning together through many connected topics. Pupils were fluent in talking of their understanding of processes, using technical language confidently, and often challenging the teacher; his enthusiasm, excellence in the subject and willingness to accept such challenges meant that the dynamic of the discussion was an example of outstanding sixth-form practice. This was possible because of the students' skills of discussion based on their own sound subject knowledge. Outstanding teaching managed this discussion very purposefully; it was at a level more normally found in a university seminar.

6. Higher-attaining boys achieve highly and learn quickly. They respond well to demanding work and make substantial progress in developing their knowledge and understanding. For example, boys in Year 11 were quick to appreciate the need for precision in their work and were aware of the factors that would cause anomalous results if attention to detail was overlooked in a biology lesson when measuring reaction times to the speed of transmission of neurones. As a result boys generated four sets of accurate results quickly and converted the averages to a reaction time in milliseconds. Boys confidently posed hypotheses during an excellent discussion, showing an understanding of synapses, through which the teacher successfully guided the boys into a further phase of understanding; he expected boys to be able to calculate the time delay connected with synapses and the speed of the impulse in a neurone. Confident teaching helped highly-achieving boys to talk and learn confidently.

### **The leadership of the headmaster and senior members of staff is very good**

7. A significant reason for the continuing success of Camp Hill Boys' School is the outstanding leadership of the headmaster. He has a clear sense of what the school should seek to achieve and has the skill to put in place those measures necessary to ensure that the school is successful. His style means that he is well liked and respected by boys, sixth-form students and staff. His personality is such that he can make demands of boys and staff that bring out the best in them; he does this with humour and concern for the well-being of the community of the school. The school is one in which boys mature and develop their own values. The overall ethos of the school ensures that the values and attitudes shown by boys in their relationships at school are secure and soundly based within a developing understanding of the community of the school and their wider sense of their place in society. He promotes an attitude to work that is always striving for excellence, whether it is the way teachers teach or boys learn.

8. The headmaster is at the centre of a commitment to maintain and improve what the school has already achieved. The last two years have been amongst the most successful in its long history and tradition. Actions have a clear purpose. For example, senior management tries to ensure that procedures and policies are of benefit to the efficient and effective operation of the school. Well-defined procedures give everyone a clear understanding of their

own responsibilities and the roles of others. For example, one of the deputy headmasters has been effective in fulfilling his responsibility for tracking the progress of boys and sixth-form students and, with heads of year, ensuring their well-being. The counselling and mentoring undertaken in this respect is an effective feature of the school. The other deputy has played a major part in the school's policy of review, self-evaluation and improvement, especially in relation to the performance of boys and sixth-form students in public examinations. The analysis he leads each year ensures that the school, departments and individual teachers improve each year on their previous best performance. This is undertaken systematically in order that every effort is made for each generation of boys to achieve its very best. Teaching and learning are effectively monitored and supported when need is identified, but not as systematically as a regular pattern of lesson observation would provide.

9. Senior management is seeking to place the school in the vanguard of appropriate educational development. The headmaster led successfully the school's application for technology college status. By applying for joint status with a neighbouring boys' comprehensive school, he pointed the way for the school to be open to influences for good coming from outside as well as making the expertise within Camp Hill Boys' available more widely. The technology college status includes working with a number of local primary schools; this cements further the move to make Camp Hill Boys' more active generally in the community of King's Heath and enriches its successful work as part of the Changemakers' Community Scheme.

10. The school is always seeking to improve on its previous best. It is pleased with its achievements, but not complacent; it is looking for ways to be better still. Governors' share the school management team's desire for standards in all aspects of the life of the school to be as high as possible. In recent years, this striving is a direct result of the present headmaster's principles and skills guiding the school's development.

### **Teaching is good or better; two-fifths of teaching is very good or excellent**

11. In eight out of every ten lessons the teaching is good or better. The quality of the teaching is a main reason why the school is successful. Teachers know their subjects well, are enthusiastic about them and present them to boys in a lively and motivating manner. They establish excellent relationships with boys and sixth-form students. Teachers have created very good learning environments in which boys develop intellectually, physically, socially and creatively. The best teaching occurs in two out of every five lessons; in these lessons teaching is very good or excellent. For example, in a Year 8 English lesson, where boys were considering the plight of the mariner in Coleridge's 'The Ancient Mariner', the teaching led boys to an understanding of the poet's use of symbolism to heighten feeling; this led one boy to talk of the morality represented by the symbolism of the mariner pulling off the chain and cross from round his neck and replacing it with the albatross he had killed. The boys understood this vibrant representation of guilt and remorse: 'Instead of the cross, the albatross / About my neck was hung'. Boys used their own imagination in response to skilful, lively and penetrating questioning by the teacher.

12. Similarly, a Year 11 geography lesson moved at a demanding pace and the balance of activities was very good. The teacher made very good use of the school's geography web-site to provide lesson information and potential research sources for the homework task set. This lesson provides an example of how a teacher's questioning that is direct and challenging,

encourages the boys to apply their previous learning. The sequence of the lesson and its carefully guiding structure provided high-attaining boys with very good learning opportunities. As a result their levels of understanding and interpretative skills were above average. They drew conclusions from statistical evidence and applied triangular graphing techniques. In their study of aspects of industry in an area, they developed an understanding of employment differences and exemplified the types of business linked to each industrial sector and appreciated that some business activities bridge different sectors. Effective teachers set challenging homework as an extension activity requiring demanding use of research skills on the web-site, in atlases and text books. This lesson was of such a quality that boys were motivated to pursue these tasks; they showed a readiness to take significant responsibility for their own learning and had been provided with the skills to do so successfully. In a biology lesson in Year 13 about the behaviour of daphnia in response to a variety of stimuli, well organised practical work provided students with opportunities to manage practical experimentation and investigation and overcome difficulties that might arise. The students arrived at cumulative tables of evidence after counting moving daphnia according to set time intervals in required sections of tubing. The teaching required that students should work quickly and accurately with a clear focus. Previous teaching and learning has established excellent practical routines. In a plenary session towards the end of the lesson the teacher skilfully drew out the reasons for the results obtained and effectively related theory to practice. He gave the group responsibility for determining the most appropriate statistical analysis of the results and gave a very good explanation of aspects of animal behaviour relating to the stimuli. The teacher's very good knowledge and enthusiasm led to the students' level of interest and endeavour being high.

13. Another feature of the very good and excellent teaching is the high expectations the best teaching has of boys and sixth-form students. Teachers use questioning skilfully to extend thinking and check understanding. They expect answers to be thorough and comprehensive. This expectation is clear in the best lessons in Year 7 and younger boys respond accordingly. As they move through the year groups, boys' facility to respond in depth in discussion increases and is a very significant feature of the effective learning of boys in the school. Upper-sixth students, therefore, presented articulate and lively presentations, for example in religious education, about the theology and practice of the Eucharist in a variety of churches in modern times. Many drew well on first-hand experience of their own faiths and churches in well-prepared presentations. It became clear that students understood well the under-pinning theological beliefs common to diverse religions; they also distinguished between commemorative symbolism on one hand and aspects of transubstantiation on the other. However, the main success of this lesson rested in the teacher's skilful questioning to take these very good presentations to even deeper levels and bring out further knowledge and understanding to be shared by the whole group. High expectations were insisted upon within discussions of a high quality. This was also true in a design and technology lesson with Year 11, but here the teacher skilfully used the technique of boys themselves acting as tutors to those less confident of achieving a quality outcome to a process concerned with the manufacturing of a product. In this case boys and the teacher used visual material skilfully to support theoretical and practical learning. Previous teaching had given boys the capacity to self-check their work and to plan for and logically work at solving specific problems in their learning about electronics. The requirements of the examination were noted, but the variety of approaches to the demands of the task was an excellent example of imaginative teaching.

14. At best teaching can be inspirational. In a Year 9 French lesson, conducted entirely in French with very accurate pronunciation, not just from the teacher but also the boys, discussions on holidays, jobs and pocket money were orchestrated by the teacher so that there was always a teaching input even though boys were working largely in pairs. The dialogue and dynamic between the class and the teacher was excellent with the result that boys concentrated well throughout the lesson, were always addressing the task in the foreign language. In a music lesson, boys composed 12-bar blues sequences on keyboards, working exceptionally well in groups of two or three. Just as in the French lesson, the skill of the teacher in intervening in a positive way to extend boys' learning, helping, for example, higher attainers to experiment beyond the banal, ensured that the quality of learning was high and the understanding of the blues idiom secure. The teacher also used, carefully, some well chosen examples of the blues for boys to listen to in relation to their own compositions. There was an air of expectation about this lesson, of something good about to happen; as a result boys' motivation and interest were high.

15. A key reason for the examination results being high is the consistently good and often exceptional teaching. The most successful teachers are hardworking, committed, knowledgeable, imaginative and enthusiastic. Sixth-form students cited these qualities as the main strength of Camp Hill Boys' School. There is an intensity of endeavour in the very good and excellent teaching; teachers assume that boys and sixth-form students will do well and this is realised in their efforts and attainment. The school has high expectations of boys and teachers; both respond to this challenge. Teachers have clear objectives for their lessons and the best share these with the boys. Good lessons end with a check on whether these objectives have been achieved and the learning effective. In the majority of the best lessons there is evidence of boys learning something new or consolidating that which is already known and understood. Boys are helped to understand what they must do to improve their work. The marking of written work in the best of instances indicates areas for improvement in a helpful way. In some activities, for example in art and design, design and technology and music, boys are asked to assess the effectiveness of their own work and that of their classmates.

### **Boys' attitudes are very positive**

16. Boys are keen to learn. When they enter classrooms they quickly prepare themselves to start work. It is rarely necessary for teachers to cajole them. The boys' excellent and positive attitudes to their work are important factors in their high achievement, the good progress they make and the results that follow in public examinations. These attitudes are apparent whether they are working as a direct response to the teacher or with each other in group activities. The excellent relationships between boys and between boys, sixth formers and teachers are a key to the successes boys achieve.

17. The heads of year and heads of department track carefully the overall well-being and development of boys in their work and relationships in school. Their attendance is very good and consistently monitored if, infrequently, any irregular attendance appears to occur. Boys and sixth-form students are effectively supported in their learning and preparation for examinations. There is a strong correlation between the attitudes boys bring to school, well supported by their parents, the care shown for boys by the staff and their high attainment and very good achievement. They persevere at difficult tasks, help each other, are curious and anxious to do well for its own sake as well as success in examinations. As a result they achieve very good rates of progress.

18. Boys concentrate well, try their best and respond positively to challenge and the demands made of them. Behaviour is usually very good; very occasionally there are examples of impolite attitudes by a small minority of boys to female members of staff or visitors. Boys help each other when appropriate. They mostly have a thirst for knowledge and do much to enable lessons flow smoothly. Standards of discussion in class are especially good. For example, in a geography lesson with Year 8, boys had developed a clear understanding of the possible hazards connecting human and physical processes through a study of the Aberfan disaster. Their fluent discussion showed their appreciation of the issues at two levels in this real example: the physical processes that caused the coal tip to slip at Aberfan coupled with empathy for the villagers who were victims of the disaster. Boys clearly demonstrated their facility to transfer and combine knowledge from different disciplines, in this case geography and the study of friction and gravity in physics, to draw conclusions and account for the reasons for the disaster. When making points, boys relate their comments to their knowledge and understanding of the topic but are sometimes prepared to give contrary views when the area of discussion is more subjective. In such cases, they differ from other boys politely and show appreciation of the views of others. They work together well in this way because they are lively, interested, well motivated and responsive to teaching that is excellent owing to the teacher's secure knowledge of the subject and excellent management of resources. This is also the result of much of the source material being on the department's own web-site, ([www.pupilvision.com](http://www.pupilvision.com)); the quality of this web-site is such that it has recently received high commendation and an award from the Royal Geographical Society.

19. Boys and sixth-form students work well because they are lively, interested, well motivated and responsive to teaching that is sometimes outstanding. They organise themselves well in pairs or groups when this required in a lesson and use their time effectively. Boys accept the work ethic that has been established in the school. Most are not easily satisfied with their work. In English for example, they are prepared to think again, approach their work in different ways and re-draft their writing to realise more clearly their thoughts and feelings in response to the set tasks. Boys make strenuous efforts to be successful and as a result their achievement is high.

### **Information and communication technology is a strength of the school**

20. At the previous inspection in 1994, concern was expressed about the skills of ICT being 'generally used insufficiently to reinforce work within other subject areas'. It was also the case that there was a need to increase 'the provision of computers across the school, or, at least, in resource areas'. Since that time, the development of cross-curricular use of ICT has been significant; its use to support learning is now a strength of the school. This is the result of the work of the deputy headmaster with an overview of the curriculum, the coordinator for ICT, the school coordinator of the technology college initiative and ICT coordinators in each subject. Governors have been aware of the need for improvement in the provision of hardware and, with the successful outcome of joint technology college status, have ensured significant improvement. It is also due to the commitment of departments in monitoring and extending their use and expertise in the application of ICT to their subjects. This work is now supported effectively by the very good teaching of a discrete ICT skills development course in Years 7 to 9.

21. Teachers' knowledge, skills and understanding of ICT have improved and they now make good use of computers to support learning and develop communication and presentation skills within subject areas. Good senior management has ensured that aspects of ICT within the school are used across the curriculum and such uses are logged. The coordinator is a thinker with many imaginative ideas; in cooperation with the deputy headmaster, many of his ideas become part of school and departmental policy. Work is carefully assessed in relation to the levels of the National Curriculum; this is collated centrally and the ICT coordinator ensures its use for further staff development. Improvement has led standards of attainment throughout Years 7 to 11 and in the sixth form to be above average.

22. Having been successful in obtaining joint technology college status, the school is currently developing and implementing initiatives to ensure the dissemination of good practice and lead to better links with primary schools within the community of King's Heath, other educational establishments and the wider community.

23. The progress that has been made means that the school is ready to monitor more fully the effectiveness of the teaching and learning in ICT across subjects; it is preparing itself for the introduction of video-conferencing, especially for gifted and talented boys. Some teaching of ICT as a discrete subject is currently very good. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, boys were using logo to consolidate and extend skills learned in the primary schools by applying control more tightly to precise geometric figures. In Year 8, boys approached work in ICT with confidence. As a result of skilful questioning by the teacher, who taught with a sense of humour, they discussed the use of spreadsheets and how they might be applied to a number of subjects. The keenness of the class ensured that the lesson moved at a fast pace and learning was very good. Boys learned how to sequence their work towards a desired outcome. At a much more advanced level, excellent teaching with a lower-sixth group led to challenging work in ICT's links with science and mathematics in connection with A-level computing work on a floating point, negative numbers and the binary system. The teacher skilfully linked abstract concepts with real situations as students write their own computer programmes. Students' learning was totally engaged with a problem needing a solution. They were aware of the strengths and limitations of computer programming.

### **The boys participate enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular activities**

24. The school offers boys a wide selection of extra-curricular activities; almost all boys participate in at least one of these activities. The school is renowned for its annual productions of plays, most recently J B Priestley's 'An Inspector Calls' by boys in Years 7 to 9 and Arthur Miller's 'All My Sons' by older boys and sixth-form students. Both of these are also set plays and by moving them from the page to the stage helped boys appreciate them as theatrical pieces and not just literature. Drama is used often in English lessons, usually linked to set texts; its effectiveness and that of productions would benefit from the facilities that would be provided by a drama studio, as found in most secondary schools nowadays. The school also mounts a number of large scale musical productions and concerts. The number of boys learning musical instruments is impressive and the range of work undertaken in class and as extra-curricular activity is wide. The choir and orchestra have performed in the cathedral and at the Symphony Hall; last year, as well as producing a CD of its usual work, it was involved in producing a charity CD 'Dreams have Power' for Christian Aid. A carol service is held each year as well as a variety of concerts during the year. There are many keen and a significant number of gifted and talented musicians amongst the boys; their interests and aspirations are well met by the school, and the music department is making good use of its recently improved facilities.

25. Sport is a strength of the school; many members of staff in addition to those within the department of physical education contribute to its wide range of teams and related activities. These activities do much to support the ethos and traditions of the school and remain an interest to old boys of the school. Because of the range of sports offered in addition to the traditional team and field sports, provision would be enhanced by provision of a sports hall. There is significant interest in squash, badminton, indoor athletics, tennis and basketball. Indoor facilities for these sports are currently limited, but there is a demand from many boys

that is not fully met at present. Such provision would also lead to enhancement of the core physical education curriculum. The school has a healthy attitude to competitive sport; during the inspection the efforts of one team that lost heavily were nonetheless appropriately recognised and applauded.

26. These activities are very public. However, many members of staff give time willingly for a range of other activities. Chess, for example, has a strong and successful tradition in the school and has been very successful in local, regional and national competitions. The school undertakes a range of educational visits, some directly linked to the curriculum, others are extension activities that broaden the experience of boys and sixth-form students. A quiz team has recently won a regional competition sponsored by a local building society and the aeroplane club successfully participated in the British Aerospace Challenge. During the inspection the semi-finals of an annual public-speaking competition were held; all boys in the school take part in this. The school supports a number of charities and mounts events to raise funds for them.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Teaching is satisfactory rather than good or better in a fifth of lessons; this sometimes limits what the boys can achieve**

27. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. However, two-fifths of all teaching was very good or excellent and sets a marker for all teaching, especially that deemed to be satisfactory, to aspire to emulate. Satisfactory teaching usually leads to satisfactory learning; this is not good enough for the school since it sets itself to achieve the highest standards of attainment in boys' learning; if lessons are no better than satisfactory, the level of achievement and rates of progress made by boys fall short of the goals of the school and the high capabilities of its intake.

28. In satisfactory lessons there is less evidence of the essential strengths of energy, enthusiasm, high expectations, perception of learning needs of individual and groups of boys within the class and opportunities for effective learning based on the teacher's confidence in the subject and sharply honed teaching skills. Appropriate teaching methods are not always consistently used during the course of a lesson, leading to learning that is satisfactory rather than fully effective and demanding. In some lessons, activities are too often led entirely by the teacher, sometimes with teachers telling boys what they should know and understand rather than using questions and answers or individual, independent but structured study to help boys identify with the teacher these key features of their learning. Sometimes, there is insufficient application of subject knowledge or skill applied to the specific area of learning the lesson is designed to meet. If a teacher does not fully possess such knowledge and skill in a narrow aspect of a subject other ways should be sought to meet the requirements of an examination course. Otherwise progress is slow and boys find themselves working at levels they know to be below their capabilities. This occasionally leads to poor concentration and application and the focus of the lesson becomes hazy rather than sharp. Boys' work rate slows and the pace of the lesson falters.

29. Teaching does not always take sufficient account of boys' previous learning. Day-to-day assessment is not always used to inform modifications to medium-term planning. There is sometimes a need to revise and consolidate before moving on; on other occasions the need is

to move more quickly to the acquisition of new knowledge or skills because previous learning is secure. In such circumstances, achievement is limited even though progress and the quality of learning are sound.

30. Less effective learning occurs when teachers use a limited variety of teaching methods and techniques to engage pupils and keep them on task. Variety for its own sake is not a virtue, but teachers are not always aware that 14 year-old boys find it difficult to engage in the same type of learning activity, however well managed if strongly led by the teacher, for 70 minutes. Because of the boys' high levels of attainment, there is a tendency amongst a minority of teachers to assume that a lecture or seminar approach is sustainable for this period of time; boys' energy levels demand, at times, more active learning opportunities. It is usually inappropriate for boys to be largely inactive and expected to simply listen or answer questions for long periods of time.

31. Teachers do not always find appropriate ways of intervening and supporting boys whilst they are working on their own or in groups. There is a tendency either to leave them to it or do no more than check whether they are on task; when boys are working in groups, especially, teachers tend not to stay for significant periods of time with one group in order to extend and deepen boys' understanding or acquisition of skills and raise the quality of their learning. Sometimes such work is insufficiently structured for boys to have clear learning goals, understand fully what they are doing, know how well they are achieving and what they need to do to improve.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

32. In order to maintain and improve on the already high standards and quality of education the school provides, the headteacher, governors and staff should give attention to:

- (1) improving the quality of teaching and boys' learning further by:
  - in a fifth of lessons improve teaching to match the best in the school so that the boys make consistently good progress, with learning in all lessons having the rigour in the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills that reflects the high standards the school and parents set for boys and sixth-form students,
  - sharing good practice and ensuring more frequent lesson observation that has a clear focus aimed at improving standards of learning and teaching,
  - extending and targeting more appropriately the existing opportunities for individual members of staff to develop and update their expertise in the subjects they teach,
  - planning lessons with clear learning objectives,
  - increasing variety in teaching methods, especially in longer lessons,
  - improving the balance between the teacher's input and the learning activities of boys,
  - making sure that the teaching matches more closely the differing learning needs of boys in the class and makes appropriate rigorous demands of all boys.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9.5	31	40.5	19	0	0	0

*The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	495	198
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	47	0

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	1

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	115

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	9.1

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	1.1

*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3*

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	96	0	96

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	94	95	94
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	94	95	94
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	98 (99)	99 (100)	98 (100)
	National	63 (63)	66 (62)	60 (54)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	98 (70)	99 (100)	98 (99)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	96	96	96
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	96	96	96
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	65 (64)	66 (64)	60 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	97 (99)	100 (100)	96 (99)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	30 (28)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4***

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	93	0	93

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	93	93	93
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	93	93	93
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	49 (46.9)	88.8 (90.9)	95.5 (95.8)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	68.6 (66.0)
	National	38.7 (38.0)

*Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### ***Attainment at the end of the sixth form***

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	95	0	95

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	32.1 (33.9)	0	32.1 (33.9)	10 (0)	0	10 (0)
National	N/A (17.7)	N/A (18.1)	N/A (17.9)	N/A (2.7)	N/A (2.8)	N/A (2.8)

*Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	9
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	2
Indian	111
Pakistani	81
Bangladeshi	8
Chinese	20
White	381
Any other minority ethnic group	76

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	1	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	18	0
Other minority ethnic groups	1	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### *Teachers and classes*

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	41.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	220.75

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.9
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13**

Key Stage 3	27.1
Key Stage 4	23.4

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2 757 182
Total expenditure	2 745 182
Expenditure per pupil	3 473
Balance brought forward from previous year	73 044
Balance carried forward to next year	85 044

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	693
Number of questionnaires returned	274

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	34	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	32	1	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	38	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	44	8	1	2
The teaching is good.	65	33	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	42	7	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	27	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	87	13	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	51	39	8	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	75	24	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	33	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	34	4	0	5