



King Edward VI Five Ways School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103552
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276950
Inspection dates 23 November 2005 to 24 November 2005
Reporting inspector Cathy Morgan HMI

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

Type of school	Grammar (selective)	School address	Scotland Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Bartley Green
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Birmingham, West Midlands B32 4BT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4753535
Number on roll	1125	Fax number	0121 477 8555
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Jan Jarrett
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr David Wheeldon

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

King Edward VI Five Ways is a voluntary aided, selective, co-educational grammar school. The school is of medium size but with a large sixth form of 350 students. The attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is well above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average as is the number identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. More than one third of the school population are from minority ethnic groups and 19% have English as an additional language (EAL). The school gained specialist humanities college status in September 2004. The school is a centre for The Royal Geographical Society, Geography Association, and The Ordnance Survey. In September 2005 the school achieved International Status.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

King Edward VI Five Ways is a highly effective school with outstanding leadership and management. The headteacher's vision together with a very strong senior team, has led to a substantial rise in standards since the previous inspection and pupils make good progress. Personal development and well-being, the curriculum and sixth form provision are outstanding. Pupils' attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning are also outstanding as is the commitment of the staff. The school has no significant weaknesses and has an excellent capacity to improve further. Its self-evaluation is accurate in identifying where provision is outstanding and where improvements are needed, including the issues identified in the inspection; for example, strengthening the monitoring and evaluation undertaken by subject leaders and improving further the quality of teaching and learning. Improvement since the previous inspection is excellent. The school's successful graduate teacher training programme and specialist humanities status have a direct and beneficial impact on the school and the curriculum. The school has developed excellent local, national and international links and has extended even further its effective partnerships with others. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding sixth form, which is renowned for its academic excellence and to which all pupils in the school aspire. Student recruitment and retention rates are extremely high. Students are offered a wide and attractive range of academic courses and their examination results are excellent. Teaching is outstanding and students receive extensive academic and personal support. There is rigorous target setting and monitoring of the performance of individual students. Relationships between students and with their teachers are excellent and there is a vibrant esprit de corps among the student body. Students benefit greatly from the wide ranging enrichment programme. This provides ample opportunities for them to develop personally and provide vibrant service to the school, the local community and on global projects. Students speak very highly of their sixth form experience and consider themselves fortunate to be educated in such a stimulating atmosphere. Students are well equipped with the skills for independent learning and respond well to the academic challenges their teachers inspire.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the existing good practice in departmental reviews to further develop the monitoring and evaluation of the progress of pupils.
- Extend the sharing of good practice in teaching and learning across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Inspection confirms the school's self-evaluation that achievement and standards are good overall and outstanding in the sixth form. Pupils' academic standards are high on entry. The school builds well on this and is in the top 25% of schools nationally on the Key Stages 2 to 4 value-added indicators. Results show continuing improvement in achievement at the end of Key Stages 3, 4 and 5. There was significant improvement in 2005. More than two thirds of pupils achieved Level 7 in the core subjects at the end of Key Stage 3 and more than half reached Level 8 in mathematics. As in previous years, 100% of pupils obtained at least five GCSE passes at grades A* to C in 2005, with 58% of pupils achieving five or more A*/A grades. In 2005, four students scored one of the top five GCSE marks in the country. The school uses a variety of data effectively to set challenging targets for its pupils and monitor their progress. In most subjects, the monitoring and evaluation of the progress of pupils is rigorous and informative and positive value is added to pupils' performance. Effective strategies, for example mentoring, have been introduced to identify those pupils who are at risk of underperforming. A comprehensive enrichment programme extends the most gifted pupils, and those with specific learning difficulties and/or EAL are well supported to make the same progress as others.

General certificate of education (GCE) A level results are consistently high and improved further in 2005, when three quarters of the large cohort of students gained grades A/B. Rigorous target setting and monitoring of performance by most subject teachers and tutors ensures that students realise their high potential at GCE A level. The most able students achieve success in the advanced extension papers. A large number of students take up places at prestigious universities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and their well-being are outstanding. Pupils are proud of their school and show enjoyment in all aspects of school life. Pupils benefit from the high levels of commitment and enthusiasm shown by staff. Pupils are very keen to achieve in lessons and virtually all take part in the outstanding range of enrichment opportunities offered by the school. Relationships between teachers and pupils and with one another are a strength of the school. Pupils say their school is a friendly place and appreciate the support offered by all staff. Consequently pupils feel safe. Staff have consistent and high expectations of good behaviour and are good role models for their pupils. Behaviour in and around the school is excellent and staff deal firmly with the very few reported incidents of anti-social behaviour. Pupils understand the importance of attending school and attendance rates are high.

As pupils progress, they develop into confident and mature citizens and are well prepared for life beyond school. There are excellent and wide-ranging opportunities for them to take on additional roles and responsibilities. Pupils make positive

contributions both in school and the community. Their charitable work is outstanding and the school celebrates this and all of the successes of its pupils through a range of high quality publications. The school council works hard to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to voice their opinions and pupils are able to make the school a better place. The wide range of sporting activities and emphasis on healthy living encourage pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. The school has significantly strengthened pupils' awareness of other cultures through its International Status, links with other schools, and activities such as Asian Arts week.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Inspection confirms the school's self-evaluation that the quality of teaching and learning is good overall and is outstanding in the sixth form. Pupils are well motivated and respond very positively to the learning opportunities offered. Lessons are overwhelmingly good and characterised by enthusiastic teachers, positive and supportive relationships and the use of a variety of challenging tasks.

At its best, teaching is exciting and enthuses the pupils. It is well planned to include clear learning objectives, matched to pupils differing learning needs and opportunities for pupils to learn in a variety of ways. An outstanding example of this was seen in a lower sixth psychology lesson. Excellent preparation enabled learners of all abilities to engage in a variety of challenging tasks, which extended their understanding of Piliavin's theory of the characteristics of bystanders. This lesson was characterised by the teacher's excellent subject knowledge, effective use of ICT and rigorous assessment for learning.

A few lessons however are led too directly by the teacher and prevent pupils from developing their independence and extending their investigation and problem solving skills. When provided with these challenges, pupils participate fully, demonstrate their initiative and improve the quality of their learning.

Assessment information is generally used well to track pupils' progress and set targets, particularly in the sixth form. Teachers regularly check pupils' work and praise their efforts, but there is variability in the quality and impact of routine marking in the main school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding academic curriculum for its pupils. During Key Stage 3, pupils study the full National Curriculum plus additional courses such as classics, drama and learning skills. In Year 8, pupils study a second language and in Year 9, the study of separate sciences helps to prepare pupils well for Key Stage 4.

There is an extremely wide range of GCSE and GCE A level subjects offered. The school has an exceptional focus on the humanities and the arts, and provides particularly good opportunities for participation in music, sport and drama.

The school has responded commendably to the recommendation in the previous inspection report to improve extra-curricular activities for pupils. It is a tribute to the commitment of staff that pupils are now benefiting from such a wide range of enrichment opportunities. Community links are very well established and there is a strong citizenship dimension across the whole school.

The valuable international focus through the 'Five Ways on Five Continents' initiative has been recognised by the British Council, and gives the pupils exceptional opportunities to link with many countries overseas. The specialist humanities school status has impacted well on other departments as well as improved participation in initiatives at national and local level.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The quality of care provided by the school is good with some outstanding features. Staff are very supportive and are successful in building trusting relationships with the pupils. All requirements for child protection are in place and staff have a good understanding of school procedures. Teachers ensure that pupils work in a healthy and secure environment. Support is carefully and successfully targeted at those with particular difficulties such as disaffection, problems in preparing for examinations or coping with disabilities. The school has forged excellent links with external agencies to support this work. Links with partner primary schools are strong and highly effective initiatives are used to aid the transition of pupils into Year 7.

Some teachers offer pupils valuable guidance on how to improve their work. However there is inconsistency in the quantity and quality of this advice, which means that pupils are not always clear about the next steps in their learning. Sixth form students receive excellent guidance about both their personal and academic development. Well structured work related learning programmes and strong links with industry prepare pupils very well for life beyond school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher and senior leaders provide outstanding leadership and management. The headteacher's vision and successful development of the school, through initiatives such as specialist humanities status and partnerships with others, have an outstanding and beneficial impact for pupils.

Governors are very effective in their role as a critical friend; they are knowledgeable, well informed and are committed to a process of self-review. They have a clear and

accurate view of the school's key strengths, its exemplary practice and its areas for development, which align closely with the inspection findings.

The new staffing structure, which is being effectively and strategically implemented, is already improving the quality of the management of subject departments. The new director of the sixth form is extending the existing good practice and providing outstanding leadership. There is a common sense of purpose and a focus on continuous improvement amongst the staff.

Continuing professional development targets are determined by the school improvement plan (SIP), and influenced also by the performance management process. The SIP has been carefully prioritised and costed and there is a rigorous review and evaluation process. This has enabled senior managers to identify inconsistencies in the monitoring and evaluation of departments and to develop strategies to address this.

Senior managers have rightly given a high priority to checking and improving the quality of teaching and pupils' learning within the main school. This needs now to extend further to enable the effective practice in the sixth form to be shared more widely.

Since the previous inspection, improvement has been excellent. The very high quality of senior leadership and management contributes greatly to the school's capacity to improve, which is outstanding.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	No
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Students

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we came to inspect your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you, watching you working with your teachers and speaking to them about your progress. We were very impressed with your positive attitudes and the range of additional activities that most of you are involved in.

King Edward VI Five Ways is an outstanding school and academic standards are high. You have every opportunity to succeed if you avail yourselves of all that is provided for you at school. We were particularly impressed by your excellent behaviour and your very positive relationships with one another and with your teachers. Members of the student council are working hard on your behalf. Your opinions are valued and you have influenced some important changes within the school.

Achievement and standards are good in the main school and outstanding in the sixth form; they have improved substantially since the previous inspection. Students make good progress, especially by the time they take their GCSE examinations. The A level results gained by sixth form students are excellent.

The quality of the teaching you receive is good overall. We have asked your school to make all lessons as good as the best. We want you to have more opportunities to develop your independence and extend your investigation and problem solving skills even further.

You all receive good care and guidance. You said that you feel that the school is a safe place to be and that you have many opportunities to become involved in a wide range of enrichment activities and visits, some of them overseas. Your charity and fund raising work are excellent.

The leadership and management of your school are outstanding. Senior managers have a very clear idea of how the school is doing, where things are working well and where they can make improvements. The managers, teachers, governors and staff are highly committed to their work and know that your school has the potential to do even better.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Cathy Morgan HMI Lead Inspector