



The King's Church of England School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131547
Local Authority Wolverhampton
Inspection number 293779
Inspection dates 6–7 December 2006
Reporting inspector Kevin Sheldrick HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Regis Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Tettenhall
Age range of pupils	11–18		Wolverhampton WV6 8XG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 558333
Number on roll (school)	739	Fax number	01902 558334
Number on roll (6th form)	123		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Carol Dixon
		Headteacher	Tim Gallagher
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	6–7 December 2006	293779

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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

Although below average in size the school has grown by about a fifth since the last inspection report and it is oversubscribed. The school has a wide range of cultural backgrounds, the two largest being White British and Indian. There is a lower than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and the level of social deprivation is now broadly average as the area has become more advantaged. Since 2000 it has been a visual arts specialist school and more recently it has added sports and science as areas of specialism.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

King's Church of England school is delivering a satisfactory education. The school is a harmonious, multiracial community that is achieving its aim of being a school 'where all faiths are valued, respected and celebrated in the school's daily life'.

The school has succeeded in building its reputation in the community, and winning the support of pupils and their parents, to the extent that it is more popular and attracting higher attaining pupils. Instrumental in this has been the new accommodation and enhanced opportunities associated with the school's specialist status. The improved learning environment is a factor in the good personal development of pupils and makes them eager to learn. The curriculum in the main school is currently good and is in the process of being changed to ensure better outcomes at GCSE. In the sixth form the curriculum is also good because of collaboration with other local providers that has increased choice.

The school leadership's desire to improve has generated many initiatives but the impact of these has not been sufficiently evaluated. In particular, teaching and learning are only satisfactory because the school has not paid enough attention to monitoring the quality of teaching and allocating resources to ensure improvement. As a result, there continues to be a significant variation in achievement between different subjects. Although achievement and standards are satisfactory overall, too many pupils are not gaining good qualifications in English and mathematics. As a result, preparation for future economic well-being is inadequate because not all pupils are developing key skills well enough.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The school successfully includes learners to ensure above average numbers gain qualifications. However, the monitoring of the progress of pupils is variable in quality because pupils do not always have clear academic targets in every subject, or receive consistent guidance on the steps they need to take to reach them.

The school is adopting a more measured approach to new developments and planning is being directed towards achieving greater consistency. The school knows what to do, has been successful in laying the foundations and has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The sixth form is satisfactory. Standards are lower than average but students' progress is satisfactory. Both the size of the sixth form and the percentage of students who complete their course are steadily increasing. Facilities for private study and social activities are good. The school works well in a consortium arrangement with three other local schools to provide a wide range of courses. Good care, guidance and support are provided both within the school and across the consortium through effective monitoring systems. Students interact well with pupils in the main school, for example

by teaching Year 7 pupils drama during their lunch break. Students are excited at the opportunities they have to work independently such as in organising charity fund raising events.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in English and mathematics by more effective monitoring and allocation of resources.
- Develop a whole-school approach to target setting to ensure all pupils know what they need to do to improve in every subject.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Achievement is satisfactory across the school. Standards are broadly average in the main school at both key stages and slightly below in the sixth form. In recent years achievement has been strongest at Key Stage 3.

Pupils' attainment on entry has risen to the extent that current year groups, including the 2006 Year 11 are close to the national average. Although achievement is average overall there is significant variability in subject results at GCSE. Results are best in subjects associated with the school's specialism, but have been weaker in mathematics and English for a number of years and this has resulted in a significantly lower than average number gaining five good GCSEs including mathematics and English. There are no discernable differences in the achievement of different groups, based on gender, ethnicity or attainment.

Sixth form achievement is satisfactory, with art, science and physical education performing better.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school's positive ethos ensures that pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are very friendly and polite and this creates a very pleasant atmosphere. They are very clear about the lessons they like and work hard even in lessons that they do not find particularly interesting. Pupils behave well in class and around the school. The focus on attendance led by the resident education welfare officer has been effective, and attendance is now good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show excellent levels of respect for each other and for their teachers. They have a good sense of community, and of right and wrong. Pupils from a variety of ethnic backgrounds get on with each other exceptionally well, and are confident that the school will sort out any issue that might arise. However, the weaker achievement in mathematics and English at Key Stage 4 results in some pupils

lacking the skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being. In this specialist sports college, pupils know what they need to do to lead a healthy life, and in practice many do so. The specialist status also provides pupils with meaningful opportunities to work alongside younger pupils in the primary schools, for example as junior sports leaders. Pupils particularly relish the opportunities they have to fund raise for charity because they enjoy the responsibility.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The best teaching uses good subject knowledge well to support learners. Lessons are well planned and move at a fast pace to actively involve pupils in their learning, resulting in rapid progress. In these lessons, tasks are well matched to individual ability, pupils enjoy and take a pride in their work and are excited by the practical activities offered. Relationships are based on respect and pupils are enthusiastic and attentive and feel confident to answer the challenging questioning of their teachers. They work well together and help each other in group activities. Too frequently, however, teaching lacks excitement and tasks are not well matched to the pupils' abilities and preferred learning styles. Teachers talk too much and opportunities are missed to involve pupils actively in the lesson. Assessment is inconsistent. Although there is some good practice and most pupils are aware of their levels or target grades, they say this is not supported in all subjects by clear advice as to how they can improve their work. A lack of quality learning resources in some subjects does not support teachers in their presentation of lessons or offer pupils sufficient opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT).

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The main school curriculum is good and fully meets statutory requirements. The specialist school status has resulted in very good opportunities for pupils in visual arts and sport. A good range of subject choices for pupils in Key Stage 4 include vocational Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) courses and some pupils are following work based learning routes.

Pupils in Key Stage 4 get good guidance on careers and further education and the number continuing their education in the sixth form has increased steadily. The curriculum in the sixth form is good with a wide range of courses available through consortium arrangements. The main school curriculum is enhanced by a good range of well supported extra-curricular activities but the range of enrichment activities available to sixth form pupils is limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. It is good in the sixth form because smaller numbers mean students have good access to staff who willingly give their time and provide good guidance. Although exclusions remain high, the restructured pastoral system is ensuring improved personal support because lines of referral are much clearer. The new system for monitoring academic progress is at an early stage, and has not had time to have the desired impact. Some departments already give pupils very useful information about the next steps in learning but this is not consistent across the school, with many targets focused on attitudes to work rather than targets for learning.

Care for pupils is of paramount importance in the school. The approach to child protection is very thorough and the school meets the government's requirements for safeguarding. Pupils feel well supported, because effective relationships mean that they know they can get help if they have a problem. The school has had some notable successes with the very few pupils who find schooling particularly difficult or who are in public care.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Good communication and clarity of vision have generated enthusiastic support from parents and learners. The leaders in the school have not yet converted this vision into consistent high quality of provision that results in better outcomes for learners. Leaders have identified the right priorities but a lack of rigour in their monitoring and evaluation procedures has led to inconsistencies in implementation. As yet the school has had limited success in effectively sharing some of its own good and outstanding practice, much of which is associated with specialist status, between departments. Until recently the school has not consistently used data well to increase levels of accountability and to more easily check on consistency in terms of subjects and different groups of learners. The school has not always ensured that discussions between middle and senior leaders are consistently challenging. However, these weaknesses have been recognised and are being addressed through a wide range of strategies, including extensive collaboration with the local authority and with other schools.

Governance of the school is good. Governors are committed and supportive, and have been fully involved in setting the strategic direction of the school. They have asked the right questions about performance in mathematics and English, and have challenged the school about taking on too much.

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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?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	2

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your contribution to the inspection of your school. The pupils we met were clearly proud of the school and particularly appreciated the new facilities and extra-curricular opportunities available. You were more than willing to tell us about the good and the less pleasing aspects of your school.

Your school is satisfactory overall. What is particularly special about King's Church of England School is the way you all get along exceptionally well together, regardless of your faith and ethnicity. You achieve well in those subjects most associated with visual arts specialist status. Your parents are really supportive and are positive about the progress the school is making. There are some really good facilities and you have good opportunities to participate in out-of-school activities. The school listens to you well and some teaching is really good and gets you motivated.

There were some aspects that could be improved. Although you generally achieve satisfactorily not enough of you are gaining good GCSEs in mathematics and English. The school has not successfully ensured that the very good and outstanding teaching in some areas has spread through the school. Sometimes in some subjects you are not aware of how you can improve. You can help by telling your teachers if you do not know how you can improve at any time in any subject.

The school is capable of improving further because the staff of the school have already identified what needs doing and King's Church of England School already has a very positive atmosphere.

Once again thank you for the part you played in ensuring we got to know your school well in our short visit to you.