

Kingsbury School, A Specialist Science College with Mathematics

Tamworth Road, Kingsbury, Tamworth, B78 2LF

Inspection dates

13–14 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Despite recent improvements, teaching is not consistently strong enough to promote good achievement across year groups and subjects.
- The proportion of less-able students who make the progress expected nationally in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11 is below average.
- Not enough of the most able students make more rapid progress in English and mathematics.
- In Key Stage 4, students do not always make the progress they should in English literature, core and applied science or statistics.
- Some teachers do not always make sure that lesson activities are matched closely to the skills and abilities of all students.
- Marking is not always as regular and helpful as it should be. Sometimes, when students set their own targets for improvement, teachers do not help them to do this effectively.
- Some students in Key Stage 3 do not always get the right level of help to develop their writing skills.
- When teaching is less effective, sometimes learning is too slow when students sit passively while teachers provide lengthy introductions and explanations.
- Some students do not always achieve well because they sit some GCSE examinations early and do not always achieve their potential or they begin courses at the start of Year 11 with insufficient time to study them thoroughly. Leaders and managers have not checked this well enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The proportion of students who achieve five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, is improving rapidly and was above average this year.
- Students have good attitudes to learning. They are well behaved, polite and feel safe.
- Leaders at all levels have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are already improving teaching and achievement, and have shown that they have the skills required to secure further improvements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, six of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. The inspection team also made several short visits to other lessons to check on the progress and behaviour of different groups of students.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students from all year groups. Other meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for leading subjects.
- Inspectors analysed 28 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and a questionnaire the school asks parents to complete. They also analysed 11 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, the school's improvement plan and data on students' progress.
- Inspectors looked at 150 students' books across a range of subjects.
- The lead inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- On the second day of the inspection, Years 7, 10 and 11 were out of school on various educational trips. Years 8 and 9 were involved in activities taught by staff who are not teachers at the school.

Inspection team

Richard Sutton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Timmins	Additional Inspector
Marian Conolly	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average secondary school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly higher than average.
- The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic heritages is much lower than average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium, which is additional funding given to schools for certain groups such as students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- A small number of students are supported through additional Year 7 catch-up funding, which helps students who join the school with attainment below the expected levels in English and mathematics.
- A small number of students in Year 10 study courses in a range of work-related subjects for one day each week at the Torc Centre.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good or better to help all groups of students achieve well across the range of subjects by making sure that:
 - all teachers plan work which is accurately matched to the skills and abilities of all students, but particularly those of the lowest and highest ability
 - marking and feedback are regular and always effectively help students to improve their work
 - when students are asked to set their own targets for improvement, teachers ensure that they are able to effectively do this
 - every opportunity is taken to help younger students to develop their writing skills
 - lessons proceed quickly and teachers do not spend too long providing introductions and explanations.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management, including governance, by making sure that students only take their GCSE examinations at times when they are able to demonstrate good or better progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- Achievement varies too much between different year groups and subjects. Some students make good progress but others, particularly those of lower and higher ability in some year groups, do not always make as much progress as they should because work is not always pitched at the right level for them.
- Students make better progress in mathematics than they do in English. However, in both subjects, too few students of lower ability make the progress that is expected of them nationally or more rapid progress.
- The most able students do not always achieve the high grades they are capable of in some subjects. This is because these students are sometimes given work that is too easy.
- Achievement in English literature and statistics is not as good as it should be because students do not begin these courses until Year 11 and do not have sufficient time to study the courses thoroughly. Achievement in the core and applied science courses has been too variable in the past because teaching has not been as good as it should have been, though this is improving, partly as a result of leaders and managers successfully appointing more skilled teachers
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, students from minority ethnic heritages and the small number who speak English as an additional language make similarly variable progress to that of other students. However, when disabled students and those who have special educational needs benefit from the support of teaching assistants they make better progress.
- The school spends the pupil premium in a variety of ways, for example on additional staff so that students benefit from working in smaller classes. Students of all abilities who are supported through the pupil premium are making better progress than they have in the past and the achievement of this group of students, although inconsistent, is getting closer to that of other students. This year, eligible students in Year 11 achieved, on average, similar grades to other students in English and two-thirds of a grade lower in mathematics.
- The school uses the Year 7 catch-up funding to provide additional support by specialist teachers. These students receive additional teaching in mathematics and English. This is an effective strategy as students are making good progress.
- Students take their GCSE English and mathematics examinations before the end of Year 11. This is not always an effective strategy because it does not help some students to achieve their full potential and they have to take the examinations again. However, in other subjects, including history and geography, where students take their GCSE examinations before the end of Year 11, many students achieve well.
- The small number of students who spend some of their time studying work-related courses at the Torc Centre have all passed their courses, reflecting good progress.
- This year, the proportion of students who achieved five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, was above average. Attainment is improving and over the past three years it has improved at a much faster rate than it has nationally.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although improving strongly, the quality of teaching has been too variable in recent years. The improvements are resulting in better achievement; however, teaching does not always ensure that all groups of students consistently make good or better progress.
- Some teachers do not always make sure that work is well matched to individual students' skills and abilities. This results in some students not consistently making as much progress as they should, particularly those of lower and higher ability, because they are given work which is too easy or too hard.
- The quality of teachers' marking and feedback is too variable, and it does not have as much impact on achievement as it should. Some teachers give students appropriately detailed and regular feedback which helps them to effectively improve their work, whilst others provide feedback which is infrequent and does little to help students improve.
- Many teachers ask students to review their learning and set their own targets for improvement. When students are taught how to do this effectively, for example in history, geography and French lessons, it makes a significant contribution to their progress. However, not all teachers help students to do this well enough to make sure the targets are effective.
- Some teachers miss opportunities to help students develop their writing skills. In particular, students in Key Stage 3 who find writing difficult do not get enough chance to practise in all subjects when it is appropriate.
- In lessons which are not as effective as they should be, some teachers spend too long providing introductions and explanations. This cuts down the amount of productive learning time available, and results in students not learning as quickly as they should.
- Teaching assistants provide good support to individual students and small groups. They have a good and appropriately detailed understanding of individual students' needs and are able to provide support at the right level. Many ask questions skilfully to help students develop their understanding.
- The good teaching in the school is characterised by teachers who use their good subject knowledge to match work closely to the students' needs. For example, in a Year 9 mathematics lesson, appropriately challenging work resulted in students showing a determination to succeed, working cooperatively and learning from each other and consequently making very good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The majority of students behave well in lessons and at break times. Most are polite, courteous and well mannered.
- Students have good relationships with their teachers and with each other. They cooperate well, and show each other a good level of mutual respect.
- Bullying is rare and consequently students feel safe at school. Students have a good understanding of the various forms in which bullying can occur, including cyber-bullying.
- The school effectively makes sure that students have an appropriate understanding of safety

issues. Students of different ages have a good awareness of potentially unsafe situations and have appropriate strategies to minimise risk in such situations. They are knowledgeable about e-safety and understand how to keep safe when using the internet.

- Students attend school regularly and arrive on time. Attendance is above average, and the school has sustained this over the past few years.
- Most students have good attitudes to learning, particularly when they are taught well. The majority are keen to try their best and achieve well. On the occasions when teaching is not as good as it should be, some students lose concentration and their attitudes to learning are not as good.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers, including subject leaders, are successfully improving teaching and achievement. The significant improvements in attainment over the past two years, better behaviour and attendance and accurate identification of areas for development indicate that leaders have a strong ability to make sure that achievement and teaching continue to improve.
- When teaching is not as good as it should be, leaders take swift and appropriate action to support and challenge staff so that achievement improves. As a result of this approach, achievement in geography, for example, has improved considerably in recent years.
- Leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because they use effective systems to check teaching and achievement regularly. Subject leaders know what needs to be done to secure further improvements in the areas they are responsible for, and they have the right skills needed to do this.
- A range of trips and visits as well as 'Spec' days make the curriculum more exciting for students as well as providing them with good opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills and understanding.
- All teachers are set targets to improve their teaching and guide decisions about pay increases. This process has a good impact on helping to improve teaching and achievement.
- Students are entered early for GCSE mathematics, English and science. This is not an effective strategy for some students because it does not result in them achieving as well as they should and they have to take examinations again. In addition, the statistics and English literature courses do not help students to achieve their best because these courses begin in Year 11 and students do not have sufficient time to study the subjects thoroughly. Leaders and managers have not checked how effective this approach is as well as they should have.
- The local authority has provided an appropriate level of support and challenge to the school. For example, support for the English department has helped to improve teaching and achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good and appropriately detailed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Many governors understand students' achievement data well and this enables them to provide a good level of challenge and support to the school.
 - Relevant governors monitor the use and impact of the additional pupil premium. They are aware that the school has not always made the best use of this funding as the achievement of

these students has been variable, but also know it is now improving.

- The governing body is aware of how targets are set for teachers and monitors how these targets are linked to pay increases. It makes sure that the school fulfils its responsibilities regarding safeguarding; all staff have been checked as required and are trained appropriately to keep students safe and free from harm.
- Governors have not specifically monitored the impact of the additional Year 7 catch-up funding. However, they monitor the progress of the students who join the school with attainment that is below expected levels, and are aware of the additional staff that this funding pays for so that these students can have more English and mathematics teaching.
- Governors have not challenged the school rigorously enough over the achievement of the least and most able students in comparison with similar students nationally, or the effectiveness of entering students for examinations earlier than at the end of Year 11 or beginning courses with insufficient time to complete them.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	125735
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	427045

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	596
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gerald Ingram
Headteacher	Simon Cotton
Date of previous school inspection	9–11 November 2011
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