

Kirkby College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122826
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	340222
Inspection dates	9-10 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Pam Haezwindt HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	638
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Susan Reast
Headteacher	Mr Simon Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	7-8 March 2007
School address	Tennyson Street Kirkby in Ashfield Nottinghamshire NG17 7DH
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 33 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's improvement planning, governing body minutes, analysis of data, support procedures for underperforming faculties, policies such as those on safeguarding, anti-bullying and behaviour, and documentation on student care, teaching and learning, the curriculum, sixth form and community cohesion. They also scrutinised 60 Ofsted parent and carer questionnaires, 94 student questionnaires and 26 staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- attainment and achievement of all groups of students to ascertain continued improvement over time
- consistent improvement in attendance at each key stage to ensure that students have maximum opportunity in school to learn
- the extent to which self-evaluation is regular and robust, leads to apposite priorities for development, and improvements in outcomes for students
- the effectiveness of middle leaders to determine whether staff are supported to provide the best possible teaching and learning and students' achievement is tracked and supported so that they can achieve their potential
- the extent to which community cohesion is embedded in school practice, audited and evaluated.

Information about the school

Kirkby College is a smaller than average school with a small sixth form. The large majority of the school population is White British, which is well above the national average. The proportion of students who are entitled to a free school meal is higher than average and the percentage with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities (SEND) is much higher than the national average. The school became a Sports College in September 2005. The school has the Healthy Schools Gold Award. Kirkby College is led by an acting head teacher who has been appointed headteacher designate from 1 January 2010 and the substantive headteacher from 1 September 2010.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Kirkby College provides a good standard of education. It has improved from being a satisfactory school at the time of its last inspection to a good school now. It has systematically improved all of the key areas for improvement in the last inspection report. For example, at that time attendance was judged to be inadequate; the school has worked exceptionally hard to improve this year by year and it is now good with excellent systems in place to maintain it. This means that the very large majority of students are in school and benefiting from a good education which they say they enjoy. A Year 10 student wrote: 'I like school because I learn a lot.' There is now a culture in the school community understood by most that good attendance means raised achievement and aspirations. Another area of significant improvement which enables good learning and progress to take place in lessons is behaviour, which is good. Where it is very occasionally anything less, staff have good behaviour management strategies and employ the school's systematic procedures to ensure learning takes place. Students were very positive when they spoke to inspectors and recognised the improvements which had been made in recent years and how the leaders of the school are making a difference. One Year 7 student wrote: 'It is a friendly school'.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has improved over time from being low to broadly average, although lower attaining boys are not achieving as well as other groups. The school is aware of this and is putting in intervention to support them. Last year it did the same for English where results were low and they improved in 2009. The school's care, guidance and support are now outstanding and underpin students' good academic and personal development. Overall teaching is good and contributes to students' good achievement and the reasons they enjoy learning and are becoming more enquiring and collaborative learners. Assessment to support progress is not as good as it might be. For example, opportunities are missed in some lessons to assess how well all students are progressing and make adjustments as required. There are few examples of self and peer assessment, and asking students to assess their own progress and evaluate what they needed to do to improve. Marking is often bereft of helpful comments and targets for improvement in a majority of subjects.

The extensively restructured curriculum for 11–16 year old students is good and meets the specific needs of the wide range of students, enabling them to enjoy what they do and achieve better in subjects they choose, and also gain work related skills. In the sixth form the curriculum is satisfactory; it is not broad enough to ensure that

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students get a good range of options, nor does it always offer good enough opportunities to discuss and debate with more than two or three students.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good and there is good capacity to improve. The strategic direction of the senior leadership team has ensured that its vision of consistent improvement is embedded in the school, articulated by staff and students alike. It has improved the consistency and effectiveness of middle leaders' work and this in its turn has driven forward improvement. The governors have a clear vision for the school and both support and challenge senior leaders. Overall, the school's partnerships are many and effectively promote learning and well-being, ensuring that provision is enhanced. They are not yet as extensive as they could be for the sixth form. The specialism is well managed as a fully integrated theme across the school, focusing on raising standards and enriching the curriculum. The school is very aware of its duty to promote community cohesion and is fully cognisant of the context and culture in which it works. Focused on raising achievement, it has centred much of what it has done within the locality and has not yet looked much beyond to regional, national and international communities to broaden the horizons of Kirkby students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by further improving assessment to enhance students' progress in lessons and beyond, and ensuring that marking supports students' knowledge of what and how to improve.
- Improve the promotion of community cohesion by
 - auditing the school's provision and forming an action plan
 - extending it beyond that of local communities and
 - evaluating its impact on students' outcomes.
- Expand the extent of partnership working to ensure that the school's small sixth form creates the best possible learning opportunities for Kirkby's students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The school has made significant improvement over the past three years so that students gained broadly average results in GCSE A*-C grades in 2009 and exceeded their National Challenge targets for GCSE A*-C including English and mathematics. The school's excellent data tracking systems have enabled it to predict very accurate outcomes in past years. These show much improved outcomes for 2010 and beyond. Where the outcomes of individual subjects are low, the school immediately puts in intervention strategies and does similarly for individual groups of students. Currently lower attaining boys including those with SEND are not achieving as well as other groups, which the school is aware of and are targeting for improvement.

Students arrive in school with lower than average attainment. For the very large majority achievement is at least good by the time they leave. In the large majority of lessons observed learning and progress were good. Students generally showed good

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commitment and a keenness to learn. They were enthusiastic, responding very well to questions and the demands of staff. Where given good opportunities to work in groups, they collaborated well, and enjoyed being able to research things and gain new knowledge. The very large majority of parents and/or carers agree that their children enjoy school and are making good progress. A parent of a Year 8 student wrote: 'I cannot the fault the school. My son is making excellent progress and enjoys his lessons.'

Students say they feel safe and secure and they are confident to speak to teachers should there be any issues. There is a good anti-bullying policy and procedures are in place to deal with any incidents. Overall behaviour is good but there is a higher rate of boys and students with SEND in fixed term exclusions. Students have a clear understanding of the benefits of healthy eating and many choose healthy options at lunch time. They have a full and rich programme of physical education and sport and there is a high uptake beyond the school day. Students take up a range of leadership roles and there is a wide participation in organising fundraising for national and local appeals. There are practical community links such as volunteer litter picks and a wide range of links with the community through the extended schools' programme. Contributions to wider national and international contexts are underdeveloped. Students are beginning to develop good work based skills due to the broader curriculum. They arrive at school with underdeveloped aspects of spiritual and emotional development. Provision to support these at Kirkby is exceptional and students make good progress in their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

For the most part teaching observed across the school was good and occasionally outstanding. Lessons were planned well and executed with good pace which kept students 'on their toes' and interested and ensured that well articulated learning objectives were achieved. Strong features of lessons were the very good working relationships between students and staff and the support given to students to achieve well by teachers and additional adults working alongside them. Resources, including information technology (ICT), were used well to engage students and focus them well on learning. In the very best lessons very good strategies for learning were being inculcated, questioning made students think hard and students were being encouraged to be aspirational. Lessons which were less effective included unclear learning objectives, too much teacher talk and too much closed questioning. Overall, assessment to support progress is satisfactory but it is not always clear to students what they need to do next to improve.

The curriculum is good. There are outstanding features, particularly the specialist sports focus which is integrated across the curriculum and is a focus for raising standards. The curriculum has been extensively restructured to address the specific needs of different groups of students and to increase both their engagement with their learning and to raise standards of attainment. The skills-based structure at Key Stage 3 with enrichment days and a focus on students' pastoral and social development has enhanced their experience of learning. At Key Stage 4 the development of a series of pathways through the curriculum to match students' abilities and interests has led to a strongly individualised pattern. This is to be further enhanced by the work being undertaken to develop the diplomas at Key Stage 4. The specialist sports college is managed as a fully integrated theme across the curriculum, focusing on the raising of standards, and enriching the curriculum in many aspects. Enrichment activities give a dynamism to the curriculum and have led to an increase in parents' and carers' engagement with the school.

Care, guidance and support are exceedingly effective. Transition arrangements are a significant strength at all levels, beginning in Year 4 in primary schools. Later, students have a series of visits to the college. Data is well used to identify students' particular needs and help them choose pathways. Liaison with parents or carers is good; nearly 100% are reached through 'target setting' day and follow-up. Students' progress is regularly reviewed against targets, students have one to one tutor interviews and tracking and mentoring are in place for students with a range of needs. Short term intervention for low literacy skills and a nurture group for Year 7 students lacking in confidence and skills help them to move more swiftly into secondary school learning. There is good support for students on long term absence.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher and senior leadership team, along with governors, aspire to excellence and have been instrumental in driving up improvement in the school over the past two years. A key area for improvement in the last inspection was ensuring the consistency and effectiveness of middle managers. This has been given high priority with key systems in place for accountability and support for development of leadership skills. Middle leaders demonstrated well their own aspirations and strategies for driving improvement in their aspects of the school as well recognising the part they play in whole school development. Teaching and learning are well led and managed. Teaching has improved due to lesson observations and follow-up, an array of training and professional development. Governors consistently challenge the senior leadership team to improve the school and move forward strategically. The school's self- evaluation is robust and accurate.

The school's engagement with parents or carers is sound; it is good in relation to academic development but it recognises that it could do more to engage parents or carers in the development of the school and intends to set up a parent and carer forum. The school works hard to ensure that it effectively promotes equal opportunity and is a fully inclusive school. For example, it puts much effort into tackling the underachievement of individuals and groups. Safeguarding procedures are fully in place. The school has begun its approach to promoting community cohesion and is doing much within the local community. The impact of this on students and the community has not been formally evaluated. The school has not yet broadened promotion into the regional, national and international arenas which would so benefit Kirkby students.

Overall, the school deploys its resources well to achieve value for money. The funding from the specialist sports college status has been used well to increase the use of ICT, improve behaviour and attendance and contribute to community cohesion.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities	2

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met	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Students make broadly satisfactory progress given their starting points. Although small in number they enjoy the experience, and students overall are appreciative of the school having a sixth form. Its numbers are rising for 2010. Good leadership and management have supported strategic innovations in the sixth form curriculum. These have led to further links with local 16 to 19 providers as part of a consortium developing greater diversity in the curriculum. This has been strengthened by the development of a greater sense of community in the sixth form, with its enrichment programme, a range of extra-curricular opportunities and leadership skills. Despite this there are still classes with too few students to ensure the quality and depth of discussion and debate necessary in the sixth form. The grade-tracking scheme, which is student managed, is at a developmental stage and will benefit from structured monitoring and mentoring.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire was low given the number of students but much higher than the school would have anticipated in the past. Most parents and carers are happy with the school in all aspects of the questionnaire; sometimes the overwhelming majority agreed with a particular aspect. A very small minority of parents and carers felt that the school did not help them to support their child's learning as much as it could. Inspectors found good evidence that the school has different systems for involving parents and carers in their child's learning. A very small minority also felt that the school did not take sufficient account of their suggestions. The school is actively looking to involve parents and carers

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more with a parent and carer forum and a new initiative involving students with special needs and/or learning disabilities and their parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kirkby College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 638 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	22	43	72	3	5	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	17	28	37	62	4	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	32	36	60	4	7	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	23	35	58	6	10	3	5
The teaching is good at this school	14	23	39	65	6	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	18	35	58	10	17	4	7
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	22	34	57	8	13	2	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	15	25	34	58	4	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	25	38	63	4	7	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	23	31	52	8	13	3	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	18	31	52	9	15	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	15	25	34	57	4	7	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	30	32	53	6	10	2	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.



16 December 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Kirkby College, Kirkby in Ashfield, NG17 7DH

On behalf of the inspection team and myself I should like to thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school last week. We were particularly impressed by the way you greeted us outside your lessons as well as being so friendly and letting us see your work. This brief letter is to tell you what we found.

- Your school has improved a lot since the last inspection and is now a good school. The leaders and managers of your school have vision and want it to be excellent and are working hard to make it so.
- Examination results when you leave school at the end of Key Stage 4 are much improved and you generally make good progress in your lessons. You have helped to achieve better progress and results because your behaviour and attendance are now good.
- You say you feel safe in school and the school does all it can to help you be so. It cares for you very well and puts every effort into trying to help you achieve your best.
- Teaching and your curriculum are good and contribute to your doing much better than previously. Assessment is not quite so good and inspectors feel this can be improved to help you do even better.
- The school has a duty to contribute to community cohesion. It has made a good start in the local community but has not yet broadened this to regional, national or international perspectives.
- You like the fact that your school has a sixth form. Some of the classes are very small and opportunities for in-depth discussion and debate are restricted.

We have asked the school to look in particular at improving assessment, broadening the promotion of community cohesion and to extend partnerships working with the sixth form so that students have the best possible opportunities. You can do your bit, particularly in suggesting which type of assessment helps you most, as well as where community cohesion could be broader.

I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely
Pam Haezwindt
Her Majesty's Inspector

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