

Kings Norton Girls' School

Selly Oak Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B30 1HW

Inspection dates

2 to 3 July 2019

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| Overall effectiveness | Outstanding |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Outstanding |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Outstanding |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Outstanding |
| Outcomes for pupils | Outstanding |
| 16 to 19 study programmes | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Pupils thrive at this school.
- Leaders' uncompromising ambition for academic excellence is underpinned by a nurturing pastoral system. There is a highly supportive environment in which pupils' and staff's well-being is the priority.
- Outcomes over time have been among the best in the country. In 2018, pupils' progress at GCSE was in the top 10% nationally. This includes for disadvantaged pupils and those of middle and high ability. Leaders received a letter of commendation from the Department for Education for both the outstanding progress made by pupils and the high proportion studying a modern foreign language.
- Teachers consistently reflect on their practice. They innovate and match work to pupils' abilities. As a result of outstanding teaching, learning and assessment, current pupils make exceptional progress.
- Teachers display deep knowledge and understanding of their subject. This, together with the excellent relationships they form with pupils, creates a purposeful learning environment.
- The broad and balanced curriculum greatly supports pupils' social development. There is a range of provision outside the classroom. This includes opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills, keep fit, help others, participate in trips and visits, relax and enjoy themselves.
- Pupils are proud of their school and this leads to their behaviour being exemplary. They are polite, personable and very welcoming to visitors. Pupils enjoy school and the vast majority are rarely absent.
- Governance is a major strength. The work of governors is pivotal to the school's continuing success.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Staff are well trained. Leaders are aware of potential risks in the national and local community. They know individual pupils and families very well. Pupils say there is always a member of staff with whom they can discuss any issues. Pupils feel safe and are safe.
- Sixth-form provision is well led and improving, but not yet as effective as key stages 3 and 4. Students' progress, although good, has varied over time between subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve outcomes in the sixth form so that they are of a similar high quality to the rest of the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher, supported by a highly effective senior team and governing body, is ambitious and assured. Leaders have created an academically successful, relaxed and harmonious community.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2018, having previously been a deputy headteacher at the school. She told inspectors she wanted to establish a culture of openness and honesty. Inspectors found leaders to be clear and principled in discussions and that their self-evaluation of the quality of education the school provides is accurate.
- Leaders and governors maintain a relentless focus on continuous improvement. They successfully use their understanding of the school's effectiveness and focus on the impact of their actions in key areas. For example, leaders have taken decisive action to strengthen the leadership of, and teaching in, mathematics. This has resulted in significant improvements in pupils' confidence in the subject and in the progress they now make.
- Leaders are focused on improving standards for pupils within a culture of care and concern for well-being. This extends to looking at staff welfare to ensure that work is sustainable.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve exceptionally well. This is because leaders and teachers have high expectations of them. Moreover, leaders and governors closely monitor the effective spending of extra funding received for these pupils.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is well managed and spent wisely. There is detailed evidence to show that this is having a significant impact on improving the literacy and numeracy of targeted pupils.
- Students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Visits to primary schools and meetings with parents support the transition process into Year 7 and aid understanding of individual needs.
- Senior and middle leaders monitor teaching and learning, and information gathered is used to prioritise support strategies and professional development opportunities. Monitoring involves regular analysis of pupils' performance, checks of pupils' learning by staff and pupils' feedback. Inspection evidence verifies that leaders have a strong understanding of the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It contributes strongly to pupils' academic and personal development and progress.
- Pupils are carefully guided on to appropriate courses at key stage 4, balancing their personal choices and preferences with their aptitude for subjects. This means that pupils follow a curriculum that is well suited to their interests, abilities and aspirations.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities available to all within the school. Leaders closely monitor pupil uptake of these activities and target groups of pupils accordingly. Leaders are mindful of the financial impact of trips and visits, and have systems in place to ensure that this does not become a burden.

- Leaders ensure that spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, together with British values, is embedded effectively across the curriculum and taught explicitly through lessons and assemblies. Leaders consulted widely to determine the school's shared values.
- Teachers new to the profession and to the school are very positive about the support they receive. They feel this is effective at both subject and pastoral level. There are several continuing professional development courses that can be undertaken. These include strategies on de-escalating behaviour and using mind maps to visually organise information. Teachers were clear that there is a strong focus on their well-being, with all expectations for planning and marking being, in the words of one member of staff, 'fully realistic'.
- There is effective communication with parents and carers utilising a range of strategies, including assessment information, written reports and consultation evenings. There is also informal communication when underperformance is noted, with suggestions on how to improve pupils' progress.
- Provision for careers advice and guidance is strong. Inspectors saw evidence of a varied programme for pupils across the school. This included the way sixth-form students gain access to local labour market data to assist applications for apprenticeships. Pupils are able to articulate how useful they found careers advice. Productive links with employers bring a 'real world' focus to topics pupils learn about.

Governance of the school

- Governors are knowledgeable, suitably challenging and supportive. They are fully aware of the legal responsibilities they have and are appropriately involved in the life of the school. There are subject-link visits and also discussions with pupils and staff.
- As with senior leaders, governors display a careful focus on academic aspirations, together with pupil and staff well-being.
- Governors have recently been involved with senior leaders in successfully overseeing the building of a new £1.5 million sixth-form centre to be opened by the end of the year.
- Governors undertake skills audits and receive training where required. There are regular risk analyses of key areas, and governors are alert to any possible barriers to the school's continued success.
- There is a good coverage of skills on the governing body, including finance, architecture and education.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is given the highest priority in the school. Checks on staff suitability to work with pupils are thorough. The designated safeguarding lead is knowledgeable about individuals and wider issues within the local community. There are good links with external agencies to provide support and care for vulnerable pupils. All

documentation relating to safeguarding issues is tracked closely and then stored securely.

- Staff are well trained. Pastoral leaders are being trained to the highest level of safeguarding oversight.
- All staff who completed the online inspection survey and almost all parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, agree that pupils are safe and well cared for in school. All pupils who spoke with inspectors said they feel safe and were highly complimentary about the care and support given to them by staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding at key stages 3 and 4. Pupils are challenged and supported in their learning and this has secured exceptionally strong outcomes.
- Strategic school improvement planning, together with well-considered staff development opportunities and rigorous performance management, has ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently of the highest standard across the curriculum.
- Positive, caring and respectful relationships are evident. Teachers' expectations are high in all lessons and pupils follow well-established routines in line with the school policy. Teachers demand that pupils work to their best at all times, and pupils almost universally have similarly high expectations and aspirations for themselves.
- Teachers demonstrate impressive subject knowledge and use this to plan lessons and activities that are well matched to what pupils already understand, know and can do. This was seen in a Year 10 mathematics lesson. Pupils' own subject knowledge was built sequentially and with great care so that complex concepts were understood. In a sixth-form psychology lesson, the teacher used questioning exceptionally well to support students' learning.
- Pupils are encouraged in many subjects to audit their progress through units of work, following teacher assessment. Pupils are clear about what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils are confident to share their work and explain what they have done. They can speak with clarity about how their previous learning has informed their current work. Pupils want to achieve. Their books and folders are well presented and show pupils taking pride in their work.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary. They are engaged in and enjoy their learning. The positive relationships in class allow pupils to offer suggestions and have ideas and misconceptions challenged by their teacher and peers when appropriate. Pupils speak highly of their lessons and teachers, and value their experience at school.
- Teachers consistently set homework in line with the school policy and it consolidates learning well. Pupils value homework and show highly effective organisational skills to manage their workload. Teachers use assessment information well to track pupils' progress. For those pupils who are not on track, numerous interventions are in place. This includes study clinics and targeted online support to ensure that no groups are left behind.

- Teaching in the sixth form has been less effective over time. It is now stronger, and outcomes are less variable than previously. This is because of more targeted support and training. Leaders accept that there is more to do in this area of their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding
- Leaders and teachers have established a happy, purposeful and nurturing environment. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Leaders and staff work relentlessly to provide an outstanding range of opportunities for pupils' personal development. Pupils in all year groups are given the opportunity to take responsibility for school development. Inspectors saw Year 9 pupils supporting Year 6 pupils on their induction day.
- Dyslexia and autism groups have been established. Both groups include parents. These groups have organised events, including a relaxation workshop to alleviate exam stress. Pupils also promote national events around areas of special needs by contributing to assemblies.
- Pupils are well mannered and confident. They have regular opportunities to express their views and develop character through discussions and debate in lessons. For example, when reviewing their own potential leadership styles.
- Tutor time is used very effectively to check on pupils' well-being and to ensure that they are properly equipped for the day. The personal, social, health and economic programme covers a broad range of areas with challenging content. This allows pupils to reflect carefully on their own and others' views. This was seen, for example, when a group of pupils discussed issues around environmental sustainability.
- Assemblies are thoughtful, reflective and often presented by pupils. Inspectors saw the school's environmental group give a highly effective presentation on climate awareness.
- A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities is available, including trips to the space centre, the theatre and visits abroad. School clubs are inclusive and an integral part of school life. These include sport, fitness, a colouring and a journaling club.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- There is a calm and pleasant atmosphere around the school in lessons and at social times. Pupils are welcoming and respectful.
- Leaders are proactive in ensuring that staff training promotes positive behaviour strategies. The behaviour policy is used consistently, with teachers taking responsibility within their own classrooms. Effective support is provided through the pastoral system and there is an inclusion room for any serious behaviour incidents. The numbers of

pupils in isolation have decreased through targeted interventions, including restorative meetings.

- There have been no permanent exclusions for the past three years. Fixed-term exclusions are below the national average and declining.
- The school has an anti-bullying pupil group and has also secured an externally verified award. This reflects the collaborative dialogue between pupils and teachers to address concerns and find solutions.
- The three-year attendance trend is above the national average and improving. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is low and declining further. Robust measures are in place to address any barriers to attendance. There is a strong partnership with parents.
- In-year pupil movement is tracked and recorded. Any moves to other schools or providers are justified and well documented.
- Pupils are rarely late, and punctuality is effectively monitored.
- The school uses two alternative providers for a very small number of pupils. Leaders monitor these pupils to ensure they are safe, attending and making suitable progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils' outcomes, including for disadvantaged pupils, are consistently very strong at GCSE across a range of subjects. They make especially strong progress in English, science and humanities. The progress made by middle and higher-ability pupils is in the top 20% nationally and has been for several years.
- Pupils of all abilities are well prepared for post-16 study when they finish Year 11. They develop excellent study habits and very strong basic skills. For example, the proportions of low, middle and high-ability pupils who gained strong passes in English and mathematics at GCSE are well above those seen from similar pupils nationally.
- Leaders' analysis of recent assessment information shows that pupils in key stages 3 and 4 are making particularly strong progress. Inspection evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of work in books and folders confirm that this is the case. Where issues have been identified, such as with English in Year 8, leaders act quickly to ensure that pupils catch up quickly.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils has been stronger than all pupils nationally over time. These pupils benefit from strong teaching, high expectations and the successful ways in which they are monitored and supported.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make very strong progress because of the very effective support they are given in acquiring and improving their English.
- The relatively small number of pupils with SEND make average progress across their subjects.
- Pupils are supported effectively to develop their ability in, and enjoyment of, reading. Reading takes place in tutor time, in lessons and via competitions. Pupils are guided in their choice of reading books. Many pupils told inspectors they enjoyed reading.

- Pupils gain qualifications that enable them to move smoothly to further or higher education and employment. The wide-ranging careers guidance they receive also helps them to be well prepared for their next stage.
- Outcomes in the sixth form have been more mixed. There has been variability across subjects. Leaders' focus has been much more rigorous this year, adopting the systems that have supported outstanding outcomes at key stage 4.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The sixth form is now well led but there has been too much variability in subject outcomes over time.
- While attainment has been above average, progress in the sixth form has been average over time. Leaders' information, verified by inspection evidence, shows that progress is beginning to improve for current students because teaching is more effective.
- There has been a marked improvement in the progress of disadvantaged students. In 2018, they made average progress, having made below average progress in 2017.
- Leaders have high expectations of both staff and students and are aware of the strengths and relative weaknesses of the sixth form. They now have well-defined systems in place to address issues.
- The sixth form is increasingly popular in the community and is growing in numbers. A new £1.5 million sixth-form centre is currently under construction.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are now increasingly and consistently strong across all subjects. Teachers have detailed subject knowledge and use this effectively in lessons. Planning is a strength and supports both teaching and students' progress.
- Students are attentive and articulate. They want to learn. Behaviour for learning is exemplary, with high levels of student engagement in all lessons observed. Students willingly answer questions and are eager to participate in discussions, where their knowledge and understanding can be shared with others in the class. This strongly supports students' progress.
- High outcomes at GCSE mean that no pupils have to resit mathematics and English.
- Information, advice and guidance are effective. Few pupils change courses and retention rates are very high. All students who leave Year 13 move on to suitable education, employment or training.
- There is a varied programme of non-qualification activities and leadership opportunities to support students' personal, social and employability skills. This includes sporting clubs, literacy and numeracy mentoring, peer support for younger pupils and prefect status. All students take part in work experience.
- Attendance is high and lateness rare. Behaviour and conduct are very strong both in lessons and around the school. Students understand how to keep themselves healthy. All students spoken to felt safe at school.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 136590 |
| Local authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 10088410 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Girls |
| Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 998 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 216 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | David Green |
| Headteacher | Nicola Raggett |
| Telephone number | 0121 675 1305 |
| Website | www.kngs.co.uk |
| Email address | enquiry@kngs.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 4 July 2018 |

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as a foreign language is below average.
- The school uses two alternative providers, which are Envirohort and James Brindley Hospital School.
- The previous inspection was a section 8 inspection in July 2018.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons in key stages 3 and 4, in the sixth form and across a range of subject areas. Senior leaders accompanied them on some of these visits. Inspectors visited assemblies and registration time. Inspectors looked at pupils' books and talked to pupils about their work. Inspectors also spoke with pupils during social times.
- Inspectors met with teachers, middle and senior leaders, and governors. Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents related to pupils' behaviour, safety, teaching and learning, and pupils' progress and attainment.
- Inspectors considered the 121 responses to Parent View, including 113 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the 97 responses from pupils and the 54 responses from staff to the Ofsted online questionnaires.

Inspection team

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Nigel Griffiths, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| William Keddie | Ofsted Inspector |
| Caroline Badyal | Ofsted Inspector |
| Rob Steed | Ofsted Inspector |

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