

# Kenilworth School and Sports College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125747
<b>Local Authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	315301
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Smith HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1756
6th form	173
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Selwyn
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alex Begbie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Leyes Lane Kenilworth CV8 2DA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01926 859421
<b>Fax number</b>	01926 859426

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<b>Age group</b>	11–19
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 February 2008
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Kenilworth School and Sports College is a very large comprehensive school that serves the town of Kenilworth and surrounding district. The sixth form is based on a separate campus two miles away from the main school. Students attending the school come from areas where the socio-economic census data indicate highly favourable home backgrounds. The vast majority of the students are White British. The proportions of students with learning difficulties, who are learning English as an additional language or who are eligible for free school meals are well below the national average. The school has a small number of students with physical disabilities.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Kenilworth is a good and improving school. Specialist sports status is at the heart of the school and students speak positively of its impact. They enjoy a wide variety of sports clubs, which helps them keep very healthy. They also make a good contribution to the community by being young sports leaders, which includes working with student leaders in Sierra Leone to help prepare them for participation in the 2012 Olympic Games in London. The sports status has supported developments in a number of curriculum areas, for example, through devising healthy diets for athletes in food technology and providing data for work in mathematics. Students also enjoy a wide variety of performing arts activities, with many playing musical instruments in different orchestras and groups. They are rightfully proud of the well-received productions in which many take part.

Students really enjoy school because they receive good pastoral care and support. Racist incidents are taken seriously on the very few occasions they happen and are dealt with appropriately. Students generally feel safe in school and say bullying is rare and is dealt with well if reported to a teacher. However, some parents raised concerns that their child felt unsafe because of instances of bullying. Much of the behaviour observed during the inspection was good. However, it is satisfactory overall because of instances when students need reminding of the school's expectations in lessons and parents identify instances of poor behaviour.

Standards have been consistently above average over the last few years and most students made good progress. Until recently a group of lower-attaining students made less progress, mainly because the curriculum failed to enthuse and engage them in learning. The school changed the curriculum two years ago so that all students now follow appropriate courses, and these students now make good progress. The number of courses taken by some higher-attaining students was reduced because some of them were taking up to 13 GCSE examinations. The emphasis on quality rather than quantity has resulted in students being more enthusiastic and engaged in their learning and they now make consistently good progress. These improvements mean that the school is now better placed to meet its aim 'to be an excellent specialist school which, in partnership with its community, motivates all of the young people it serves to achieve their maximum potential and to play a full part as adults in shaping the society of the future'.

Teaching is good and students enjoy most of their lessons. Good relationships between staff and students and well-planned and engaging lessons ensure students learn well. When teaching is less effective, learning outcomes are not specific enough and the variety of activities is limited and led too much by the teacher. Tutors give very good pastoral care and support but academic guidance, although satisfactory overall, is not consistent across all groups.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher gives a clear direction and impetus to the school and is well supported by the senior leadership team. Middle management has improved from the time of the last report and holds departmental staff to account for their work by a thorough self-evaluation. In many subjects the quality of learning has been improved by improving the quality of teaching. The school has worked hard to develop communication with parents, for example, through a weekly newsletter, but parents rightly still feel this is an area which the school can improve. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance learning has improved since the last report and is often used as a teaching aid in lessons.

Governance is good and governors take an active part in the school to hold it to account through its committee structure. They ensure all appropriate policies, including race equality, are kept up to date and evaluated for their impact.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a good sixth form. Students really enjoy their studies and make excellent progress. They achieve exceptionally high standards. Two thirds of the Year 11 students stay on into the sixth form and a large number join them from other schools, some travelling a long way, to be part of the successful establishment. Teaching is usually very good and challenging, but it is inconsistent. Other lessons are less engaging and the pace is slow, with questioning not pitched high enough to probe students' understanding. Because there is a positive learning environment at the sixth form centre and students are able to work well independently, this does not adversely affect their progress.

The curriculum offers a very large number of advanced level courses. A few students attend courses in other establishments as part of consortium arrangements and others work with the local university. The school concentrates on advanced level courses in response to the local need. It takes care to ensure that students choose appropriate and meaningful options. They value the support and understanding that teachers show towards their pastoral and academic needs. Consequently, the large majority of students successfully finish their courses and transfer to higher education. Students make an excellent contribution to the community, for example, by mentoring younger students and volunteering for a large variety of activities in the local area. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good because there is a strong focus on raising achievement and maintaining high standards. Regular performance reviews are particularly effective in ensuring that students remain on track to meet their challenging goals. However, monitoring within and across subjects is less effective.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the quality of teaching by extending the variety of teaching activities and giving a sharper focus to learning outcomes.
- Ensure a consistent approach by tutors by enhancing their role and supporting them to deliver good academic guidance across all tutor groups.
- Improve the communication with parents by ensuring a speedy response to enquiries.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

Standards are above average and achievement is good. Results in 2007 show that the school was very close to meeting its challenging target for the proportion of students who gained five or more higher-level GCSE passes, including mathematics and English. Students' progress overall was no more than satisfactory for a number of years because lower-attaining students made less progress than others, who generally made good progress. Since the change to the curriculum, these students make good progress because they are engaged in their learning and are more enthusiastic in their studies. The school carefully monitors the students' work and identifies any underachieving students, providing additional support where necessary. GCSE results are particularly good in mathematics, music, English and the separate sciences. Standards remain

low in ICT. Many students go on into the sixth form, where they make excellent progress to achieve exceptionally high standards.

In Key Stage 3, students make good progress in English and mathematics and satisfactory progress in science. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to that of their peers. The school uses challenging targets well to stretch students and to ensure they are achieving as much as possible, including the use of targets relating to its specialism.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Their good attendance shows that they much enjoy school and they particularly enjoy the wide variety of activities that helps them keep fit. Many of them take part in sports, whilst others make a very strong contribution to the school through their work in the performing arts. Behaviour around school is generally positive and friendly but at times a lack of concentration by some students detracts from their learning in lessons. Good relationships support the strong social development of students. They demonstrate good spiritual awareness and understanding of moral issues. Students have a well-informed understanding of different cultures through links with Tanzania and their teaching in subjects such as art and modern foreign languages, where they were observed comparing life as French speakers in different countries.

A good contribution to the community is made through fund raising for charities, the many leadership programmes available in sports and language activities, and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Students partake in a range of activities, including sport and dance, to support partner primary schools. They are very aware of the healthy eating options available in school, some of which they have been responsible for introducing through the work of the school council with the caterers. There are councils for year groups and lower and upper schools but students say these are not particularly effective at present. The school gives appropriate advice and support to students who continue to smoke to help them break the habit. Students are well prepared for their future lives by their good progress in literacy and numeracy and the way in which they are able to make informed decisions.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Teaching and learning are good and some outstanding lessons were observed. Lessons motivate students, who are challenged by the well-planned and exciting activities. The pace is fast, yet with time allowed for consolidation, and students know what they have to do to make progress. Marking is often good, and informs students of the level at which they are working and how to improve. Students are given opportunities to assess their own work and that of others. They were observed in a particularly effective English lesson setting targets for each other and sharing constructive comments about how they could improve their work.

Good relationships between students and staff support them in making good progress. Work is generally well matched to the level of the students. In the outstanding lessons observed,

challenging questions enabled students to think deeply and creatively about their answers. Students felt confident to praise or question the opinions of others whilst accepting constructive criticism of their own suggestions. Students were engaged and on task throughout such lessons and really enjoyed them because they 'learned a lot and had fun'.

When lessons are less successful, students make only adequate progress. In these lessons the pace is often too slow and students are not engaged enough in their learning. Targets are set but the learning objectives are not specific enough and so students do not know what is expected from them. Often these lessons are over-reliant on teacher input and students are unable to make sufficient progress as independent learners.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The school realised the curriculum was a barrier to students making good progress and so changed it two years ago. It is now good because it ensures all students study a more appropriate range of courses. It supports their learning and personal development well. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy. However, ICT is not used consistently well in subjects. In Key Stage 3, most students study two modern foreign languages, with some studying Latin as well. Citizenship, which was an area of concern at the time of the last inspection, is carefully organised and students know when they are studying the subject and the level at which they are working.

In Key Stage 4, students follow a variety of courses, which allows them to follow their interests and prepares them well for the next phase of their education or the world of work. Vocational courses, including art and physical education, have been introduced to meet the needs of students who wish to develop their practical skills. Courses such as Star 14 and Jaguar apprenticeships allow selected students to develop their skills successfully in a workplace environment. Three quarters of students study a modern foreign language, with many studying two and some three. There is a very good range of enrichment activities, particularly in sports and expressive arts, which is valued by the students and which makes a major contribution to their enjoyment of school. Additional courses are run to support students with learning difficulties or those with a physical disability, for example, 'living for sport' and 'learning to lead'. Provision in the sixth form is good, with a very wide range of advanced level courses available.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Good advice and support is given to the students as they progress through the school. Strong pastoral care helps to develop students' working attributes. The school works closely with a range of external agencies to support students, when needed. Exclusion rates are low. The school makes good use of rewards and sanctions and regularly evaluates attitudes to learning.

Students receive good support when they arrive at the school, and effective advice and guidance when choosing options in Year 9 and A level courses at the end of Year 11. This is supported by work with Connexions. The support for the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good so that they are able to make progress in line with that of their peers.

Teaching assistants are used well in some lessons but support is not always jointly planned with teachers, which reduces their effectiveness.

Procedures to ensure child protection and health and safety are robust and the school makes all the required checks to ensure the safety and protection of students. Incidents of bullying or harassment are identified and generally dealt with quickly. Students are set targets and tutors work with their forms to help them achieve them. However, academic guidance is inconsistent across the years, and some tutors do not challenge and support students sufficiently.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher gives a clear strategic direction and is well supported by the senior leadership team. They have worked well to ensure the school has improved since the previous inspection. In the last two years the school has made significant changes to the curriculum so that now students make better progress. The school ensures students have good equality of opportunity and recent developments have meant that lower-attaining students now achieve well.

The school has an accurate, if at times too modest, evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses. It takes account of views from staff, students, parents and governors, although parents and students sometimes feel it does not take adequate notice of their opinions. This information is then used to formulate a coherent improvement plan which identifies important developments and is the focus for planning all areas of the school's work. Governance is good and holds the school to account well. Governors ensure appropriate policies and procedures are in place and regularly updated, including monitoring the impact of the school's race equality policy.

The school has shown it has a good capacity to improve further and it uses its resources well to bring about the above-average standards.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	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?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	1
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
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?	2	2

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
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

22 February 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Kenilworth School and Sports College, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2DA

My colleagues and I visited your school recently, met some of you at lunchtime and talked to others during lessons and at break. We were very pleased with your friendliness and helpfulness. We were very impressed with how proud you are to be a sports college and how much you enjoyed physical activities as well as the performing arts.

Staff support and guide you well, enabling you to make good progress. Standards are above average and you achieve well in your GCSE courses. You make outstanding progress in your sixth form. Teaching is good, with a significant number of lessons being outstanding. Many of you told us you preferred it when lessons were lively and interesting and you had more opportunities to work in groups or independently, when you listen to teachers less. We have asked your school to improve the overall quality of lessons by extending the variety of teaching and making sure you understand exactly what it is you are expected to learn. You can also help by making sure that the small number of you who get distracted in lessons concentrate more and do not spoil it for your friends and classmates.

Many of you have a very good understanding of what you need to do to become healthy, although some of you smoke, which you know is damaging for your health. The curriculum in Key Stage 4 changed recently and we feel that this meets your needs well. You also take part in a large variety of extra-curricular activities, especially sport and the performing arts. You were proud of the good work you do supporting younger students in your school, in other schools and in Sierra Leone, particularly as sports leaders. You generally knew your targets but we feel that the school needs to make sure tutors are consistent in the academic guidance you receive for your work.

Your school is well led and managed and it gains the views of yourselves and your parents to see how it can improve further, although some parents rightly feel not enough notice is taken of them and that the school is slow in responding when they contact it. This is another area we have asked your school to improve and you can help by making sure you always give your parents the weekly newsletter.

We wish you well in this good and supportive school. Thank you again for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith HMI

Annex B



22 February 2008

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