

Kemnal Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101672
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	323506
Inspection dates	26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Joanna Beckford-Hall (HMI)

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

Type of School	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	
School (total)	1127
Sixth form	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Professor Mark Hector
Headteacher	Mr Christian Markham
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2006
School address	Sevenoaks Way Sidcup DA14 5AA
Telephone number	020 8300 7112
Fax number	020 8300 5619

Age group	11-18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- How high are achievement and standards across Key Stages 3 and 4, with a focus upon investigative and problem-solving approaches to learning in mathematics?
- How successful is the quality of teaching and learning across Key Stages 3 to 5?
- How effective is the school in ensuring that provision and outcomes in the sixth form are rising to more closely match provision and outcomes in Key Stage 3 to 4?
- How well are students prepared for the world of work and their future economic well-being?

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form, national published assessment data, observing lessons, discussions with staff and students, and analysis of parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Kemnal Technology College is a larger than average boys school, with a sixth form. Students attend the college from a diverse catchment area of Bromley and South London. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is just above the national average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. A very small proportion of students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, most of whom have moderate learning difficulties, is above the national average.

The college has specialist technology status, has gained the Healthy School Award, and has Training School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Kemnal Technology College is an outstanding school with a good sixth form, expecting the very best of students both as young men and independent, thoughtful learners. The college is well recognised by parents, who comment that it is 'an outstanding educational institution' and that 'the ethos of the school is helping to produce confident, caring, expressive students who will take this attitude and the learning gained into their adult lives'. These comments from two parents capture the essence of many positive written responses received during the inspection.

Most students enter the college with starting points that are below the national average expectations for Year 7. By Year 11 they have made outstanding progress, achieving average or above average standards in their GCSEs. For the last three years, the percentage of students attaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE has consistently been well above the national average, reaching 70% in 2008. Students attaining five A* to C grades including English and mathematics dipped slightly in 2008. The college has moved energetically to remedy this decrease in attainment in 2008. Inspectors saw stringent and compelling evidence from the school's current data, lesson observations and student work that standards in Year 10 and Year 11 are rising. The school is on track to reach predicted outcomes for GCSE results in 2009.

In Years 7 to 9, students attain very well, and results at the end of year 9 are well above the standards expected for their age. The setting of challenging targets to stretch all students, targeted support, and a more appropriate curriculum all contribute to successful progression. The consistent monitoring of students' progress ensures that students achieve very well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and boys who underperform, particularly in Year 7.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Well-planned lessons, challenging pace and use of exploratory questioning helps students to develop and apply subject knowledge in a variety of ways. The preservation of high-quality teaching and learning is at the heart of the college's work. Impressive quality assurance monitoring of teaching gives all staff a clear understanding of the impact of their work on outcomes for students. Lessons are well matched to the individual needs of students. Students respond enthusiastically to different learning activities involving information and communication technology (ICT) and paired or group tasks, effectively evaluating each other's work. The clarity of direction in teaching and learning successfully builds links to assessment criteria for GCSE courses. Good-quality marking constructively paves the way for students to learn how to improve their work, although a few students said that in some subjects marking could be more detailed to give greater extension and depth to their work in trying to attain higher grades at GCSE level. Effective use of teaching assistants helps students with specific learning needs to make good progress and to increase their competency as independent learners.

Praise is used effectively to encourage students to take part in lessons and not be afraid of having a go and learning from mistakes. This was particularly true in mathematics lessons, where investigation and problem solving, as opposed to learning by rote, developed students' understanding of key concepts. The trust and firm relationships between students and staff create a positive learning experience. In the majority of lessons behaviour is excellent. On a few occasions, low-level disruptive behaviour of a few students causes disengagement with lessons. Students say that this is dealt with quickly and consistently by teachers and the leadership team.

The primary focus in raising standards and achievement is deeply rooted in what takes place in the classroom. Students make excellent progress as a result of many good and outstanding lessons, combined with outstanding care, guidance and support, and a curriculum offer that has been judiciously designed to meet the needs of the students. Since the last inspection the breadth of the curriculum has improved appreciably, now offering four distinct curriculum pathways of academic and vocational subjects. Students say that they particularly enjoy the technology courses and the chance to select a pathway that meets their future ambitions. The specialist technology status has played an important part in developing students' transferable skills. Links between learning in the classroom, and learning through enterprise and industry visits, help students to see how technological innovation affects and is crucial to business and industry.

Students enjoy varied extra-curricular and enrichment activities in sports, the arts and enterprise events. They speak positively about the annual drama production, the ski trip, arts-based work with a local specialist arts college, and their voluntary work with severely disabled students. The popularity of sporting opportunities encourages students to become

healthy active young people, and students comment that the food in the canteen is just too healthy, but they know exactly why this is so!

Students' attendance is good, reflecting enjoyment of college life. Behaviour is good and students have positive relationships with staff. A strong staff presence around the college encourages courteous and friendly conduct, with trust and respect for one another. Students feel safe and well cared for by the college. The outstanding pastoral care from tutors, and the impact of a newly designed personal, social, health and economic education programme, give students very good understanding of current issues such as knife crime and drugs awareness. Students express appreciation for workshops deepening their understanding of staying safe and of well-being, including men's health issues.

Students make outstanding progress in preparing for their future economic well-being. Well-structured enterprise days; work experience at Key Stages 4 and 5; a rigorous focus upon literacy, numeracy and ICT; and classes by personnel from various industries - all of these help students to acquire skills for the world of work. Students' awareness of economics and of sustainable development is increased by practical exploration of product creation, marketing and costing linked to finance and business practice. The Eco Club's garden project with a local business and the arts team, and the project between a local supermarket chain and the food technology department, are testament to students' outstanding knowledge of enterprise and business.

Outstanding care, guidance and support, the imaginative curriculum, and effective systems for student tracking progress together provide a first-class standard of targeted support for individuals and groups of students. Each student knows who they can turn to in order to get the help as they need it. Staff devote extensive time to revision classes and coursework support, investing in the life chances of every student. A high percentage of parental questionnaires commented on the excellent support that students receive, and how well informed parents are about the progress and welfare of their sons.

One parent noted that the exceptional achievements of the Executive Principal '...in bringing the college to such fruition have been magnificent over the years. His grit, determination and tenacity have been truly outstanding.' Such qualities are also evident in ambitious and focused middle and senior leaders, who establish rigorous cycles of school improvement.

The restructuring of the senior leadership team, arising from the formation of Kemnal Trust, has fostered a new energy in the leadership teams. Their insightful strategic decision making, leading to efficient quality assurance and innovation, brings about rapid improvement to the curriculum, to teaching and learning, and to interventions to support less-able students.

Comprehensive department reviews lead to resolute action plans in moving weaker subjects forward. Personalised professional development for all staff gives valuable time for reflection and evaluation of pedagogy. An appreciable strength of the college is the performance management system, enabling talented staff to aspire to and quickly achieve middle and senior leadership positions. Succession planning for the college and the work of Kemnal Trust is exemplary, and has been recognised by awards such as the Investors in People Leadership and Management award.

The governing body has comprehensive oversight of the college, challenging all leaders to continuously raise standards and achievement. Holding leaders to account for the progress of students cements ambitious target setting. The specialist technology status and extensive links through the work of Kemnal Trust build networks of local and national community partnerships, nurturing understanding of different cultures, faiths and ethnicities. Students demonstrate good understanding of why community cohesion is important. They are able to discuss values of different cultures and to explain why equality of opportunity is vital in establishing a society which respects the rights of individuals.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

There has been considerable progress in the overall effectiveness of the sixth form since the last inspection. It is now good in many respects, and is continuing to improve. Sixth-form students are excellent role models for younger students. They present themselves in a mature and confident manner. Their enthusiasm for learning, willingness to take on responsibility, and excellent understanding of their roles and contribution to the whole college and wider local community, makes them important ambassadors for the college.

Leaders of the sixth form set clear strategic direction, and translate good analysis of assessment data and tracking of student progress into effective action to support the progress of students. This is now good, and value-added analysis shows that standards are steadily rising. Increased focus upon scrutiny of student work helps staff to regularly monitor student progress. The college recognises that although many students make good progress, a minority do not achieve as well as they could, and the college needs to help more-able students to reach higher grades.

The curriculum in the sixth form is now good, and leaders are actively pursuing the expansion of the curriculum in 14-19 pathways through the national diplomas. Processes for matching students to courses are increasingly rigorous, and entry to courses at both AS and A level focuses more appropriately on student point scores at GCSE level.

The impact of the rigorous and accurate lesson observation programme in the main school is also used well in the sixth form, benefiting the quality of teaching and learning, which is now judged to be good. Students confidently debate key topic areas and draw links between theory and practical application of learning in fieldwork. Knowledge of the world of business and the impact of global issues upon students' economic well-being were seen by inspectors. In many lessons, students can discuss and describe the key concepts that they are learning. The extension of these skills into the ability to evaluate strengths of different arguments, including seeing contentious and opposing perspectives, is sometimes lacking. The development of higher-order thinking skills needs further attention in raising standards in the sixth form.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the capacity of sixth-form students to use higher-order critical and evaluative skills in their work, helping to raise standards in the sixth form.

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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?	1	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?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	1	1
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

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

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	No

Annex B



Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

11 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Kemnal Technology College, Sidcup, DA14 5AA

Thank you for the very warm and positive welcome you gave to inspectors when we visited your college recently. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing about the many things you find interesting and rewarding at your college.

For many reasons we judged your college to be outstanding, with a good sixth form. The outstanding academic guidance and pastoral support, and excellent quality of teaching, help the majority of you to make extremely good progress during your time at the college. The standards you attain are rising, and you can all challenge yourselves even further by aiming for the higher grades at GCSE and A level. This is the one area of improvement we have asked your Executive Principal and Head of College to address: developing sixth form students' ability to use critical and evaluative skills in learning to raise standards in the sixth form.

You speak highly of the support you receive from staff, and this guides you very well in making choices for curriculum pathways, and further and higher education. The curriculum matches your interests, and you talked to us about the rich project-based opportunities, combining technology subjects with enterprise and business workshops led by experienced industry leaders. I hope you continue enjoying and participating in these kinds of projects to give you valuable skills for life, regardless of where your future careers may venture.

Teachers plan lessons which are challenging and matched to your needs as individuals. In lessons you are enthusiastic, and most of the time behaviour in them is excellent. On occasion, a few students cause disruption to lessons, which does not help learning. You can all play your part in helping everyone to work together and succeed in learning.

The outstanding leadership teams, along with the high levels of investment by all staff in your education, ensure that the college is a place where your development as responsible citizens and young people, with the capacity and capability to excel in the future, is right at the heart of your learning.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Joanna Beckford-Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector