

# Kingsmead Community School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123884
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	340451
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robert Pyner 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>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	780
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Allan Sutton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Geoff Tinker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Wiveliscombe Somerset TA4 2NE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01984 623483
<b>Fax number</b>	01984 624230
<b>Email address</b>	Sch.562@educ.somerset.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St. Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 36 lessons, and held meetings with senior leaders, governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's progress tracking and performance data, school development plan, reporting procedures, governors' minutes, students' work and numerous policies, guidelines and departmental reviews. The inspection team also analysed questionnaires from 333 parents or carers, 101 students and 55 staff.

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

- the effectiveness of strategies for raising achievement, particularly for boys
- how well assessment, progress tracking and target setting procedures are used by teachers to support the achievement made by students
- procedures for safeguarding learners and the quality of support for vulnerable students
- evidence for improvement in the proportion of good or better teaching
- the impact of changes to the curriculum
- the effectiveness of the work by governors, senior and middle leaders to bring about improvement.

## Information about the school

Kingsmead is an over-subscribed, smaller than average secondary school situated in Wiveliscombe and serving a large rural area. Since 2000, the school has been a specialist college for languages and in 2004 was awarded high performing specialist school status and adopted humanities as a second specialism. The percentage of students entitled to free school meals is well below average as is the proportion from ethnic minority groups and for whom English is a second language. The proportion of students with special needs and/or disabilities has been increasing and is above the national figure although the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. Students' attainment on entry to the school is close to the national average. The school roll shows a greater proportion of boys than found nationally. Raising the achievement of boys has been a priority of the school's work in recent years. The school has gained the Healthy School, International School, SportsMark and Secondary Geography Quality Mark awards.

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

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

Kingsmead is an outstanding school. Students thrive in this inclusive, well ordered and harmonious school that cares exceptionally well for vulnerable groups. It is highly successful in helping young people look beyond the rural community in which it is situated and understand contrasting environments in Britain, Europe and Africa. In this the school uses its languages specialist status very effectively. There is a powerful culture of team work and continuous improvement in the school. This is driven by the highly respected headteacher, the governing body and all levels of leadership; all in the school promote the 'good is not good enough' ethos which drives the strategies to improve achievement in all areas.

Students' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. The proportion of students obtaining five top GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, shows an above average trend over a number of years and, following a slight dip in 2008, shows a clear improvement in the unvalidated 2009 results. The proportion of students who gain a higher level GCSE or equivalent in a modern foreign language is well above average and improving strongly. However, school performance data do show variable performance in some subjects. Students make good overall progress as a result of effective teaching and excellent monitoring. There has been a significant improvement in the progress made by boys to close the gap in achievement with girls over the last three years following focused work by the school.

The outcomes for students are good overall, but with some aspects that are outstanding. Students say they feel very safe and appreciate the efforts of the school to support them in their academic life and personal development. The highly inclusive nature of the school owes much to the contributions students make. Examples of this are the 'buddy' system for Year 7 students when they begin at the school, the effectiveness of the Student Voice forum in negotiating improvements in the fabric of the school and the fact that the chair of this group sits on a governors' sub committee. The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The young people are taught to think independently and reflect on their learning through, for example, the work undertaken during 'Challenge Days' which develop cross curricular themes. One student who had been working on the theme of 'Identity' reflected that the 'British identity is its diversity'. Overall, students are prepared for the next stage of their education or for employment very well.

Teaching is good with a significant proportion that is outstanding and this results in

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the above average performance by students. The teachers use a wide range of strategies well to engage and develop students' learning but the marking found in books was variable. There are excellent examples in some departments which provide clear guidance to students on the next steps they need to make in order to improve their learning, sometimes involving the young people themselves, but this is not consistent across the school. The outstanding curriculum ensures that individual needs are met exceptionally well. The care, guidance and support given to all students are outstanding. The school has a number of students who present significant challenges but integrates them very well. Diversity is valued highly and the school is extremely successful in ensuring the equality of opportunity.

The school has highly effective procedures for self evaluation. The excellent monitoring and analysis of students' achievements and attitudes to learning are used to target highly effective interventions. Departmental reviews systematically monitor performance although this needs to remain a high priority to ensure improvement in those subjects whose performance is variable. The school is very effective in embedding ambition and driving improvement at all levels. Governors and senior leaders have the courage to 'be radical' and encourage staff at all levels to play a substantial part in developing provision. An example of this is the role of 'think tanks' of staff which research and develop improvements. As a result of such inclusive development strategies staff morale is very high. The school sets high targets at the whole school, department and student levels. These targets are well understood and contribute to the improvements the school has made. As a result of these factors, the school has outstanding capacity to sustain further improvement.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that marking consistently provides students with the information that helps them improve their work by:
  - sharing more widely the good practice found in some departments
  - developing further ways to involve the students more effectively in the marking of their work.
- Using the excellent practice found within the school, improve the outcomes of all departments to that of the best by:
  - developing further the formal support and peer mentoring systems for middle leaders
  - setting clear timescales for improvement in outcomes for departments receiving support.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Overall, students' attainment is above average. The school has successfully maintained this level of performance over the last four years with a steady improvement in outcome measures. Attainment at the highest GCSE grades in mathematics shows an impressive trend with results significantly above average over

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a number of years. In the school’s specialist subjects, there is a strong trend of significantly higher than average outcomes in German and history and above average in geography, but more variable performance in French, Spanish and religious studies. The latest results in 2009 show improvement in these subjects following challenge and support by senior leaders.

Students overall make good progress and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities this is outstanding due to the excellent support and tailored curriculum developed for this group. Most students are keen to work hard, know and respond well to the aspirational targets set for them and demonstrate good, and often outstanding, attitudes to learning in lessons.

Five of the other outcomes are outstanding and a number of features are worth noting. The extent to which students feel safe is very high and this is supported by the views of parents and carers. Behaviour is good. During the inspection, inspectors often observed excellent behaviour and attitudes, with none that was inappropriate; students spoken to all felt that their learning was not impeded by behaviour issues. However, a very small minority of parents and students noted behaviour issues in their questionnaires and for this reason this aspect has not been graded as outstanding. The school is very effective in developing students’ understanding of health related issues. An example of this is a development initiated by governors to improve health services on site which is to be implemented in early 2010. Students’ involvement in many aspects of the school contributes significantly to its inclusive nature and very pleasant working environment. Students recognise and respect the needs of others and many actively support their peers and younger students. The school is an important hub for the local community making important contributions through, for example, a local community radio station and provision of language courses for adults. Attendance is good and improving due to the highly effective school procedures and links to other agencies. Students’ preparation for their future economic well-being is excellent given the emphasis on the development of key skills through highly appropriate personalised curriculum opportunities.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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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<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good overall. During the inspection teaching was judged to be outstanding in about one quarter of the lessons observed. A key difference between the good and outstanding teaching is in the way teachers use their on-going assessments of students' work as a basis for planning the next steps, setting new targets and helping students understand what they have to do to achieve them. In outstanding lessons teachers tailored their expectations very effectively to match students' different needs and abilities. In most lessons teachers used a wide range of teaching and learning strategies. Where learning was outstandingly effective group activities, peer assessments and skilful questioning ensured the pace of lessons was brisk and students were prompted to give thoughtful and insightful responses to challenging questions. Teachers have access to a very wide range of information about their students and use this well in their planning of lessons. However, the quality of marking is variable. There are some very good examples of marking which give specific guidance on the next steps needed to improve their work but this is inconsistent across the school.

The curriculum provision is outstanding. The school has been proactive in designing a curriculum that is imaginative, forward looking and matched to students' ambitions and personal goals. The range of academic and vocational courses provides a coherent and personalised curriculum. There is 'alternative' provision, taught on site, for students who may be struggling to overcome personal barriers to learning. Courses include hair and beauty, vehicle maintenance and land based industry which students can study in conjunction with more traditional academic subjects. The very rich and broad range of opportunities makes a significant contribution towards students' achievement, enjoyment, their positive attitudes to learning and attendance. This rural school has taken brave and ambitious steps to maximise opportunities for employment and encourage an appetite for continuing study. A prime example of this are the 'Challenge days' that run for a whole day each fortnight covering a range of topics and subjects and often involve visiting specialists and community members. The themes support learning across and between subjects by, for example, exploring social dilemmas, environmental issues and personal development. These days are very popular with students and staff.

The effectiveness of care, guidance and support is outstanding. The targeted and well matched support for individuals is a great strength of the school. Due to the very high quality of care students receive they respond with trust, confidence and

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enthusiasm. All aspects of students’ development are carefully monitored to ensure that any required interventions are swift and effective, making excellent use of other agencies when required. As a result of this the school provides excellent support for its most vulnerable students, some of whom describe how the support provided has significantly improved their life chances.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

A key element in the school’s improvement and outstanding features is the strength of the leadership provided by the headteacher supported by the senior team and middle leaders. The headteacher is an inclusive and inspirational leader who enjoys the full backing of a knowledgeable and proactive governing body. Governors work hard to ensure they play a full part in the life of the school and understand the work of students and staff. They have the confidence and expertise to develop new initiatives and challenge when performance measures do not meet targets. The school development plan is well focused on priorities. Team reviews of subjects are very thorough, focused on improvement and identify areas for development and expected outcomes by the next review date. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are outstanding. There is effective concentration on the quality of learning and expectations of staff are high. Monitoring by senior leaders is rigorous and very well supported by middle managers and teachers.

In the parental questionnaire, most parents say that they are happy with their child’s experience at the school. However, a very small minority felt that communication with the school could be better but this did not extend to information about their child’s progress; for this aspect a very large majority felt this was at least satisfactory or better. This was matched by students who, in their questionnaire, responded with almost all noting that they know how well they are doing in school.

There are strong relationships developed particularly well through the school’s networks with other secondary and primary schools. Its outreach work in languages is strong with all feeder schools now offering French based on support from Kingsmead. The school works hard to develop links with industry despite its rural location. In this it has been successful in developing links with companies and further education colleges particularly for vocational aspects of the school’s curriculum. Safeguarding procedures are thorough and rigorous.

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Every effort is made by the school to ensure that each student has the maximum opportunity to participate in activities particularly the visits to Europe as part of language courses. The school effectively ensures that choices fit the needs and interests of individual students and as a result the progress made by students with special needs is outstanding. There is no evidence of any discrimination.

The school takes justified pride in the quality of its promotion of community cohesion, which is outstanding. There is a very good understanding of local needs and the school responds to these very well by, for example, helping to meet the language needs of new local residents from Poland. The established links with a school in Birmingham are excellent with some Year 8 students undertaking a residential exchange to develop projects aimed at gifted and talented students from both schools. These links provide excellent opportunities for students from the two schools and widen understanding of life in Britain. Through its language specialist status there are strong links with schools in France and Germany and all students have the opportunity to visit one of these countries during their school career. The global perspective is further developed with a well established link with schools in Zambia. There is a pattern of student and teacher exchanges which are now being developed to include parents and the wider community.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents are happy with their children’s experience in the school and feel well informed about their progress. Parents feel strongly that their children enjoy school,

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make good progress, feel safe, are helped understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and are prepared well for their future education or training. They have confidence in teachers and in the leadership and management of the school. A very small minority noted that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and did not take sufficient account of suggestions or concerns. During the inspection inspectors observed no evidence of poor behaviour and, indeed, much that was excellent. The school has a range of methods by which it communicates with parents and the wider community. The questionnaires showed a broad range of comments from parents praising the work and leadership of the school.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kingsmead Community School 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 received 333 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 780 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	109	34	181	56	24	7	4	1
The school keeps my child safe	107	33	196	61	10	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	111	34	183	57	21	7	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	113	35	174	54	21	7	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	97	30	202	63	11	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	75	23	170	53	56	17	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	68	21	210	65	36	11	0	0
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)	100	31	185	57	12	4	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	87	27	188	58	29	9	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	74	23	188	58	29	9	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	74	23	174	54	37	11	4	1
The school is led and managed effectively	100	31	179	56	16	5	6	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	109	34	183	57	18	6	2	1

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

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>the following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.



4 December 2009

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Kingsmead Community School, Wiveliscombe TA4 2NE**

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we inspected your school recently. Special thanks go to the student guides who helped the inspectors find their way around and to those of you who completed the questionnaire; we found this very useful. We enjoyed talking with all the students we met and found what you had to say very informative and relevant.

This letter is to tell you about our findings. Our judgement is that Kingsmead Community School is outstanding. We were very impressed by your behaviour and the quality of your relationships with adults and other students. Your attainment at the end of Year 11 is above average and the progress you make in your work is good. Those students who have special needs make excellent progress. The opportunities you have through the specialist subjects of modern foreign languages and humanities are a real strength of the school. However, achievement in some school subjects could be improved further. The care and support you receive are excellent. Teaching is good overall with a significant proportion that is excellent. Your teachers successfully provide you with an outstanding curriculum and work that is interesting and meets your needs and interests. Your progress is tracked very well and in the questionnaire a sample of you completed, almost all students said they know how well they are doing in their work. However, some of the marking of your work does not clearly help you to understand what you specifically need to do to improve. Your headteacher is highly respected and he, the senior staff and governors provide outstanding leadership and management.

Your headteacher, senior leaders and governors already recognise that there are always areas for improvement, and these are the aspects the inspection team judged that need to be addressed.

- Using the excellent practice found within the school, improve the outcomes of all departments to those of the best.
- Make sure that marking consistently provides you with the information that helps you improve your work.

However, every member of the school community needs to work together and you have an important part to play in supporting the staff to bring about these improvements. You should continue to work hard and make the most of the wide range of opportunities you have at school. I am sure that you will do so and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

**Robert Pyner**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

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