

Kimichi School

111 Eastbourne House, Yardley Road, Birmingham, B27 6LL

Inspection dates 6–7 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school

- Trustees and the headteacher have a very clear and ambitious vision for the school and its students. They have ensured that all the independent school standards are met and that students' achievements are consistently good because of good teaching across all subjects.
- Achievement is good because of the individual attention students receive. It is outstanding in English, history and music because teachers have excellent ways of inspiring students to learn in these subjects. Students are on target to attain high levels in almost all subjects, which represents at least good progress from their starting points last September.
- Teachers check carefully that students understand what they are learning through excellent questioning and explanations.
- Students feel very safe and valued. They have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. The school is rigorous in ensuring that all the required checks are carried out on the building and on staff and volunteers.
- Behaviour is good because students and teachers have very high expectations of themselves and set the rules together. Students are rarely absent.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength. The very strong personal, social and health education programme, including involvement in community projects, means that students are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The ways in which the school uses the information it gathers about students' progress to hold teachers to account for students' progress and to plan for improvement are not fully developed.
- Marking does not always make clear to students how they can improve their work.

Compliance with regulatory requirements)

- The school meets the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed learning in six lessons involving all students and held discussions with the headteacher, a representative of the proprietorial board (the Chair of the Trustees) and students.
- Students' work was examined during lessons. A more detailed scrutiny of the work of all students in all subjects was undertaken to explore students' achievement since entry, home work, breadth of work covered and aspects of teaching.
- The inspector looked at a range of school documentation including policies and records about how the school keeps students safe; the data the school collects about students' learning and behaviour; attendance and admissions records; and the school's evaluation of its strengths and priorities for improvement.
- There were too few responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, for these to be considered, although the inspector was able to talk with parents who had children at the school.

Inspection team

Susan Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kimichi School is a small independent school for boys and girls aged 11 to 16 years. It is located in the Acocks Green area of Birmingham in the buildings of a former preparatory school. The school specialises in the development of students' musical skills as well as their broader academic skills. The school is owned by a registered charity, Kimichi School. The trustees are also the governors of the school. The headteacher is also a trustee.
- The trustees have carried out a range of work on the school building since moving in. Not all of the premises are in use currently.
- Students attending Kimichi School study at least one musical instrument and often more, although they do not have to have any required level of musical skill before entering the school.
- The school was registered in August 2014 and enrolled its first students in September 2014. This was the school's first standard inspection.
- Currently there are three students on roll, aged between twelve and sixteen. None have identified special educational needs or disabilities, or speak English as an additional language. All have British backgrounds.
- There is one full-time member of staff, supported by part-time staff for specialist subject teaching. Volunteer staff support a range of school activities and subjects. The school does not use alternative provision, although it does use a local leisure centre, together with its changing rooms and showers, for physical education.
- The school aims to 'develop a music-based centre of learning that uses the medium of music to inspire and educate our young people' and 'to produce confident, academically sound and socially adept young people ready to take on the challenges of life after school'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership and management by:
 - formalising further the ways in which the proprietorial board hold staff to account for the progress and achievement of students
 - ensuring that information held about students' progress is used to inform school development planning.
- Improve teaching to outstanding and raise students' achievement further by ensuring that all teachers use the school's new marking policy to help students to improve their work and to be clear as to next steps.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The proprietorial board (the trustees) and the headteacher are determined that the school should lead the way as to how music might be used to motivate students and support learning in other subjects. They have created an ethos of high expectations and very high aspirations for every student. Students and staff are hugely committed to this and not a moment for learning is lost.
- The headteacher's enthusiasm for the school's vision is tangible. She is determined that every student will succeed. She has worked tirelessly to ensure that students have access to all the areas of learning, and that resources are available to promote good teaching and achievement in each subject. For example, the science and computer studies resources have been recently enhanced; students' work shows that good use has been made of these latest acquisitions to accelerate their learning further.
- Currently the school is very small and there are very few staff members. However, subject specialists and the trustees support the school very well so that subjects are well led. Staff are up to date and informed about developments within subjects and within the curriculum as a whole. The headteacher works alongside new or less experienced staff to ensure that individual students have work set at the right level for them. Newer teachers quickly gain confidence in the ways in which they support each student's learning.
- The school collects a good range of information about students' achievements on entry and their progress from entering the school. It is strengthening its links with local schools to ensure the accuracy of this and to learn from best practice elsewhere. It has strong links with other music schools and groups that support not only teaching its specialism, but also its planning of its broader curriculum.
- The inspector's checks on work and observations confirmed the accuracy of the school's information as to students' attainment and progress. However, although this is used well by teachers to plan students' work, the information is not used systematically to inform the leadership's plans for further improvements in teaching and achievement. This is partly because the school is so small and also because many staff are volunteers.
- The school's curriculum is good. It contains all the subjects required and offers the opportunity for students to develop further interests if they emerge. Music is an important part of everyday and students play to a high level. They also study Italian, German and French and subjects such as philosophy, alongside an appropriate emphasis on English, mathematics and science.
- Themes within these subjects are chosen to excite students' interest and debate. They showed a high level of understanding, for example as they discussed the history of the British electoral system on election day. This and the many opportunities they have within their personal, social and health programme to consider different life styles and views prepare them extremely well for life in modern Britain.
- No student is disadvantaged by the school's work, because the school promotes equality and diversity very well. Although all students are currently taught together, different work is provided that builds well on students' individual levels and challenges them to achieve even more.
- Although no students currently have identified special educational needs or disabilities, the school is well prepared should such students join the school. It fulfils its duties under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
- Students have good access to careers advice through the school's own programme, independent advisers and their work experience programme. The school prepares them very well for their next steps in education and life through the high standard it promotes in academic achievement and personal development.

- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They demonstrate maturity, tolerance and mutual respect as they interact with each other and staff. They take part in work experience and in community events, sharing their musical talents in workshops and performances with other schools. They contribute to charity events, as well as visiting many places of interest so that they have a deep understanding of different lifestyles.

- **The governance of the school:**

The trustees have understandably been focused in ensuring that the school gets off to a good start, that the appropriate resources are in place, and that students are safe and secure. They have been very successful in recruiting staff so that students are well taught and achieve well in all the subjects they study.

The trustees have ensured that all regulations are met and that the school's high ambitions for students are translated into practice. They produce good quality information to ensure parents are kept fully informed and involved in their children's education. The complaints policy meets requirements and there have been no complaints since the school opened.

The trustees know each student well and are clear as to what is being taught and how students are achieving at the school. However, their holding of staff to account for students' progress and well-being, and the incorporation of this into school development planning, is less well developed. Since staff are not currently paid there is no link made to remuneration but the trustees are aware of the need to consider this once the school has recruited paid staff.

The trustees have ensured that all safeguarding requirements are met and are effectively implemented. They ensure that health and safety and fire safety requirements comply with requirements, and that safe recruitment practices are robust and adhered to. The school's safeguarding policy is available to parents and others on its website and includes everything that it should.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good both in and around the school. It is often exemplary. However, occasionally individual students are reticent to volunteer ideas or they do not take sufficient care with their spelling.
- Relationships between students and with adults are outstanding. Students feel they are listened to and they listen to others with respect and tolerance. They show considerable empathy for others whether discussing a character in a book or the election campaign. Staff model such respect and empathy extremely well. The very strong personal, social, emotional and economic programme, alongside such subjects as philosophy and religious education, ensure that students think very carefully about others and reflect on the different lifestyles and values they may experience.
- Students have a good understanding of different forms of bullying. They are adamant that there has been no bullying at the school and that they get on very well indeed. School records and school council minutes confirm that any behavioural incidents are extremely rare. Students themselves decide on sanctions if there are issues, such as the late submission of homework. They value the opportunities that they have to propose things that they will study or visits they might make. This all prepares them very well for life in modern Britain.
- Attendance is excellent. Students rarely have any time off and when they do it is always for illness. They value school hugely and the many opportunities they have to get involved in local community activities or to visit places of interest.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students' safe and secure is good. The site is secure and all the checks regarding welfare, health and safety and safeguarding are robustly made. All the required staff and volunteer training is in place. Training of a trustee to the higher level in safeguarding procedures and of the headteacher in first aid ensures that, if others are ill or unavailable, students always have access to an appropriately trained person.

- Appropriate risk assessments are in place regarding fire safety, the premises and off-site visits. In addition, students develop a good awareness of evaluating personal risk because of their studies in information and communication technology and personal, social and health education. They are able to describe potentially difficult situations and how these might relate to such things as journeys, but also when people might try to exert undue influence on them.
- Parents and students are clear that the school keeps each student safe. The size of the school helps each to feel valued and safe, while ensuring that issues around personal safety are covered well. Students are clear that no one is discriminated against and that tolerance of, and respect for, different lifestyles is promoted and encouraged.
- The school uses subjects, such as history and philosophy, as well as its safe recruitment procedures to ensure that students can recognise and are protected from extremist views and develop a good understanding of the values of modern Britain.

The quality of teaching is good

- Students achieve well from their starting points because teachers are expert at building on what students already know and at providing explanations when they might be unsure or stuck. Good teamwork between the headteacher and other staff, together with good planning, means that links between different subjects are made well. Therefore, should staff be away, as during the inspection, students' progress is not impeded.
- Very high-quality questioning and explanations by teachers draw out good explanations from students themselves, for example, in a discussion about the centre of mass in science or the history of elections in history. These also help teachers to check carefully as to whether everyone is understanding, and adjust each student's work accordingly.
- English and history are taught very well indeed. Individual students are on track for achieving high standards from starting points that were similar to, rather than higher than, others of their age on entry. Individual talents are nurtured and developed very well so that the most able are achieving well above others of their age in these subjects and in art, mathematics and science, whatever their talent.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Students are provided with work that checks on and extends their understanding or ability to use their mathematics to solve problems. Good links are made to practical ideas and to online resources so that each student can work on a similar subject but at their own level.
- Students have many opportunities to develop their study skills, such as research skills and note taking, so that they are very confident about their ability to cope in sixth form or future higher education. They write at length in many subjects and their written work shows rapid improvement since they entered the school.
- The teaching of music is a particular strength and students make excellent progress whatever their starting points on entry. Students have continuous access through the day to musical instruments and to expert teachers who convey their love of making music. Theory is taught incidentally alongside this, so that students quickly make links with their practical work. They say they love to be able to practise throughout the day where previously they have found it a chore.
- Students' work shows a maturity in their use of vocabulary, including subject vocabulary which is impressive in English, but also within other subjects such as science and history. This is because teachers themselves are careful to use such vocabulary, to extend it and to check students' understanding of its meanings.
- Although homework is used well to support students' learning, and an extensive range of work is evident in each student's books since September, this is not marked in a consistent way. The school has a new marking policy to help to address this but it is not yet fully implemented. Consequently, although there is some good practice, teachers do not have a consistent way of marking spelling, of helping students to

understand how they can improve their work further or what they should now go on to learn.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students generally enter the school with skills similar to those of others of their age and sometimes better in individual subjects. During the time they have been at the school their work, school data and observations by the inspector shows them to have made good progress in all subjects. In their English work, and that in history and music, their progress is outstanding.
- The school is new and no students have yet taken examinations. However, students in Year 9 and Year 10 are already on track for achieving good grades in GCSE subjects. The school checks their progress against GCSE grades carefully and often. In almost all subjects these students are already close to or exceeding the higher grades. Inspector observations confirm this. The school rigorously checks the progress of all students in all subjects so that it can readily identify where progress might not be as strong.
- Students say they are doing so well because their teachers give them good verbal feedback and explanations as to how to improve their work further. This was certainly a feature when visiting classes. However, occasionally marking itself does not pick up on how work can be improved and students do not 'correct' their work. This stops progress from being even more rapid.
- Students love of music and the expert teaching that they receive, whatever their chosen instruments, mean that their progress in music in theory and performance is outstanding. They show great determination to improve their own performance further but also rightly celebrate when each gets it 'just right'. They are visibly moved as they listen to different genres of music or play a piece together in their ensemble that sounds 'just right'. The determination they show transfers into their attitudes and concentration in other subjects and the ways in which they reflect on their 'performance' in these subjects too.
- Students take a broad range of subjects which supports their achievement and their potential career choices well. All are ambitious for the future and feel that the school is setting them up well for different life choices. They show they are able to speak and understand a range of simple sentences in Italian, for example, showing rapid progress over two terms. Their work in mathematics demonstrates a good grasp of a range of mathematical topics in advance of others of their age, such as in algebra and trigonometry. In science, the most able achieve well because they are given more challenging work that stretches their understanding well. This all means that students are being well prepared for their future.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the GOV.UK website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	141242
Inspection number	462986
DfE registration number	330/6017

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Secondary
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	3
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Kimichi School
Chair	Kirstie Berry
Headteacher	Sally Alexander
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,000
Telephone number	0121 679 5298
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