



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

INSPECTION REPORT FOR KING'S SCHOOL

DfE No: 879/6002

The key inspection judgements for this school are:

The quality of education	outstanding	1
Pupils' personal development	outstanding	1
Safeguarding pupils' welfare health and safety	outstanding	1
Leadership, management and governance	outstanding	1
Effectiveness of the Early Years' provision	outstanding	1

Compliance with the Independent School Standards:

The school meets the regulatory requirements of schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Compliance with the Equality Act 2010:

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act.

Compliance with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

The school meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Date of inspection: 23 – 25 May 2016

SECTION A: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

King's School provides an outstanding quality of education for its pupils. They make excellent progress in their learning and achieve standards that are at least in line with national averages and which are exceeded by a significant number of pupils. Teaching is of a consistently high quality. Pupils are taught how to learn and are equipped with the knowledge and skills to apply their learning in considerable depth. Assessment informs teachers' planning although data analysis is not used to track the progress of groups of pupils nor to identify further improvement. Personal development is excellent and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The level of care and nurture for pupils throughout the school is exceptional. Arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are outstanding and procedures to check the safe recruitment of staff are thorough. The leadership and management, including governance, are outstanding. School leaders have ensured that the school meets its aims to enrich the education of all learners. Excellent systems are in place to ensure the school accurately evaluates its performance and is continually developing. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is outstanding. Children make excellent progress in their learning and development and are extremely well prepared for their future learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Whilst not required by the regulations, the proprietor should:

- improve the effectiveness of the analysis of assessment data so that it is used more efficiently to track the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils and identify further areas for development.

SECTION B: INFORMATION

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. It follows the inspection framework agreed by SIS and the Department for Education (DfE).

In reaching their judgements, the inspectors observed lessons across a range of subjects and areas of learning. Examples of pupils' work were examined and data regarding pupil achievement were analysed. Discussions were held with members of staff and trustees and inspectors spoke with groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the life of the school, including break and lunch times. They scrutinised the school website and other documentation and records. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires were taken into account.

The inspectors were:

Reporting Inspector:	Mr Andrew Rickett
Team inspectors:	Mr Paul Armitage Dr Martin Bradley

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL:

King's School is a non-selective independent day school for boys and girls aged between three and eleven years. The school opened in 1989 and following rapid growth moved to its current premises in Mannamead in 1991 at which time the nursery provision was added. The school is part of Cognita Schools Limited. There are 246 pupils on roll of whom 79 are in the nursery. One pupil had a statement of educational need at the time of the inspection and 12 were identified as more able or talented. The school is designated as a school with a religious character and aims to 'provide, within a nurturing Christian environment, an excellent, child-centred, holistic education'.

SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

1. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is outstanding.

Pupils' learning and achievement

Pupils' learning and achievement are outstanding. Pupils make at least expected progress throughout the school with a large number of them exceeding national expectations. A significant number of pupils do better at higher levels than pupils of the same age nationally and a good proportion achieves exceptional standards in maths and English. Pupils of all abilities make progress which is built upon from one year to the next and adds considerable value to the overall standards they attain. There is consistency across all subjects in the high level of achievement; pupils do equally as well in mathematics as they do in reading and writing and other subjects in the curriculum.

The outstanding quality of pupils' achievement is the result of the emphasis placed on teaching pupils how to learn. They not only acquire the knowledge and skills needed to access the curriculum but are also encouraged to use both creatively, to enhance their learning by adding depth to their understanding. An excellent example of this is the emphasis given to writing creatively across the curriculum. Pupils have a secure grasp of the conventions of spelling, punctuation and grammar, but it is when they use these creatively, almost testing these rules to breaking point, that they produce their most exciting and highly original work. This applies equally to subjects such as art or music where the exploration of concepts and skills produces work of high quality. The award of the Gold Artsmark is an excellent example of the high achievements of pupils in dance, drama, music and speech, and 97% of pupils achieved a distinction in recent LAMDA examinations.

An important aspect of pupil learning, which benefits their achievement, is the flexibility within the curriculum for pupils to explore links between their knowledge in different curriculum areas. This is effectively utilised to develop their own thoughts and ideas and test them out in a learning environment that encourages risk taking. This is augmented in the way teachers use weekly planners as a tool to capture the success of individual pupil progress and to identify those who need specific support to allow them to flourish. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning and approach their work with diligence and enthusiasm.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is excellent. An outstanding aspect of teaching is the extent to which teachers have an 'in depth' understanding of the needs of children in their care. Teachers know their pupils' strengths and what they need to do to help them improve. This detailed knowledge informs their daily planning and how they deliver the curriculum. Teaching adapts to meet these needs and pupils respond with enthusiasm and engagement in their learning.

Teaching is of a consistently good quality with a high proportion of outstanding lessons observed across the school. The consistency in the quality of teaching

enables pupils to build effectively on their knowledge and understanding so that progress is accelerated as they move through the school.

Teachers' weekly planners are an excellent example of how the individual needs of pupils are at the centre of the school's aims and ethos to encourage all children to excel in their learning. For example, teachers evaluate each lesson they have taught to identify its strengths and to identify individual pupils who need to be supported or challenged by more demanding work.

The best teaching was characterised by a high level of challenge that was uncompromising in the expectation that pupils would engage in their learning at a mature level. Pupils responded with great enthusiasm to these opportunities and enjoyed the interaction that teachers promoted enabling high level discussion and the sharing of views. Excellent use was made of teaching assistants to challenge and support the pupils' confidence and encourage their contribution to the lesson.

Continual assessment of pupil progress and achievement through ongoing review and monitoring of their work is a strength of the school. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and this makes an impact on curriculum planning, teaching and assessment. The quality of the teacher's evaluation of their own performance is a major factor contributing to the overall success of the school. The school has a diligent response to the national changes in assessing pupil progress and is currently trialling a number of approaches. Some of these are at an early stage and evidence to support the most recent performance data is not fully secure. Procedures for assessment are good and improving but have not yet been used to analyse the progress made by different groups of pupils nor to identify further improvements in pupils' learning.

The quality of the curriculum

The curriculum is outstanding because it is broadly based and has the flexibility to respond to the individual needs of pupils and is carefully tailored by teachers to enhance pupils' learning. It is further supported by the teachers' excellent knowledge of the pupils' strengths and areas for improvement which are recorded in their weekly planners. While the curriculum closely follows the National Curriculum, it is planned to respond to the interests of the pupils and events that take place in Britain and worldwide. There is a curriculum policy and schemes of work which guide teachers in their detailed lesson planning. Account is also taken of the needs of pupils with school-created individual education plans.

A strong emphasis on 'The Big Question' encourages pupils to ask their own questions about a topic. They respond well to this because it gives them some personal input into how the curriculum is explored. Excellent examples were seen in the humanities and science where identifying a question to ask and then seeking evidence to justify their answer are common features of pupils' work. In Year 2 science, pupils had a long list of questions and hypotheses when they studied mini-beasts and their habitats. This approach reflects teachers' insistence that pupils should understand that there are often different views and emphases, even in science. Planning is strong in English and mathematics where pupils are set individual targets and extension work challenges the more able learners.

The richness of the curriculum is exemplified by the way teachers interpret its content to challenge and excite children and have fun. This was seen in mathematics through activities such as the weekly 'maths challenge'; in English by making it possible for pupils of all ages to write high quality stories and factual accounts; and in art where the whole school is full of most impressive paintings and drawings.

There is a very extensive extra-curricular programme including many clubs and places to visits. Recent visits have included a field trip to a local beach to explore rock pools and tides and build a mini raft. An outing to the Royal Courts of Justice gave pupils the opportunity to be involved in a mock trial. A strong sports programme sometimes involves competition with local independent and maintained schools and in these competitions, pupils have often done well.

2. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Pupils' personal development is outstanding supported by a personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) programme. It is delivered in many ways through circle time, assemblies, and specific events such as 'Maths Week' when the focus was on money. Personal development is also explored through other subjects of the curriculum such as English, religious education and geography where moral and other issues are discussed when examining the lives of others. The PSHEE programme helps pupils to appreciate the differences between people and the need to be respectful of each other. Pupils show a marked degree of compassion and empathy for others and talk about fairness and justice with sincerity and concern. They understand the difference between right and wrong and older pupils explain with considerable maturity the moral dilemmas that they may have to face in their lives.

There is a strong Christian ethos which has a palpable impact on the way pupils view issues and the opinions they form. For example, the 'Golden Rules' which reflect both Christian and British values and which clearly guide pupils in their thinking. The rules also include such encouragements as 'do be gentle; 'do be kind and helpful'; 'do not hurt anybody'; and 'do not cover up the truth'. Assembly programmes support the pupils' growing understanding of human values. The recent spring theme, based on 'Values for Life', provided opportunities for each class to deliver their own interpretation of how virtues such as courage or humility can make an impact on their lives. Pupils openly share their views about the need to be respectful of others and talk about why some people may be attracted to extremism.

Pupils learn about other faiths and a broad range of cultures. During the inspection, in one classroom, there was an excellent display focussing on Sikhism with a picture of Guru Nanak featuring strongly.

Pupils grow in confidence during their time in school. This is a consequence not only of their academic success but also because of the many opportunities they are given to take responsibility. This could be as a book monitor or as a prefect or as a buddy for a younger or unhappy child. In this way, pupils learn to respect themselves and others and in turn, this has a positive impact on behaviour and

bullying. Behaviour is excellent and the incidence of bullying is low. Attendance is high and pupils look forward to coming to school.

3. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY

Provision for the safeguarding of pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The school has a full set of policies covering safeguarding, recruitment, first aid, health and safety, behaviour, anti-bullying and other including supervision and the handling of critical incidents. The procedures for implementing these policies work well. The safeguarding policy gives details of the local safeguarding board whose advice and support is valued. The relevant staff have an active, professional relationship with the local safeguarding board.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and her deputy in the Early Years Foundation Stage are both suitably trained and work well together. They also have an excellent relationship with all other staff in the school and their role is well understood. The child protection files are in good order. All staff have received up to date training in child protection procedures. Staff interviewed have an effective understanding of current safeguarding procedures and are aware of the latest requirements. An appropriate number of staff have been trained in first aid and there are suitable arrangements for the storage and administration of medicines.

Risk assessments, for the most part, are tailored to this school rather than being more general in purpose. There are also useful daily checks on areas of risk in the school by grounds maintenance personnel and the results of these checks are recorded. Fire risk assessments have been undertaken as required by an external company. Fire equipment and alarms are tested regularly.

E-safety is given a high level of attention in the curriculum. Information Technology (IT) lessons successfully use a variety of on-line courses to help pupils from reception age so that they appreciate the benefits and the dangers of the Internet. An effective firewall tested by the school with Cognita is in place. All teachers and pupils from Year 4 upwards sign a contract binding them to proper usage and this has been shared with parents. Guidance letters and information days have been provided for parents so that both school and parents work in tandem to help ensure good usage.

Supervision arrangements work very well. The admission and attendance registers are in good order. It has suitable arrangements for informing the local authority when pupils move to their next school.

Pupils are encouraged through the curriculum to lead a healthy lifestyle. The school has gained a silver Healthy Child award for its work in this area. The food served in the dining hall is of good quality. The high regard for the school staff is reflected in the displays that honour and celebrate the lunchtime time staff and, with great affection, the long standing contribution of the school cleaner to the school community.

The single central record is kept in very good order and there are rigorous procedures for staff recruitment. The school requires the correct checks to be

undertaken by contractors including self-employed persons and is careful to assess the checks required on those undertaking different types of work in the school.

4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, are outstanding. The headteacher is inspirational in her vision that puts the needs of children at the centre of the schools' ethos. She works tirelessly to ensure that any new initiative or development has the needs of children at its heart. The school's leaders and managers have created an ethos that has been established that firmly places the welfare and academic achievement of each pupil at the centre of the school's purpose. This has a significant impact on the academic and personal development of each child.

The headteacher is an exceptional leader who has maintained the school's high reputation and academic excellence. She is supported effectively by a leadership team that has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. These are accurately identified in a detailed school improvement plan and which directly relates to pupils' performance and welfare. A well planned programme of senior leadership meetings, whole school staff meetings and junior and infant meetings means that priorities identified in the school improvement plan are discussed by all teaching staff and make an impact at classroom level. Teachers' performance management is clearly linked to school improvement priorities. Regular observation of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' work constitute efficient procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance.

The leadership and management ensure that the premises are generally well maintained. The recent resurfacing of the outdoor play area has made a considerable improvement to on the quality of provision for physical education as well as making pupils' play times safer. Some of the exterior decoration of the school is looking rather tired. The school meets the independent school standards for information to parents and handling complaints. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire was very positive.

Governance

The quality and effectiveness of governance are outstanding. The school has is very well supported by the Cognita Group who offer expert advice and guidance as well as providing independent auditing of safeguarding procedures and compliance with regulations. A recently appointed Assistant Director of Education (ADE) has spent time in the school working with the headteacher and leadership team offering advice and providing effective challenge.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS' PROVISION

The overall effectiveness of the provision is outstanding as are its quality and standards. Children make excellent progress in their learning and development and are extremely well prepared for moving into Key Stage1. Staff ensure that children have positive attitudes towards their work and develop their social skills

and emotional security very effectively. Throughout the EYFS the children feel safe and secure. Their happiness at being in school is evident. Staff are particularly skilled at encouraging self-directed learning which gradually becomes more structured as the children move through the Foundation Years classes into the Reception classes. Safeguarding and welfare requirements are fully met. Staff rightly regard these to be shared responsibilities. Leadership and management have a deep understanding of good early years' practice and ways that this can be developed to promote continuous improvement of the children's experiences and life chances.

Leadership and management are outstandingly effective. The leaders of the school and the EYFS share an ambitious vision and high expectations of what the children can achieve and ways of sustaining this. Performance management is strong. Supervision is effective and promotes professional development. Recent support provided by Cognita encouraged staff to review their outdoor provision, supporting a view that 'less is more'. This has given children opportunities to organise equipment and materials, whilst the adults unobtrusively ensure that effective learning occurs across the curriculum. Activities including balancing, counting, sorting, measuring and recording are outstandingly well supported as is the continuously active involvement of all the children. The curriculum is broad and relevant. It meets all the requirements of the EYFS and the needs and interests of the children. Parents have helped develop outdoor learning as well as for one class topic showing diving equipment. Such links are supported by events including a forthcoming grandparents' afternoon for which the children have rehearsed enthusiastically. A good understanding of what constitutes outstanding practice emphasises the school's capacity for sustainable improvement. Children are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education. Equality and diversity are well promoted and behaviour is outstanding. Planning to meet individual children's needs reduces any gap between the achievement of different groups of children. British values permeate teaching and safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory and other government requirements. The children's welfare is promoted consistently and the school works very effectively to prevent radicalisation and extremism.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. Staff have consistently high expectations of what each child can achieve. This is extremely well supported by a shared understanding as to how achievement can be raised to high levels and then sustained. Excellent classroom displays support and extend the children's learning. In an outstanding Year R lesson phonics was taught very effectively; consistently well-paced activities sustained the children's interest and enthusiasm and extended their reading and spelling skills. Elsewhere in Year R the children's excellent speaking and listening skills were evident in discussions using complex sentences for questions and answers as well as identifying adjectives and other aspects of grammar including alliteration and punctuation. Their wide vocabulary was evident in the accurate use and definition of words such as 'predator' and 'camouflage'. Assessment information is carefully gathered from a detailed understanding of what the children have achieved. The staff then use this information along with their excellent understanding of the EYFS to develop 'next steps' in children's learning. Parents are kept well informed of how well their child is doing and what they need to do next to continue to make progress. Equality of opportunity is well-promoted. Throughout

the EYFS classes, teaching is outstandingly effective in supporting the children's acquisition of knowledge and skills, preparing them very well for their move into Key Stage 1.

The children's personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding. The EYFS classes share a positive culture which enables children to feel safe, secure and happy. They enjoy their achievements, and are confident, successful learners. Both indoors and outside, children are encouraged to be independent, to explore their surroundings and to use their imagination. 'Wellie walks' in the school grounds enable them to explore the woodland. Together with the consistent support of the staff, these experiences ensure that the children are extremely well prepared for moving into the older classes. They have excellent relationships with the staff. In the Foundation Stage 1 classes each child has a key person and in the older classes the teacher takes on this role. This is appropriate provision which ensures that the children are emotionally secure. Attendance is good and well-monitored. The children develop good awareness of how to keep safe and the school has promoted parents' awareness of issues concerned with using the internet and social media. Healthy eating is well supported. Most classes use paper towels after hand washing, but occasionally children share cloth towels which is not appropriate. A good range of cultural experiences along with the children's own experiences such as travelling on holidays, prepares the children particularly well to respect others and to contribute to wider society.

Outcomes for children are outstanding. The children make excellent progress from their starting points and by the end of the Foundation Stage many exceed the level of development typical for their age. The Foundation Stage classes provide an extremely excellent basis for future learning and development.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	King's School			
Address of school:	Hartley Road Mannamead Plymouth PL3 5LW			
Telephone number:	01752 771789			
Email address:	school.secretary@kingsschool-plymouth.co.uk			
Web address	www.kingsschool-plymouth.co.uk			
Proprietor:	Cognita Schools Limited			
Person registered with DfE as proprietor under paragraph 20 of Part 4:	Chris Jansen			
Head Teacher:	Ms Jane Lee			
Early Years Manager	Mrs Tracy Phillips			
DfE Number	879 6002			
Type of school	Independent school			
Annual fees	£5985 - £6855			
Age range of pupils	3-11			
Gender of pupils	Co-educational			
Total number on roll	full-time	167	part-time	79
Number of children in registered nursery		13		50
Number of children under-5	Boys:	32	Girls:	48
Number of compulsory school age pupils	Boys:	61	Girls:	74
Number of post-compulsory pupils	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Number of pupils with statements of special educational need	Boys:	0	Girls:	1
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Boys:	5	Girls:	3
Type of inspection	Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008			

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, and members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship or Cognita group. The report is available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk.