



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

## **Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report**

**King's School and Nursery**

**September 2019**



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### School's Details

<b>School College</b>	King's School and Nursery			
<b>DfE number</b>	879/6002			
<b>Early Years registration number</b>	EY371506			
<b>Address</b>	King's School and Nursery Hartley Rd Mannamead Plymouth PL3 5LW			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 771789			
<b>Email address</b>	school.secretary@kingsschool-plymouth.co.uk			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Clare Page			
<b>Proprietor</b>	Cognita Schools Ltd			
<b>Age range</b>	0 to 11			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	267			
	<b>EYFS</b>	80	<b>Juniors</b>	187
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25 to 26 September 2019			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 King's School and Nursery is a non-selective, independent co-educational school for pupils aged between 8 months and 11 years. Originally founded in 1989 by Mrs Mary Smyth, it moved to its present site in 1991 and opened its nursery in 1993. It is owned and administered by Cognita Schools Ltd.
- 1.2 The school includes a registered Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting for children under 2 within its nursery, which also includes children up to the age of 4. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2019.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school has a strong Christian ethos. It aims to inspire children to realise their potential in terms of academic achievement, aesthetic appreciation and spiritual awareness. The school seeks to embed a culture of wellbeing throughout the whole community and to help pupils develop responsible attitudes to their work and to respect themselves as well as the rights, views and property of others.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a wide range of professional and business backgrounds in Plymouth and the surrounding area. The school's own data indicates that the ability of the pupils is above average. Twenty-one pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including dyslexia, five of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupils in the school have an education and health care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language for seven pupils whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified six pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 19 other pupils for their special talents in sport, music and the arts.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

**This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards.** The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

### **PART 1 – Quality of education provided**

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

### **PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

### **PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

### **PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

### **PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 2.11 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

2.13 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

**2.14 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

## **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

2.15 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

**2.16 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

## **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

2.17 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

**2.18 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.**

## **The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision**

- 2.19 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding
- 2.20 Leaders implement a curriculum which supports pupils' personal development and physical skills most effectively and offers a wealth of opportunities for children to develop their language and communication skills. The setting provides a very high standard of care. Staff demonstrate a deep knowledge of how children learn at this stage. All children are very well supported and their needs are appropriately met.
- 2.21 Children make rapid progress from their starting points. They separate easily from their parents, engage in activities readily and are well prepared for their transition to the next stage of education. Staff provide excellent support for the children's development, giving time and attention to each child to ensure they feel very safe, secure and happy. All requirements for the children's safeguarding and welfare have been met. Staff share a strong understanding of their responsibility for safeguarding and ensure every child is safe in the setting.
- 2.22 The leadership team have acted on recommendations from the previous report. The refurbishment of the setting has led to closer integration of practice so that children have high quality language and communication experiences. All EYFS policies are now incorporated into whole school documents. The development of the play areas has enabled children to play together in a co-operative manner. Strong leadership, with a clear vision for the future, ensures that the setting demonstrates highly evaluative practice and secures continuous improvement of children's life chances.

### **Quality of education**

- 2.23 The quality of education is outstanding.
- 2.24 The curriculum is very well planned and meets the needs and interests of the children, thus giving them an excellent start to their education. It includes opportunities for children to increase their communication and language skills, their physical development and their personal, social and emotional development. Staff show that they have an excellent understanding of how children learn at this age. They plan exciting activities to give children experiences which develop their learning. Detailed planning shows that staff have high expectations of what each child can achieve in relation to their age and stage of development.
- 2.25 Staff respond extremely well to the children's differing needs and know when to intervene to move their learning on with appropriately planned activities. For instance, a child playing in the sandpit mastered how to use a spade and was then shown how to use it to fill up a bucket. Staff readily engage with children during routine activities and take every opportunity to develop language and social skills. They were observed talking to children about what they were going to do next while helping them change their shoes and reminding them to share and to play together. Staff communicate with the younger children through sign language and songs and they model language well so that the older children develop their vocabulary.

2.26 Regular assessments, recorded on the online tracker, contribute to the staff's knowledge about each child and help identify the next steps in their learning. All assessments are tracked against the expected levels of development for their age so that each child's progress is carefully monitored, and their needs are met. These assessments are shared regularly with parents when they come into the setting and they are able to contribute to them through 'proud clouds', which inform the setting of children's significant achievements and experiences at home. However, these assessments are not yet available for parents to access remotely. This can lead to opportunities being missed for parents to keep up to date with their child's activities and progress on a daily basis. The high-quality experiences that children receive allow them to develop at pace. Children are very well-prepared for the next stage of their education.

### **Behaviour and attitudes**

2.27 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.

2.28 Children are very enthusiastic learners who are keen to explore their surroundings and use their imaginations. They show high levels of engagement and settle quickly into different activities. They are willing to try new things and to persevere. For example, children were seen trying to move bubble cars around the outside area and working out how to move their feet to propel themselves forward. Babies were seen trying to sort shapes and post them into the right slot and exploring the texture and feel of jelly and fruit in an activity based on the colour yellow. Children demonstrate great pleasure and pride when they achieve something. Many of them squealed with excitement when they found the toy animals hidden in the forest area.

2.29 Children maintain their focus on activities for appropriate periods of time. Staff encourage children to play without intervening unnecessarily. For example, children were absorbed when choosing their own materials to decorate their animal masks. Some proudly showed their finished masks to everyone, taking great delight in their own success. Children were enthralled listening to a story using a puppet and all wanted to hear it again, showing that they can become involved in an activity without being distracted. Staff give appropriate praise to the children for their achievements and this increases the children's confidence to try new things. Children are able to access their chosen toys independently and to use their own ideas when playing. A baby was seen selecting different shakers and listening to the different sounds each made. Some toddlers chose to use construction bricks to make towers and others used wax crayons to make patterns and draw circles.

2.30 Children demonstrate excellent behaviour and show great respect for one another, often helping each other to fetch things or joining in applause to celebrate each other's successes. Staff remind them gently how to share things and play in a cooperative manner. Prompt and regular attendance at the setting is encouraged and procedures are in place to investigate unexpected absences. The setting works very closely with parents and communicates effectively with them to ensure that children do not miss activities, with the result that children form good habits for future learning.

## Personal development

- 2.31 The personal development of children is outstanding
- 2.32 Highly effective care practices support the children's emotional security and development of their character so that children feel extremely happy and safe. Staff respond very effectively to individual children's needs and are very supportive of the children's own efforts. Parents commented to inspectors that they were very impressed with the high standard of emotional support given to their child. Staff utilise the curriculum to encourage children to take risks and challenges both inside and out, such as balancing on the logs in the wooded area. These activities are carefully monitored so that children are not endangered or lose confidence by being set a task that is too difficult. Staff know each child very well. The nurturing key person system helps children form very secure attachments so that they feel safe and happy in the setting and the high standard of care given to each child promotes their well-being and independence most effectively.
- 2.33 The setting strongly encourages children to lead a healthy lifestyle. Children have regular access to the outdoor learning areas and to the wider school grounds for exercise, allowing them to be physically active and to develop their gross motor skills. They are provided with nutritionally balanced lunches and can have water and milk when required. The setting ensures that children do not have access to social media and strict guidelines about the use of photography and mobile phones are in place.
- 2.34 All staff give high priority to safeguarding and are aware of their responsibilities to ensure that they meet the EYFS statutory requirements for safeguarding, welfare, learning and development. Personal hygiene routines are well embedded and carefully followed by everyone. Very clean and modern facilities ensure that a high standard of hygiene is maintained.
- 2.35 The setting prepares the children for life in Britain through a well-planned programme of cultural events, including the whole school *Group One World* initiative, which celebrates diversity and personal well-being. Children are included equally in all experiences. Staff encourage children to take responsibility and learn to respect each other. British values of fairness, tolerance and kindness underpin the setting.

## Leadership and management

- 2.36 Leadership and management are outstanding.
- 2.37 Leaders and managers have a very clear vision for the setting. They consistently monitor the standards of care and regularly scrutinise the curriculum to ensure that high standards are maintained. They have a very clear understanding of how to support all children so that they achieve the best possible outcomes. Leaders place great emphasis on staff development. Staff are well-qualified, leaders monitor their performance carefully through annual appraisal, supported by an effective system of individual meetings which enables staff to discuss issues, including about their own well-being. All staff regularly attend a wide range of professional development courses to ensure that they keep their practice up to date.
- 2.38 Relationships between leaders and children, parents and the wider community are very strong. Parents trust the setting to provide consistently high standards of care. Leaders know the children very well and respond quickly to the needs of children, including those with SEND. The setting has good links with outside agencies through the local authority and can access specialist help if required.
- 2.39 Governance is strong and works closely with leadership and management to ensure welfare and safeguarding requirements are implemented effectively by all staff. They offer support and guidance and are extremely well informed about the practice and standards of the setting. High priority is given to safeguarding and rigorous implementation of all health and safety policies to ensure that children are kept safe. All staff are regularly updated on matters of child protection, including radicalisation, so that their knowledge remains current and they can apply it in the best interest of the children.

## **Compliance with statutory requirements**

**2.40 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.**

## **Recommendation for further improvement**

In the context of outstanding provision and outcomes, the setting might wish to consider the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years:

- Allow parents to access the online assessment system remotely to enable them to keep up with their child's activities and progress on a daily basis.

### 3. Inspection Evidence

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

#### Inspectors

Mrs Kate McCarey

Reporting inspector

Mr Adam Gibson

Compliance team inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Mrs Ros Ford

Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former deputy head, IAPS school)