

# Kingscourt School

Independent school standard inspection report

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|-------------------------------|---------------------|
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| Inspection number             | 386841              |
| Inspection dates              | 22–23 February 2012 |
| Reporting inspector           | Susan Gadd HMI      |

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## **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, 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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## **Information about the school**

Kingscourt School, which opened in 1995, is situated in a Georgian manor set in 20 acres of grounds in Catherington on the outskirts of Horndean in Hampshire. It is a non-selective, co-educational independent day school for pupils aged between three and 11 years of age. Currently there are 209 pupils on roll of which 32 are part time. There are 53 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This part of the school consists of three provisions: 'Tadpoles', 'Frogs' and Reception. The school receives nursery funding for 40 children. The rest of the school is divided into a pre-preparatory and preparatory department which encompasses pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. There is a mother and toddler group which is available for one hour each week which did not form part of this inspection. Kingscourt School is part of the Cognita Schools Group. The school was last inspected in December 2008.

The school aims to provide 'an education built on the firm foundation of basic skills such as English and mathematics whilst preparing pupils for the technological future through structured teaching and a vibrant learning environment'.

## **Evaluation of the school**

Kingscourt School successfully meets its aims and provides a good quality of education with some outstanding features. The good curriculum and good teaching and learning from the Early Years Foundation Stage through to the end of Key Stage 2 result in pupils making good progress, except in English where pupils make outstanding progress. Pupils' outstanding behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensure that pupils become self-assured individuals excited to learn and develop. Day-to-day pastoral care of pupils is outstanding, although welfare, health and safety and arrangements for safeguarding are good overall. The school has improved since its last inspection and now meets all the regulations.

## **Quality of education**

The quality of the curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage through to the end of Key Stage 2 is good overall. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum,

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

with detailed schemes of work clearly supporting adults in identifying a clear progression of skills, knowledge and understanding for pupils to follow within each subject. The school is now in the process of making refinements to curriculum planning so that all adults have further specific guidance on how to optimise the achievements of the most able pupils.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, curriculum plans are closely linked to the key areas of learning for this age group and well supported by practical, first-hand experiences. The school is now rightly considering how best to develop the range of outdoor learning opportunities for children in Reception to further enhance their progress and development. In Key Stages 1 and 2 planning is based on National Curriculum recommendations supported by published schemes of work. In music, French, drama and physical education pupils are taught by specialist teachers. In some year groups subjects such as history, geography and science are taught by class teachers. As pupils transfer to Years 5 and 6 English, mathematics and science are taught by a range of subject teachers within the school. Pupils in these year groups have an opportunity to broaden their linguistic skills through learning Latin. An outstanding feature of the curriculum is the significant range of enrichment activities available to pupils at various points during the school day, such as extra curricular clubs, day trips and the wide use of the school's extensive grounds. This, along with the emphasis on first-hand experiences such as the use of scientific models, provides pupils with an enjoyable and meaningful context in which to learn. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic about learning and are excited to come to school each day. As one child said, 'Learning here is fun!'

Teaching and assessment are good from the Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of Key Stage 2 and as a result pupils make good progress overall. Children join the school with varying skills each year. The current children in the Early Years Foundation Stage joined with skills just above those expected for their age. Regardless of the starting points, pupils of all ages make good progress in mathematics and science and outstanding progress in English as a result of exceptional teaching in this subject, especially in Year 6. Where teaching is at its strongest a range of methods are used to engage and motivate pupils while matching their varying learning styles. Highly effective teacher questioning is used to develop pupil understanding of new skills. The pace of teaching within such lessons is brisk and pupils are encouraged to assess their own learning through the use of 'traffic lights' and 'marking ladders'. Pupils of all abilities are challenged to achieve their best through frequent discussions with their teachers. On occasions there are missed opportunities to fully extend the more able pupils through the work they are set. Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers as a result of the support they receive from adults in and out of class.

In the Early Years Foundations Stage regular observations are made of children's achievement and recorded in their profiles. In some instances these do not always reflect children's next steps to learning. Older pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6, are clear about how their targets support them, but other pupils are less aware of the

relevance of their targets in helping them improve their work. Improved teacher assessments and the tracking of test results help adults gain a clear understanding of the progress that pupils are making as they move through the school. Consequently, assessments and tests are used well to support the good progress that pupils make in mathematics and science and outstanding progress in English. This ensures that all pupils gain entry into their school of first choice and some are awarded scholarships.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The atmosphere within this small school is one of unity. As one pupil said, 'We are all a community. The best thing is that we are all friends and adults make us feel special!' This extremely positive attitude is reflected in pupils' high attendance and outstanding behaviour. Pupils are proud of the many responsibilities they take on, ranging from supporting younger children in reading or becoming prefects and monitors around the school. They have a clear view on the importance of being able to express their feelings and the role this plays in their personal development. As one child said, 'It is never good to stay inside your bubble; you need to talk about your feelings to relieve the stress so that you can get on with things.'

Through religious knowledge lessons pupils become fully aware of the range of religions within society. Pupils point out some of the similarities and differences between religions and discuss the importance religion plays in bringing communities together. This understanding of the world is extended through a range of other activities. These include close links with a special school where pupils from both schools share their learning experiences, visiting places of religious worship such as a Hindu temple, raising money for a variety of charities, and residential trips to France and Italy. Pupils gain a strong understanding of public institutions and services through a range of activities and visits such as guided tours around the Houses of Parliament.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage children confidently share toys and play harmoniously together. Pupils of all ages know that they are considered as individuals and that adults take every opportunity to enhance their self-esteem and belief in themselves. Consequently, pupils are proud of their achievements and develop into confident individuals who get on exceptionally well together and are very well prepared for the next stage in their school life.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. Staff are committed to ensuring that all pupils feel valued through the exceptional pastoral care they provide. Pupils feel very safe. As one child said, 'All adults help us, they keep us safe and we know they care about us.' All relevant policies, risk assessments and procedures, such as those for child protection and fire safety, are detailed and effectively implemented. Although regulations for admission and pupil welfare are

fully met, the school is in the process of reviewing systems for checking the accuracy of the electronic admission register and formal procedures for analysing pupils' sickness records. Safeguarding procedures meet all the necessary requirements. Pupils are well supervised at lunchtime and breaks. As a result of the school's curriculum, pupils are clear about the dangers of not keeping fit and healthy. As one child said, 'If I was unhealthy then when I grow older I wouldn't feel good about myself.'

The school fulfils the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The school meets the regulation for safer recruitment procedures and appropriate checks have been carried out on the suitability of the proprietor and staff who work with the children. A single central register is in place and meets requirements.

### **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The adults at Kingscourt School have worked hard to ensure that classrooms are bright, airy and colourful. A range of pupils' work is displayed throughout the building, promoting pupils' achievements and providing a safe and conducive atmosphere to learn in. The extensive grounds and playing fields are a real asset in enriching learning.

### **Provision of information**

The school provides a range of information to parents, carers and others and meets all the regulations. This information is available through the school's website, A-Z of Kingscourt, and the school prospectus. A fortnightly newsletter provides updates on school events and pupil achievements. In addition, each half term the 'Kingscourt Explorer' is sent home to share pupils' enrichment experiences. Parents and carers attend regular meetings throughout the year on their child's progress and receive reports twice a year. Links with parents and carers are strengthened through the school's Parent-Teacher Association who meets regularly with the headteacher to share its views and organise family events for all who attend Kingscourt School. Parents and carers were overwhelming positive about the school. One comment represented the views of many, 'Kingscourt is a wonderful, caring environment that instils enthusiasm for learning.'

### **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school's complaints procedures meet all the regulations.

### **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the college meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1.

## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure all pupils make outstanding progress by developing curriculum planning so that all adults have specific guidance on how to further optimise the achievements of the most able pupils and by developing pupils' understanding and use of their targets
- in Reception, develop greater opportunities for pupils to use the outside environment as part of their regular learning experiences.

## Inspection judgements

|             |      |              |            |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| outstanding | good | satisfactory | inadequate |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|

### The quality of education

|  |  |   |  |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Overall quality of education   |  | ✓ |  |  |
| How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils |  | ✓ |  |  |
| How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs         |  | ✓ |  |  |
| How well pupils make progress in their learning  |  | ✓ |  |  |

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

|  |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | ✓ |  |  |  |
| The behaviour of pupils  | ✓ |  |  |  |

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

|  |  |   |  |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils |  | ✓ |  |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|



## School details

|   |   |           |            |
|---|---|-----------|------------|
| <b>School status</b>  | Independent   |           |            |
| <b>Type of school</b>   | Preparatory   |           |            |
| <b>Date school opened</b>   | April 1995  |           |            |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>  | 3–11 years  |           |            |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>   | Mixed   |           |            |
| <b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>                              | Boys: 92  | Girls: 85 | Total: 177 |
| <b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>                              | Boys: 17  | Girls: 15 | Total: 32  |
| <b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b> | Boys: 0   | Girls: 0  | Total: 0   |
| <b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>                          | Boys: 0   | Girls: 0  | Total: 0   |
| <b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>                                       | £ 1,347–£6,735  |           |            |
| <b>Address of school</b>  | 182 Five Heads Road, Catherington Lane,<br>Waterloooville, Hampshire. PO8 9NJ |           |            |
| <b>Telephone number</b>   | 023 9259 3251   |           |            |
| <b>Email address</b>  | office@kingscourt.org.uk  |           |            |
| <b>Headteacher</b>  | Mrs J Easton  |           |            |
| <b>Proprietor</b>   | Cognita Limited   |           |            |

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**

24 February 2012

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of Kingscourt School, Waterloooville PO8 9NJ**

Thank you for the help that you gave us when we visited your school. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour and attitude towards your work and each other. Many of you told us how much you enjoyed coming to school and we could see why!

Your school is a good school with a number of outstanding elements. These are the things we liked best about your school.

- All adults keep you very safe and encourage you to do your best and believe in yourself.
- You have a good curriculum which is made exciting by the use of practical equipment, the amazing school grounds and an outstanding range of clubs and trips.
- You make exceptional progress in English and good progress in mathematics and science as a result of all the adults working really well together.
- You have outstanding opportunities to feel good about your achievements, share your feelings, and learn about a range of religions and different communities beyond your school.

To help you do even better we have asked the teachers to think about:

- giving those of you in Reception more opportunities to learn outside the classroom
- how they can make changes to the curriculum plans so that you always receive work that helps you to achieve your best, especially those of you that occasionally find work easy. Also to help you to improve your work by understanding your targets.

Yours sincerely

Susan Gadd  
Her Majesty's Inspector