

# The King's School

Cadhay Lane, Ottery St Mary, Devon, EX11 1RA

## Inspection dates

27–28 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	N/A
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Students make outstanding progress from their starting points. The proportion of students attaining five GCSE grades at A\* to C, including English and mathematics, is well above average.
- The GCSE results in many other subjects, for example science, textiles, geography and religious studies, are very high when compared with national averages.
- The quality of teaching over time is outstanding because teachers have high expectations and manage their classes very well.
- Teachers know their students exceptionally well and use this knowledge to plan and adapt lessons to meet their needs. In a few cases, feedback in marked books does not tell students how to improve further.
- The behaviour of students both around the school and in classrooms is exemplary. Positive relationships between staff and students, based on mutual respect, mean that learning is able to progress rapidly.
- The school takes great care of its students and as a result they feel extremely safe.
- Students are involved in a rich variety of activities outside of normal lessons and these make an exceptional contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example there are strong international links.
- The sixth form is outstanding. The number of excellent opportunities for students to develop their leadership skills is particularly striking.
- The headteacher is passionate about developing the school as an inclusive community; every individual is accepted regardless of their background. She brings inspiration and a strong sense of direction to leaders, managers, staff and students.
- The Chair of the Governing Body and the governing body know the school well and use their considerable skills to support and challenge the headteacher and senior leaders very effectively.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 42 parts of lessons. Three of these were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors also looked at examples of students' work in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers responsible for subject areas, three groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors.
- The lead inspector also spoke with the school's independent self-evaluation partner who advises the school on its development.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents expressed in 133 submissions to the online questionnaire (Parent View), two letters and one phone call. In addition, inspectors took account of the school's own survey of parents and carers.
- Returns from 63 questionnaires completed by staff were also considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, information on students' current progress, monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, minutes of governing body meetings and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Paul Williams, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Cooper	Additional Inspector
Justine Hocking	Additional Inspector
Marian Marks	Additional Inspector
Sylvie Trevena	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average sized secondary school with a large sixth form.
- The King's School converted to become an academy on 1 April 2011. When its predecessor school, also called The King's School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. The proportion of students supported at school action is above average.
- 'The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is similar to that found in most schools. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, to children who are looked after and any whose parents are members of the armed forces.' A small number of students are taught vocational courses at Exeter College.
- The school is a member of the Jurassic Coast Teaching Schools Alliance which provides mutual support and staff development for schools in the local area.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Provide more opportunities for students to receive and act on high-quality feedback by:
  - using marking to advise students more precisely on how to improve and correct their mistakes
  - allowing more time in lessons for students to consider and respond to the written feedback they receive.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students enter the school with attainment that is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 11, having made outstanding progress from their starting points, the proportion of students attaining five GCSE grades at A\* to C, including in English and mathematics, is consistently well above average.
- The attainment of students across many GCSE subjects is exceptional; in more than half of the subjects offered, the proportion of A and A\* grades attained is significantly above average.
- A much higher proportion of students at this school make rapid progress in English and in mathematics than is seen nationally. As a result of the high level of challenge seen in lessons, students of all abilities, including the most able, are thriving.
- Standards in the sixth form are high; students make rapid progress. Students' progress in A-level biology, chemistry and English literature is particularly strong.
- The school develops students' communication and mathematical skills very well, contributing to outstanding progress in other subject areas also. For example, in Year 9 science a project to help students with their auditory processing skills is being used to enhance their ability to follow complex instructions.
- The school manages the achievement of all groups of students whose circumstances may put them at risk of underachieving with great care. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make strong progress because of the personalised support they receive from highly committed teaching assistants.
- In 2013 there was a gap in attainment between students receiving extra support through additional funding and other students of about one and a half grades in both English and mathematics. Students currently in the school are doing much better. These students are making the same rapid progress as their peers and so the gap is closing quickly.
- A few students with weaker literacy skills are being supported very effectively through Year 7 catch-up funding and, as a result of the strong progress they have made, the vast majority of these students have now reached the expected level in their reading and writing.
- The school entered some Year 11 students early for GCSE mathematics in 2013. Considerably fewer students have been entered early this year; they have been chosen judiciously and they have the opportunity to continue studying mathematics. This has not hindered their progress in mathematics.
- The small number of students who follow vocational courses at Exeter College are making outstanding progress; they were commended specifically in a recent inspection of the college.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching has been outstanding since the school became an academy because across all subjects teachers know their students well and prepare learning activities which are well pitched and imaginative. Students respond very well, they enjoy the challenge of lessons and play a full part in activities. Over time this has resulted in students' outstanding achievement.
- Teachers have high expectations of students. Inspectors observed examples of outstanding teaching across many subjects. For example, in physical education, inter-house netball and football matches were being used to enhance students' coaching ability by them observing and feeding back to their peers about particular skills.
- Students' confidence and self-esteem are built up by the very strong relationships that exist between staff and students, based on mutual respect. Questioning is used well to deepen students' understanding; they are encouraged to take risks and challenge themselves. Students value the support they get from teachers and other adults very highly.

- Teaching in the sixth form is consistently strong. Teachers have a passion for their subjects and use their deep subject knowledge to good effect. Thorough checking of progress and examination preparation contribute to the outstanding progress made by students in the sixth form.
- In some cases written feedback in books does not give students enough detail about how to improve or does not demand action from the student in response. In other cases where the marking is more detailed, students do not get the chance in class to reflect on the comments that have been made and this slows their progress.
- Homework is used well in most cases to extend students' learning beyond the classroom. However, there is some inconsistency between classes in the regularity with which it is set and completed.
- The school is taking action to further develop students' reading and writing skills, recognising that in some cases they are weak when they join the school. The recent appointment of a whole-school literacy coordinator and the introduction of the 'Write On' literacy programme for Year 7 students indicate the high priority that senior leaders are placing on the development of literacy skills.
- Disabled students and those who need extra help receive high-quality support, bearing witness to the school's commitment to equality of opportunity. Teachers and additional adults work together effectively, have high expectations and continually strive to help these students reach the highest standards.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- The behaviour of students is outstanding; they are proud of their school.
- The behaviour of students in lessons is exemplary; they typically arrive on time, follow expected routines and involve themselves wholeheartedly in learning. This very positive attitude to learning is a strong factor in students' outstanding achievement.
- Teachers' management of behaviour is skilled and firm. The welcoming and positive atmosphere which is typically seen in classrooms has been built up over time by consistent application of agreed procedures and expectations. Discrimination of any type is not tolerated.
- Students' enjoyment of school is reflected in their attendance which is above average.
- Students' behaviour around the site, which comprises a wide range of buildings from a brand new teaching block to the 102-year-old school house, is calm and polite. Students show respect for their environment and each other and move around the site considerately.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding; safety is a high priority for all staff.
- Students report that bullying incidents, although rare, are dealt with effectively when they arise. Students from different year groups all reported that they feel safe. They describe, with confidence, different types of bullying, including the advice they have received from school about staying safe; they also make reference to e-safety. One Year 10 student talked about her work as an anti-bullying ambassador, describing the training she had received from the school in order to take on the role.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View said that their child feels safe at school and is well looked after.
- Sixth form students are good role models and share their knowledge and aspirations with younger students. They receive good independent careers advice and guidance and are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She has a passionate and deeply held belief in 'achievement for all'. This desire to be inclusive pervades the senior leadership and runs

throughout the school; leaders and middle managers strive for academic excellence no matter what the background of the student and this has a marked impact on their achievement.

- This is a cohesive school community where everyone shares the same values. Staff work as one and have great confidence in senior leaders, exemplified by the overwhelmingly positive response in the staff questionnaires.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and about the quality of teaching, on which they base ambitious improvement plans. There has been a concerted drive by leaders to raise standards by providing regular professional development for teachers through meetings at lunchtime and after school.
- Appraisal procedures are used well to support improvement. Clear expectations for staff performance based on the Teachers' Standards are set and, using information about students' achievement, this is linked to salary progression.
- The achievement of students receiving extra support through additional funding is rising rapidly as a result of accurately considered interventions which meet their individual needs.
- The curriculum is outstanding because it makes a clear contribution to students' achievement and their behaviour by adapting to meet their needs and interests. For example, a new skills-based programme has been introduced in Year 9 to prepare students more effectively for the reading, writing and mathematical demands of Years 10 and 11. A link with Exeter College is used well to offer vocational courses.
- The development of students' leadership skills, for example through the impressive school parliament, contributes significantly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students generously support several organisations including a partner school in Ethiopia and development work in Moldova.
- The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school, as shown by the positive response to the online survey indicating that almost all would recommend it to others.
- The schools' arrangements for ensuring the safeguarding and safety of staff and students, both on and off site, meet statutory requirements.
- Through participation in the Jurassic Coast Teaching Schools Alliance, the school is making a strong contribution to improvement of the wider education system in the area. It has maintained good links with the local authority in order to share best practice with other schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The Chair of the Governing Body is committed to a continual drive for improvement. She leads the large and highly skilled governing body well, providing very effective challenge and support to the headteacher and senior leaders. Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They work systematically with senior leaders so that they know about the quality of teaching in the school and how well students are achieving, including those receiving extra support through additional funding. They have a strategic overview of the spending of this funding and assess its impact on the students it supports. They ensure that teachers only move up the pay scale if appraisal targets are met. Since becoming an academy, governors have overseen excellent financial management, in particular securing funding for new buildings. Regular training is provided by linking to external agencies so that governors' knowledge and skills are kept up to date and extended further, for example by the development of 'data champions', so governors are clear about how the school compares with others locally and nationally.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136673
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	441261

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,135
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sue Fallows
<b>Headteacher</b>	Faith Jarrett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01404 812982
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