

King's School

High Street, Portslade, Brighton, BN41 2PG

Inspection dates 9–10 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management		Outstanding 1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding 1
Quality of teaching		Good 2
Achievement of pupils		Good 2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- School leaders and governors have a clear and uncompromising vision for the school that promotes the achievement of every student within a caring community. Leaders have established a highly positive ethos which is helping to drive further improvement.
- Governance is excellent. Governors use their wide-ranging skills to the best advantage of the school. They know where the best teaching resides and provide very effective challenge and support for school leaders.
- Highly effective support from the Russell Education Trust has helped improve all aspects of the school's work. The school is progressing well towards the founding governors' ambition for an inclusive, high quality school based on Christian principles.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well. Students show respect and concern for the needs of others in their community and beyond. Students are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Students are happy and feel safe in school. They are confident that the adults in school support them extremely well. Parents are equally enthusiastic in their praise.
- Students' behaviour around the school and in lessons is excellent. Students are polite and take pride in their appearance. The large majority of them are keen to learn and work hard. Many stay on after school to take part in a wide range of clubs and activities.
- Teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. Students benefit from the high levels of expertise and depth of knowledge of many teachers.
- Students achieve well. Progress in mathematics is particularly strong.
- Leaders ensure disadvantaged students are well supported and, as a result, they achieve as well as other students in the school.
- Students' progress is tracked carefully so that effective action is taken to support students at risk of falling behind.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet leading to outstanding achievement for all students. The most able students do not make as much progress as they could because they are not always sufficiently challenged.
- The written work of students is not always accurate or detailed enough for them to make exceptional progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, eight of which were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Every teacher who was present was observed.
- Inspectors looked both at students' work in lessons and also at a separate sample of students' books.
- Inspectors met with groups of students from each year group and talked to others in lessons, at break and during tutor periods.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, newly qualified teachers, the Chair of Governors and a parent governor.
- Inspectors met with the associate deputy headteacher from the Russell Education Trust who works at the school full time and the Chief Executive Officer of the trust.
- Inspectors analysed 56 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and 25 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A range of the school's documentation was reviewed, including information about students' achievement, the school's evaluation of its performance, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, a wide range of policies and the school's arrangements to keep students safe.

Inspection team

Theresa Phillips, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- King's School is an academy free school which opened to students in September 2013. It is part of the Russell Education Trust. This is the school's first inspection.
- The school's local governing body is appointed, with the exception of its two elected parent governors, by the Russell Education Trust. The group of parents behind the creation of the school are strongly represented.
- The school is much smaller than average. Currently it has students in Years 7 and 8. In time, the school will cater for students between 11 and 19 years of age.
- The school is currently housed in temporary classrooms and former school buildings whilst a site is confirmed for a new school building.
- The proportion of students eligible for additional pupil premium funding, allocated to support disadvantaged students, is below the national average. Some students are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is below average. Most students are of White British heritage.
- No students attend alternative provision away from the school site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that achievement is typically outstanding by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan to challenge effectively the most able students
 - factor enough time in lessons for students to improve their writing so that it is grammatically correct and explains their ideas fully and accurately.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leaders, Trust and governors have a compelling vision for an inclusive, nurturing school with high academic standards, based on Christian principles. Staff share this vision and, as a result, a caring ethos of support and learning permeates the school. Within this culture, students behave well, are keen and able to succeed.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of what they need to improve to meet their high expectations. Senior leaders check the quality of teaching and marking regularly and thoroughly. Where teaching needs to be stronger, leaders and advisers from the Russell Education Trust provide teachers with well-focused support and training that promote improvement.
- School leaders have successfully recruited high-quality, motivated staff. The well-targeted training programme has helped new teachers develop their skills rapidly. The quality of teaching is improving as newly-arrived teachers gain an understanding of students' learning needs and plan to address them. Staff morale is high, as seen in the very positive responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Procedures for managing staff performance are rigorous and contribute well to improvements in teaching. Teachers are held accountable for the progress of students in their classes.
- Senior leaders set no limits on what students can achieve. They successfully use their tracking of students' progress to identify those who need extra support. As a result, students make good progress in many subjects, including English, and very good progress in mathematics.
- Subject leaders of English and mathematics, who joined the school after Easter, show insight and ambition. They identified that teaching in both subjects needs to develop students' communication skills further and increase the rigour of assessments for students to achieve the highest grades in the new GCSEs. The subject leaders have started to introduce these changes.
- The school is an exceptionally harmonious community. There is a strong commitment to promote equality of opportunity and ensure there is no discrimination. As a result, pupils display high levels of respect and support for each other during lessons and around the school. Students show consideration towards those of different faiths whose needs are taken into account during Christian prayer times. The week's theme of 'understanding' was evident in every aspect of the school's life.
- Students' understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy, tolerance and respect are very strong because these values are reinforced throughout the curriculum. During tutor time, students were writing to their pen pals in a school in Africa and working collaboratively to gather each other's views about different values. There is an extensive extra-curricular and enrichment programme which is well attended by students. All of these activities help to develop students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well.
- The pupil premium is put to good use and managed efficiently, so that there is no gap in the standards achieved by disadvantaged students and others. Year 7 catch-up funding is used well so that students who fall behind with their reading in primary schools are helped to improve rapidly.
- Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress because their needs are met fully.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and is focused on preparing students to achieve GCSE success in academic subjects. The personal, social and health education programme includes useful careers guidance, and students in Year 8 have attended enrichment courses at universities to help them consider future careers.
- Senior leaders give a consistent and very high priority to safeguarding and child protection so students are kept safe.
- Parents' views of the school are very positive. All of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire would recommend the school to another parent.
- School leaders actively share good practice with other regional schools and with partner schools in the trust.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The local governing body and sponsoring trust make a highly effective contribution to the overall leadership of the school. They are aware of the school's strengths and also areas which could be improved. They are ambitious and use their detailed knowledge of the school and professional expertise to challenge school leaders rigorously. They attend Russell Education Trust training to ensure their own skills are fully up to date.
 - Many of the governors are parents of students at the school and are selected by the trust. The governors drew on the wealth of expertise within the trust to strengthen leadership capacity through

two changes to the post of headteacher since it opened. This includes support for the current headteacher, who was promoted to the post in January. The founding governors' clear vision for the school enabled interim leaders to maintain stability and drive improvement throughout these changes.

- Governors regularly check how well students are progressing and monitor the school's robust performance management systems to ensure that only good or better teaching is rewarded. Governors visit the school regularly to check how well policies are being implemented. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding and child protection.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Students show a strong thirst for learning, concentrate well in lessons and work with enthusiasm. Staff and students forge positive relationships based on trust and respect, which help students to learn well.
- Students conduct themselves in an exemplary way as they move between lessons and socialise at break and lunchtimes. Although the playground space is limited, students show consideration towards each other as they play ball games or chat together amicably. They are polite, courteous and friendly to each other, teachers and visitors. They wear their uniform with pride.
- Students understand the school's systems of sanctions for poor behaviour, although these are not used very often. Disruption to learning is rare. The number of students receiving fixed-term exclusions is well below the national average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Students say they feel extremely safe and a very large majority of parents responding to the online survey agreed.
- Students state that bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively by the school. They are well aware of different types of risk, including when using the internet and social media. Students are confident that the school will help them if they have worries about any aspects of their schooling or their personal lives.
- Safeguarding is given the highest priority and procedures are rigorous. The school works very effectively with a range of outside agencies to ensure that students receive the care and support they require. Where necessary, leaders challenge the local authority to act more swiftly. Staff in the school show a relentless determination to help every student overcome any difficulties they may face. This builds students' confidence, particularly those who are most vulnerable.
- Attendance is above the national average, and improving. A minority of students with significant medical conditions who attend less regularly are well supported.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good, and some is outstanding. Due to the growth in student numbers, a significant number of teachers joined the school at the beginning of, or during, this academic year. Teachers show expert knowledge and passion for their subject and are keen to improve their practice. Well targeted training has rapidly improved the quality of teaching.
- Clear routines and strong relationships between teachers and students build high levels of trust and confidence so that students are absorbed in their learning. Students in both year groups work very well together to solve problems and are happy to review each other's work and offer constructive advice.
- Teachers have high expectations and expect students to do their best. They set tasks which engage and motivate students. However, work is not always set at the appropriate level for all groups of students. Sometimes the most able students have to complete work at lower levels before moving on to more challenging tasks, so do not make as much progress as they could.
- Where teaching leads to good or better achievement, skilful questioning encourages students to develop deep understanding. In mathematics and science lessons, teachers tested the progress of students by encouraging them to apply their learning to different situations. Students acquire skills rapidly in modern foreign languages because of clear explanations and effective modelling by teachers. In some other subjects, where progress is less secure, teachers do not check carefully how well students have understood before moving on.
- Teachers' feedback to students is generally good. It is most effective where teachers' comments offer precise advice for students who then improve their work and complete additional tasks set.
- The development of students' literacy skills is a strong feature across all subjects. In history, inspired

students were intensely focused on writing well-constructed accounts of life in America after the abolition of slavery, based on their thorough research. Precise feedback given to students had prepared them very well for this task and helped them achieve highly. Other students developed their use of geographical language very well, although they do not show the same levels of understanding in their written work.

- Students of all abilities are able to read aloud confidently. In an English lesson, students' fluent reading with expression and lively debate were developing their language skills very well. Helpful feedback from teachers helps students to make good progress in English, and many are beginning to develop the skills of analysis and interpretation.
- Homework is used effectively to practise key skills in each subject, as well as to develop deeper thinking.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school in Year 7 with starting points broadly in line with national averages. The profile of ability on entry is higher in Year 7 than in Year 8. Students in both year groups make good progress in English and very good progress in mathematics. Consequently, most students are on track to achieve well and meet their targets. If students meet their targets midway through the year, they are set new targets to accelerate their rate of progress.
- Standards are generally high in English, mathematics, science, humanities and modern foreign languages. In mathematics, teachers develop students' mathematical reasoning skills effectively and ensure the work closely matches the abilities of students. Many students in Year 8 are able to confidently use their mathematical understanding to solve challenging problems.
- In science, many students show a sound grasp of scientific ideas which they use in new situations. For example, during a discussion about pressure, Year 8 students used their understanding of particles to describe what happens when a person dives into deep water. However, work in books does not show the same levels of comprehension and students do not always write explanations using accurate scientific terminology.
- Progress in English is good, but in some cases written work is hampered by incorrect spellings and illegible handwriting. Students' reading skills are better developed than their writing.
- More-able students generally achieve well in the school across most subjects. However, some of the most able students are not always being stretched enough during lessons and, as a result, do not make as much progress as they could.
- Disadvantaged students achieve at least as well as their peers in English, mathematics and science.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs benefit from a range of carefully-sourced external support and a well-targeted programme in school. The impact of this can be seen on the good progress for these students.
- Teachers regularly assess students' progress in all subjects and analyse the information to identify those not making enough progress. Effective steps are taken to address students' learning needs, including additional classes.
- Students who enter the school with low literacy skills make rapid progress and catch up with other students of their age.

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

Unique reference number	139409
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	450089

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katherine Laux
Headteacher	Sarah Price
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01273840004
Email address	info@kingsschoolhove.org.uk

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