

# **Inspection report**

## **The Kingsfold Christian School**

**Independent school**

**DfES ref no: 923/6019**

**Inspection under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002**

**Dates of inspection: 14 – 15 November 2006**

## **INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY**

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

This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

### **Information about the school**

Kingsfold Christian School is attached to Hesketh Bank Christian Centre. The school attracts pupils aged 4 to 16 years. They are drawn from a wide geographical area, and from a range of churches, and from homes where there is no regular church contact.

The school: *'aims to provide a good basic education in a Christian environment, teaching Bible truth and life skills as well as a range of academic subjects, enabling pupils to understand the world around them from a Christian biblical worldview'*. The school is seen as an extension of the home, and shares the responsibility for education and training of the children with the parents. It is based on a two-acre site and the buildings provide accommodation for both educational and church activities. The school opened in 1987 and was registered with the DfES on 13 October 1987.

### **Summary of main findings**

The quality of education and care is good. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 experience a suitably wide range of curriculum experiences, which, coupled with effective teaching, promotes good learning and achievement. Children in the Foundation Stage are not receiving as broad a curriculum as they might through limitations in their experiences of investigation and practical work. Staff show high levels of commitment to their work, and teach in ways that strongly promote the spiritual and moral development of pupils and students. The quality of teaching is often good and is strongest in Key Stages 3 and 4. The relationships built between staff, pupils and students are strong and positive. The ethos of the school is one of hard work and high levels of care and consideration for each other.

### **What the school does well:**

- it offers a broad and balanced curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4 that leads to good academic success in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations;
- it provides for the development of outstanding behaviour and attitude in pupils and students; and

- its strong commitment to pupils and students promotes outstanding spiritual and moral development and good social and cultural development.

#### **What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations:**

- ensure that all staff are aware of policies and procedures detailed in section 3 of this report:
- ensure that prior to the confirmation of their appointment, staff at the school have been subject to a check with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) to confirm their suitability to work with children;
- install a wash basin in the sick room; and
- amend the complaints procedure to set out clear time lines for the management of all the stages of the complaint.

#### **Next Steps**

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

- provide reception children with experiences of a broad curriculum with increased opportunities for practical and investigative activities;
- improve provision in design and technology and physical education; and
- enrich the curriculum by providing extra-curricular activities such as clubs.

# **COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION**

## **1. The quality of education provided by the school**

### **The quality of the curriculum**

The curriculum is broad and balanced although pupils' design and technology and physical experiences are limited due to a lack of expertise in these areas. One of the school's primary aims is to '*see the children work to their potential*'. To this end the academic curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 is based on a graded and structured individualised learning programme. Pupils are assessed to find their level in English, mathematics, science and social studies. Then, for part of each day, infant and junior pupils complete individual workbooks proceeding at a pace commensurate with their abilities. Whilst this curriculum ensures that pupils learn literacy and numeracy skills effectively there are few opportunities for pupils to develop their oral skills by discussing their learning with each other. In addition children in Reception, whilst learning the key skills of reading and writing, do not experience a curriculum based on the nationally agreed areas of learning for children of this age. Their work is completely adult-directed with few chances for them to engage in practical or investigative activities.

The curriculum for students in Key Stages 3 and 4 is good and based on the National Curriculum guidance leading to GCSE awards. The work-related curriculum successfully prepares older students for the next stage of education or training. The school plans the work experience programme and all Year 10 pupils have work placements. Pupils with statements of special educational need receive good support and have full access to the curriculum.

There is no structured programme for personal, health and social education. It is the school's policy to address these issues through assemblies, devotions, chapel and circle time. However, a series of personal, spiritual and social development lessons are planned and taught weekly for Key Stage 3 students covering various topics such as eating disorders, alcohol and drugs abuse. A good range of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum but there are no lunchtime or after school clubs apart from weekly choir. Both junior pupils and older students expressed a desire to have clubs, such as cookery.

### **The quality of teaching and assessment**

The quality of teaching whilst being good overall varies throughout the school. It is particularly effective in Key Stages 3 and 4 resulting in students' good achievement and attainment in public examinations. In Key Stages 3 and 4, lessons are well planned and make good use of national guidance. This ensures that work is appropriate to students' ages, and that it builds successfully on previous learning. Teachers and teaching assistants form good teams and respond promptly to students' needs. They take every opportunity to work either with individuals or small groups of students to provide sharply focussed teaching paying very close attention to students' preferred learning styles. Key Stage 3 and 4 teachers make sure that students are very clear about what they are to learn and also what they expect

students to know by the end of the lessons which keeps learning focussed. There is also a very good insistence on understanding and correctly pronouncing new vocabulary.

In an outstanding Year 10 history lesson the teacher skilfully adapted her questions to meet the various capabilities of the students ensuring that they made excellent progress in understanding the difficult concept of 'protectionism,' and how farming communities were driven to drastic measures to ensure their survival. Highly effective specialist mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and history teachers make a real difference to junior pupils' and older students' learning. This is due to their excellent subject knowledge and expertise, and use of a variety of interesting activities such as sharing real chocolate bars in mathematics to enliven their lessons.

Classes are small throughout the school, and teachers consequently have a detailed knowledge of the pupils and students. Staff know when extra help is required and the necessary support is provided sensitively to meet individual needs. In many lessons good teaching ensures all pupils and students make rapid progress. These lessons contain a clear sense of purpose and a sharp focus on what will be learnt. Relationships between teachers, pupils and students are very good and based on mutual trust and respect, providing a good context for high quality learning.

In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils spend approximately twenty per cent of the time engaged in individual learning tasks seated at their learning stations with limited teacher intervention. Whilst this gives pupils a thorough grounding in basic literacy and numeracy skills it prevents pupil discussion and may not be every pupil's preferred learning style. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory with a good focus on the teaching of early reading and writing skills. However, children's learning is very structured and there are few chances for them to enjoy practical or investigative activities. Nor is there a role play area where they can engage in structured play to promote their language development.

Individual teachers have suitable systems to assess pupils' and students' standards of attainment and to measure their progress. However, tracking pupils' progress from entry into Reception to the end of Year 6 is not well developed. Judicious use is made of a range of tests, for example to assess standards in reading and to check that students are on course to achieve the predicted levels in GCSE. Teachers' marking varies with the best examples making reference to the achievement of learning objectives and setting targets for further improvement.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## **2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The school makes very good provision for the spiritual, moral and social development of its pupils and good provision for pupils' cultural development. There is a warm, pleasant family atmosphere and pupils say they enjoy school and feel

happy and safe there. Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive and pupils respond by trying hard and behaving very well. Pupils are encouraged to help and support each other. They have a strong sense of fairness and know the difference between right and wrong. Behaviour is outstanding both in classes and in the playgrounds.

Promoting pupils' spiritual awareness lies at the heart of the school's work. This is reflected in one of its aims, which is *'to see pupils come to and grow in a personal relationship with God, and to learn to understand the world around them from a Christian viewpoint'*. The school successfully achieves these aims through daily devotions, assemblies and a bi-weekly chapel service. Very close links continue with the Hesketh Bank Christian Fellowship who set up the school in 1987. Pupils are encouraged to consider the circumstances of others by supporting charities and helping others. Pupils readily accept responsibilities such as assisting with lunchtimes and preparing for school plays and productions. Pupils also join in on periodic work days around the school and grounds. There is no school council to give pupils a 'voice' although students in Key Stage 3 and 4 have weekly opportunities to raise issues with the headteacher. The school promotes pupils' cultural development effectively by teaching other world faiths such as Islam and Hinduism in religious education, and through listening to visiting foreign nationals in chapel. However, there is scope for pupils to have a greater knowledge and understanding and tolerance for other cultural traditions. Visits to nearby places of interest help to extend pupils' awareness of their cultural heritage.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

### **3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils**

The welfare, health and safety of pupils is at the heart of a number of policies that the school has implemented. There is a suite of policies that adequately describe the responsibilities and roles of staff and pupils. The school's policy on anti-bullying sets out clearly the measures to be taken in response to bullying, but does not give details of how bullying is to be identified. However, displayed on a corridor and in classrooms there is information on posters that communicates appropriate messages on bullying very clearly. The impact of the policy is evidenced by pupils' responses. For example, pupils' questionnaires had identified bullying as a concern and nearly one in five pupils thought the school did not deal with bullying effectively. In interview, however, pupils from across the school's age range said how much the situation has improved greatly this year and that there were very minor incidents reported.

Policies are not all dated nor are review dates made explicit. While many of the policies contain elements of guidance provided by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) these are not explicitly referenced. In the case of the staff handbook, there is no health and safety policy other than the one describing arrangements for activities outside school. Although there is separately a collection of policies including health and safety this does not make clear that it has regard to the

guidance issued by DfES on this matter. Some staff when asked were unaware of the health and safety policy.

Behaviour in the school is of a very high standard. The sanctions policy is clear and is supported by a school behaviour code that is clearly understood by pupils. The published reward system relates only to good performance in work, but teachers were seen to reward good behaviour and attitudes in their own way. Pupils interact in positive ways, show clear respect for each other and teachers and demonstrate high levels of self-control. The very good behaviour extends beyond lessons, and pupils show good self-discipline around the school. Pupils are carefully supervised during break and lunchtimes, and in interview they make it clear they feel well cared for.

Records are generally up-to-date and current records are well kept. In the absence of visits from the Fire Authority the headteacher has carried out systematic fire safety checks, and records of fire drills show the buildings can be effectively evacuated in a reasonable time. The trained members of staff who can administer First Aid are not known to all staff. The pupils are not clear about arrangements for First Aid and there are no notices displayed in classrooms to help pupils react appropriately in the case of accidents.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

No.

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:*

- *make all members of staff aware of the policy for health and safety and ensure it is informed by reference to the DfES guidance cited in regulations. (paragraph 3(4));*
- *ensure that staff know who are trained first aiders and that pupils are made aware of procedures. (paragraph 3(6)).*

#### **4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff**

Before the inspection all but three members of staff had CRB checks completed and recorded. During the inspection two confirmations from the CRB were received, and the remaining member of staff is never in sole charge of children. Procedures for appointing staff are well managed, with the exception of one appointment being confirmed before the CRB check outcomes were received.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

*The school meets all but one of the regulations.*

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***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:*

- *ensure that, prior to the confirmation of their appointment, staff at the school have been subject to a check with the Criminal Records Bureau to confirm their suitability to work with children. (paragraph 4(b)).*

**5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation**

The school is housed in a range of demountable buildings owned and used by the church for both education and church activities. A wide range of activities take place on the premises. These include Rainbows, Brownies and mother and toddler groups. The meetings of these groups do not disrupt the education provided by the school.

The accommodation provides a bright and well maintained environment for learning. While there is penetration of rain water in a few areas these are being repaired. The rooms are adequate to allow effective teaching. Care is taken to accommodate the larger groups in the larger rooms. There are no evident health and safety risks in the school buildings. Rooms are well decorated and equipped with modern furniture suited to the purpose of education. For example, in the ICT suite there is comfortable seating that is adjustable in position and height appropriate for working at computers. There is a mixture of carpeted and hard floor coverings appropriate to each area and in good condition. This helps create a comfortable environment for learning.

The school meets requirements for almost all regulations concerned with accommodation. No food is prepared and served on the premises. The washroom facilities exceed the requirements of regulations, and there is clear designation of separate facilities for staff and pupils. The facilities for ill pupils are provided in the prayer room, where a folding bed allows pupils to be treated effectively. However, while it is relatively close to a washroom with WC and washbasin, there is no washbasin in the room as required by regulations.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

*The school meets all but one of the regulations.*

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:*

- *install a wash basin in the sick room to meet requirements. (paragraph 5(l))*



## **6. The quality of information for parents and other partners**

There is an informative prospectus available for parents and other partners. The prospectus includes information about the school, its history, aims and the curriculum. Following admission, there is very regular contact between the staff and parents at the beginning and end of the school day. The prospectus makes it very clear to parents and other partners what additional information can be provided should they request it. Virtually all the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire reported that they were very happy with the information they receive from the school and feel welcome there. One extremely contented parent said that her two children were very happy and doing really well at school and that she wished she had discovered the school earlier. A twice yearly progress report is provided for all parents and in the spring term parents have an opportunity to speak to their children's teachers.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

Yes.

## **7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints**

The school has a complaints policy which that makes clear complaints can be made both informally and formally. The document makes clear the right of a complainant to attend a hearing before a review panel and to be accompanied at the panel meeting. There were no complaints during the year preceding the inspection. There is a clear time line associated with the first stage of the complaints procedures, but subsequent stages, including that describing the working of the review panel, are not associated with a time line.

***Does the school meet the requirements for registration?***

*The school meets all but one of the regulations.*

***What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?***

*In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:*

- *amend the complaints procedure to set out clear timescales for the management of all the stages of the complaint (paragraph 7(c)).*

## SCHOOL DETAILS

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| Name of school:  | The Kingsfold Christian School  |
| DfES Number:   | 923/6019  |
| Type of school:  | Primary and Secondary   |
| Status:  | Independent   |
| Age range of pupils:   | 4 – 16 years  |
| Gender of pupils:  | Mixed   |
| Number on roll (full-time pupils):                             | Boys: 26      Girls: 22      Total: 48  |
| Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need: | Boys: 0      Girls: 1      Total: 1   |
| Annual fees (day pupils):                                      | One child      £2,100<br>Two children      £3,540<br>Three children      £4,980<br>Four children      £6,240<br>Senior supplement      £360 per pupil |
| Address of school:   | Moss Lane<br>Hesketh Bank<br>Preston<br>PR4 6AA   |
| Telephone number:  | 01772 813824  |
| Fax number:  | 01772b816727  |
| Email address:   | kingsfoldschool@btconnect.com   |
| Headteacher:   | Mr Stephen Lamin  |
| Proprietor:  | Hesketh Bank Christian Fellowship   |
| Reporting Inspector:   | Mr Ian Richardson HMI   |
| Date of inspection:  | 14 – 15 November 2006   |

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