

# **Inspection report**

## **The King's School Senior**

**Independent school**

**DfES ref no: 850/6050**

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

**Dates of inspection: 30 October - 2 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**

The King's School Senior is located in spacious grounds outside Eastleigh, in Hampshire, and draws pupils from the south of the county. It was established in the early 1980's to provide education in a specific Christian context and moved to its present site twelve years ago. The vast majority of pupils come from Christian families although the school also welcomes applications from non-Christians who are nevertheless supportive of its ethos.

The school's declared aims are to *'treasure childhood and enable its pupils to develop strong relationships with God that equip them with the knowledge, skills, personal qualities and qualifications to achieve success and fulfilment at school and beyond'*. Its curriculum, which includes the National Curriculum, is based on Biblical concepts. The headteacher has been in post for just over one year and the school is undergoing significant building works to improve its accommodation.

### **Summary of main findings**

The King's School Senior is a good school. The headteacher, governors and staff are all highly committed to meeting the school's aims and these are met successfully. As a result of good teaching the pupils make good progress in all subjects across the curriculum, which is of good quality. They achieve very well in national tests and General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations (GCSEs) in their final year. The assessment of pupils' progress is at a developmental stage.

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

- it enables the pupils to achieve very well academically and also in their personal development;
- it successfully encourages the pupils to display excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning;
- it has excellent provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- it promotes an ethos which ensures that pupils enjoy all aspects of their education; and
- it promotes excellent relationships between staff and pupils.

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

- prepare and implement a written policy to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils as noted in section 3 of this report; and
- provide further information for parents and other partners as listed in sections 6 and 7.

### **What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002:**

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

### **Next Steps**

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

- extend and formalise the use of assessment data and the procedures for the evaluation of whole-school effectiveness;
- ensure consistency in the quality and use of information about pupils' special educational needs throughout the school; and
- extend to all lessons the range of teaching and learning strategies evident in the most successful lessons.

# **COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION**

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

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

The curriculum is good. It is in keeping with the school's distinctive character and is well supported by suitable schemes of work. The policy explaining the curriculum's basis in Biblical texts is currently under review, although it provides a secure foundation for further curricular development.

All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, including a modern foreign language, personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship, careers education and guidance, as well as religious studies. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow accredited GCSE courses in religious studies, English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and French, in addition to optional subjects, including those from the arts and technological areas. The introduction of an accredited course in ICT for pupils in Years 8 and 9 is a recent addition. In keeping with the school's beliefs and values, significant time is given to religious studies and the daily consideration of personal devotion within tutorials, whereby pupils may reflect upon their achievements in relation to their faith.

Each subject is planned in detail for all age groups, and this forms an effective basis for teachers' lesson planning, all of which takes account of the Biblical context, as with, for example, the placing of subject content within 'heart concepts' that relate to the teaching of God as read from scriptures. The attention given to pupils' individual special educational needs is satisfactory overall, although some identification of individual needs lacks the precision seen in the best planning.

The curriculum for PSHE and citizenship has a strong emphasis on guidance and knowledge of the world within and beyond school and prepares pupils well as they mature. Pupils' safety and health are promoted very effectively as is their future economic well-being. They are well supported in making choices before Year 10 and good links are established with the Connexions service to support their options and careers choices. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of additional activities including lunch-time clubs, adventurous outdoor pursuits, day trips, a residential ski-trip, participation in competitive sports and the Princess Diana Award, which highlights service to others.

The school makes good use of the local community to maximise curricular opportunities, such as a local sports centre for swimming and indoor games. Long term development planning for subjects is satisfactory, although managers do not yet make use of available performance data to evaluate their departments' overall effectiveness.

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

The quality of teaching is good and this results in pupils making good progress across the curriculum. Most planning takes good account of pupils' previous learning, their age and interests. Teachers have access to individual education

plans for a small number of pupils with learning difficulties, but the inconsistency of the format and targets for these limits their impact on learning. Pupils with learning difficulties make at least satisfactory progress.

Assessment is satisfactory and is currently in a developmental stage. Much of the school's previous assessment was individualised within subjects. The introduction of progress grades has given more consistency to assessment. The school improvement plan is moving towards using recent national guidance on 'assessment for learning', to give greater value to peer and self assessment in order to challenge pupils' personal reflections further, as seen in their personal record books.

Teachers have a good dialogue with pupils through marking and view it as a useful signpost for improvement and most pupils spoken to during the inspection know what they should do to improve. Presentation is rarely mentioned in marking and many, particularly boys, do not always use effective written communication.

Teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations of the pupils, with whom they enjoy excellent relationships. The school aims to deploy teachers according to expertise and where this is not the case, for example, in ICT, they are supported in their professional development. As teachers develop new schemes of work to guide the curriculum the process is causing them to reflect on how to extend their teaching and learning styles.

Good and outstanding lessons are characterised by lively teaching with a varied range of teaching and learning styles. Effective planning breaks the 70 minute lessons into short, sharp activities that drive the pace of learning forward. Pupils take an active part and contribute to the lesson through enquiring questions, good feedback and well-executed presentations. Many teachers use games to consolidate learning and this is helpful, given the breadth of ability in some classes.

Few teachers write the lesson objectives on the board at the start of lessons to reinforce their expectations for pupils' learning. In some classes group work relies on working in friendship groups, which sometimes limits a group's progress. Behaviour is very good in most lessons and this is particularly evident where teachers employ practical activities to involve pupils in their learning.

Resources are adequate because of teachers' innovative use of the limited range available. Wider use of ICT and audio-visual equipment to enhance teaching is restricted by the lack of hardware and software in the school. Lack of space in some areas restricts circulation in the classroom which hampers independent access to equipment, space to complete investigational work, and effective group work. Display across the school misses opportunities to set the scene on the expected quality of presentation and content. Subjects have good sets of books but the absence of a library limits access to a wider range of subject texts and fiction to extend pupils' independent learning.

The headteacher has reintroduced a rigorous programme of lesson observations to identify the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. An effective analysis of lesson observations has been used by the headteacher to create a report that underlines expectations of good teaching and learning.

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

Yes.

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

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. There is a strong and happy family atmosphere, which helps pupils to develop confidence and self-esteem. Relationships between adults and pupils are extremely positive and much valued by parents.

Spirituality is a core value in the school. Opportunities for pupils to reflect on their personal growth and strengthen their self-belief are at the heart of all learning and teaching. Pupils explained with enthusiasm the worship day workshop activities which help them to be guided by the life of Jesus. Assembly is an opportunity for fellowship across the school. Pupils' musical talent, house captains' leadership of worship and visits from international speakers form a backbone of spiritual reflection for the week.

Good opportunities for pupils to understand right from wrong are promoted through 'heart concepts'. Form time is Bible-based and develops pupils' understanding of moral dilemmas in today's society. The school's successful approach to moral education was highlighted and praised in the responses to the pre-inspection parent questionnaires. Pupils develop long lasting relationships because they learn to value qualities such as trust, reliability and honesty within their peer group. The demands of the behaviour policy founded in the three R's: 'Respect, Responsibility and Responsiveness', give pupils guidance on taking responsibility for their behaviour.

Teachers give pupils stimulating opportunities to develop their social skills in a variety of settings. Exciting residential trips to a Christian centre, for Years 7 to 9, present physical and mental challenges including the chance to explore new skills which enhance personal development and build new friendships. Well-planned activities give a good range of options so that pupils and staff extend their skills through interesting activities such as kayaking and archery. Years 10 and 11 travel to Europe to widen their experience of different cultures and to gain independence. Staff are effective role models through their own faith and enable the school's Christian ethos to permeate all areas of the school.

Pupils develop a good knowledge of others' cultures through art, geography, religious studies and history. Close links with an African town have resulted in fund-raising to support a school in Kware, Kenya. Through effective teaching in religious studies pupils develop empathy and the need for tolerance, respect and understanding of the values and beliefs of others. In English and history pupils study aspects of slavery and they use the words of an African spiritual song to reflect on racism and justice in the present day. The school council assists the pupils' understanding of democracy and their evident enthusiasm has prompted a request to meet on a more formal and regular basis.

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

Yes.

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

The provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The dedicated commitment of staff supports both academic and personal development through the 'heart concepts' that are embedded in all policies and procedures. However, a few policies are not informed by the latest Department for Education and Skills (DfES) guidance, as is required.

The concept of 'childhood' is highly valued by the school. The majority of pupils say that they feel safe at school and only a very small percentage are not sure who they would go to with a problem. The new role of senior tutors is effective in providing extra support and extra-curricular activities. Challenging outdoor pursuits and survival techniques enhance the pupils' personal development and preparation for the wider world. These activities are well supervised and effectively risk-assessed.

Staff are well trained and suitably qualified in child protection. Good policies on behaviour management, anti-bullying and health and safety are based on a Christian framework. Positive behaviour management approaches are used consistently across the school. The new policy is working well and there is less unsatisfactory behaviour evident. In the last 12 months there have been no instances of serious misconduct or exclusions. Staff are very vigilant about instances of bullying and take appropriate action. Parents indicate endorsement of the school's work. The school completes good risk assessments for trips, equipment and classroom activities. Arrangements for First Aid are clear and the school's duty of care for pupils with medical conditions is excellent.

The school has not yet drawn up an accessibility plan to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. However, planning for the new development encompasses a lift to give access to the upper floor and ramps have been installed to ensure access to ground floor teaching spaces.

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

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

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

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

- *prepare a school policy response to the DFES guidance: 'Safeguarding Children in Education' (paragraph 3(2)(b)).*

#### ***What does the school need to do to comply with the DDA?***

*In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA the school should:*

- *devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.*

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

The proprietor has secure procedures for checking the identity, fitness, qualifications and employment history of staff before they take up their appointment. Character references and professional references are also sought, in addition to a commitment to the school's ethos. Staff are informed that their appointment depends on gaining clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau. Relevant documents and copies of evidence used for staff selection are stored securely in staff files.

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

Yes.

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

The current premises are adequate for the curriculum provided and are located within a large country house and two temporary buildings on the same site.

All practical subjects have specialist rooms, with the exception of physical education which is well supported by use of a local sports centre. However, the absence of a library reduces opportunities to develop pupils' individual research skills. Overall, best use is made of the sometimes limited space due to flexible use by staff, small groups and the pupils' mature attitudes to learning. Well-planned visits ensure that good use is made of the local community to support the curriculum.

The school's attractive and extensive grounds offer good provision for outdoor games and safe recreation, although there is a limited amount of hard surface play area. On entrance to the school, signage to alert motorists to the presence of children and demarcation of vehicles and pedestrian rights of way are insufficiently clear. The premises are clean and well maintained, although some exterior window frames and interior plaster work require attention.

One of the temporary buildings has been identified for removal when the new building is complete. The other, much more recent and substantial building is subject to an application for permanent status. Significant additional accommodation is due for completion by September 2008 and this will provide welcome improvements to the provision for practical subjects.

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

Yes.

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



The school meets some but not all requirements in relation to the provision of information.

There is a clear and very attractive prospectus that captures the school effectively in pictures and describes its ethos very well. However, it contains insufficient information to parents and parents of prospective pupils on the school's policies for the curriculum, child protection, health and safety, sanctions, bullying, exclusions, complaints and on the welfare provision for pupils with statements and for whom English is an additional language. Furthermore, the school does not make it clear that these policies are available on request. Details for contacting the chair of governors are also lacking. The school's website is based on the prospectus and consequently has the same shortcomings.

There are regular opportunities, both formal and informal, for parents to meet with teachers to discuss their children's progress. School reports are issued twice a year and contain information on how the pupils are progressing, along with targets for improvement and further development. Not all the targets provided are easily measured or sufficiently specific and some reports comment too much about pupils' attitudes to study rather than gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Nevertheless, parents are happy with the progress their children make. Responses from parents via comments and questionnaires showed overwhelming support for the work of the school. Typical views expressed, included: *'the school is very approachable ...it has strong leadership and encourages every child to achieve their best'*. Fortnightly newsletters also provide parents with relevant news about school life and parents are regularly invited by the headteacher to contact the school at any time with any concerns.

***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:*

- *provide the name and address for correspondence of the chair of governors (paragraph 6(2)(c));*
- *provide particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for exclusions (paragraph 6(2)(e));*
- *provide particulars of the school's educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements and for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f));*
- *provide particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h)); and*

- *provide details of the complaints procedure, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j)).*

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

The school has a satisfactory policy that details appropriate procedures for handling complaints, although some parents are not sufficiently aware of these procedures.

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

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

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

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

- *ensure that its complaints procedure is available on request to parents of pupils and prospective pupils (paragraph 7(b)).*

## SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	The King's School Senior
DfES Number:	850/6050
Type of school:	Christian
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys: 63    Girls: 60    Total: 123
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys: 1    Girls: 0    Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils):	£4540.00
Address of school:	Lakesmere House Allington Lane Fair Oak Eastleigh SO50 7DB
Telephone number:	023 8060 0986
Fax number:	023 8060 0956
Email address:	head@kingssenior.hants.sch.uk
Headteacher:	Mr Paul Johnson
Proprietor:	Hampshire Christian Education Trust
Reporting Inspector:	Mr Greg Sorrell
Date of inspection:	30 October – 2 November 2006

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