

# The King John School

Inspection report - amended

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122116
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	319513
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nada Trikić HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	464
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bob Blakeman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alan Dodds
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Market Road Thrapston Kettering NN14 4JU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01832 732266
<b>Fax number</b>	01832 733401

<b>Age group</b>	9–13
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 June 2008
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## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The King John School serves the local community and surrounding villages. Few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low. The school has gained Investor in People, Sports Mark, Healthy Schools and Eco status. At the time of its last inspection, in February 2007, it was given a Notice to Improve. An acting headteacher has been in post since January 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The King John School is friendly and welcoming. It provides a satisfactory and improving education with good features. In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The school's leaders have created a safe, secure and busy learning environment, which contributes to a caring and inclusive ethos. As a result, pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as shown in positive attitudes to school, good relationships and behaviour and above average attendance. Pupils enjoy their time at school and appreciate the wide range of activities and opportunities on offer to develop skills and talents in areas such as sport and music. The good curriculum includes French for all pupils, themed days linked to food technology and history, and numerous visits and visitors that also enrich the experiences of pupils.

Following the previous inspection a high priority was set on raising standards in Year 6 through a very intensive programme to boost skills in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. As a result, standards reached were above average in Key Stage 2 tests in 2007, a significant improvement on previous years. However, standards vary across year groups and are broadly average overall. Although the progress made by pupils in 2007 was much better than 2006, this represented satisfactory progress from the end of Key Stage 1. The school is over-reliant on end-of-key stage intervention programmes to address areas of underachievement. Although there has been some success here, leaders recognise that they have not yet done enough to sustain and improve progress across both Key Stages 2 and 3. A good tracking system is now in place and should enable leaders and teachers to set more challenging targets, to identify pupils falling behind, and to tackle underperformance systematically. The quality of care, support and guidance has improved and is now good. Pupils are aware of learning targets in all subjects and are increasingly able to identify aspects to improve through good progression guidance. This is a stronger feature in the core subjects.

The school has made good use of external support since the last inspection to strengthen the quality of teaching. However, it remains satisfactory overall due to many staff changes, and this is a concern for some parents. A wider range of teaching strategies are now used to engage pupils, with clear and consistent expectations about the structure of lessons. However, there are insufficient opportunities to extend learning through discussion and independent study. Systems for checking teaching are in place although monitoring does not focus strongly enough on the progress pupils are making in lessons.

Leadership and management are satisfactory despite some improvements since the previous inspection. Given recent changes in staffing, the acting headteacher has recognised the need to involve subject coordinators more directly in school improvement processes to bring about sustained and consistent improvement in standards and achievement. They have responded positively to this challenge and the recently formed teaching and learning group is already providing a good forum for sharing and developing practice. Whole school and team improvement plans are in place but are not used strategically to coordinate priorities for development. Plans do not focus sufficiently on how progress will be measured, monitoring or evaluated. Until recently, governors did not receive the information required to form an accurate view of the school's work. Governors recognise the need to strengthen their role through greater involvement in monitoring and evaluation activities, in partnership with staff.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Increase rates of progress in all years through robust tracking, monitoring and intervention, and the use of more challenging targets.
- Ensure that outcomes of the school's work are rigorously and openly evaluated by leaders, staff and governors, to inform priorities that lead to coordinated and effective improvement plans.
- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching and learning to engage pupils more actively in lessons and promote independence and responsibility for learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 varies from year to year from average to above average. Steps are now taken to process assessment information more carefully from the first school and to undertake additional tests to assess pupils' capabilities. Outcomes are used more effectively to tailor work to individual needs and to inform pupil groupings. For example, a group was identified in Year 5 for a specific input on phonics.

In 2007, overall performance in Key Stage 2 tests represented the best results achieved by the school. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was significantly better than the national average. This is explained by a strong focus on English, mathematics and science prior to the tests. Although test preparation was reduced in 2008, it was detrimental to other subjects. Staff now have much greater access than before to a range of school and national assessment data on which to base evaluations of progress, intervention activities and lesson planning. The quality of analysis is improving, especially in the evaluation of progress by subjects and groups of pupils, but it is yet to provide a secure view of standards across the school.

Targets set have provided adequate challenge to enable tracking procedures to be established more securely within the school. Leaders recognise that targets are not yet challenging enough to raise expectations and accelerate pupils' progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils are a credit to the school, their parents and themselves. They are confident, articulate and polite, and respond well when entrusted with responsibility. For example, pupils engage in activities to support the environment, and Year 8 prefects carry out their duties with maturity. In lessons such as technology and science, pupils use equipment with respect and with a high degree of safety. The school council is well established but limited responsibilities and powers, reduces its contribution to school improvement. Relationships are good and sometimes outstanding, reflecting genuine respect and tolerance of others. Pupils have good knowledge of culture through art, music, literature, history and geography.

Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and they make good choices. For example, many attend several after school sporting and performing arts activities each week, and snacks and meal choices are predominantly healthy and well balanced. Consistently above average attendance and excellent punctuality, together with good attitudes

towards school and learning, reflect pupils' high levels of enjoyment. Pupils speak highly of their school and feel safe. They especially praise friendships and the help they get from teachers as the best features. The personal skills and self-confidence that pupils acquire equip them well for the world of work and as valuable citizens.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Learning is generally satisfactory, and often good. The quality of teaching has been limited by the large number of supply teachers needed to cover staff absence, restricting the impact of professional development. However, pupils show very positive attitudes to their studies, which help them to progress. A variety of methods are used to capture pupils' interests and classroom management is good. Supportive assessment and marking ensure that progress is tracked regularly and personal targets set at pupils' own levels of need, supported well by teaching assistants. There is a focus in lesson planning to address the needs of different groups of learners, but in lessons there are few opportunities for all to reach their potential, as most pupils are completing similar tasks. The overuse of worksheets is limiting opportunities for pupils to extend their work. Most teachers work in specialist subject areas which means that they have good subject knowledge and access to specialist equipment.

Where teaching is good, the purpose of lessons is clear, pupils know precisely what they are aiming to achieve, and tasks are directed well to meet pupils' needs, with regular opportunities to reflect on learning. Lessons proceed at a good pace and pupils are encouraged to do their best, but there are few chances to learn through independent study.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum provides opportunities for all pupils to progress well. The new National Curriculum requirements have been developed in collaboration with the local upper school. This liaison between teachers has been particularly beneficial and has helped to develop 'bridging' lessons to smooth pupils' transition. The curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage of education.

Pupils benefit from teachers' specialist knowledge in planning for different subjects, and from the enhanced facilities such as workshops, laboratories and good outside areas. There are many opportunities to support pupils' cultural development, but the preparation of pupils for the multicultural world outside their immediate locality is less evident.

Participation rates in the extensive range of educational visits, productions and trips abroad are high. A good range of extra-curricular activities after school, such as the eco club, are much appreciated by the parents and pupils.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Well-established routines, high expectations of behaviour and personal presentation, good role models in school and strong parental support all contribute significantly to high standards in pupils' personal development. Pupils receive good personal guidance and as a result, they gain a good understanding of healthy living and their responsibility as citizens – indeed one pupil has been successful in persuading family members to give up smoking. The recent introduction,

in response to liaison with the upper school, of a careers project called 'The Real Game' provides good guidance for pupils' future decisions. Academic guidance has improved in line with access to a greater range of assessment data and is now good in many respects, supported well by pupil review meetings. However, the work set in lessons is sometimes too easy when teachers do not expect enough of the pupils.

Child protection arrangements, staff vetting procedures, first aid, supervision and fire precautions are all good and together with a well-maintained site, ensure pupils feel happy and safe in school. Risk assessments prior to visits out of school are also rigorous.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Despite the challenges of staff turnover and absence, leaders and staff have worked hard to make improvements such as the extended curriculum and better tracking, demonstrating a satisfactory capacity to improve further. Staff morale is high. Senior leaders and subject coordinators recognise that whilst personal development is promoted well, they have not yet done enough to embed and reinforce the stronger features of teaching and learning, or to evaluate the impact on pupils' progress in order to improve overall effectiveness.

Although the acting headteacher provided a broadly accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, evaluation is a weaker aspect across the school. Consultation on priorities and the strategic direction of the school has been limited, and prevented a coordinated and rigorous approach to improvement. Until recently, staff have not had access to national performance information, target setting and tracking data in order to engage more fully in evaluation of the school's work. Subject coordinators and staff relish the challenge provided by these sources, as demonstrated in the improved use of assessment information to strengthen schemes of work, and in providing improved progression guidance for pupils.

Most parents are supportive of the school's work, with some expressing the need for improved communication and involvement. The governing body is committed to the improvement of the school, as shown by good budget management, an active committee structure and the promotion of projects to enhance the learning environment. Governors now have a greater awareness of the challenges the school faces and the need for all stakeholders to work effectively together to secure the best outcomes for pupils.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 June 2008 Dear Pupils

Inspection of The King John School, Thrapston NN14 4JU

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we came to inspect your school recently. We very much enjoyed talking to you, hearing your views and watching you at work. You told us that the school is a busy place because there are always different popular activities taking place. You very much value the support and care you receive from staff.

We think The King John School is a satisfactory and improving school. We were very impressed with your positive attitudes to work and the school, your good behaviour and how well you all got along. Your teachers and other staff work hard to make sure that you feel safe and know how to lead healthy lives. You told us about your school council and some of the responsibilities you have such as prefects or on the eco committee. We think that you could contribute more to the school's development by taking on even more responsibility.

The school has faced difficulties recently because of many staff changes which have affected some of your lesson. The acting headteacher has worked very hard to make sure that staff work more closely together to support your learning and progress. You told us that you enjoyed your lessons and that you are now more aware of targets for learning and how to improve your work.

You may have heard that, at the end of the visit, we decided that your school needed to improve certain things to be more successful. The school has a good system for checking on your learning and should now set higher targets so that you can make even more progress. We want teachers to continue to share ideas about good lessons so that you can be more involved in your learning. You need more opportunities to work on your own and with others to develop your ideas, and to take responsibility for your learning. We have asked school leaders, staff and governors to work more closely together to agree on the most important areas for improvement and to make sure that plans are shared so everyone can play a part.

You, too, can help the school to improve further by thinking more about what you are learning and tackling the next steps to reach even higher standards.

Our very best wishes for the future.

Nada Trikić Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools

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