

King Richard School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132420
Local Authority	Service Children's Education
Inspection number	320765
Inspection dates	5 - 6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Jones HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of students	11 - 18
Gender of students	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	130
Sixth form	23
Appropriate authority	Service Children's Education
Chair	Major Gary Jones
Headteacher	Martin Ainsworth
Date of previous school inspection	1 - 8 November 2004
School address	Dhekelia Cyprus BFPO 58
Telephone number	00357 2474 4776
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Age group	11 - 18
Inspection date(s)	5 - 6 November 2008
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors

Description of the school

King Richard School serves students whose parents are serving in the British Forces in Dhekelia Garrison on the island of Cyprus. It is much smaller than most secondary schools in England. Few students come from minority ethnic groups, have English as an additional language or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Student mobility is very high with many students transferring frequently between schools as their parents move between postings.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

King Richard School provides a good standard of education for its students. As one parent noted 'I feel positive about the school, its ethos and the education my children are receiving'. The school is very effective in getting to know its students quickly and in making appropriate provision for them. Senior leaders are determined that all students achieve as well as they can regardless of when they enter the school. This is very important as student mobility is high and most young people have attended several different schools during their school life.

The recently appointed headteacher has been the inspiration behind the creation of a positive learning atmosphere in which students know they are expected to behave and achieve well. As a result, examination results in 2008 rose significantly and the school enjoyed very good GCSE and Key Stage 3 results. The vast majority of students make good progress from their starting points on entry to the school. Students make a good contribution to the life of the school and garrison and appreciate the opportunities available to them. They are maturing into responsible citizens with a commitment to their school and wider community. They socialise well with each other, have good attitudes to learning and attend school very regularly. Students are fully aware of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and are eager participants in the extra sporting activities available. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The school takes excellent care of its students and liaises very effectively with a range of agencies to help the young people cope with the frequent changes in their school life and to make sure they reach their full potential.

Good teaching and learning are promoted successfully in the main school. Consequently, the quality of lessons is improving. Teachers are encouraged to develop their skills creatively and deliver lessons that are engaging and interesting. In many classes teachers convey a real enthusiasm for their subject that challenges and stimulates students of all abilities. Most teachers use assessment information appropriately to set targets for students. However, not all students are clear about the meaning of these targets and what they need to do to improve their work. The good curriculum offers students appropriate courses and the range available is being extended to provide greater flexibility and choice.

Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Recent actions to improve provision are already bearing fruit and indicate there is good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Small numbers and high mobility of students have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the sixth form and restrict the range of courses that can be provided. Although very small numbers of students take examinations, most attain adequate standards and make appropriate progress. In a few instances in 2008 inappropriate and incorrect entries resulted in some Year 12 students receiving ungraded results.

Some sixth form students feel they are not given enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and that teaching does not always meet their needs, especially in some very small classes. Teaching is weaker in some subjects where teachers do not take full advantage of the benefits of one to one tuition. The curriculum is satisfactory. Although increasing, the range of vocational provision is limited. However, local partnership arrangements are being developed that will enable students to choose from a greater range of vocational options. For example, from next September students from this school will be able to take advantage of a specialist diploma in engineering.

Sixth form students receive satisfactory care, guidance and support although some struggle to make the transition from GCSE to sixth form styles of working. Their personal development and well-being are also satisfactory and they give freely of their time to be involved in extra-curricular activities such as leading the school council and mentoring younger students. In the past, leadership and management of the sixth form has not always been effective in ensuring provision is appropriate for the learning needs of the students. Recent in-depth monitoring and evaluation of provision by the senior leadership team demonstrates there is now satisfactory capacity for growth and improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all students are given enough information and feedback on their work so that they understand their targets and know clearly what they need to do to improve.
- Strengthen leadership and management in the sixth form to ensure that teaching and learning are better matched to the needs of individual students.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students join the school in Key Stage 3 with average standards and, because of good teaching, their achievement is good. In English, mathematics and science, standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 are consistently above the national average. Students make good progress in Key Stage 4 and reach standards that are above the national average with many students gaining the highest A/A* grades at GCSE. Standards are also above average when English and mathematics are included. As in previous years, all students entered for a GCSE gained a grade. In some optional subjects, the number of examination entries is too small to make useful comparisons with the national picture. However, in those subjects where most students are entered, the best outcomes are in information and communications technology (ICT) and science.

There are many more boys in the school than girls and, at Key Stage 3, girls reach higher standards in English whereas boys do better in mathematics. Boys and girls reach similar standards in science. At Key Stage 4 more girls gain five A* to C GCSEs than boys. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress during both key stages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students mix well together and enjoy each other's company, acting with a good sense of responsibility both for their own and others' safety. Social and moral development are good; students have a clear sense of right and wrong and behave well around the school and in classrooms. In lessons where teachers choose resources carefully and make excellent use of praise, students flourish and show very high levels of enjoyment and satisfaction in their work.

Students' spiritual development is good and the garrison padre is involved actively with school life. Students appreciate assemblies that provide them with opportunities for quiet reflection or prayer. Students lead healthy and active lifestyles. For example, over 60% of students participated recently in a relay where they ran a mile to raise money for charity. Students have a good understanding of the need to have a balanced diet, and they make sensible choices when purchasing food from the tuck shop.

The school council are proud of innovations that have occurred as a result of their deliberations, for example, picnic tables and provision of shade in the tuck shop area. Several students expressed concerns that they do not feel well prepared to rejoin mainstream school life in the United Kingdom but they are resilient and used to coping with significant change in their lives. They are well prepared for their future economic well-being through their good levels of literacy and numeracy and the ease and competence with which they use ICT.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school carries out rigorous monitoring of teaching and is constantly striving to raise the quality of teaching and learning. Many teachers are keen to embrace new ideas and senior leaders encourage staff to use innovative approaches to develop classroom practice. Students learn particularly well when teachers encourage them to think for themselves and they have opportunities to both work in groups and to learn independently within well structured lessons. They thrive on a variety of activities that capture and keep their interest and, in the more lively lessons, relationships are good with a real sense of enjoyment of learning. Learning is less effective when teachers talk too much and provide students with little opportunity to show initiative. In these lessons the pace of learning is too slow, students lose interest and their attention drifts. Students' work is marked regularly. However, the quality of marking and feedback to students is variable, not all know how well they are doing and what to do to improve.

Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) are effective in helping students with differing needs. They are well trained and informed of students' needs and are skilled in supporting teaching and learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is clearly driven by students' needs. The majority of older students follow routes through a good range of GCSE courses taught by subject specialists. Where students have additional specific needs, the school tailors their curriculum to include part-time work experience and vocational options. As a result of the school's successful work in this area, individual students have been successfully reintegrated back into mainstream education. The majority of vocational options for pupils aged 14 to 16 are not currently accredited. However, the school has submitted a successful bid to offer a 14–19 diploma in engineering from September 2009, and has convincing plans to offer further diplomas from 2010.

The school caters especially well for students who join midway through examination courses. It ensures that students can complete the relevant work before sitting the examination. There is good support for literacy, numeracy and the use of ICT across subjects. Many students take up the good range of opportunities for extra curricular activities, particularly in areas such as sports fixtures against other SCE and Cypriot schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Arrangements for keeping students safe are robust. Staff are highly committed to supporting the more vulnerable students, promoting students' health, safety and the inclusion of all in the life of the school. As a result, support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and vulnerable students is exemplary. Their progress is monitored very closely and the school is swift to marshal both SCE and Army support agencies to ensure that students and their families get the help they need to do well at school, both academically and socially. Students at risk of not reaching their full potential are identified quickly and kept on track by a senior member of staff.

Most students change schools very frequently and staff put considerable effort into making the transitions as easy as possible. Parents appreciate these excellent arrangements. The appointment of a teaching assistant with responsibility for mobility has been instrumental in ensuring a smooth transition for those students recently arrived at the school. Students feel valued and respected because the school takes good care of them. The safe and supportive environment enables students to flourish. Students have justifiable confidence that their problems will be listened to and that action will be taken as necessary. This has helped reduce bullying to negligible levels. Students from Year 7 upwards receive plentiful and high quality careers advice, ensuring they make appropriate curriculum option choices as they move through the school. This, together with the improving range of curriculum provision contributes to the excellent preparation for students' future economic well-being.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher clearly knows his school and makes perceptive judgements about what the school must do to continue improving. He is supported in his work by an effective senior leadership team that is committed to a strong teamwork approach. The School Governance Committee (SGC) are good supporters of the school and are valued 'critical friends'. Middle managers are becoming more aware of their responsibilities for oversight of the quality of education. Successful and honest self-evaluation strategies and associated monitoring procedures give the school an accurate view of its own performance. Frequent changes to the composition of year groups and the decreasing size of the school make it difficult for the senior team to set challenging targets for each year group. Target setting at individual student level is much more successful due to the improved analysis and availability of information relating to the students' current and previous performance.

The school engages very effectively with the local community and is active in establishing relationships with a variety of different local groups. Considerable success has been achieved in promoting equality of opportunity for all students; the school ensures that the contribution of each and every individual is recognised, regardless of the length of their stay.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall	16–19
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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?	2	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
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	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	3

¹ 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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise Standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	N/A	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

¹ 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.

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10 November 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of King Richard School, Dhekelia, Cyprus, BFPO 58

Thank you for the welcome you gave me and my colleague when we inspected your school recently. We appreciated the opportunities we had to meet with some of you and to talk with others in lessons. Your views on life and learning at King Richard formed an important part of the evidence we used in coming to our conclusions.

We judged that King Richard is providing you with a good standard of education in the main school and a satisfactory standard in the sixth form. A lot of work has gone into making sure you settle into your new school as quickly as possible, especially as most of you change schools often, and that you are safe and well looked after. Your school is a caring and supportive place and relationships are strong. As a result, you enjoy coming to school and are very involved in extra-curricular and voluntary activities, both in school and in the local community.

Most of your teachers make sure that you enjoy your lessons and are actively taking more responsibility for your learning. Your work is marked regularly and you are all aware of your predicted grades and levels, but some of you do not always know what you have to do to reach your targets. Some teaching and learning in the sixth form does not always meet the needs of the students. Staff have worked successfully to get the good curriculum right for you and make sure that it meets your needs and interests. The small size of the sixth form means it is difficult for a full range of courses to be provided, especially vocational ones, but the school is looking into ways of improving this situation.

The most important thing to concentrate on now is helping you to learn faster. We have asked staff to:

- Make sure you all understand your targets and know what you have to do to improve your work.
- Improve the way the sixth form is run so that provision better meets the students' needs

We all want your school to keep on improving. We think if you keep working and learning together, you will do just that.

With very best wishes for the future,

Yours sincerely
Christine Jones HMI