

The King's (the Cathedral) School

Park Road, Peterborough, PE1 2UE

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils and students make excellent progress from well above average starting points in English and mathematics. They progress equally well across a wide range of other subjects. They attain very high standards.
- High quality provision for pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development pervades the school. They develop as very reflective, caring, confident and well-informed individuals as a result.
- Teachers know their subjects extremely well. Teaching is outstanding because staff are very effective in helping pupils and students make strong and sustained progress over time. They give excellent spoken feedback. The quality of marking is more variable.
- The school's focus on making all lessons as engaging as the best is proving very successful. Sharing approaches between staff, acting upon pupils' and students' views and involving them by leading aspects of learning are contributory factors.
- Pupils' and students' behaviour is excellent; they develop extremely positive attitudes to learning. Their contribution to the 'student commission' is helping to make the quality of learning better still.
- The headteacher has successfully gained the overwhelming support of staff, pupils, students, parents and carers in developing the 'King's family', a term frequently used.
- A significant increase in the school size, which includes primary-age pupils, has been expertly managed. Different facets of the school integrate together extremely well. This includes the school's historic cathedral connections.
- Governors set very challenging targets and rigorously monitor the impact of senior and middle leaders' work on pupils' and students' achievement. They support the school very well by using their expertise, for example to ensure that finance is managed efficiently and judiciously.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. They develop very high levels of independence, achieve high grades and they take every opportunity to develop responsibility and resourcefulness.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 41 lessons, of which five were joint observations with senior and middle leaders. In addition, inspectors observed three assemblies.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, a group of parents and carers, the Chair of the Governing Body and a Canon of Peterborough Cathedral.
- Inspectors talked to many pupils and students about their learning and life at the school. They held meetings with four groups of pupils and students, scrutinised their work in a range of subjects and listened to younger pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of 239 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) received during the inspection and 56 questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspection team observed the school's work; scrutinised current data about pupils' and students' achievement; examined records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance; and looked at documents used by leaders in monitoring and evaluating the school's work.

Inspection team

Ian Middleton, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Susan Fennell

Additional Inspector

Peter McKenzie

Additional Inspector

Patrick Walsh

Additional Inspector

Jane Guest

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The King's (the Cathedral) School is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school has a large sixth-form that includes students who join the school in Year 12. A small proportion joins the school part-time from St John Fisher Catholic School.
- Since 2011 the school has included a small number of pupils in Years 3 to 6, some of whom are choristers at Peterborough Cathedral.
- King's is a Church of England school with close and historic links to the cathedral.
- The school converted to academy status in January 2011.
- The proportion of pupils and students eligible for the pupil premium (extra government funding to support particular groups of pupils) is very small.
- There are nine students in Year 7 supported by catch-up funding because they did not achieve the expected level 4 in English while at primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and students and those who have special educational needs is below that found nationally. A below-average proportion of pupils and students are supported through school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportions of pupils and students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are below the national figures.
- The proportion of pupils and students who join or leave the school other than at usual transfer times is well below average.
- The school meets the government floor standards which set minimum expectations for pupils' and students' attainment and progress.
- There are no students using alternative provision off-site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make all lessons as successful as the very best by:
 - developing fully pupils' and students' skills as independent and collaborative learners
 - ensuring that teachers' written feedback to pupils and students is sufficiently detailed.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- A small proportion of pupils join the school in Year 3. They attained above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics when tested at the end of Year 2. The proportion exceeding expected progress at the end of Year 6 is very high, particularly in reading and mathematics. Pupils currently in Key Stage 2 are confident readers and write accurately and creatively.
- The vast majority of students join the school in Year 7, having also attained above average standards when tested at the end of Key Stage 2. As a result of skilled teaching, conscientious attitudes and strong parental support they make excellent gains to attain standards that are significantly above average by the end of Year 11.
- The proportion of students achieving 5 or more GCSE A* to C grades continuously improves. In 2012 the 91% of students that achieved this figure was significantly above the national level of 58% and a more significant gain on the previous year than that nationally. In a wide range of subjects a significantly high proportion of students attain A* or A grades at GCSE. These are: art and design; business studies; design and technology; drama; English literature; English language; geography; history; mathematics; music; physical education; and religious education. In relation to their other subjects students do less well in modern languages.
- Students do exceptionally well in the sixth form. This includes students who join the school in Year 12. Inspectors observed students acquiring knowledge and deepening their understanding quickly and securely. This is reflected in the very high proportion that attain A* to B grades at A level which has increased over recent years and is now significantly higher than sixth forms nationally.
- Disabled pupils and students, or those with special educational needs, progress equally well. This is because work that is planned and additional support that is provided are at just the right level.
- A very small proportion of pupils and students are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding. The progress they make is significantly better than that of such pupils and students nationally. They make progress as equally strong as their peers between Years 3 and 6. Students' average points scores at the end of Year 11 indicates a small gap, which school monitoring records show is closing rapidly. Pupils and students known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after are on course to exceed the progress expected of pupils in both English and mathematics.
- The school does not enter pupils for examinations early because the school's leaders do not believe that students would benefit from such a strategy.
- Since additional catch-up funding was received in January the school has increased the support given to students who had not reached the expected level in English before starting at the school. In addition, the school has designed home support resources to make sure these students sustain the rapid progress being made at school, particularly during the holiday periods.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The proportion of outstanding teaching has increased since the last inspection, when teaching was judged good overall. Best practice in teaching is shared at every opportunity. Staff are

reflective about their teaching. Their self-criticism combined with constructive feedback from senior and middle leaders and the perceptive views of pupils and students, help to continuously refine teaching. Mutual respect underpins the excellent relationships that exist. Staff enjoy working with pupils and students at the school and show it.

- Lessons typically have a brisk pace. Teachers stimulate pupils' and students' interest from the start, use questioning very skilfully, manage time-limited activities very well, circulate around the class regularly to check their understanding and provide individual support where needed most. They promote continuity in learning by making reference to previous lessons and by using homework to extend pupils' and students' thinking beyond the lesson. Their impact on pupils' and students' strong and sustained progress over time is evident.
- The school knows that outstanding teachers are never complacent about their success. Staff at the school value the regular programme of lesson observations, learning walks, work sampling, analysis of progress data and professional development. They use opportunities to collaborate with pupils and students in order to maximise their impact on them as learners. For example, a series of short activities designed collaboratively in form time have focused very successfully on the '5Rs: reflection, resourcefulness, responsibility, reasoning and resilience'.
- Teachers are consistently skilled at telling pupils and students how they can improve their work when they speak to them. There are also excellent examples of written marking, for example in English, geography and Latin, although this is a more variable aspect of teaching. Staff are trialling and analysing various approaches to written feedback in order to further improve this aspect of teaching.
- Disabled pupils and students and those with special educational needs are taught very well. Teaching assistants are used very effectively and are skilled in helping pupils and students to learn independently. Teachers and teaching assistants give strong emphasis to pupils' and students' literacy skills. Reading, writing and communication skills are promoted very well across all subjects. In art lessons several students in Year 8 and Year 11 used their love of reading to inspire graphic design work for book illustration.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils and students are keen to learn; their attendance is above average. They arrive punctually to lessons, work hard and develop high aspirations. The small minority of pupils and students who need extra help are supported very well, which means they too are able to realise their potential by aiming high.
- The school is an extremely supportive environment for teaching and learning. Excellent relationships between pupils, students and staff contribute to pupils and students feeling safe and secure. Pupils and students are well-informed about different forms of bullying and are confident that on the very rare occasion that bullying is reported staff take quick and effective action. Exclusions are extremely rare. The school provided examples of students that have remained in school as a result of highly effective support.
- Pupils and students are exceptionally well mannered, polite and courteous. Their behaviour around the school is impeccable, evident in some of the narrower entrances and corridors that really test their patience and respect for others. Older students are excellent role models to younger pupils.
- In lessons behaviour is typically outstanding, particularly when teaching enables pupils and

students to take a lead in the learning. For example, where they make a presentation, give a demonstration, manage a group or stimulate a discussion they are confident and considerate. Through their homework and conduct in class pupils and students also show independence and initiative. For example, in several lessons students took detailed notes during discussions unprompted by the teacher. When teachers' marking includes detailed feedback pupils and students respond conscientiously.

- Parents expressed no concerns about behaviour. They are extremely proud of the school and the contribution that pupils and students make to the school's excellent reputation in the local and wider community.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school has a very strong sense of purpose. Senior leaders are highly effective in developing an ethos that values pupils' and students' academic and personal development equally. Parents and carers are very clear about the school's mission and unequivocal in their support. The school's very strong track record and the success of more recent developments such as the school's expansion indicate that it is in an excellent position to continue to improve.
- Teaching and support staff are highly motivated and morale is very high. Robust systems and processes are in place to enable leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's performance and effectively manage the performance of teachers and other adults. Staff are very well qualified for their roles and responsibilities. Regular seminars led by teachers with particular expertise and an annual secondment to the leadership team are examples of the wide opportunities for professional growth and development that exist.
- High expectations of middle leaders are explicit. The links between whole school improvement planning and prioritisation, and that of subjects or aspects of the curriculum are perfectly clear. Staff at all levels are sharply focused on the school's priorities as a result; this cohesiveness accelerates their impact. In addition, middle leaders are strongly encouraged to innovate and exploit the distinctive contribution of their area of responsibility.
- The leadership and development of teaching is supported by very accurate monitoring and evaluation, including teachers' self-evaluation. The school has rightly recognised that staff are extremely successful in supporting pupils' and students' progress over time in order to attain very high standards. It is now focused on spreading the very best practice where pupils and students also flourish as learners. The development of a 'student commission on learning' involving collaborative work between staff and over 100 students is proving highly effective.
- The range of subjects, courses and extra-curricular activities meet the needs of pupils and students at the school very well. In addition, assemblies for pupils and students with different faiths complement the strong faith dimension of the school. Few opportunities are missed to promote pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is a strength of the school.
- The school makes sure that every pupil and student has an equal chance of success. This can be seen in the detailed progress tracking and high achievement of different groups of pupils and students. The pupil premium funding, designed to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and students progress as well as others, is used effectively to close any gaps in opportunity or achievement that emerge between different groups while at the school.

- Parents and carers have very high expectations of the school and are not disappointed. Almost all that responded to the questionnaire would recommend the school to another parent. Almost all parents and carers agreed that the school is well led, that their child is well looked after and well taught, and that their child makes good progress. They strongly support the school's work.

- Procedures to keep pupils safe meet requirements well.

- The school contributes to and receives support that is highly valued. Close collaboration with Peterborough Cathedral is central to the school's ethos. The school's work with the local Catholic school helps to widen the range of courses available to their sixth form students. The local authority assists where required, for example with data management. External consultants are deployed when specific expertise is essential, for example to complete a review of modern languages.

- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good grasp of the school's strengths and any aspects that are weaker. They strongly support the development of the school and hold its leaders to account in relation to very challenging targets. Governors know where the very best teaching and learning exists and any subjects that fall short. They fully understand the procedures for performance management and the structures for improving the quality of teaching. They know how the pupil premium money is spent and about its impact on pupils' achievement. They bring a wide range of valuable skills and expertise to the school.

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	136398
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	400219

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	7–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1150
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Bath
Headteacher	Gary L Longman
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Telephone number	01733 751541
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