



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

INSPECTION REPORT FOR QUINTON HOUSE SCHOOL

DfE No: 928/6043

The key inspection judgements for this school are:

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| The quality of education | | 2 |
| Pupils' personal development | | 1 |
| Safeguarding pupils' welfare health and safety | | 1 |
| Leadership, management and governance | | 2 |
| Effectiveness of the Early Years' provision | | 1 |

Compliance with the Independent School Standards:

The school meets the regulatory requirements of schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Compliance with the Equality Act 2010:

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act.

Compliance with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

The school meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Date of inspection: 17-19 November 2015

SECTION A: Summary of main findings

Quinton House School has grown in size and undergone considerable change since the last inspection. A strong emphasis on values pervades the whole school, beginning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Pupils say that they are happy to be at the school. In all parts of the school they speak warmly of the varied things they do that the school has made them proud of. The quality of education is good; in the EYFS it is excellent. The curriculum is good and the quality of teaching and assessment is good. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and achieve well. By the end of Key Stage 4 the most recent GCSE results show that pupils' achievement is well above the national average. Last academic year 94% pupils achieved 5 GCSE A*-C, including in English and mathematics. Though pupils' progress over time is good, the new management team has identified that the data tracking progress in some subjects in the primary school has previously been insufficiently robust and is now dealing effectively with the matter. Pupils' personal development is outstanding and the school's provision for safeguarding their welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The school's ethos and provision strongly support the development of pupils' understanding of British values. Leadership and management are good and ensure that all the independent school regulations are consistently met. The school is well placed to make improvements and develop further under the new management team.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Whilst not required by the regulations, the proprietor should:

- ensure that data to track pupils' attainment and progress throughout the school is used accurately to drive further improvement;
- ensure that monitoring systems identify and improve any areas of weaker teaching or provision which lead to relative underperformance; and
- ensure that appropriate account is taken of pupils' and parents' views, such as in relation to minor misdemeanours, where there is a feeling that teachers do not react consistently.

SECTION B: INFORMATION

Information about the inspection:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. It follows the inspection framework agreed by SIS and the Department for Education (DfE).

In reaching their judgements the inspectors observed lessons for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) aged 3-5 and in the primary, secondary and sixth form parts of the school in a range of subjects and activities. They examined samples of the work of pupils of all ages. They observed daily life in the school, including at break and lunch times. They analysed the school's documents and records as well as the school's website. They held discussions with staff, including those with leadership and management roles. They took account of the responses of parents and pupils provided in questionnaires completed before the inspection, and whilst in the school had discussions with groups of pupils in both the primary, secondary and sixth form parts of the school.

The inspectors were:

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| Reporting Inspector: | Mr Mike Thirkell |
| Team inspectors: | Mrs Jane Cooper Mr David Rzeznik Mrs Anne McConway Mrs Sally Jenkinson |

Information about the school

Quinton House is a co-educational, independent day school for boys and girls aged 2-18 years. Pupils represent a broad range of ability. The school is situated on the outskirts of Northampton. It opened in 1946 under the name of Upton House, and changed its name to Quinton House School in 1966. It became part of the Cognita group of schools in 2004. There are now 446 boys and girls attending the school, with an additional 32 part-time children in the nursery. In total there are 41 children below compulsory school age who attend the nursery. There are 25 pupils above compulsory school age in the sixth form. Four pupils have statements of special educational need and a further 48 are identified by the school having special learning needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and requiring varying degrees of learning support. An additional 87 pupils are identified by the school as able, gifted or talented. The school provides support for English as an additional language (EAL) for a number of international pupils, mainly from China. A new headteacher and management team were appointed in September 2015.

SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

1. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of education is good and provision for children in the EYFS in the nursery aged between 3 and 5 is outstanding. The curriculum is good and a clear written policy sets out its nature and purpose at each Key Stage. Additional information is provided to parents and prospective parents about its content, including the extra-curricular activities in a range of documentation. The curriculum is supported by carefully prepared long and medium term plans for each subject and each stage of pupils' development.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and appropriate to the learning needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. It is based on the National Curriculum. It provides a good preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of British society. Pupils in the sixth form are able to study a good range of subjects relative to the size of the school. The provision ensures that pupils have access to all the required areas of learning. However, their learning in science is constrained by a lack of opportunities for practical work in specialist lessons. Accommodation for information communication technology (ICT) is further constrained by computers that need repair in the junior school and there is limited specialist ICT accommodation when two groups of pupils require the same facilities in the secondary school.

Account is taken of the needs of individual pupils in designing the curriculum. The junior school curriculum gives special weight to core subjects and uses setting, most usually in English and mathematics, to meet pupils' different learning needs. With the aim of making the curriculum more relevant and interesting, the junior school explores themes for learning using the opportunity, on occasions, to collapse the normal timetable. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have the opportunity to take either two or three science subjects where appropriate and they can take either French or German or both languages. The very extensive range of extra-curricular activities and clubs, including trips and educational visits, also provides an opportunity to study Spanish. Music is taken throughout the school and a high proportion of pupils learn to play a musical instrument.

The school provides effective support for pupils identified as having special learning needs, both in lessons and, where deemed necessary, by withdrawal from the classroom for individual teaching. The school maintains excellent SEND records and has effective procedures for passing specialist information and guidance to teachers to support an individual pupil's needs through their lesson planning. Pupils' statements of special learning needs are reviewed appropriately. International students study an appropriate range of subjects and receive effective support in improving their English. Teachers cater effectively for pupils identified as able, gifted or talented. Suitable work is planned for them in classes and various extension activities are usually available to challenge them with harder work and to extend them intellectually. However, occasionally able pupils require more challenge in classes.

The school emphasises the importance of developing British values and ensures that pupils develop an understanding of the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance, including towards those of different faiths and cultures.

Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to recognise the sacrifices made to preserve liberty, for example in Year 9 they studied the work of war poets. In the junior school they learned about great British people and understand the reasons for rules in a society in the context of their school. Mock elections were used as an opportunity for pupils to express their views and to reflect on the words of speakers representing the different parties. Such activities help pupils to develop effective speaking skills. They develop good listening skills through class discussions while work across the curriculum helps pupils to develop appropriate literacy and numeracy skills. However, the school's own monitoring of the curriculum for English and mathematics has not ensured sufficiently that provision for these subjects in parts of the junior school is consistently good.

The quality of teaching and assessment

Teaching and assessment are good in the junior and secondary parts of the school, reflecting the high quality observed in the previous inspection. In some lessons, most notably English in the senior part of the school, teaching was outstanding. The good quality of teaching enables most pupils to make good progress over time and to attain well above average standards at the end of each key stage. By the end of Key Stage 4 results at GCSE are well above the national average. In the last academic year 94% pupils in Year 11 achieved 5 GCSE A*-C, including in English and mathematics. Nevertheless, there are some subjects and year groups where pupils could do better, such as mathematics in Years 1 and 4 and Year 5 English. The school's new leadership team identified from school data that in the last academic year, Year 6 pupils had not made the progress they are capable of in science. They responded effectively to this by deploying senior school science specialists to teach the subject more effectively. Inspectors confirm that Year 6 pupils' science education is much improved and that pupils' progress is accelerating quickly as a result.

Most teaching is effective because the work provided is well planned and challenging. Teaching methods and activities move learning on at a good rate. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they teach concepts securely. They use assessment information effectively to ensure that work is well matched to the pupils' capabilities and individual needs. Where teaching is less effective, it is mainly because work is not pitched at the right level so that learning is consolidated rather than extended. Such activities are insufficiently demanding, particularly for the most able, and thus these pupils do not achieve as well as they should. At times, in primary classes, mathematics is taught concepts in too abstract a way. For example, teaching number rules without the underpinning knowledge to consolidate learning so that pupils gain mastery.

Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively and this promotes a positive climate for learning. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are positive throughout the school. As a result of effective teaching and positive relationships with their teachers, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. Teachers encourage pupils to work independently and to think and learn for themselves. This is an important improvement since the last inspection.

Pupils' learning and achievement

Appropriate structures are in place to assess pupils' attainment at the end of each key stage, and in interim years. However, the tracking of pupils' progress in the junior school has sometimes been insufficiently robust. Senior staff know that the oversight of performance data has lacked rigour and have already taken effective steps to address the matter.

The school's own guidance and expectations with respect to marking is not always fully or consistently implemented. For example, although most work is marked regularly, feedback is of inconsistent quality. Handwriting is of variable quality and too often older pupils do not write in a fluent cursive style. The presentation and organisation of work is variable and the organisation of work in folders is not always good, for example, in some Year 12 subjects. Notes taken in a range of subjects at this level show no sign of being checked for accuracy to support later revision.

2. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The quality of pupils' personal development is outstanding because of the school's strong emphasis on the important values that underpin its ethos. The school maintains a constant focus on developing the whole child through excellent pastoral care, and the exceptional range of extra- and co-curricular activities gives every child the chance to excel at something. Pupils in all parts of the school speak warmly of the varied things they do that the school has made them proud of. They clearly enjoy their pursuits and the school is enabling them to develop interests which will give them active and fulfilling lives. Pupils have exceptional opportunities to develop their creative, sporting, musical and artistic talents.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Fundamental British Values permeate the ethos through the curriculum, the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) provision, and the varied programme of assemblies. This has a strong influence on pupils' moral development and on their openness, appreciation of and respect for the beliefs, cultures, views and lifestyles of other people. At all levels in assemblies and prize-giving events pupils' personal and academic achievements are celebrated and this boosts considerably their confidence and self-esteem.

The pupils are outgoing, courteous and polite. They have a mature attitude towards their learning, work hard and interact positively with others; support and care for each other, are competitive for their forms and houses and take pride in their school environment. They behave very well. Pupils of all ages make a strong contribution to the school by volunteering to take on responsibilities which they carry out very sensibly. They are willing volunteers and are very helpful in the smooth running of their school as monitors, prefects, sports leaders and School Council representatives. The sixth form in particular are thoroughly involved and make an excellent contribution, from running clubs for younger pupils, helping with Year 11 preparation of GCSE topics in French and leading the School Council. This helps them develop strong team-working and leadership

skills. The pupils support a wide range of local and national charities, raising money for good causes or offering more practical help, for example by organising the Christmas party for local elderly residents or by volunteering through the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. This really helps the pupils to understand the challenges faced by people in wider society.

The comprehensive provision for PSHEE throughout the school covers aspects of modern life, including citizenship and economic education. There is a designated coordinator who monitors the provision ensuring that it is well-delivered, comprehensive and relevant. PSHEE lessons seen by inspectors were interesting and well-taught, enabling pupils to gain an understanding of British values and the dangers of extremism. The programme is supported by outside organisations dealing with such issues as drugs awareness. A nurse provides specialist teaching and guidance for health and relationships education. Pastoral care is a strong feature of the school and children are well known as individuals to staff.

There is an excellent enrichment programme, visits and speakers, including from charities, the armed forces and local services such as the police and a local MP. An excellent variety of trips, locally and overseas, supports the curriculum and a full programme of sporting fixtures, inter-house music and drama competitions gives everyone a chance to showcase their talents. Celebrations of wider cultural traditions help pupils to learn about the diverse nature of modern British society, and enable them to develop a very good understanding, appreciation and respect for those from different faith and social traditions from their own. The presence in the senior school of international pupils from China brings a mutually beneficial learning experience for pupils.

There is a suitable programme of careers education which includes work experience. Pupils get expert help with subject choices, information and guidance about higher education courses and apprenticeships, and assistance with the preparation of personal statements for university application. Sixth formers are particularly appreciative of the assistance they have been given by careers staff and teachers.

3. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY

The school's provision for welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The school has comprehensive, clear and up to date policies and procedures which meet fully the statutory requirements. They are well known to and understood by staff and pupils, and are implemented effectively. The implementation of policy is checked and overseen by senior leaders and the parent company. The safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed and updated annually or more frequently as required and reflect the latest government guidance, including the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education which covers the prevention of extremism and radicalisation. Key staff have undergone online Channel training and are awaiting further training on the Prevent strategy from Cognita. They have a good understanding of the duty and the issues behind it.

The school has established an extremely strong safeguarding culture and an 'it could happen here' approach to being vigilant. Thus all staff are aware of the

importance of safeguarding to pupils' welfare, health and safety. When planning activities they consider all aspects which enable pupils to feel safe and fully protected. Pupils know how and to whom any concerns should be raised. They say that they feel safe in school: they know who the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs are, and say that there is a range of staff to whom they could talk when needed. The strong support of the pastoral team of teachers, amongst whom there are two trained counsellors, makes a strong contribution to pupils' well-being. The DSL is a key figure in the school. He is fully aware of the importance of the role and takes the responsibilities very seriously. He is well trained and knowledgeable: he has made very good contacts with the appropriate local authorities, understands the local processes, and contributes to reviews and meetings when required. Staff training on safeguarding is up to date, occurs regularly, involves both internal and external training and is covered in the induction for all new staff. Training has a strong impact on staff knowledge and vigilance. Safeguarding is a standing item at meetings of senior staff and is regularly referred to in staff briefings. Staff awareness of safeguarding matters is high and this gives confidence that the school has done everything it can to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Excellent confidential child protection records are kept. These are clear, easy to monitor and are kept under regular review. There are strong systems for ensuring that these records are passed on when pupils leave. Staff recruitment procedures are extremely rigorous. The school goes well beyond the requirements to ensure that safe procedures for recruitment are followed and carefully documented. For example, every member of all recruitment panels has received safer recruitment training. There is a clear 'end to end' process from job advertisement to letter of appointment which enables the appropriate checks to take place in a timely manner. Suitability checks are undertaken with care and the single central register (SCR) of staff checks is an exemplary model: it provides a clear, comprehensive and accurate record of all the requisite checks being completed, dated and signed. Confidential staff files are well-ordered and provide clear evidence of the school's rigorous checking and vetting mechanisms.

Health and safety and allied policies are clear and comprehensive. Staff are well-trained and records are clear. There is an effective system for ensuring that routine maintenance issues are picked up and acted on quickly. The accident book is well kept and scrutinised periodically for any problems with either pupils or with the premises. Pupils are well supervised at all times and there is a clear staff supervision rota for breaks and lunchtimes. Risk assessment procedures are followed scrupulously and implemented carefully. Where risk assessment has identified concerns about safety or security, the school has responded well, for example by ensuring higher levels of supervision at break and lunch times supported by security cameras, to mitigate the potential risk posed by a public right of way across the grounds. Risk assessments for trips are completed thoroughly and include a post-trip analysis to support improvement. The e-safety policy is clear and taken very seriously by the school: it is provided to parents on admission. Pupils understand well the harm that cyber-bullying can do through the misuse of the internet, text and social media, and know how to stay safe online. The high standard of fire safety includes regular checks and maintenance. Officers are well-trained and drills are recorded and evaluated appropriately. The school and grounds are very well maintained and are notable

for cleanliness and the lack of litter. The caretaking, cleaning and ground staff do a good job.

Good behaviour is promoted effectively through the rewards system and pupils behave very well. Sanctions for serious misdemeanours are applied and recorded appropriately. Some parents felt that smaller sanctions for routine misdemeanours are not applied consistently and Year 7 pupils felt that these were sometimes unfair. The school has an appropriate anti-bullying policy. The issue of bullying features strongly in assemblies and in the PSHEE programme. The week of the inspection was anti-bullying week and the School Council members were seen preparing to deliver an assembly on the subject. Staff are alert to the various forms that bullying can take and older pupils in particular are confident that incidents are tackled swiftly and decisively by the school. However, some younger pupils felt that instances of 'jostling' that had occurred on their way between the sports hall and the junior school from older pupils had not been taken sufficiently seriously by staff.

The school maintains its attendance registers appropriately. Absence is followed up assiduously and monitored carefully for trends. There is very low unauthorised absence and the pastoral care team is fully involved. The admissions process is clear and thorough.

4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The quality of leadership and management is good. The school has clear aims and an established ethos and values. The leadership and management of the school demonstrates a strong vision for the further development of the school, expressed through the recently developed school improvement plan and supported by a strategic plan. The leadership and management actively and effectively promote the well-being of the pupils.

Leaders and managers have successfully weathered considerable turbulence during the recent past. During this time the school has been well supported by a representative of Cognita, the parent company. A new senior management team is now in place and the new headteacher, who was appointed this academic year, has already implemented changes and developments that have had a rapid and positive impact on the school. New lines of communication have been established which ensure that senior members of staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The school is in a strong position to move forward.

The developments set out in the school improvement plan provide the basis for continued academic improvement, including in English, mathematics and science in the junior school through the provision of specialist teaching. Additional developments in the provision for ICT and the improvement in the provision of music in the school are also highlighted. The school leadership and management team now in place are well qualified and work well together. They demonstrate the skills, experience and knowledge necessary to fulfil their roles. A full programme of monitoring of teaching and the curriculum has begun and is well underway.

The school's premises and accommodation meet the independent school standards. Parents are supportive of the school and receive all the information to which they are entitled. The school's complaints procedure meets requirements.

Governance

Support provided through governance by the parent company Cognita has played an important role in the recent history of the school, prior to the appointment of the new headteacher. Representatives of Cognita provide discrete support to the new school leadership and management team. They ensure that the school has access to training and information related to the latest legislation and guidance from the Department for Education. An independent person appointed by Cognita has oversight of safeguarding. Similar support is provided in relation to health and safety and school's curriculum development. They have ensured that the school meets all the independent school regulations.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS' PROVISION

Overall effectiveness

The school provides a highly effective nursery setting for children in the early years. All children progress extremely well in their learning and development relative to their starting points, and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The needs of the range of children who attend, including those who have special educational needs, are particularly well met. The personal and emotional development of the children is very good. The requirements for safeguarding and welfare are fully met and staff understand their shared responsibilities. The leadership and management are committed to securing continuous improvement in the outcomes for children. This is a happy learning environment where children are well cared for and feel safe and secure.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management

Leadership and management have high expectations for what all children can achieve. They ensure a high and rising standard of provision and practice through the professional development of staff, performance management and supervision, and peer observations. The comprehensive self-evaluation of the planning and outcomes for children provides for sustainable improvement. All children are making excellent progress and are effectively prepared for the next stage in their learning. The curriculum is wide ranging and meets the learning and development requirements of the EYFS as well as the interests of the children. In adult-led activities staff actively promote British values, equality and diversity. Effective systems are implemented to protect children and they meet all statutory and other government requirements to promote welfare. Staff understand the expectations and are about to receive training in relation to the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. The recommendations from the previous inspections have been implemented and communication with parents has been improved.

The effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment

The teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Effective analysis of assessment ensures that planning is precisely directed to the development needs of the children. Relationships are very good at all levels and staff provide appropriate praise and challenge to the children. Information for parents includes guidance on how they can help their children learn at home. The provision for children with special educational needs is excellent. The high-quality teaching fully equips the children with the skills they need for the next stages in their learning.

The personal development, behaviour and welfare

The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children is outstanding. Children enjoy solving problems, playing co-operatively, developing their independence, exploring their surroundings and learning new skills. The well planned key person system gives the children emotional security. The behaviour of the children is very good. They listen attentively to adult guidance and learn to manage their feelings. Staff ensure that children learn how to keep themselves healthy through physical education, outdoor play, 'Forest School' activities and eating healthy foods at lunch time.

Outcomes for children

Children consistently make excellent progress in all areas of learning from their different starting points. Methodical recording and evaluation of achievement accurately indicate the rapid pace of progress. Children are learning to read, write sentences, count reliably to 40, recognise and sequence numerals to 20. Most children exceed the level of development that is representative of their age thus ensuring that they are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

School Details

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| Name of school: | Quinton House School | | | |
| Address of school: | Upton Hall Northampton NN5 4UX | | | |
| Telephone number: | 01604752050 | | | |
| Email address: | info@quintonhouseschool.co.uk | | | |
| Web address | www.quintonhouseschool.co.uk | | | |
| Proprietor: | Cognita Schools | | | |
| Person registered with DfE as proprietor under paragraph 20 of Part 4: | Mr Rees Withers | | | |
| Head Teacher: | Ms Catherine Cozens | | | |
| Early Years Manager | Miss Clare Billington | | | |
| DfE Number | 928/6043 | | | |
| Type of school | Independent school | | | |
| Annual fees | £4,491 – £11,100 | | | |
| Age range of pupils | 2-18 | | | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | | | |
| Total number on roll | full-time | 446 | part-time | 32 |
| Number of children in registered nursery | | 41 | | |
| Number of children under-5 | Boys: | 25 | Girls: | 29 |
| Number of compulsory school age pupils | Boys: | 227 | Girls: | 172 |
| Number of post-compulsory pupils | Boys: | 14 | Girls: | 11 |
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational need | Boys: | 4 | Girls: | 0 |
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | Boys: | 7 | Girls: | 5 |
| Type of inspection | Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008 | | | |

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, and members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship or Cognita group. The report is available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk.