

Quinton House School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	928/6043
Unique Reference Number	122137
Inspection number	320002
Inspection dates	29-30 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Mark Mumby HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Quinton House is an independent day school for boys and girls aged 2–18 years. It is located in Upton on the outskirts of Northampton and has been owned by Cognita Schools Ltd since November 2004. Students are selected using a range of criteria, including their willingness to learn, assessment days and feedback from the child's current school.

The school aims *'to provide our students with the academic, social and emotional skills necessary to become well-rounded and socially competent members of the world beyond Quinton House School'* and has the philosophy, *'to create an atmosphere of caring that pervades every aspect of school life, and promotes respect for all members of our school community'*.

The school is registered for 355 students and there are currently 336 full time students and 12 part time students on roll. The school was first registered in September 1963 and this is the first published inspection report by Ofsted. The Early Years provision, which is part of the school, is registered separately and was inspected in March 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Quinton House is a happy school where students are well-behaved and have excellent attitudes to learning. It provides a good quality of education and care. The school meets all of the requirements for registration.

Quality of education

Teaching and assessment are good and students make good progress enabling them to attain high standards by the time they leave. They get a good start in the Nursery and then make at least satisfactory progress through the junior school. Progress improves through the senior school and is outstanding in some lessons. Attainment at GCSE is excellent and virtually all students go on to study at university.

Lessons are well managed and teachers are very clear about what they expect students to learn. They set high expectations of students' behaviour and about the work that should be completed. Students respond well, having constructive relationships with their teachers and demonstrating very good attitudes to learning. However, in many lessons, teachers spend too much time talking to the whole class and there are insufficient opportunities for students to develop their independent

learning skills. Although teachers know their students well, the tasks set are frequently the same for all learners. As a result, the opportunities to fully challenge the most able students are sometimes limited and they do not always make as much progress as they are capable of. In the very best lessons, mainly in the senior school, teachers use their good subject knowledge well to ask searching questions and extend students' thinking. As a result they make very good progress in these lessons. Teachers make good links between subjects and with previous lessons to ensure good continuity in learning.

The marking of students' work is inconsistent. At its best it provides clear guidance to help them understand the next steps in their learning. However, too much work is either unmarked or the marking is too brief. Targets for individuals or classes are used effectively to guide students towards the next level in their learning in some classes, for example, in English and history lessons in the senior school.

The curriculum is good because it enables students to make good progress in their learning and to leave school well prepared for their future economic well-being. Students' strong academic performance in basic skills is a result of the emphasis on these areas of the curriculum. A strength of many lessons is the effective way in which students use their literacy, numeracy and computer skills in subjects such as science, history and art and design. However, this good practice is not yet embedded across the school. Whilst the school generally provides a broad and balanced curriculum it also recognises that aspects of design and technology, geography and personal, social and health education are not always covered in sufficient depth. Provision for music is good and adds much to students' enjoyment and cultural understanding. Good opportunities are also available for the older junior aged students to learn two foreign languages. Progression routes are well established for students of all abilities and the good support for those with learning difficulties enables them to make similar progress to their peers.

Opportunities for enrichment, such as visits out of school and sporting activities, have improved significantly over the last two years. However, scope remains to further increase extra curricular activities, off-site visits and visiting speakers to the school to bring an even richer dimension to students' learning and achievement.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good and add much to the sense of community in the school. Students are reflective individuals who show a genuine concern for the well-being of others. They demonstrate a very good awareness of how their actions may impact on others and they have a strong sense of empathy for those less fortunate than themselves. This is reflected in students' readiness to raise money for a wide range of local, national and international charities. Students show high levels of respect to staff and each other and there is a strong sense of racial harmony. They have a good awareness of Britain as a culturally diverse society.

Students of all ages enjoy school and this is reflected in their very good attendance. They are very attentive and focused learners who show a strong desire to do well. Their behaviour is good and they are consistently polite and courteous. They are more than willing to make positive contributions to the school community through the student council, recycling projects and by carrying out various tasks and responsibilities. Students rightly feel that they would benefit from more frequent opportunities to help them develop as good independent learners. However, there is little doubt that the skills and qualities that students acquire during their time at the school equip them well for their future lives.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

Students' welfare, health and safety are good. Careful attention is given to ensuring that they are well cared for. The staff handbook provides useful guidance on all the school's routines and systems. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place and all staff are suitably trained.

The school has implemented effective strategies to manage students' behaviour and any bullying that may occur. As a result, the school has a calm and disciplined environment where the students feel safe. A suitable range of risk assessments has been carried out, for example prior to activities taking place off site. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for the safety of themselves and others. They behave sensibly on the school site. Although they have a good understanding about how to lead a healthy lifestyle, too many students choose to eat unhealthy snacks at break times.

The proprietors take good account of regulations and recommendations made by external agencies relating to fire and electrical equipment. The school has drawn up a three year accessibility plan for disabled students and fully complies with its duties under the *Disability Discrimination Act (2002)*.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school fully complies with the regulations relating to the checks it makes on prospective employees and volunteers regarding their identity, qualifications, medical fitness and suitability to work with children.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is housed in extensive grounds which provide a good range of outdoor space including grassed areas and an all-weather sports area. However, during the winter months, the grassed areas become unusable at breaktimes and this limits opportunities for outdoor play. The senior school building is grade 1 listed which restricts the internal alterations that can be made. However, this accommodation meets the needs of the school. The teaching rooms are all bright and provide adequate teaching space, although a few rooms are only just large enough.

At the time of the inspection, the school was undergoing major building work as a result of a significant capital investment by the proprietors. The sports hall, which is nearly complete, is an excellent addition to the school's current facilities. The classrooms within this complex will improve the teaching space available considerably when the building work is complete. The junior school building is currently out of use during major building refurbishment and was not inspected. The younger students are being taught in alternative classrooms in the newly built sports hall complex. The school has ensured that these temporary classrooms provide a suitable and bright learning environment for these students.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides suitable opportunities to consult with parents three times a year. Written reports are prepared for all students at least twice each year. These provide parents with a clear overview of their child's progress. Helpful parents' handbooks are produced for each phase of the school. The school has recently updated its prospectus and it now fulfils all of the requirements.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a clearly written and fair complaints procedure which meets the requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Make more effective use of assessment to plan lessons which challenge students' thinking and enable them to demonstrate their own initiative through independent learning activities.
- Ensure that marking is consistently effective in providing clear guidance to help students move on in their learning.
- Further develop the good work already in progress to allow the students to benefit from a wider range of extra-curricular activities, off-site visits and visiting speakers in order to enrich their learning.

School details

Name of school	Quinton House School		
DCSF number	928/6043		
Unique reference number	122137		
Type of school	Day		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1963		
Age range of students	2–18		
Gender of students	mixed		
Number on roll (full-time students)	Boys: 169	Girls: 167	Total: 336
Number on roll (part-time students)	Boys: 7	Girls: 5	Total: 12
Number of students with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day students)	£ 6500		
Address of school	Upton Hall Upton Northampton Northamptonshire NN5 4UX		
Telephone number	01604752050		
Fax number	01604581707		
Email address	info@quintonhouseschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr J O'Leary		
Proprietor	Cognita Schools Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Mark Mumby HMI		
Dates of inspection	29-30 January 2008		