

# **Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report**

The King's School

September 2022

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# **School's Details**

School	The King's Sc	hool		
DfE number	916/6003	916/6003		
Registered charity number	1080641			
Address	The King's Sc	The King's School		
	Pitt Street	Pitt Street		
	Gloucester	Gloucester		
	Gloucestersh	Gloucestershire		
	GL1 2BG	GL1 2BG		
Telephone number	01452 337337			
Email address	reception@tl	reception@thekingsschool.co.uk		
Headmaster	Mr David Mo	Mr David Morton		
Chair of governors	Mr Philip Dar	Mr Philip Dancey		
Age range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	737			
	EYFS	46	Juniors	180
	Seniors	398	Sixth Form	113
Inspection dates	27 to 29 Sept	27 to 29 September 2022		

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# 1. Background Information

### About the school

1.1 The King's School is a co-educational, independent day school. Founded in 1541 as the Cathedral school, it provides choristers for the Cathedral choir. A board of governors, which includes representatives from the Cathedral, oversees the school, which is an educational charity.

- 1.2 The school buildings are intertwined with those of the Cathedral. The junior school, which includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), occupies its own building on the same site.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has built an all-weather pitch, a new music school and theatre and redeveloped the sixth-form centre and the art department.

#### What the school seeks to do

1.4 The school aspires to help its pupils become happy, confident, and kind individuals who are well equipped to play their part in a challenging and fast-changing world. It seeks to encourage pupils to develop qualities such as aspiration, integrity, creativity, reflection, resilience, and independence.

### About the pupils

1.5 The pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds within a fifteen-mile radius of the school. A small number of pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified 159 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, 111 of whom receive additional help. English is an additional language (EAL) for eight pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified a group of pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and others because of their special talents in music. Their needs are met within lessons and through enrichment activities. The timetable is adjusted to enable cathedral choristers to meet their obligations.

# 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

#### Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as <u>met</u> or as <u>not met</u>. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Additionally, this visit serves as a material change visit to assess the school's proposal to increase numbers to 825.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: <u>The Education (Independent School Standards)</u> Regulations 2014, <u>Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework</u>.

### **Key findings**

2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards)
Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years
Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

### PART 1 - Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the junior school, National Curriculum tests in the years 2020 to 2022 confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 In the senior school, at GCSE in the years 2019 to 2022, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2019 to 2022 have confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.5 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.6 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.7 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

### PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.8 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.9 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

### PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.10 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.11 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.

### PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.12 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.13 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.

#### PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.14 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.15 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

#### PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.16 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

### PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.18 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.
- 2.19 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

# PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.20 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.
- 2.21 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

# 3. Recommendation with regard to material change request

# **Summary of findings**

3.1 The growth in numbers forecast by the school is based on recent experience and the reasonable assumption that the larger groups currently in Years 7-11 will remain for the sixth form. External recruitment has been strong in the last five years. Classrooms will be adequate for the proposed numbers. An additional science laboratory has already been constructed. Toilets and dining space are suitable. The sixth-form centre has been redeveloped and enlarged. The games programme is being reorganised to ensure facilities are suitably available. The pupils' welfare centre has been expanded this year to double the number of rooms for treatment and counselling.

#### Recommendation

3.2 It is recommended that the requested change be approved. If the school implements its plans effectively, it is likely that it will continue to meet regulatory standards.

# 4. Educational Quality Inspection

#### Preface

The EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

### **Key findings**

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
  - Throughout the school, pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, make excellent progress and attain high grades in external tests and examinations.
  - Pupils have highly developed communication skills which enhance their learning.
  - Pupils have strong skills in numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT).
  - Many pupils have well-developed thinking skills and use them effectively in all areas of learning.
  - Pupils are enthusiastic and purposeful, and their positive behaviour is supportive of learning and a harmonious school environment.
- 4.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
  - Pupils have strong self-confidence and self-esteem.
  - Pupils develop secure moral and social awareness, knowing right from wrong, and they strive to contribute to others' well-being.
  - Pupils demonstrate a sensitive appreciation of the non-material and spiritual aspects of life.
  - Pupils collaborate effectively to solve common problems and help one another.
  - Pupils are accepting and respectful of one another, whatever their differences may be.

#### Recommendation

- 4.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
  - Ensure that all pupils take leadership of their learning and develop independence of thought.

### The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

4.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent. This is true of all age groups, those with SEND and EAL, and the most able. Junior school pupils, including children in the EYFS, attain strong results in externally standardised tests and assessments. The school's leaders and teachers ensure optimum pupil performance by closely tracking pupils' progress and providing suitable support and challenge. Externally validated data indicate that all pupils make excellent progress. In the senior school, almost all pupils agreed in the pre-inspection survey that they make strong progress in lessons. This was borne out by observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work. It is also confirmed by the examination results at GCSE and A level. Centre- and teacher-assessed grades in 2020 and 2021

showed very high standards. These standards were maintained in the 2022 GCSE examinations, when a third of the results were at the highest two grades or equivalent. Similarly, at A level in 2022, over a third of examinations were awarded the two highest grades, and over two-thirds the three highest. These excellent levels of attainment were also seen in BTEC Sport, and in the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Pupils with SEND and EAL have, in recent years, achieved grades in external examinations at least equal to the average for their classmates. School leaders have developed a curriculum which is flexible and varied. In addition, pupils respond well to the sensitive and well-planned support provided by the school, creative and individualised teaching, strong pastoral care, and effective monitoring by senior leaders.

- 4.5 In the junior school, pupils have excellent knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of subjects. Pupils apply these effectively, for example when children in the EYFS during story time used their knowledge of how trees grow, or when Year 3 pupils designed and built model Egyptian pyramids to entomb a deceased pharaoh. Pupils in Year 2 showed a well-developed understanding of the junior school's SMART values (smile, marvellous manners, ambitious attitude, resilience, and teamwork). They designed posters to reflect these values, one example showing pupils thanking the caterers for lunch to reflect marvellous manners. Similarly, in the senior school, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are excellent. Effective teaching enables them to hone their knowledge and understanding. In a Year 7 music lesson, pupils competently utilised their understanding of the representation of sounds by symbols to select the correct graphic score for different music clips. Sixth-form linguists confidently manipulated complex grammar. Mathematicians are shrewd in selecting appropriate strategies for solving a problem, and accurate in carrying out the required calculations. They apply this knowledge to new problems and can describe their learning confidently and securely. Pupils' proficient research skills and extensive range of expression were seen most clearly in their work on the EPQ, where Year 12 pupils produced high quality projects on subjects of their choice.
- 4.6 Pupils in the junior school, including those in the EYFS, develop excellent communication skills. The youngest pupils are confident and articulate communicators in both the spoken and written word. They described vividly what hedgehogs eat for breakfast, using a well-developed range of vocabulary. In their outdoor learning environment, Year 1 pupils used advanced language when describing the differences between sycamore, horse chestnut and oak trees, their seeds and leaves. Older pupils passionately and confidently articulated the meanings of the school's core values. Pupils use ambitious and powerful vocabulary when they write, for instance when reviewing literature in Year 4, explaining the intrigue, excitement and adventure inherent in a story. Senior school pupils continue to apply excellent communication skills. In a GCSE drama lesson, teaching created an atmosphere and space where pupils trusted one other and felt comfortable to communicate, critique and collaborate, resulting in greater self-awareness and clarity about their next steps. As a result of engaging in public speaking, assemblies and committees, pupils speak with poise, share their ideas willingly, and listen to one another attentively. In a Year 8 science lesson, pupils used specialist terminology to describe the structure and function of the organs in the digestive system which their peers then used to prepare individual notes. In a Year 10 English lesson, there was fluent and scholarly discussion of issues raised in Of Mice and Men, a text which was used to explore issues of diversity, enhanced by contributions from governor level.
- 4.7 Throughout the school, pupils' knowledge and skills in numeracy are excellent. The school's focus on strengthening pupils' numeracy through smaller intervention classes is especially effective. Numeracy is nurtured from an early age, enabling pupils to delight in increasingly challenging number-based tasks. Children in the EYFS apply their mathematical understanding in a range of practical activities, for example when creating repeating patterns with jewels or counting conkers. Pupils effectively apply mathematical knowledge and skills to further their learning across the curriculum. For example, Year 1 were confident counting to eight in French, and Year 8 pupils used their strong understanding of ratio and proportion to calculate the amount of salt in a serving of bread.

- 4.8 Pupils' competence in information and communication technology (ICT) is excellent. The school has a bring your own device programme that starts in Year 10. This enables pupils to enhance their learning by accessing resources, seeking help and receiving highly effective individualised feedback online. Pupils become proficient in the use of coding, presentation software, and word processing. ICT enabled pupils to deepen their understanding of place value during a Year 6 mathematics lesson. Pupils in Year 5 challenged themselves effectively with tasks from a digital mathematics programme. Pupils keep track of amendments and improvements in their written work digitally, recognising the advantages of this approach. Senior pupils demonstrated excellent online research skills to deepen their understanding about topics which catch their imagination. They also recognise the need to verify the status of any information before it is used.
- 4.9 Pupils' study and thinking skills are good, and often excellent. Children in the EYFS displayed positive study techniques when finding out information about budgies, noting particularly that these birds should not eat chocolate or lemons. Written feedback in GCSE classes explicitly comments on pupils' development of thinking skills when completing challenging tasks. Pupils draw upon independent research and wider sources of information to create their own conclusions. Year 5 pupils hypothesised about the distance from one location to another on maps. In a history lesson on Richard III, Year 9 pupils, asked to relate his disability to modern attitudes, were quick to grasp the implications during the lesson. Year 12 pupils in physics used highly developed thinking skills to identify all the possible pair combinations of up and down quarks in mesons and determined their charge. Pupils' study skills are nurtured and encouraged effectively in extended project work, where pupils draw on evidence and make hypotheses of their own. This culminates in excellent work in the EPQ, completed by nearly half the pupils. The independence of mind which turn some pupils into learners able to lead their own learning is not yet fully developed in all pupils.
- 4.10 Pupils' academic and other achievements are excellent. Pupils succeed in public speaking competitions, academic challenges and Olympiads. They have won medals in the Cheltenham performing arts festival for poetry composition. Across the age range, pupils showcase their musical and dramatic talents both within school and in the wider community. Pupils win representative honours across a range of sports. They achieve gold awards in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, excel in music and LAMDA examinations, and sing in the Cathedral choir. Participation in activities is strong, and the programme is promoted and managed effectively by the school's leadership.
- 4.11 Pupils' attitude towards their learning is excellent. Pupils demonstrated consistent engagement during lessons. Pupils explained that this is in response to passionate and expert teaching. In all lessons, pupils worked with enthusiasm and purpose, because the school culture expects pupils to be fully involved both in listening to teachers and responding appropriately. Behaviour is highly supportive of others, and of everyone's learning.

### The quality of the pupils' personal development

4.12 The quality of the pupils' self-confidence, self-esteem and self-knowledge is excellent. Through sport, clubs, assemblies, drama productions and musical performances, pupils are given a range of opportunities to develop confidence and resilience. In this way, pupils are encouraged to have high expectations of themselves and celebrate their successes. Departments have effective systems of feedback so that pupils conscientiously review their development. Pupils know they can readily approach adults for help and advice and do so with self-assurance. Year 2 pupils reflected carefully on their own progress in mathematics and responded to questions asked by the teacher in their written feedback. Junior school pupils' self-understanding is enhanced by the curriculum, which includes critical thinking and reflection time. Children in the EYFS were confident in exploring ingredients when making hedgehog bread, smelling the water and yeast, and announcing their findings with gusto. During discussion, pupils in Year 3 reflected on the importance of regular practice to improve performance in a variety of areas including martial arts, mathematics, and art. Pupils confidently described the positive impact the school has had on their attitude to learning, transforming their

- approach to their academic work. Pupils' involvement in the running of many aspects of the life of the school gives them a strong sense of self-worth. They gain confidence in a harmonious atmosphere.
- 4.13 Pupils show an excellent understanding of the impact of the decisions they make on their learning and sense of well-being. As juniors they are encouraged to take care in deciding which clubs and societies to join, and their form tutor is the main provider of advice; this support is present too for older pupils in subject and university choices. Senior school pupils have busy school lives and decide how to achieve balance, and still fulfil their commitments. Offered a range of tasks of differing degrees of difficulty, pupils commonly challenge themselves by selecting appropriate tasks for themselves based on their understanding in lessons. Pupils feel that their voice is heard at the school, and that they have influence. As members of the Tortoise Team, they decide how to care for the school's pets; through the school council they have reviewed the school's principles, prior to a school-wide consultation. Pupils say they learn a great deal from playing the leading role in organising house competitions.
- 4.14 Junior school pupils demonstrate a strong spiritual understanding and appreciation of the non-materialistic aspects of life. Pupils regularly display awe and wonder. Reception children squealed and gasped with excitement when they found a poem from Percy the Park Keeper hidden in their classroom tree, asking for help to build homes for animals. Pupils in Year 3 showed a well-developed knowledge of the harvest festival, the importance the event holds within the Christian faith, and the reasons for celebrating it through dance. Older pupils value opportunities for self-expression in a range of areas including art, music and debating. They speak persuasively, too, about the thrill of being in the cast of a play, being part of a musical ensemble, or a team on the games field. Regular attendance at whole-school services in the cathedral encourages pupils to think deeply about spiritual matters and the purpose of the musical element of each service.
- 4.15 Throughout the school, pupils' moral understanding is excellent. They have a clear sense of right and wrong, and they are strongly committed to the junior school's SMART values and the senior school's seven principles (respect, responsibility, kindness, honesty, individuality, resilience and equality). Pupils demonstrate excellent behaviour around the school, including during unstructured periods such as breaktime. Pupils show high levels of respect for the systems in place and conduct themselves considerately and courteously, for example when lining up at the end of break or moving around the buildings. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 5 eloquently demonstrated a highly developed understanding of how to convey their emotions and take ownership of their behaviour. Year 8 pupils reflected on the assembly theme of kindness, and they committed to an act of kindness in the coming day.
- 4.16 Pupils' social development and collaboration are excellent. They collaborate constructively from an early age, learning to take turns and share. Their social development is greatly enhanced through talk partners, group work and team activities in the EYFS. In a performing arts lesson in Year 3, pupils worked as pairs to create 'W' shapes using their bodies. In Year 1, excellent collaborative work was observed in the outdoor setting taking turns playing noughts and crosses or making an imaginative crab stew with conkers in the mud kitchen. Pupils develop the habit of working together for everyone's benefit, as in a GCSE drama lesson, where pupils constructively critiqued each other's work and then were able to refine their performances. Similarly, pair work was used effectively for discussion and debate in an A level lesson on Plato's Cave analogy.
- 4.17 Pupils' contributions to others in and beyond the school community is excellent. They are encouraged to fulfil their responsibilities through a wide range of programmes including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme starting in Year 9, a volunteer day in Years 10 and 12, and events that benefit the local community at Christmas. The houses in the school choose the charities they support each year. The pupils in the school's choir programme perform regularly in the local area. Pupils enjoy supporting younger pupils through reading activities, supporting global causes, and developing a linked school in India. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, identifying ways they can make an active contribution to the community. Hence, they are addressing the planet's health, how to reduce litter and how best to protect and conserve water-based ecosystems. Pupils take on positions of responsibility running clubs, being house and sports captains, organising assemblies and mentoring younger pupils. Pupils

- spoke about how much they had learned from helping less advantaged families on a holiday programme. They worked in the kitchens, served food, led activities, and cleaned up afterwards.
- 4.18 Pupils' respect and appreciation for diversity and cultural understanding is strong. They demonstrate sensitivity to those from different backgrounds. The school has an effective committee to promote equality, diversity and inclusion, led by pupils who say that their community accepts that everyone is different and that differences are to be respected. As a result, pupils show respect for one another, whatever their cultural backgrounds, gender or religious faiths and traditions. Pupils welcome and embrace one another's differences when celebrating holy days and visiting different places of worship. They also refer to the school's core values in accepting differences in individuals' approach to learning.
- 4.19 Pupils know how to stay safe, including online. Pupils appreciate the ongoing focus on online safety in ICT lessons and spoke confidently of the need to retain personal details and the long-term risk of online data retention. They also understand the need to evaluate carefully what they find online, and to seek support from a trusted adult if they are disturbed by it. Pupils understand the importance of being physically healthy. They feel well supported in this by curricular emphasis on topics such as nutrition, exercise and cyber safety, and the physical education programme ensures that all pupils find a way of exercising regularly.

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### 5. Inspection Evidence

The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings, chapel, and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Bill Burn Reporting inspector

Mr Marcus Cook Compliance team inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Ms Alexia Bolton Team inspector (Former head, IAPS school)

Mr Tim Dewes Team inspector (Former deputy head, HMC school)

Mrs Alison Hewitt Team inspector (Former head, GSA school)

Mr Daniel Wilson Team inspector (Assistant head, association school)