



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports**

**King Edward VI School**

**January 2022**

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### School's Details

<b>School</b>	King Edward VI School			
<b>DfE number</b>	852/6006			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1088030			
<b>Address</b>	King Edward VI School Wilton Road Southampton Hampshire SO15 5UQ			
<b>Telephone number</b>	02380 704561			
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@kes.hants.sch.uk			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Neal Parker			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Alan Morgan			
<b>Age range</b>	11 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	961			
	<b>Seniors</b>	738	<b>Sixth Form</b>	223
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19 to 21 January 2022			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 King Edward VI School, Southampton is a co-educational independent day school. It was founded in 1553. Since 1938 it has occupied its present site near the centre of Southampton. The school is a charitable company limited by guarantee. The governors are trustees of the charity. A majority of pupils join the school at the age of eleven in approximately equal numbers from maintained primary or independent preparatory schools. The school comprises two sections: the senior school, for pupils aged 11 to 16 years, and a sixth form, for those aged 16 to 18 years. The school selects pupils by academic ability.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection the school has appointed a new headmaster.
- 1.3 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school remained open only for children of key workers.
- 1.4 During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.5 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.6 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.7 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than vulnerable pupils or the children of key workers received remote learning provision at home.
- 1.8 In 2020 and 2021, public examinations were not held. For pupils who would have been expected to take these examinations, centre-assessed and teacher-assessed grades were awarded.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.9 The school aims to nurture and support the pupils, so that they flourish and exceed their expectations in their learning, interests, relationships and emotional development. The goal is that pupils become intellectually curious, resilient, confident and ready for their next steps.

### About the pupils

- 1.10 Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 132 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include a wide variety of individual needs. All of these pupils receive additional support. One pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Forty-nine pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), five of whom require additional support for their English. The curriculum is modified for pupils whom the school has identified as gifted and talented.

## 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. 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 **met** or as **not met**. 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.

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: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#).

**COVID-19: Inspection judgements do not cover the period March to August 2020 inclusive.**

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

### **PART 1 – Quality of education provided**

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2019 to 2021, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2019 to 2021 have confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 Pupils receive 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.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

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

- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 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**

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.12 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**

2.13 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.

**2.14 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

2.15 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.

**2.16 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

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

2.17 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.

**2.18 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

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

2.19 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.

**2.20 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.**

### 3. 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. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> Year	Year 7
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	Year 8
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Year 9
4 <sup>th</sup> Year	Year 10
5 <sup>th</sup> Year	Year 11
Lower 6 <sup>th</sup>	Year 12
Upper 6 <sup>th</sup>	Year 13

#### Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Pupils' attainment in examinations and ability to secure entry to further education or destination of their choice confirm that they make excellent progress.
- Pupils secure excellent achievement in their academic and co-curricular activities.
- All pupils develop and demonstrate the skills and knowledge to enable significant success at all stages of their learning.
- Pupil progress is strong when the level of challenge is high, when activities are varied and when they take responsibility for their own learning.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils' demonstrate excellent relationships with peers and adults and exhibit a strong sense of community through an overarching ethos of nurture and support.
- Pupils demonstrate a profound appreciation of their moral responsibilities. They respect and celebrate diversity within the school community.
- Pupils across the school show excellent self-confidence and self-discipline.
- Pupils are able to make well informed decisions enabling them to stay safe and healthy.



## Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following improvement:
- Enable pupils to develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of the spiritual and philosophical aspects of life.

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

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils display excellent knowledge, skills and understanding. They develop as highly resilient learners as they move through the school. They make rapid progress in most of their lessons because of a wide range of activities and effective planning due to teaching which further enhances their learning. A majority of pupils noted that they can build effectively on prior knowledge and work and that the setting of targets in lessons and form tutorials. This they believe are very helpful in understanding how to achieve their long-term goals. This was reflected in a chemistry lesson where pupils used their previous knowledge to explain and example giant bonding structures. Pupils are very positive about the teaching that they received online during the lockdown, enabling them to continue to make progress in their learning and understanding. They also speak well of teachers' support for them in their academic studies through effective marking and feedback, using the school's electronic classroom software. Throughout the school, pupils are happy to take risks with learning and to learn from any mistakes. They say that they develop their academic, sporting and creative skills to a high level because the teaching and coaching inspires them and helps them to improve and make personal progress.
- 3.6 Pupils show rapid progress that enables a smooth transition between year groups into the sixth form. At A level in 2017–2021, the average pass rate was 96.6% (grades A–C). In 2021, 100% of pupils achieved three A levels. Attainment at GCSE for the years 2017–2021 show the average pass rate to be 98.8% (grades A–C). In 2021, 97% of pupils achieved ten or more GCSEs. Pupils with SEND and EAL make rapid progress towards long-term goals because they receive highly effective support, which is individually focused and carefully assessed. Such progress was maintained during lockdown. More able pupils gain awards in creative arts, music and sport. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching enables their child to make progress. Most pupils who responded to the questionnaire expressed the view that they learn a lot in most of their lessons. Inspection evidence supports these views. Progress, as shown by assessment data provided by the school and by observations and work scrutiny, is excellent.
- 3.7 Throughout the school pupils communicate confidently verbally, when reading aloud and in their writing and creative arts. Junior pupils exhibited excellent listening skills and were able to follow instructions accurately when learning new dance skills. In a geography lesson about the Amazon rainforest, pupils' presentational skills, use of language, eye contact and humour were excellent. By the time pupils reach GCSE level they are skilled and confident collaborators, arguing cogently in groups and capable of taking on a broad range of views in order to enhance their learning. They write highly effectively in a range of styles and show clear understanding of aspects such as the use of cliché and other linguistic elements. During the most recent period of remote learning, pupils aided their progress with innovative ideas and by creating new opportunities to communicate, using discussion, debating and music to enhance their experiences. This was exemplified by the pupils as they practised their music skills and came together in concert while online.
- 3.8 Pupils of all ages develop agile mathematical skills and apply them across the curriculum. SEND pupils successfully respond to numerical tasks and are effectively supported. Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge well to tasks across the curriculum. For example, in the sixth form pupils apply statistical and data-handling techniques with confidence in the sciences and business studies. Groups of pupils

were seen during a lunch time break preparing for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) expedition, calculating bearing using compasses and mapping skills to plan their routes.

- 3.9 Pupils of all ages demonstrate competency in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and effectively apply such skills across the curriculum to support their learning. Excellent computer skills were demonstrated in a GCSE music lesson as pupils produced compositions by using notation and combining instruments using computer software. Pupils develop skills of coding in ICT lessons and in the senior school many utilise word processing and spreadsheet tools with ease, including to research. In a history lesson, pupils made very good use of laptop computers whilst planning and researching presentations on the role of women and colonial troops in World War 1. During recent periods of remote learning pupils developed their ICT skills by working on a variety of devices at home. GCSE pupils used digital technology with teachers to engage in effective dialogue about their coursework. These strategies enabled pupils to improve their outcomes.
- 3.10 Throughout the school most pupils display outstanding attitudes to their learning and are determined to succeed. They respond positively to teaching which aims to help each child make progress, discover their own passions and have aspirational goals. In a sixth form art class, pupils were very successfully learning to use soft colour pastel techniques and how to layer on colour to build tone and contrast, resulting in excellent creativity. Pupils become sophisticated learners. They develop good study skills and use them to make progress. Pupils value working with success criteria and targets to evaluate their progress and improve through their use. They become independent and well-motivated, many choosing to attend study on offer during lunch time and after school in the week. Such attitudes are a strong factor in pupils' successful and enhanced academic outcomes. Pupils are very positive about the fact that teachers would not always give them the answer directly but would help them become able to work out the right answer or method. In the questionnaire and discussion, a small minority of pupils noted that not all lessons were interesting. Inspectors found that a very large majority exhibited highly positive attitudes towards teaching and learning. Senior leaders have begun to increase the number of class observations and the sharing of best practice to enhance pupil interest and learning.
- 3.11 Pupils develop strong physical skills in the extensive sports programme and in co-curricular activities. Further enhance outdoor experiences and achievements are enabled through the *Endeavour* outdoor activities programme and an end of year residential trip. They improved their hockey, netball, rugby and football skills by playing in house team competitions in school during the period when external matches were not possible. Achievements beyond school have included county representation in football, athletics, hockey and swimming, several selections for rugby club academies and national success in rugby, netball and athletic competitions. Senior pupils have successfully completed the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) at bronze, silver and gold levels and competed successfully in the Ten Tours. In the creative arts, pupils have embraced opportunities to perform and show high levels of individual and collaborative skill. This is exemplified by the 100% pass rate in national music and drama awards with over 60% of all entrants receiving the level of distinction. Pupils demonstrated very high levels of artistic prowess whether by singing in a chamber choir, playing in instrumental ensembles or by preparing highly imaginative artwork which is displayed around the school, as observed during inspection. Pupils of all ages relish taking part in drama performances. This was exemplified during the inspection as pupils prepare for their production of *Matilda* and spoke enthusiastically regarding previous term's production of *Les Misérables*, gaining positive experiences and achieving success backstage, on stage and costume design and making props for productions.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 3.12 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.13 Pupils develop strong self-understanding and self-belief. This is achieved because of the focus given to encouraging self-confidence by the school's leadership and the support provided by dedicated pastoral and academic staff. Sixth form pupils demonstrated resilience and confidence in biology.

Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes in front of their peers, in order to develop their learning, as observed when making contributions to a discussion on models of resting potential. Pupils believe in their ability and take opportunities to praise each other, thus increasing the self-esteem of their peers, as when practising lacrosse in preparation for team matches. In doing so, they respond well to the school's culture of mutual respect and celebrating success. Pupils successfully explore their own identity through art, singing and drama. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their child to be confident and independent. Inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils, including those with SEND, say that their self-confidence has developed significantly over their time in school, due to effective individual strategies put in place to assist them. Senior pupils spoke of the need to be resilient and persevere. They said that academic and personal targets discussed with their tutors help them to understand their own strengths and weaknesses and provide the opportunity to work to improve. Pupils' personal development has been enhanced during recent remote learning through effective teaching that considered individual pupils' needs. Pupils spoke of feeling empowered by the fact that they take control of their learning. Pupils feel safe to explore new things, such as embarking on a Japanese GCSE in the sixth form.

- 3.14 Pupils of all ages are active and well-informed decision-makers. They make age-appropriate decisions about their learning, the activities they wish to pursue, subjects to study and their possible career paths. Pupils show excellent confidence and public spirit when they lead assemblies and write their 'Thought for the day'. Staff say that pupils see the 'bigger picture' and actively engage to influence the school strategy on issues such as racism, LGBTQ+ and the possibility of an 'Awareness wall' to enhance the charity work that the pupils are involved with. In core practicals in physics, pupils able to decide independently which equipment to use in order to successfully carry out the experiment and obtain valid data. Older pupils say that they feel empowered to take control of their learning by deciding how to prioritise homework tasks and manage time effectively. Senior pupils actively seek out their subject teachers to aid their academic progress and attainment and can understand how doing so helps to improve their outcomes.
- 3.15 Pupils' spiritual understanding is good. A majority of pupils who spoke to inspectors reported that they value the importance of spirituality and mindfulness. Leaders and staff promote a school ethos which enables a majority of pupils to develop some form of spirituality and cultural sensibilities. Spiritual understanding is enhanced by thoughtful assemblies, often pupil led and most pupils acknowledged the usefulness of quiet reflection that enhances their well-being. As they progress through the school, a majority of pupils develop an understanding of and a sensitivity to the spiritual backgrounds of all members of the community. A small majority of pupils described moments of joy and satisfaction, whether it be in creating a work of art, helping and supporting others or the interaction with their friends and peers. Since returning from remote learning pupils exhibit a tangible sense of pleasure at being part of a community with a regained collective purpose.
- 3.16 Pupils demonstrate excellent relationships with peers and adults and exhibit a strong sense of community through the school's overarching ethos of nurture and support. Pupils show an excellent moral compass in discussions, in class and during meal times. They live out the school's ethos by clearly demonstrating the qualities of being kind and showing respect to others. Pupils showed much consideration and a sense of responsibility for the impact of their own behaviour and choices on others. For instance, they suggested that, regardless of what their own views might be, they might endanger someone else if they did not get vaccinated or wear masks. Further examples include the formation of an LGBTQ+ awareness group called the *Diversity Society* (DivSoc) and a *Feminist Society* to encourage inclusion and understanding in the school regarding such issues. Pupils behave well overall. Most pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the concepts of right and wrong through their daily interactions with each other and staff. Such understanding is also seen in their work. In history, pupils produced thought-provoking and reflective work about the Holocaust, including prose, poems, paintings, dance and music. Pupils considered and communicated their thoughts on both the enormity of the event itself and the personal stories they had investigated. In their questionnaire responses, all the pupils agreed that the school has very high behavioural expectations. Inspection

evidence supports this view. In discussion, pupils discussed intelligently the connection between rules in school, especially in the team games that they played, and the laws by which society is run. Younger pupils say that they look up to their peers in the senior forms and see them as very positive role models.

- 3.17 Pupils collaborate very effectively within and across age groups in lessons and during activities. The youngest pupils work together instinctively. For example, working well in small groups successfully passing footballs to each other and showing good teamwork skills. During a science club, pupils used peer assistance in class to support with model making techniques to complete toy catapults and bridges. Pupils develop understanding of relationships, including between genders, through school leaders challenging any inappropriate attitudes or behaviours. An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their child to develop strong teamwork and social skills. Inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils develop excellent interpersonal skills when playing sport in teams. Pupils say that they gain self-confidence by being in a team or in group work situation such as the DofE, and that this helps to strengthen their individual skills.
- 3.18 Many senior pupils choose to spend time helping with younger pupils and in so doing enhance their own personal development as well as that of the children they support. The older pupils support others through academic mentoring, tutor form support as prepositors (mentors), and acting as prefects. As well as enjoying these experiences, pupils say that they are contributing to the strength of the family community that they respect. The collective impact of such individual decisions helps to create the strong sense of community in the school. Pupils engage very successfully with the world outside school, choosing charitable causes and carrying out fund-raising activities. Before the pandemic, pupils carried out community work such as visiting a care home and providing musical entertainment to its inhabitants. Senior pupils valued the opportunity to explore recent global issues such as the *Black Lives Matter* movement. From this, they gained a deeper understanding of racial inequality. The cultural development of the pupils has been strengthened through the school's focus on the issue of inequality in society. Pupils' work demonstrates strong appreciation of the roles of ethnic and female leaders in politics, art, music, drama and academic professionals. In discussion pupils expressed their appreciation of the diversity of religious beliefs in the school. They said that they felt the school is a place where everyone is committed to the support of each other. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. Inspection evidence supports this view.
- 3.19 Pupils, in discussion voiced a very clear understanding of how to stay safe and healthy, including of the importance of eating a healthy diet and how to maintain a positive outlook on life. Pupils' feedback through the school council has led to the implementation of healthier lunch options. They appreciate the opportunity to enhance their mental health through the support of the well-being centre where they can go for support and reflection during their busy day. Pupils are empowered to make good choices regarding healthy living so that they are able to participate in personal and team sports and other physical activities such as the DofE. They have a clear understanding of the need for a healthy mind and feel that they benefit from mindfulness and reflection. Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that they understand how to stay safe online. This was confirmed during the inspection. In discussion, pupils demonstrated a strong awareness and understanding of the importance of online safety and potential risks of internet use.

## 4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Alistair Telfer	Reporting inspector
Mr Koen Claeys	Compliance team inspector (Headmaster, SofH school)
Mr Nick Brown	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Diane Durrant	Team inspector (Deputy head, SofH school)
Jane Huntington	Team inspector (Retired head, ISA school)
Miss Clare King	Team inspector (Headmistress, ISA school)
Mr Keith Metcalfe	Team inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)