

School inspection report

3 October to 5 October 2023

King Edward VI High School for Girls

Edgbaston Park Road
Birmingham
B15 2UB

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as ‘the Standards’.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. The proprietor, through the governing body, ensures that leaders and managers have the skills and knowledge to actively promote the wellbeing of pupils. Governors are effective in discharging their duties to support and monitor the work of school leaders through an appropriate range of committees. Governors commission expert external reviews of aspects of health and safety and of safeguarding and leaders take action to ensure that risks to pupils' wellbeing are identified and mitigated.
2. In consultation with school leaders, governors have created an ambitious school development plan with clear strategic targets. These are linked directly to the school's aims of enabling pupils to experience joy in their learning, to develop strong character and to inspire the confidence to serve others.
3. Leaders and managers provide pupils with an education which is challenging, wide-ranging and meets their needs. Leaders actively promote the wellbeing of pupils by creating an academic culture of scholarship underpinned by sensitive pastoral care. An extensive extra-curricular programme and active house system enable pupils to extend their talents to the full and help to create a cohesive school community.
4. A clear, forward-looking disability access plan is in place to ensure that the school does not discriminate through its curriculum or wider provision.
5. The extra-curricular programme is a significant strength of the school. Leaders plan carefully to provide opportunities for all pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of activities. Leaders are quick to adapt to the changing interests and needs of pupils by supporting new activities or extending existing provision. Leaders ensure that activities are widely available to pupils and regularly check for any unintended consequences of the programme by ensuring that pupils maintain a healthy balance between their work and other activities.
6. Teaching is well planned and meets the needs of all pupils. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic learners who take pride in their work and are keen to do well. Pupils make good progress and achieve results in public examinations which exceed expectations from their given starting points. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make progress in line with their peers as a result of the individual support offered by the learning support team and by their subject teachers.
7. Leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils find joy in their learning and that pupils realise their full academic potential. Leaders promote a range of academic initiatives aimed at developing scholarship and encouraging independent thinking, which have been well received by pupils. However, these academic initiatives are not yet fully embedded in all departments because the effectiveness of the monitoring of teaching and learning by managers is not consistent across departments.

8. The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum enables pupils to develop self-knowledge and an awareness of the needs of others. Leaders have created a culture where pupils from diverse backgrounds mix well and respect and value each other's cultural heritage and identity so that pupils enjoy positive relationships with their peers and with staff. Serious misbehaviour and bullying are extremely rare, and any instances of bullying are dealt with effectively.
9. Pupils are extremely proud of their school. They are keen to lead activities, run house events and, when older, act as mentors for younger pupils. Pupils are enthusiastic about serving the local community and supporting charities by volunteering or raising money.
10. Leaders and managers prepare pupils well for the next stage in their lives by providing appropriate guidance at each stage of their development. As a result, pupils feel confident about their futures and nearly all go on to a wide range of universities.
11. Leaders and managers ensure that the school is a safe place for pupils. Safeguarding arrangements are highly effective. Staff at all levels fully understand how to recognise and report safeguarding concerns and are alert to the contextual risks to pupils in the school.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards:

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met

Recommended next steps

- Leaders should ensure that monitoring of teaching and learning is consistent and effective across departments so that the encouragement of pupils' independent thinking is further embedded.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. Leaders and managers have appropriate policies in place that are implemented effectively, so that the relevant standards and statutory guidance are met consistently. They actively promote the wellbeing of pupils in the school by ensuring that policies and procedures are understood by staff through a cycle of regular and focused training. For example, staff training in the behaviour policy has ensured that pupils behave well and understand the consequences of any misbehaviour.
13. Leaders and governors successfully enable the school to meet its aims of promoting a joy of learning through offering an academically challenging curriculum, as well as developing pupils' leadership, skills and character through the rich extra-curricular programme.
14. Governors and leaders share a clear vision for the school based on a detailed assessment of the school's current strengths and relative weaknesses. Development plans focus on improving academic outcomes for pupils through enhancing their learning experience and on increasing support for the wellbeing of pupils. For example, a recent initiative to ensure that homework is meaningful has been well received by pupils, who commented that their workload has been reduced and that they feel less pressurised as a result.
15. Senior leaders have established a number of initiatives to enhance the learning experience of pupils, such as increasing opportunities for discussion in lessons and developing opportunities for pupils to think deeply. In many areas, pupils report that these initiatives have increased their joy of learning but the pace of implementation of academic initiatives varies between departments, and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by heads of department is not consistent across the school.
16. Governors monitor leaders' work systematically through focused committees and provide an appropriate level of challenge to senior leaders. Governors ensure that leaders respond promptly and effectively to pupils' concerns and ideas, which are heard regularly through meetings with pupils, surveys and an anonymous suggestions box. As a result of recent feedback from pupils, leaders have ensured that pupils who have SEND now receive more focused support and pupils comment how the enhanced provision gives them greater confidence.
17. Governors ensure that leaders are careful to identify and manage any possible risk to pupils' wellbeing. Consequently, leaders understand the contextual risks for pupils in the school and ensure that staff are trained and understand how to recognise any pupil at risk of harm and how to report concerns.
18. As part of the school's own process of quality assurance, governors commission a number of expert external annual reviews, including an annual review of safeguarding. Governors are diligent in monitoring the implementation of the school's safeguarding arrangements, including links with external agencies, through close contact with pastoral leaders in the school. Governors fully understand their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and offer extensive support and

challenge so that pastoral leaders feel confident in their roles. As a result, arrangements to protect the wellbeing of pupils are effective.

19. Governors and leaders ensure that they respond to any complaints in a timely and effective manner. All required policies and information for parents is available on the school's website or by request from the school.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

All the relevant standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. Leaders plan the curriculum carefully to ensure that a wide range of subjects is offered appropriate to the needs of pupils. The curriculum enables pupils to develop a firm grounding in all key areas of the curriculum and to develop practical study skills through individual guidance offered by teachers and in study skills sessions within the extra-curricular programme.
21. Most teachers regularly implement the school's initiative to encourage more active pupil participation in lessons. This leads to pupils collaborating enthusiastically when working in a group, seeking shared solutions to problems and learning from one another as they discuss ideas. Pupils enjoy exploring new areas of study through undertaking independent research following the introduction of a bespoke school learning programme.
22. High expectations from leaders and staff ensure that pupils are quick to settle, eager to engage and very well behaved. Pupils are encouraged to be highly articulate. They communicate clearly in class and in their written work. Pupils often display a love of learning in lessons and are keen to increase their knowledge and to deepen their understanding. Pupils of all ages question perceptively and enjoy the challenge of analysing information and debating concepts.
23. Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan well and convey clear expectations. As a result, pupils respond positively and learn effectively. Teaching and planning are tailored to meet pupils' individual needs, including the needs of those who have SEND, which ensures that pupils make good progress.
24. Leaders ensure that an effective system is in place to assess and monitor pupils' progress. In most departments, leaders use data effectively to track pupils' progress and to reflect on outcomes, so that individual pupils can receive support to achieve their full potential. Pupils understand how to improve their work because of the regular and clear feedback offered by their teachers.
25. All pupils make good progress and attain grades at GCSE and A level above those expected for their starting points. Pupils who have SEND value the increased individual support they receive and feel more confident in their learning, which contributes to the good progress they make.
26. Leaders have designed an extensive extra-curricular programme that offers opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding through a range of activities. All pupils are involved in the programme which enables them to develop their skills, increase their self-esteem and develop their leadership skills. Leaders encourage and expect pupils to lead activities, and pupils articulate clearly how their leadership roles increase their self-confidence and enhance their self-esteem.
27. Leaders respond positively when pupils ask to develop existing activities, such as expanding opportunities in outdoor pursuits beyond those offered in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. As a result of leaders' keen support for the extra-curricular programme, pupils can find an area of interest with ease, enabling all pupils to be engaged in activities beyond their academic study. Pupils

speak maturely about how their love of extra-curricular activities complements and provides a healthy balance to their academic studies. Leaders closely monitor the impact of the extra-curricular programme on pupils to ensure that none are either over-committed or denied opportunities to follow their particular interests.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

All the relevant standards are met.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

28. Leaders have planned a curriculum that provides an extensive programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) including relationships and sex education, which meets pupils' needs. Pupils are taught to treat all people with respect reflecting the aims of the school. The successful impact of the school's programme is demonstrated by the respect and mutual tolerance shown by pupils in their day-to-day interactions with their peers and staff. Pupils speak openly about how their PSHE lessons have given them confidence and have helped develop their self-understanding.
29. Leaders provide a wide and varied programme of physical education to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils with particular talents and interest in sport are supported to develop their skills to a high level, and all others are equally encouraged to enjoy recreational activity and to develop a healthy lifestyle. Leaders are careful to ensure that the physical education programme is inclusive and that sporting opportunities are available for all pupils.
30. All pupils are involved in extra-curricular activities. Participation is viewed as a natural and healthy complement to academic work. Most activities are led by pupils and supported by staff. Pupils speak enthusiastically about how their involvement in extra-curricular activities help them to develop leadership skills, self-confidence and resilience as well as enhancing their practical skills and broadening their interests.
31. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is encouraged through the curriculum and evident in the harmonious relationships between pupils from diverse backgrounds. Pupils are able to express their beliefs openly in lessons, assemblies and in the various faith societies. Pupils recognise the intrinsic value of having a clear moral code and the importance of establishing healthy relationships in and out of school.
32. Leaders establish clear expectations of pupils' behaviour, and pupils respond accordingly. Pupils' behave very well in and out of lessons. Pupils value one another and are proud of their school. As a result, misbehaviour and bullying are rare. If bullying does occur, it is dealt with effectively, and appropriate records are kept. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff are extremely positive. Recent initiatives by school leaders to promote stronger relationships between year groups have been successful. For example, younger pupils speak about how the support of sixth formers helps them to settle in school and to feel confident.
33. Pupils are well supervised by staff and pupils feel safe in school. The premises are well maintained, and there is an effective system to ensure that any repairs are made promptly. Arrangements for first aid and medical support in school are effective. The first-aid policy is clear, readily available, and an appropriate number of staff are trained in first aid.
34. Leaders ensure that all relevant health and safety regulations, including those relating to fire safety and evacuation, are understood, and the relevant policies and procedures are implemented

effectively. The school's admission and attendance registers are maintained and kept appropriately, and the school follows up the destinations of pupils who leave the school.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

All the relevant standards are met.

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

35. Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn about right and wrong, British society and the wider world. The PSHE curriculum allows pupils to discuss and understand their legal rights and responsibilities and to examine the role of local and national political institutions. Pupils eagerly seek to broaden their political and social awareness through debate in lessons and in the many extra-curricular clubs and societies. Visiting speakers offer opportunities for pupils to hear and debate topical issues. As a result, pupils have respect for the rule of law and a discerning understanding of current affairs.
36. Pupils are keen to serve the school community in a variety of ways. Older pupils act as form prefects or anti-bullying ambassadors. Pupils speak of how such responsibilities enable them to develop empathy and a sense of personal fulfilment, as well as strengthening the sense of community within the school. Pupils of all ages run or help to run clubs and societies, developing teamwork and their ability to manage others tactfully and successfully.
37. Pupils' willingness to volunteer and to raise money for charity are in line with the school's aim of encouraging pupils to make a difference in their community and beyond. Pupils speak perceptively about how working in local primary schools or involvement with a food bank has developed their self-confidence and expanded their experience of life. Successful pupil initiatives to raise money for charity demonstrate pupil commitment to help those less fortunate than themselves.
38. Pupils from diverse backgrounds mix easily and develop their understanding of different cultures within the city. Pupils learn about different religions through the curriculum and through the extra-curricular faith groups which are open-discussion and support groups. As a result, pupils display a mature understanding of their own faith and that of others and a healthy respect for cultures other than their own.
39. Leaders encourage an open culture in school where difference is celebrated and respected. This ethos is promoted through the PSHE curriculum which encourages respect for all groups of people and is modelled by staff who support societies such as the LGBTQ+ group. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds speak warmly about how well pupils get on with each other.
40. As a result of pupils' feedback, leaders actively encourage pupils to form joint societies with a neighbouring boys' school. Pupils appreciate that these links contribute positively to their personal development and preparation for life after school.
41. Pupils are ambitious, and leaders ensure that appropriate careers guidance is available to help pupils choose subjects and consider career choices. Senior pupils express confidence that the school offers good support as they make choices about higher education. Nearly all pupils go on to a range of universities, often to those with highly competitive entry requirements.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

All the relevant standards are met.

Safeguarding

42. Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils are highly effective. Leaders clearly understand when and how to liaise with external agencies if concerns arise. Any referrals to children's services, the local authority designated officer and the police are made in a timely manner.
43. The safeguarding policy is accessible to staff, parents and pupils via the school website and contains all necessary contact details in school and for local agencies. The policy is up to date and reflects the most recent published guidance.
44. Leaders and managers ensure that pupils know how to stay safe online through the curriculum and also by ensuring that effective filtering systems are in place. Pupils understand the school's requirements about the responsible use of personal devices and, as a result, there are very few breaches of internet protocols. Leaders monitor pupils' use of the school's internet systems so that staff can respond quickly to any pupil who may need pastoral support.
45. Leaders ensure that all staff and volunteers receive safeguarding training as they join the school, and this is updated at regular intervals. Staff are knowledgeable in child protection procedures, including those for online safety, and the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism. Those with designated safeguarding lead responsibilities receive appropriate training and are aware of, and manage, risks for pupils in the school. They understand how to recognise and report a safeguarding concern and are alert to the need to monitor pupils' attendance. Staff report that they are confident to report any low-level concerns about other staff or to self-refer if need arises. Leaders keep careful records of low-level concerns so that any trends or patterns can be identified.
46. As a result of the actions of leaders, pupils feel safe in school and are confident that there is an adult they can easily speak to if they have any concerns.
47. Records are kept appropriately and show that any safeguarding concerns are acted upon promptly. All of the required checks are undertaken to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors. An accurate record of these checks is maintained in a central record of appointments.

The extent to which the school meets standards relating to safeguarding

All the relevant standards are met.

School details

School	King Edward VI High School for Girls
Department for Education number	330/6077
Registered charity number	1159413
Address	King Edward VI High School for Girls Edgbaston Road Birmingham B15 2BU
Website	https://kehs.org.uk
Proprietor	The Schools of King Edward the Sixth in Birmingham
Chair	Ms Lucy Williams
Headteacher	Mrs Kirsty von Malaisé
Age range	10 to 18
Number of pupils	666
Date of previous inspection	March 2019

Information about the school

48. King Edward VI High School is a single-sex school for female pupils located in Birmingham in the West Midlands. It consists of a senior school which includes a sixth form. The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors and is one of a number of schools within the King Edward VI Foundation in the city. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher was appointed in 2020 and a new chair of governors was appointed in 2021.
49. The school has identified 61 pupils who have SEND. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
50. English is an additional language for 19 pupils.
51. The school states that its aims are:
- To impart the joy of learning and enquiry together with intellectual courage, with the resilience and adaptability requisite for this
 - To develop integrity, resolve and self-knowledge, compassion and respect for others
 - To inspire the confidence and purpose to make a difference to our community and beyond.

Inspection details

Inspection dates 3 October 2023 to 5 October 2023

52. A team of six inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.
53. Inspectors undertook a range of inspection activities:
- observation of lessons and activities
 - learning walks with senior leaders
 - discussions with the chair of the governing body and other governors
 - discussions with school leaders, managers and staff
 - discussions with pupils
 - observation of registration periods and assemblies
 - visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
 - examination and discussion of pupils' work
 - examination of a range of policies and documentation provided by the school.
54. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit www.isi.net.

Independent Schools Inspectorate 2023

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