

# School inspection report

27 to 29 February 2024

## **The King's School**

Elmfield

Ambrose Lane

Harpenden

AL5 4DU

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'.

## Contents

<b>SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS.....	4
<b>SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....</b>	<b>5</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....	6
<b>SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....	7
<b>SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....</b>	<b>8</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....	9
<b>SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....</b>	<b>10</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY .....	11
<b>SAFEGUARDING .....</b>	<b>12</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING .....	12
<b>SCHOOL DETAILS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>INSPECTION DETAILS .....</b>	<b>15</b>

## Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders actively promote the wellbeing of pupils. They have a deep understanding of the needs of pupils and are constantly evaluating the school's curricular provision to enhance pupils' learning. Leaders promote the school's aims daily. They have created a diverse community in which mutual respect and integrity is central to all they do. The school's foundations are built on a strong Christian ethos which positively impacts pupils' spiritual growth.
2. Trustees ensure that leaders have the skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively and consistently. Trustees have thorough oversight of school policies and their implementation. Leaders and trustees consistently take appropriate measures to mitigate risk and potential harm to pupils' wellbeing.
3. Leaders closely monitor the progress pupils make and provide appropriate support to individual pupils when needed. Pupils' attainment at the end of the primary and secondary sections of the school is above average.
4. Leaders promote a learning environment in which pupils grow in self-confidence and become increasingly ambitious. Pupils focus well on their learning and value the support they are given. However, at times the feedback teachers provide to pupils is insufficiently detailed. This results in some pupils not knowing how to further improve so they can make even more progress.
5. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and use a range of effective strategies to enable pupils to make good progress overall, compared to their relative starting points. However, some teachers do not consistently give enough consideration to pupils' prior knowledge and understanding when planning lessons.
6. Leaders have implemented a wide-ranging curriculum which actively promotes British values and the rule of law in modern society. Pupils grow in self-confidence and self-awareness by being part of a diverse but inclusive community in which collaborative and shared experiences are prioritised.
7. In the early years setting, leaders have established a well-resourced and child-centred learning environment. Children made good progress relative to their starting points in all the developmental areas of the curriculum.
8. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in a variety of sporting, cultural, creative and academic activities. A number of these activities are initiated by pupils. Leaders listen to the views of pupils and provide considerable opportunities for pupil leadership, which has a positive impact on pupils growing in self-confidence.
9. There is a clear careers programme to support pupils moving to post-16 providers and possible future pathways. This programme is currently being redeveloped to provide more opportunities for pupils to consider possible careers but these plans have not yet been realised.
10. Leaders manage the safeguarding of pupils effectively. They implement a safeguarding policy which follows the latest statutory guidance. Records of safeguarding concerns and subsequent action taken, staff training and liaison with external agencies are all appropriate.

## 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 teachers use evidence from pupils' previous learning in their lesson planning to enable pupils to make more consistent progress
- strengthen the consistency and detail of teachers' written and verbal feedback so it informs pupils how to improve their learning more effectively
- accelerate the developments to the school's careers programme to fully support pupils in making decisions about their future pathways.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Leaders promote the school's aims and values of kindness, integrity, commitment and togetherness. The school aims are underpinned by a strong Christian ethos which pervades all areas of school life. Leaders have established a community which is mutually supportive and inclusive, and actively enhance pupils' wellbeing.
12. Trustees have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. They check that senior leaders have appropriate skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively and consistently. Trustees challenge school leaders and scrutinise the implementation of policies and procedures. Each trustee has a specific responsibility on which they report to the trustee board. Overall trustees have a comprehensive oversight of the work of school leaders.
13. Leaders have a clear understanding of what the school does well and what needs further development. They use the information from their quality assurance to identify what they will improve. Leaders listen to the views of pupils in helping to inform these plans so that the impact is centred on pupils and their personal and academic achievement. As a result, pupils make positive progress in their learning, and grow in both self-confidence and self-esteem.
14. Leaders monitor pupils' progress thoroughly, so that targeted support and learning strategies are put in place for individual pupils. Teachers work closely with learning support staff to ensure that all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make good progress overall when compared to their starting points.
15. Leaders check the quality of teaching and listen to pupils' views about their learning. Consequently, leaders identify areas for developing teaching in order to enhance pupil learning. However, some teachers do not use evidence from previous learning effectively in their planning and consequently pupils' progress in lessons can be inconsistent.
16. Leaders in the early years have high levels of skill and knowledge appropriate to their roles. They have created a child-centred learning environment in which children's progress is checked carefully, and individualised support is put in place for each child as required. Leaders have a robust approach to safeguarding, health and safety and risk assessment to ensure a safe environment in which the children's wellbeing and learning is enhanced.
17. Leaders effectively mitigate any potential harm to pupils' wellbeing. Staff are well trained in identifying and managing risk. Risk assessments, across all areas of school including educational trips, are effectively implemented and regularly reviewed. Pupil welfare planning is thorough, with leaders having appropriate liaison with external agencies.
18. Leaders effectively manage any complaints that the school receives, with appropriate record keeping in place. Communication to parents is regular and informative, both in terms of pupils' progress, school policy and updates on school events.
19. Leaders have established a school community, without discrimination, in which each pupil is valued as an individual. The school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

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

**20. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. Leaders' deep knowledge of the pupils enables the well-planned curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. As a result, pupils can develop their skills in the key areas of linguistic development, mathematical and scientific understanding and their use of technology. Pupils progress well in their ability to express views and opinions articulately and persuasively. Pupils make good progress in developing their creative, literary and aesthetic skills which are evident around the school through the many examples of high-quality art and writing on display.
22. There is a well-planned assessment framework in place which is used effectively. Leaders and staff use the information well to measure the progress that pupils make from their starting points. Assessment information is used to help identify and support the needs of all pupils, including pupils with SEND, and also those who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Pupils generally make good progress in response to targeted support provided both in and outside lessons.
23. Leaders in the early years have developed a curriculum in which children explore the world around them through play and more focused group activities both indoors and using the safe outdoor spaces. Children make good progress with respect to the early learning goals. Children are encouraged to choose their learning topic during activity time. Children make good progress in expressing their ideas using age-appropriate language.
24. Leaders' oversight of teaching across the school ensures that it does not discriminate against pupils nor does it undermine fundamental British values of democracy. Teachers consistently demonstrate good subject knowledge. Most teachers use their detailed knowledge of pupils' needs and prior attainment to plan lessons effectively, using an array of teaching methods, enabling pupils to enjoy their learning and gain an in-depth understanding of the subject. However, some teachers do not fully take account of the prior aptitudes of all pupils in their planning so that all pupils can make strong progress and build on what they already know and can do.
25. Pupils are well-behaved and have a positive attitude to their learning. They try hard with their learning and take pride in their work. Older pupils especially work effectively to make good academic progress, and increase their levels of self-confidence and feeling of wellbeing.
26. Pupil progress is supported by the feedback that pupils receive from their teachers. Pupils respond positively to both written and verbal advice from teachers and feel that their progress is more rapid with individualised guidance from their teachers. However, some teachers are inconsistent in the detail and frequency of their feedback, which can have a detrimental effect on pupils' progress.
27. Across the school pupils make good progress relative to their starting points. The attainment of pupils at GCSE is above average. Pupils' level of attainment in the primary section of the school is above average.
28. Leaders provide opportunities in sport, music, drama and academic enrichment, which enable pupils to further enhance their skills and both their sense of achievement and wellbeing.

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

**29. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

30. Leaders actively promote the Christian ethos of the school which is interwoven through all aspects of the curriculum. Pupils' personal moral compass develops as they mature and this positively impacts their relationships with each other. They play a prominent role in assemblies, taking prayers in tutor time, and older pupils enthusiastically lead bible study groups. Consequently, pupils' spiritual growth and self-knowledge rapidly develops.
31. Leaders have recently reviewed and implemented considerable changes to the delivery and content of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education which incorporates relationships and sex education. The curriculum reflects the school's Christian ethos and places a particular emphasis on pupils' wellbeing. Pupils value the opportunity to discuss challenging life issues which enables them to enhance their understanding of the needs of everyone across the community, including those with protected characteristics. The effective delivery of PSHE impacts positively on pupils' self-awareness and their sense of mutual trust and respect for others.
32. Pupils respond positively to the opportunities to develop their physical health through a well-planned physical education (PE) curriculum and sporting activities. Pupils participate in a number of individual and team sports such as netball, football and tag-rugby. Pupils talk with great pride about the success they achieved in table-tennis and athletics, which has had a positive effect on the growth of their self-confidence. The delivery of the PE curriculum focuses on equal opportunities enabling the positive impact on physical and mental health to benefit all pupils.
33. Leaders in the early years have established a setting in which positive relationships and kindness between children is prioritised. Children flourish in a nurturing environment where they are valued as an individual. The skills for developing good friendships are taught in an age-appropriate way, focusing on themes such "how to be a good friend" and "reconciliation when things go wrong". Consequently, children behave well in the early years setting and grow up respecting their peers.
34. Leaders implement appropriate behaviour and anti-bullying policies. When poor behaviour or bullying does occur, staff respond swiftly with appropriate action taken. Detailed records of pupils' behaviour are maintained and are monitored by leaders to identify any patterns, and to ensure victims and perpetrators are appropriately supported. Leaders use a variety of strategies to enable pupils to reflect on their actions and learn from their mistakes. Mutual respect between pupils and staff ensures that high standards of behaviour are observed around the school.
35. Leaders implement suitable health and safety policies and procedures, ensuring the school site is a safe and healthy environment. Maintenance records for the premises and accommodation are appropriately kept with any issues rapidly addressed. The provision for first aid and the mitigation of the risk from fire are robust, and in line with the school's appropriate policies. Health and safety training records for staff are effectively maintained. Suitable numbers of staff are trained in first aid including paediatric first aid for those who work in the early years setting. Fire equipment is serviced appropriately, fire drills take place at least termly and evacuation routes are suitably maintained.
36. Supervision levels throughout the school are appropriate with suitably qualified staff in the early years setting. The school's attendance and admission registers are accurately maintained, and the local authority is informed as required when pupils leave or join the school.



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

**37. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

38. The school community is culturally and ethnically diverse. Leaders have firmly established the values of the school, prioritising the importance of mutual respect and inclusivity. Pupils talk with pride about the diverse nature of their community and the fact that every pupil is valued as an individual.
39. Leaders actively promote fundamental British values through the curriculum. Building on their visit to the Houses of Parliament younger pupils rapidly gain an understanding of the importance of democracy, which is reflected in the election and operation of various school councils. Pupils increasingly understand the importance of the rule of law in modern society, as typified by younger pupils drawing up their own classroom code of conduct. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong which is reflected in their increasingly mature acceptance of responsibility for their own behaviour. Teachers facilitate opportunities for age-appropriate debate and discussion often linked to moral dilemmas, such as misuse of the internet, and events in the wider world. These discussions have a positive impact on pupils' growing social awareness and their tolerance of differing views.
40. Leaders model the values of the school. They listen to the views of pupils and encourage participation in serving or representing others. Pupils respond positively to the opportunity to serve others in a democratic society and talk proudly of their achievements in bringing about change and raising awareness of important issues. Pupils led a recent "cultural awareness day" which helped younger pupils increase their understanding of social and cultural issues.
41. Through effective planning across a number of subject areas, pupils can apply their numeracy skills to real life economic and business scenarios. In a typical example, older pupils put together a business plan for running their own stall for a summer fete. Younger pupils consider real-life economic considerations, such as debating the differences between financial "needs and wants" when constructing a personal budget.
42. Through play, children in the early years learn how to control themselves and understand the needs of others. They are increasingly able to understand the importance of rules, how to work together and how to resolve any differences through mutual respect. Children learn about the world and British society through songs, stories and role play.
43. Pupils' social development is enhanced through volunteering to help others both in the school and local community. Older pupils act as mentors for those in the younger groups while others lead enrichment activities, such as the French conversation club. Pupils play an active role in community work such as organising a Christmas party for local senior citizens. They appreciate helping others.
44. The school's careers programme gives limited opportunities for older pupils to gain an understanding of the links between their post-16 choices and possible later careers. Pupils are ambitious and value the impartial guidance that the school already makes available, including a careers fair, but there is a desire for more opportunities to consider future pathways. Leaders have developed plans to enhance the careers programme but these plans have not come to fruition.

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

**45. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

46. The school has a clear and appropriate safeguarding policy, in line with the latest statutory guidance. Leaders implement the policy effectively promoting the welfare of pupils. Leaders identify and mitigate risks that may affect the wellbeing of pupils. They have established a robust safeguarding culture. Pupils feel safe and reassured by the many contact points with trusted adults to whom they can turn if concerns arise.
47. Trustees have comprehensive oversight of safeguarding arrangements. They conduct a thorough annual review of the safeguarding policy and monitor its implementation through regular reports from safeguarding leaders. Trustees regularly visit the school to oversee safeguarding records and they are alerted to any safeguarding concerns that may arise. Trustees have been trained appropriately.
48. Leaders ensure that safeguarding concerns are suitably recorded, and referrals are made promptly to the relevant external agencies. There are well-trained safeguarding teams in both primary and secondary sections. The safeguarding teams, special educational needs coordinator and mental health lead work closely together to provide support to individual pupils.
49. Staff are trained effectively in child protection procedures and feel confident to report a concern about a pupil. They are aware of the possible risks in the local community from radicalisation, extremism and county lines. Low level concerns are reported appropriately and are carefully monitored to ensure any patterns of behaviour are identified and action taken as required.
50. Pupils know how to stay safe online. Leaders listen to pupils' concerns about online safety and regularly review the school's procedures. Suitable oversight of the school's filtering and monitoring systems for online systems are in place.
51. In the early years, leaders ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place. Appropriate recruitment checks are completed for staff and volunteers including prohibition from childcare. Suitable procedures are in place for the handover of children from parents to staff and vice versa at the start and end of each school day.
52. Leaders ensure that safer recruitment checks are completed for all staff, supply staff, volunteers and trustees. A suitable record of appointments is in place and staff files include the evidence needed to confirm that the required safeguarding checks have been made.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 53. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## School details

<b>School</b>	The King's School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	919/6224
<b>Registered charity number</b>	291913
<b>Address</b>	The King's School Elmfield Ambrose Lane Harpenden Hertfordshire AL5 4DU
<b>Phone number</b>	01582 767566
<b>Email address</b>	office@thekingsschool.com
<b>Website</b>	www.thekingsschool.com
<b>Chair of Trustees</b>	Mr Ashraf Farahat
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Andy Reeves
<b>Age range</b>	4 to 16
<b>Number of pupils</b>	171
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 to 19 September 2019

## Information about the school

54. The King's School is a co-educational independent day school located in Harpenden, Hertfordshire. The school consists of primary and secondary sections. The school is owned and managed by Kingdom Education Limited and is a registered charity; whose trustees form the school's governing body. Since the previous inspection a new chair of trustees was appointed in July 2021 and the current headteacher took up his post in September 2020.
55. There are 9 pupils in the early years setting comprising one Reception class.
56. The school has identified 29 pupils who have SEND. Very few pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
57. English is an additional language for 64 pupils.
58. The school states its aims are to provide a Christian education in a spiritually enriching and caring community. The principles of academic excellence, Christian commitment and a nurturing environment are interwoven into the school's values. These are promoted through "The King's School Way", which places emphasis on integrity and mutual respect.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

27 to 29 February 2024

59. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

60. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration and form periods
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with staff, school leaders and members of the trustee body
- discussions with pupils
- visits to teaching areas and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school
- tour of the school premises.

61. 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

**Independent Schools Inspectorate**

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)