



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

KING'S COLLEGE SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

King's College School

The junior school was inspected at the same time and a separate report published.

Full Name of School/College **King's College School**

DfE Number **315/6000**

Registered Charity Number **310024**

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Email Address **s.doherty@kcs.org.uk**

Headmaster **Mr Andrew Halls MA**

Chair of Governors **Mr John Jarvis QC, MA**

Age Range **13 to 18**

Total Number of Pupils **855**

Gender of Pupils **Mixed**

Numbers by 13-16: **490**

16-18 : **365**

Number of Boarders Total: **0**

Inspection dates **11 Oct 2011 to 12 Oct 2011**

09 Nov 2011 to 11 Nov 2011

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in November 2005.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Founded by royal charter in 1829 as the junior department of King's College, London, King's College School was originally located in the Strand. It moved to Wimbledon in 1897 and is now a selective, independent day school for boys aged 7 to 18 and girls aged 16 to 18. By Act of Parliament, the Corporation of King's College School is a body corporate constituted for the purpose of carrying on the school. Its functions are discharged by the Governing Body.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide an education, which enables bright boys and girls to develop independent and enquiring minds and realise their academic potential, in a safe, friendly and mutually supportive environment. It seeks to offer every opportunity for strong personal growth across an extensive range of creative, cultural, sporting and service activities. The school is Anglican, but welcomes pupils of all faiths and backgrounds. It has a strong commitment to both its charitable role in the community and its duty to develop responsible citizens.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, the senior school comprised 855 pupils aged from 13 to 18 years, (770 boys and 85 girls), of whom 365 were in the sixth form. The great majority have parents of British nationality, but a small number of other ethnic groups are represented in the school. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified 101 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), just under half of whom receive specialist learning support. Eighty pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), but only three have needed and received English language support. Well over half of all entrants at age 13 come from King's College Junior School. Scores in standardized tests taken on entry indicate that, in every age group, the average ability of the pupils is far above the national average. The girls' academic profile is slightly higher than the boys'.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection, changes include the appointment of new headmasters in both the senior and junior schools, the admission of girls into the sixth form in 2010, the development of the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB) course in the sixth form, and the opening of a new sports pavilion shared with the junior school and six new science laboratories. The school has also acquired two pre-preparatory schools in the local area.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following tables.

| School | NC name |
|------------------|---------|
| Fourth Form | Year 9 |
| Lower Fifth Form | Year 10 |
| Upper Fifth Form | Year 11 |
| Lower Sixth Form | Year 12 |
| Upper Sixth Form | Year 13 |

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' learning and achievements is excellent. They are extremely well educated in line with the school's aims. King's College School deserves its reputation for academic excellence. The dialogue between teachers and pupils is central to the school's ethos, inspiring a genuine love of learning, independent thinking and rational debate. The broad, challenging curriculum engages the pupils' commitment and interest, offering demanding options to challenge the more able, whilst also providing highly effective learning support where needed. It is enriched by an exceptional outreach programme of community service and a rich variety of outstanding creative, cultural and sporting activities, which promote inclusivity as well as variety. Standards of drama and music are excellent. Pupils with EAL or SEND make rapid progress, whilst the gifted produce research essays of the highest quality. Effective monitoring of pupils' workloads is, however, not yet entirely consistent.
- 2.2 The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. It is supported by exemplary pastoral care and by robust welfare, health and safety procedures. The generosity of the staff is a hallmark of the school, leading to an ethos of care, support and stimulus, in which pupils develop strong levels of self-awareness and self-esteem. The quality of tutorial support is rightly acknowledged by pupils and parents as outstanding. Relationships are excellent. Pupils show concern for each other's welfare and their strong moral, social and cultural awareness is highlighted in their commitment to and involvement in the service of others, both locally and worldwide.
- 2.3 The school's aims are being fully realised, a strong testimony to exceptional leadership, as well as to excellent governance. Caring commitment and clear direction have succeeded in empowering senior and middle managers and in persuading staff to share their educational vision. Almost all pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire praised the quality of their education, both academic and extra-curricular. A significant minority felt their workload was not always effectively monitored and the inspectors agreed. The school promotes excellent links with parents, whose replies to their pre-inspection questionnaire showed almost unanimous support for all aspects of school life. The school has tackled all requirements of the previous report. Recommendations concerning the format of reports and the provision of careers education in the middle school have been acted upon successfully.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Increase support for pupils to manage the demands of the very full academic and extra-curricular education which achieves such successful outcomes.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills

- 3.1 The overall quality of the pupils' achievements is excellent. They are extremely well educated in line with the school's challenging academic aims. Their commitment to and hunger for learning, supplemented by dedicated and often inspiring teaching and an academically challenging curriculum, lead to a level of achievement that is not just consistent with 'high academic ability', but transcends that descriptor, not least in their performance in IB examinations. Equally notable are the pupils' independence of thought and their commitment to scholarly learning. Research essays perused were remarkable for vigorous innovative enquiry, whilst pupils with EAL or SEND also make rapid progress.
- 3.2 The pupils display excellent levels of understanding, knowledge and skills. They are highly articulate. An outstanding ability to address important issues in an informed and vigorous fashion was observed in defence of an appointed House of Lords during a sixth form politics lesson, and in societies, such as 'Provoke', in which pupils argued cogently with an invited speaker who presented a vivid picture of Palestinian suffering. Pupils are no less fluent and persuasive in written assignments, many of which display a high level of creativity. They are adept at utilising their strong information and communication technology (ICT), literacy, numeracy and mathematical skills across the curriculum. Physical prowess is shown over a wide range of sports.
- 3.3 Achievements in art, drama and music are also excellent. This last summer saw a triumphant Edinburgh Festival performance of *Caligula*, and rehearsals for *The Madness of King George* showed achievement of a similarly high degree. The symphony orchestra demonstrates exceptionally high standards for pupils' ages, consistently so across an ensemble of sixty who often play in public arenas. Musicians play in national ensembles, regularly achieving diplomas, including a recent Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music. Drama pupils engage in professional work, one taking the lead in a major television series. Four pupils are Arkwright scholars, sports teams and individuals succeed at regional and national levels, rowers represent Great Britain and the school has a consistent record of success in mathematics and science Olympiads, in external essay and public speaking competitions and in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE). Large numbers excel in the various activities of the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), including achieving excellent leadership skills.
- 3.4 Attainment in public examinations is excellent and high in relation to the pupils' abilities. The following analysis uses the national data for 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. The pupils' results in GCSE have been far above the national average for all maintained schools and significantly well above the average for maintained selective schools, with nine out of every ten results being graded A* or A and nearly two-thirds A*. Pupils taking IGCSE examinations in mathematics, physical education (PE) and the sciences, achieved similar levels of excellence. Over the same three-year period, the pupils' performance in the IB was well above both the worldwide and UK averages, with their exceptional average of 39.2 points placing the school amongst the highest achieving UK schools. Of the total number of UK pupils gaining maximum points, over a quarter came from the school. This level of excellence was

maintained in 2011. Results in external examinations, nationally standardized measures of progress and inspection evidence indicate that progress throughout the school is excellent, when compared with the average for pupils of similar ability. Almost all Year 13 leavers enter higher education, with a quarter gaining places at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

- 3.5 Pupils have an infectious, unselfconscious intellectual curiosity. Their healthy work ethic is complemented by an enjoyment of co-operative endeavour and an ability to persevere with tasks assigned to them.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)

- 3.6 The quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent. The school provides a rich, wide-ranging and stimulating curriculum, enhanced by an extensive range of extra-curricular and community service activities, which enables pupils to discover their strengths and talents in order to realise their true potential, in line with the school's academic aims. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire were almost unanimous in their appreciation of the high quality of curricular and extra-curricular provision.

- 3.7 The curriculum facilitates the attainment of high standards in relation to pupils' ages and abilities and is suitable for all needs. In Years 9 to 11, pupils study an extensive range of subjects. This prepares them well for the academic breadth required by IB studies later. To provide appropriate challenge, the school maintains teaching of the three individual sciences throughout and offers four modern foreign languages, including Mandarin, up to IGCSE, plus a one year IGCSE course in Italian or Russian for the large number who have taken French a year early. Provision is also made for pupils to study additional mathematics. Significant numbers opt to take Latin and some take Greek. The more able pupils study eleven subjects, together with a compulsory religious studies (RS) short course. In the sixth form, all pupils take six subjects from the IB options, in addition to the core requirements.

- 3.8 The curriculum is enriched by an outstanding extra-curricular programme. A commitment to excellence, inclusivity and variety leads to high participation rates for pupils of all abilities. The highly talented excel in symphony concerts, dramatic productions, public speaking and major sports fixtures, whilst others participate enthusiastically in B teams, individual sports, lunchtime recitals and house competitions, some very imaginative. The free choice of sports and the extensive creative provision allow a wide range of pupils of all ages to experience success at high levels, including nationally. Cerebral pursuits include chess, debating and problem solving. Provision is made to help prepare able mathematicians and scientists for entry into Olympiads, whilst the range of societies and lectures across a wide range of subjects includes classics lectures and those of the Geographical Association.

- 3.9 Exemplary links with the local community underpin an exceptional outreach programme of community service. An educational project involves pupils in helping run workshops to inspire local maintained secondary school pupils to raise their aspirations. Others work in special schools or deliver ICT and art classes at local libraries. A large proportion of pupils join the CCF or the DofE, the former much in evidence at a moving Remembrance Day parade.

- 3.10 A strong learning enrichment programme combines highly effective support for the specified needs of pupils with SEND, and for the few with EAL who need language support, with subject-specific help and learning skills. Parent and departmental workshops are arranged. Extension activities are provided for the most able in all subjects, supplemented by lectures from eminent academics. IB core requirements offer excellent opportunities for depth of research and independent study.
- 3.11 A thought-provoking personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme covering social, health, civic and cultural issues, is timetabled in Years 9 to 11 and delivered through lectures and 'follow up' discussions with tutors in the sixth form. Since the previous inspection, a comprehensive careers programme has been integrated into middle school PSHE. Work experience includes leading workshops in art, drama and music for partner schools. Sixth-formers benefit from an extensive higher education and university applications support programme.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.12 The quality of teaching is excellent. It is a major factor in the pupils' excellent academic achievements and fully meets the school's aims to enable pupils to realise their academic potential and to promote independent and enquiring minds. Parents and pupils alike appreciate both the exceptional quality of most teaching and the willingness of teachers to make themselves available outside lessons for pupils who need their help.
- 3.13 The teaching staff are highly qualified. Their subject knowledge and expertise are commensurately high, and they encompass an enabling variety of style and approach. For example, Year 9 English pupils were guided into exploring the power of dialogue through ad hoc presentations on a previously-unseen extract from *Death of a Salesman*, imaginatively investigating family tensions. Teachers convey scholarly commitment to and enthusiasm for their subjects. High expectations and a strong sense of scholarship prevail, minds are changed, ideas cultivated, opinions shared and knowledge forms deep roots. A Year 12 theory of knowledge lesson pitched pupils studying the nature of free will into consideration of emotionally challenging events, such as the My Lai massacre; subtle probing led pupils to grasp the issues involved and address them with panache. Astute planning enables appropriately challenging tasks to be set in most lessons and individual help to be offered, when needed. A topic on female reproductive hormones in Year 11 was extended to IB level to give pupils a fuller understanding.
- 3.14 Teaching is outstanding in fostering interest and independence. The pupils' needs are fully understood, and teaching regularly uses a range of strategies to engage and sustain the pupils' concentrated and often active involvement in lessons, including effective use of ICT. Pair work and individual or group presentations were observed to lead to very successful learning, as in a Year 12 multi-faceted examination of Act II of *King Lear*, which featured a series of presentations and subsequent discussion, always centred on the pupils' own discoveries. Management of time is excellent. Full use is made of excellent resources, efficiently maintained. Pupils value their teachers' passion – and wit. Pupils observed that teachers treat them as adults. Many teachers and tutors check the pupils' individual workloads, but co-operation between subjects is not consistent and some uncoordinated thinking, when setting homework, especially in the sixth form, leads to these becoming hard to manage on occasions.

- 3.15 All pupils interviewed considered themselves well supported, clearly briefed, and always able further to consult teachers if necessary. They benefit from outstanding personalised constructive comments in most teachers' marking. However, the excellent practice observed in most subjects is not entirely consistent across the whole curriculum.
- 3.16 The school has devised comprehensive arrangements for the pupils' performance to be evaluated, which reflect both the school's aims and national norms. Electronic systems enable a detailed system of tracking pupils' progress and reporting it to parents. An at-risk register enables identification and monitoring of under-performing pupils. Induction programmes for new staff have been strengthened, and increased mutual lesson observation is raising standards. The school's teaching ethos has been referred to as 'scholarly and gentle' – a phrase which incisively encapsulates the reasons for the excellence of its teaching.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent. It testifies strongly to the school's outstanding realisation of its pastoral aims and its commitment to each pupil's strong personal growth.
- 4.2 The pupils' outstanding spiritual awareness derives from a safe, secure and supportive learning environment, which allows them to develop a strong sense of self worth. They participate eagerly in a wide range of activities, growing in self-confidence and learning to work with and respect their peers. Pupils passionately discuss and debate values, as in RS and PSHE lessons and in tutor groups, where pupils of all age groups were observed participating eagerly and unselfconsciously in discussions on whether war can be just and how Britain should deal with immigration. They listen to thought-provoking lectures and assemblies and attend weekly chapel services and Christian events such as the Remembrance Day service. They explore their inner selves in the creative arts. Through all these activities, they are led to appreciate the non-material side of life and to reflect on its importance. Pupils of other faiths benefit from their own weekly assemblies. Pupils readily grasp the excellent opportunities offered by the multi-faceted nature of school life to consider questions of identity and the importance of relationships.
- 4.3 The pupils are guided by an outstanding moral compass and are reflective about individual choices and the consequences of their actions. They develop a clear sense of right and wrong. A sixth-form economics lesson was enlivened by debate on whether taxation on tobacco was exploitative of dependency and weakness. Pupils conform to the school's code of conduct and are well behaved, confident and courteous at all times. Many are outward-looking, showing strong moral fibre and making a commitment to regular service in the community, whether preparing displays, workshops and shows for partner primary schools or working with the local homeless. Extensive charitable fund-raising, often imaginatively conceived, also shows the pupils' moral sense in action.
- 4.4 The social development of the pupils is exceptional. They are assured, articulate and thoughtful. Relationships are excellent. Behaviour in class and around the school is also excellent. Pupils eagerly accept roles of responsibility, whether in the CCF or in the prefect and mentoring systems and show strong teamwork skills in musical ensembles, in drama productions, on and behind stage, and on the sports field. Sixth-formers direct plays; some house plays are written by pupils. Civic awareness is strengthened through initiatives such as the Young Citizen's passport in Year 10. Outstanding social awareness is promoted by the community service programmes, which bring King's pupils together with pupils of very different social backgrounds and helps them grow in understanding and empathy, whether helping improve pupils' fluency in English in local maintained secondary schools or helping in special schools for the disabled. Conservation projects mirror this awareness of social responsibility.

The pupils' cultural awareness is excellent. Their understanding of their own and other cultures is strong. The school is a multi-cultural community, which offers many opportunities for pupils to learn from each other. Their cultural awareness is extended through visits which take advantage of the diverse heritages, sites and cultural events which form part of life in London. Pupils gain first-hand experience of other cultures on the numerous trips abroad, whether it be teaching in the partner

school in Zambia or going on a European language exchange. The inclusion of Russian and Chinese in the curriculum and the study of world literature in the IB English course also broaden pupils' cultural horizons.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.5 The quality of pastoral care is excellent. Together with effective implementation of the comprehensive arrangements for pupils' welfare, health and safety, it makes an indispensable contribution to the pupils' personal development and well-being, in line with the school's aims. A caring, supportive ethos, based on Christian values, permeates school life, fostering a culture in which pupils rapidly gain in self-esteem and self-awareness.
- 4.6 Pupils are allocated to houses and have a tutor who remains with them throughout their time in the school. This tutor system is regarded, rightly, as the bedrock upon which the school's outstanding pastoral care is built. Tutors get to know their tutees extremely well and the close relationship engendered fosters high standards of appropriate personalised care. They are extremely well supported by heads of house. The pastoral system is enhanced by the chaplaincy and the availability of two counsellors. There is thus a matrix of staff, able to act on or respond to concerns. Teachers and tutors share their mid-morning refreshment break in the dining hall with pupils who need their help, an unusual facet of provision which testifies to the excellent relationships prevailing. Daily form meetings enable swift electronic dissemination of notices. Excellent induction procedures help pupils settle in. The integration of girls into the school community has been seamless, thanks to detailed planning and care to ensure a smooth transition to a co-educational sixth form.
- 4.7 The excellent relationships in the school generate a supportive environment, in which all pupils feel safe and valued. The vast majority of pupils feel there is always someone to turn to if they have academic or personal difficulties. Pupils' workloads are generally, but not always, effectively monitored. The pupils respect and approve of the school's system of rewards and sanctions, but a minority questioned its consistent implementation, which they saw as a minor irritant in otherwise extremely caring support. A thought-provoking anti-bullying programme, delivered within PSHE lessons, is highly effective. Pupils say that bullying incidents are rare and that when they do occur, the school's approach is prompt, firm and fair.
- 4.8 The safeguarding of pupils is a major priority; the comprehensive policy and procedures are implemented effectively, including appropriate training and liaison with local safeguarding agencies. All necessary measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. Fire practices are recorded accurately and fire notices are displayed throughout the campus. Health and safety procedures are effective, and safety documentation, including risk assessments, is extremely thorough. The health and safety committee meets regularly and conducts injury audits. The requirements of the previous inspection report have been met. A written first aid policy is now extant. Accidents are suitably recorded and facilities for, and the care of, pupils who become ill during the school day are very good. An appropriate plan is in place to improve educational access for pupils with disabilities. Pupils understand the importance of choosing a healthy diet and grasp opportunities to take regular physical exercise. School meals are nutritious and give plenty of choice; although healthy options can run out for latecomers. The admission and attendance registers are accurately maintained and stored.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is excellent. The extremely high standards of the pupils' achievements and personal development testify strongly to the governors' clear vision and strong strategic thinking, which enable the school to meet its challenging aims. Parents' responses to their pre-inspection questionnaire indicate their strong approval of the school's governance and of the values it promotes.
- 5.2 The Governing Body's structure and procedures are meticulously planned and clearly set out in detail in the document *Governance: Rules and Regulations*. A well defined structure of committees, restructured in recent years, provides a framework which enables effective oversight of the school. This is supplemented by a system of governor portfolios, where a named governor takes delegated responsibility for a particular area of school life. Termly shadowing visits enable some governors to observe teaching and learning at first hand, thus extending their insight into the day to day life of the school. Records are kept of the regular programme of governors' training, which includes use of external trainers.
- 5.3 Governors discharge their responsibilities for educational standards and financial planning very effectively. The school is extremely well resourced and staffed. ICT facilities are outstanding and the library is well-stocked and attractive. An ambitious 10 year site development plan for all four schools is under consideration. Governors act as critical and supportive friends. Working relationships between governance and senior management are positive, built on mutual respect. Feedback from interviews with staff, when they leave the school, is reported to the education committee.
- 5.4 The Board is highly effective in discharging its responsibilities for safeguarding the pupils' welfare, health and safety. The compliance and policies committee reviews all policies. The secure, comprehensive child protection policy and procedures are effectively implemented and reviewed annually. The bullying register is also checked. There is similar comprehensive oversight of health and safety. All governors have been trained in child protection within the last three years, including local safeguarding agency procedures. The governor responsible for child protection liaises closely with the designated person in both junior and senior schools. All requirements of the previous inspection report have been met.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.5 The quality of the school's leadership and management is excellent. The outstanding quality of the pupils' achievements and of their personal development points to exceptional standards. Almost all parents and pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaires praised the leadership and management of the school.
- 5.6 Strategic vision, clear direction, strong resolve, an eye for detail and a basic care and compassion from the headmaster and from his senior colleagues, both appointed since the previous inspection, are producing outstanding leadership which is maintaining and improving the school's realisation of its academic and pastoral aims. Oversight of the Corporation's four schools is lodged in a board of management, which reports to the Governing Body, whilst experience and new blood have been combined in an extensive senior school management team, in

which everyone has a clearly delineated role. Excellent self-evaluation and careful and sensitive communication skills ensure that every aspect of school life is kept under highly effective review. The staff's trust and support have been earned. A generosity of spirit underpins the staff's total commitment to their pupils and to the school.

- 5.7 A rigorous, supportive appraisal process, comprising annual departmental and biennial full school reviews, ensures that staff are held accountable for the quality of their performance. Middle managers, both academic and pastoral, are highly effective; they take their responsibilities seriously, appreciate being trusted to lead and manage and feel valued. The heads of department meet termly, whilst a smaller academic policy committee offers the opportunity for productive consideration of academic initiatives. Lesson observations within and between departments are now formally required and the in-service training (INSET) co-ordinator ensures training includes good observation practice. An excellent five-year development plan has been put in place. It sits alongside the governors' ten-year site development plan, and departmental plans feed into it.
- 5.8 Management is highly successful in securing and motivating excellent staff and ensuring that they are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all pupils and in safeguarding their welfare, health and safety. Secure safer recruitment procedures are effectively implemented. Criticisms in the previous report have been tackled and put right. The child protection officers are appropriately trained in local safeguarding agency procedures and liaise with the delegated officer. Excellent schemes for induction and in-service training are in place, including training in health and safety, fire safety and safeguarding procedures. Resources are excellent, with exemplary ICT systems, including the King's Information Management (KIM) system, the portal and the intranet. Financial management and care for the site and buildings are excellent. Support staff are highly efficient and make an important contribution to the school's caring ethos.

5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.9 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. This effective partnership is a significant factor in the school's realisation of its pastoral aims.
- 5.10 Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive and indicated an exceptionally high level of satisfaction with the education and support that their children receive. Parents agreed unanimously that information about all aspects of school life was readily available, while almost all confirmed their satisfaction with their children's academic progress, the school's curricular and co-curricular provision, its promotion of worthwhile attitudes, the behaviour of its pupils, how it communicates with them, and the way in which it is managed. Positive comments greatly outweighed the small handful of negative responses.
- 5.11 Parents receive all the information required by regulation and are able to obtain further information on every aspect of school life from the attractive and easily navigated website. In addition, parents receive a written newsletter twice a year. The newly introduced parent portal allows access to information for each individual child, with details of their lesson and homework timetables and a complete record of reports and grades since joining the school. E-mail communication is frequent and parental queries receive prompt responses from staff. A rapid and effective emergency communication system has recently been introduced to notify parents of logistical problems such as a change to pick-up times.

- 5.12 Since the previous inspection, the format of reports to parents has been radically revised. Reporting is now entirely electronic. Teachers' comments are constructive, most offering advice for improvement and the grading system is clearly explained. In addition, the school organises an annual parents' meeting for each year group, plus specific meetings in relation to option choices in Years 9 and 11. A range of valuable information evenings offers guidance to parents on topics such as drugs, cyber-bullying, learning strategies and how to help their children prepare for examinations.
- 5.13 The parent-tutor relationship underpins the school's pastoral care and ensures that a child's education and welfare is a mutually supportive enterprise. Parents praise highly the care, support and guidance provided by their child's tutor, and the ease of communication and concomitant speed of response. They are actively encouraged to contact tutors to follow up concerns.
- 5.14 The school's complaints policy meets requirements. Most concerns are resolved quickly in what parents describe as a 'caring and effective manner'.
- 5.15 Parents support the school in a wide variety of ways – providing information at careers evenings or sharing their areas of expertise on the Governing Body. The Friends of KCS is an enthusiastic and active association, promoting both social and fund-raising events. The sums raised for the school have been substantial, funding sophisticated items of equipment for the science department, an electronic score board and giving support to music and sports tours. Their current sponsorship of paralympians is a fine example of the commitment of the whole school community to furthering the aims of the school.

What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Mr John Sugden | Reporting Inspector |
| Mrs Paula Cross | Assistant Principal, HMC school |
| Mrs Glynne Butt | Former Headmistress, GSA school |
| Mrs Barbara Denning | Former Director of Sixth Form Studies, GSA school |
| Mr Julian Johnson-Munday | Headmaster, HMC school |
| Dr Richard Palmer | Director of General Education, HMC school |