



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

KING'S SCHOOL

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King's School

Full Name of School	King's School
DfE Number	933/6004
Registered Charity Number	1071997
Address	King's School Plox Bruton Somerset BA10 0ED
Telephone Number	01749 814200
Email Address	office@kingsbruton.com
Head	Mr Ian S Wilmshurst
Chair of Governors	Lt Gen A M D Palmer, CB CBE
Age Range	13 to 18
Total Number of Pupils	338
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (221 boys; 117 girls)
Number of Day Pupils	Total:111
Number of Boarders	Total:227 Full: 227
Ownership and Governance	The school is a charitable company and is administered by a board of governors.
School Structure	Pupils are educated in the school from Year 9 to Year 13.
Inspection Dates	24 Nov 2015 to 25 Nov 2015

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, this inspection records whether the school complies with each of these Regulations, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Compliance is judged both by written formulation and by implementation. The Regulations represent minimum requirements and are given as either 'met' or 'not met'.

Additionally, inspections consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the Education (Abolition of Corporal Punishment) (Independent Schools) Regulations 1989.

This inspection also contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and it judges the extent to which the school currently meets the boarding Standards. It identifies any Standards which the school does not meet and requires action to meet them. Findings are distributed across sections relating to the eight Parts of the Regulations.

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

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

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

The report reflects the evidence used in deciding whether the school's provision meets or does not meet the various requirements. Grades are not provided for the quality of the school as a whole or for each aspect inspected.

National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with teachers, with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and 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

Mrs Maureen Bradley	Reporting Inspector
Mr Gregory Cole	Compliance Team Inspector (Bursar and clerk to the governors, HMC school)
Mr Stuart Corrie	Team Inspector for Boarding (Housemaster and assistant director of music, HMC school)
Mrs Sarah Hollingsworth	Team Inspector for Boarding (Director of pastoral care, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 King's School is a day and boarding school situated in the Somerset town of Bruton. It was founded in 1519 originally as a boys' school attached to Bruton Abbey. Girls entered the sixth form in 1969 and the school became fully co-educational in 1997.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection the boarding houses and the art department have undergone refurbishment and new sports facilities have been constructed. There has been a change of chair and vice chair of governors (Senior and Junior Warden respectively), and a newly constructed senior management team including a new bursar.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, 338 pupils were on the roll. Most are of white British origin and have professional and business family backgrounds. The 111 day pupils attend from the surrounding towns and villages. Most of the pupils are full-time boarders and come from the UK or Europe, with a small number from Africa and Asia.

2. COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATORY STANDARDS

Part 1 Quality of education provided

Curriculum

- 2.1 The school meets the Regulations.
- 2.2 The school's curriculum policy is implemented to meet the needs and abilities of its pupils. The curriculum and extra-curricular provision is appropriately planned and timetabled to support the school's aims and to ensure continuity of learning throughout the age range. The curriculum covers all the required areas of learning and is supported by appropriate schemes of work. All pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress. Further documentation provides suitable guidance to teachers to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those identified as having English as an additional language (EAL). The policy and its implementation support, and do not undermine, the teaching of British values such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance. [Paragraph 2(1)(a) and (b)]
- 2.3 Year 9 pupils study a range of subjects covering all the required elements, with the additional opportunity to study Latin and to undertake the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) level 1 as an enrichment project, and they also begin the International GCSE (IGCSE) science course. In Years 10 and 11, pupils study for GCSE and IGCSE examinations in six core subjects with the addition of further option choices. In the sixth form a wide choice of subjects is offered for study at A level, chosen with regard to the pupils' ability and personal preference. The sixth form pupils also have the choice of studying business and technology qualifications (BTEC level 3) and the EPQ level 3. The curriculum is supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities which enrich the experiences of pupils at all ages. [Paragraph 2(2)(a), (b) and (g)]
- 2.4 All pupils benefit from a suitably planned course in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) which supports the school's ethos and ensures that they understand the importance of healthy life styles and their role as responsible citizens in British society. Opportunities are provided to explore issues and discuss concerns that affect young people today and how to develop the required skills for life after leaving school. Careers education is taught in all year groups to increase pupils' awareness of their own potential and the options available to them in the world of work. Year 12 and 13 pupils concentrate on courses and applications for university. [Paragraph 2(2)(d), (e) and (g) to (i)]

Teaching

- 2.5 The school meets the Regulations.
- 2.6 Evidence from the observation of a small number of lessons and work scrutiny shows that teaching is well planned to meet the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, the vast majority of pupils agree that they receive help and support from their teachers. The schemes of work ensure that pupils develop knowledge, understanding and skill in the subjects taught. The teaching displays good subject knowledge and ensures that progress is made by all pupils, including those with SEND or EAL. Those that are most able have suitable extension work in lessons and enrichment activities provided for them outside the classroom. The teaching maintains the values generally upheld in Britain and is effective in employing a range of methodology and good resources to ensure that pupils are engaged in their learning and are motivated to achieve to the best of their ability. Teachers and pupils share positive relationships and behaviour is managed effectively. [Paragraph 3(a) to (j)]
- 2.7 Ability and progress are identified and monitored using standardised tests and a range of internal assessments and examinations. The results of these tests are used to assist in target setting and to help teachers plan appropriate work. The school uses a regular and thorough tracking process to ensure that pupils make the expected progress and that those with SEND or EAL are suitably monitored. Twice-termly assessments monitor progress and set targets for examination attainment. The regular marking of pupils' work incorporates comments to aid progress. [Paragraph 4]

How well do pupils achieve?

Pupils' Ability	The ability profile of the school is above the national average. Around two-thirds of pupils have ability that is at least above average, with a further fifth having ability that is similar to the national average. The ability profile of the sixth form is in line with the national average for pupils in sixth form education, with a spread of abilities similar to the normal distribution.
Pupils' Needs	The school has identified 112 pupils with SEND, of whom 46 receive learning support. Of the 63 pupils identified as having EAL, 34 receive support. No pupil has an education, health and care plan.
Pupils' Achievements	The school enters pupils for GCSE, IGCSE, BTEC and A-level examinations. The following analysis of senior school examinations uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2014. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools. Results in IGCSE have been similar to worldwide averages and have been higher than worldwide averages in a number of subjects. Pupils studying BTEC courses are attaining grades above the national average. Results at A level are above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools. Results were similar to the national average for maintained schools in 2014.

Part 2 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

2.8 The school meets the Regulations and Standards.

2.9 The school's provision through the curriculum, teaching, pastoral care and boarding life ensures that pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem and understand their responsibilities to themselves and to the wider community. They have a good understanding of right and wrong developed through the school's ethos and PSHEE teaching which actively promotes the British values of democracy, tolerance, equality as represented by the 2010 Equality Act, and respect for others. Through the wider curriculum pupils grow in understanding of English laws and how the important institutions of British society function. In interviews pupils displayed a mature attitude to responsibility and leadership, which are well developed through their involvement in the Combined Cadet Force, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and in sixth form community service. They were able to demonstrate a growing political understanding which was unbiased in attitude. [Paragraph 5(a) and (b)(i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi); NMS 16]

2.10 Pupils show a social conscience and a balanced understanding of the democratic process and the views of different religions and cultures. International pupils are integrated into school life and respect for each other's diversity is evident in their sharing of cultural traditions and experiences in their international club, an activity held after school. Visits and trips to both local and overseas cultural centres further develop pupils' cultural understanding. [Paragraph 5(b) (v) and (vii)]

- 2.11 Many opportunities are available for pupils to express their views in the boarding house or in school, including house councils, termly forums for discussion, the sixth form committee and the food committee. Debate is intrinsic in all subjects and the school is careful to offer balanced political discussion. Prefects and older pupils act as mediators between pupils and staff to represent any boarders' concerns or issues. [Paragraph 5(c) and (d); NMS 17 and 19]

What are pupils' views of the school?

- 2.12 Pupils were asked to respond as 'agree' or 'disagree,' with the option to specify 'no view' or not to answer individual questions. Three hundred and twenty-three pupils responded to part or all of the questionnaire. The table below shows the proportions of pupils who responded 'agree' or 'disagree' in relation to each question, and the number who did not offer a view.

	% Agree	% Disagree	Number offering no view
School questions			
1. I enjoy school	88	11	39
2. I find my lessons interesting and engaging	86	13	53
3. The school gives me the support I need to learn	97	2	39
4. I can get help if I need it	97	2	20
5. The school encourages me to do my best	95	4	29
6. I feel safe and happy at school	94	5	28
7. My views and ideas are listened to in class and in school	91	8	64
8. Behaviour is good in the school	89	10	65
9. Teachers are fair in the way they give rewards	74	25	65
10. Teachers are fair in the way they give sanctions	67	32	62
11. The school deals with bullying	92	7	75
12. There is a member of staff or senior pupil I can turn to if I have a problem	97	2	25
Boarding questions			
1. I enjoy boarding	94	5	66
2. Boarders get on well together in the house	97	2	65
3. I am well looked after if I fall ill or am injured	96	3	89
4. I am able to contact my family and friends if I need to	94	5	64
5. I like the food in boarding	56	43	90
6. I feel safe in my boarding house	98	1	60
7. I am able to have snacks and drinking water outside main mealtimes	91	8	68
8. I am able to keep my belongings safe	80	19	76
9. Boarding staff treat me fairly	96	3	68
10. I am happy with the balance of free time and activities in the evenings and at weekends	72	28	73

Part 3 Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.13 The school meets the Regulations and Standards.
- 2.14 The pastoral care and welfare procedures are in accordance with requirements and almost all parents in their questionnaire responses reported that their children are well looked after in the school. Particular attention is paid to safeguarding and child protection and shows regard for Keeping Children Safe in Education and safe recruitment procedures. The school has developed, and is gradually implementing, a Prevent policy and the dangers of radicalisation have been introduced into the curriculum. Policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection are detailed and implemented, and documentation is thorough. Procedures are monitored by a designated governor and addressed by the full governing body in an annual review to ensure that any deficiencies are identified and quickly remedied. Links are maintained with local welfare agencies. [Paragraphs 7(a) and (b) and 8(a) and (b); NMS 11]
- 2.15 Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are appropriate, and in their questionnaire responses the vast majority of boarders agree that they get on well together and feel safe in their boarding house. Staff are dedicated to the welfare of all pupils and provide a suitable structure for them to develop and thrive. Pastoral policies and procedures are effective and good behaviour is promoted. A suitable range of behaviour policies and procedures is implemented effectively and provides guidance on managing behaviour, maintaining the school's code of conduct, rules, and the issuing of sanctions and rewards. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a minority of pupils reported that they do not think that staff are fair in their issuing of rewards and sanctions. In pupil interviews this was not considered to be a concern. Records of rewards and sanctions demonstrated that they have been applied appropriately. Good behaviour is celebrated in house meetings, and boarding sanctions now require their recipients to contribute to the boarding community such as helping with laundry. The boarders thought that this was fair. Prefects are only allowed to impose sanctions with the agreement of boarding staff. [Paragraph 9(a), (b) and (c); NMS 12 and 5]
- 2.16 Incidents of bullying are rare but an effective policy and procedure is followed by staff and pupils if it does occur. Pupils said they have not experienced or observed any bullying but report that incidents of unkindness are quickly handled if they are reported to house staff. Documentary evidence shows a small number of bullying incidents have occurred since the previous inspection and have been handled according to the school's policy. [Paragraph 10; NMS 12]
- 2.17 Health and safety laws are complied with and the health and safety policy is implemented effectively. A termly health and safety report is presented to the risk committee and the full governing body. Governors ensure that they maintain oversight of the welfare, health and safety of boarders. A suitable risk assessment policy is in place, appropriate measures are taken to evaluate risk in school and on school trips and any weaknesses highlighted are appropriately resolved. Fire arrangements are thorough and fire drills are suitably evaluated, including at least one drill each term for boarders during boarding time. The equipment is regularly tested and efficiently maintained. [Paragraphs 11, 12 and 16(a) and (b); NMS 6 and 7]
- 2.18 Supervision levels both around the school and in the boarding houses are appropriate and staff duty rotas are known to boarders. The school deploys sufficient

staff during the school day and at night for boarders. Two members of staff are always on duty in each house overnight and boarders know how to contact them if necessary. Staff involved in boarding are sufficiently qualified and experienced for their roles. The school registers pupils regularly throughout the day and roll calls for boarders are completed in the morning and evening. Attendance registers are properly maintained and stored, and staff know what to do if a pupil was to go missing. The school has an appropriate admission register. [Paragraphs 14 and 15; NMS 15]

- 2.19 The school has a suitable range of policies for first aid and medical care. The appropriately equipped medical centre provides 24-hour care for both day and boarding pupils with separate accommodation for boys and girls. It is operated by fully qualified medical staff and a doctor's surgery is held on site 2 days a week. Appointments with other specialist medical services are made locally if required. Regular and effective communication is maintained between the nurses and boarding staff, and the confidentiality of pupils is respected. The school affords suitable attention to the mental well-being of pupils. Accident records are held centrally and are suitably monitored and evaluated. [Paragraphs 13 and 24; NMS 3]
- 2.20 An appropriate process of induction operates for new boarders. Induction booklets are provided and older pupils lend help and support through a 'buddy system' and house prefects. Boarders can easily contact home using a variety of means, including social media. Contact details of people who boarders can talk to, other than school staff, are displayed throughout the boarding houses. Boarders' laundry is efficiently done both centrally and in boarding houses, and facilities are available to enable pupils to launder their own clothes. [NMS 2, 4 and 9]
- 2.21 Meals served in the central dining hall are of suitable quality, quantity and variety, and appropriate to various dietary or religious needs. A minority of pupils reported dissatisfaction with the food in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses. When interviewed boarders expressed a general satisfaction with the food although they found the quality varied from day to day. Pupils acknowledge that the school has improved the quality and choice of food in the previous two years and they continue to canvas pupils' views on food to make further improvements. Boarders have access to snacks and drinking water in houses and facilities are available to prepare food outside main meal times. [NMS 8]
- 2.22 Reasonable protection is provided for boarders' personal possessions. All boarders have lockable cupboards, although many choose not to use them. Valuables can be handed to the house staff for safe keeping. A few boarders expressed dissatisfaction with the balance of free time and activities in the evenings and at weekends. In interviews boarders reported that they were always kept busy but involvement in all activities was not compulsory. Those that were concerned about the lack of free time expressed difficulty in finding the required time to complete homework when they were involved in many after-school activities. They were happy with the wide choice of activity available to them and appreciated the free time available to them at weekends. [NMS 9 and 10]

Other legislation

- 2.23 The school has a suitable accessibility plan to ensure that no pupil is discriminated against. The accessibility plan has appropriate timescales to make any necessary adjustments to widen access to the school premises and the curriculum and to the provision of information.
- 2.24 Corporal punishment is not used or threatened.

Part 4 Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

- 2.25 The school meets the Regulations and Standards.
- 2.26 The school implements an appropriate recruitment policy for the appointment of staff, governors and volunteers, and those involved in recruitment have undergone safe recruitment training. All the required appointment checks are completed before staff start work in the school. The school has implemented improved human resource management since the previous inspection. The central register of appointments is maintained as required. Appropriate checks are carried out for other adults who live or participate in work on the school site and suitable arrangements are organised for visitors. The school has fully implemented the requirements of the previous inspection. It does not appoint guardians for the overseas pupils. [Paragraphs 17 to 21 and NMS 14]

Part 5 Premises and accommodation

- 2.27 The school meets the Regulations and Standards.
- 2.28 The standards of maintenance provide an environment which ensures the health and welfare of the pupils. Those who responded to the questionnaire and those interviewed said that they feel safe in school and in boarding. All rooms and facilities, including the boarding accommodation, have appropriate acoustics, heating, lighting and ventilation, and standards of cleanliness are maintained. All houses have suitable accommodation for sleeping, for private study and for social purposes. The gardens and extensive grounds offer suitable space for sports and recreational activities and leisure time. Sufficient toilet and washing facilities are provided in each building in the school. Suitable separate toilet and washing facilities are provided for boys and girls in the boarding houses close to the sleeping accommodation. All the facilities offer appropriate privacy. Drinking water is clearly labelled and suitable provision is made across the school site. The school does not provide lodgings for its boarders. [Paragraphs 22 to 25 and NMS 5]

Part 6 Provision of information

- 2.29 The school meets all of the Regulations and Standards.
- 2.30 The required information is provided or made available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils. The school's policies together with other useful material are available on its website. Parents receive suitable reports of their children's attainment and progress. The principles for boarding are issued to parents in boarding handbooks which reflect the school's vision for the boarding community and are observed to work in practice. [Paragraph 32; NMS 1]

Part 7 Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.31 The school meets the Regulations and Standards.
- 2.32 A clear complaints procedure is available for all parents. Records show that formal complaints are rare and that concerns are handled in the time frames outlined in the school's published procedures. Two formal complaints were received and satisfactorily resolved in the previous school year. [Paragraph 33; NMS 18]

Part 8 Quality of leadership and management

- 2.33 The school meets the Regulations and Standards.
- 2.34 The governing body and senior management have fully discharged their responsibilities for ensuring that the regulatory standards are consistently met. Following the recommendation at the previous inspection, all levels of governance, leadership and management have improved procedures for ensuring regulatory compliance. Governors have increased their monitoring of standards and improved their oversight of school policies and procedures. A new senior management structure ensures effective oversight of the regulations and the NMS at all levels. [Paragraph 34]
- 2.35 Management of boarding is effective in maintaining standards and evaluating areas for development. A clear line-management structure for boarding staff has been established and job descriptions define individual responsibilities. Those in charge of houses are suitably qualified and trained for their management responsibilities. Effective links are maintained between the day and boarding school. The required records and documents for each house are kept secure and are maintained appropriately. [NMS 13]

What are parents' views of the school?

Parents were asked to respond as 'agree' or 'disagree', with the option to specify 'no view' or not to answer individual questions. A hundred and seven parents responded to part or all of the questionnaire. The table below shows the proportions of parents who responded 'agree' or 'disagree' in relation to each question, and the number who did not offer a view.

	% Agree	% Disagree	Number offering no view
School questions			
1. My child is happy at the school	98	1	3
2. My child is making good progress at the school	97	2	2
3. My child feels safe at the school	99	0	1
4. My child is well looked after at the school	99	0	1
5. The school actively promotes good behaviour	99	0	6
6. There is someone for my child to go to if problems arise in the school	99	0	3
7. The school welcomes my views	98	1	20
8. The school deals well with bullying	97	2	31
9. Behaviour is well managed	98	1	9
10. I receive good information about my child's progress, the school's policies and activities/events	99	0	1
11. I receive timely responses to my questions, concerns and complaints	98	1	3
12. My child has access to a broad curriculum	98	1	6
13. My child's individual educational needs are being met at school	98	1	6
14. I would recommend the school to another parent	97	2	4
Boarding questions			
1. My child enjoys boarding	94	5	36
2. The boarding accommodation is well maintained	97	2	40
3. My child is well looked after if he/she is ill or injured	98	1	43
4. I am able to contact my child easily	100	0	39
5. I am able to contact boarding staff easily	95	4	35
6. My child feels safe in the boarding house	98	1	35
7. My child's belongings are kept safe	94	5	36
8. Boarding staff treat my child fairly	97	2	38
9. I am happy with the balance of free time and activities my child has in the evenings and at weekends	94	5	40

3. SUMMARY OF REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

	All requirements met?
Part 1 Quality of education provided (curriculum)	Yes
Part 1 Quality of education provided (teaching)	Yes
Part 2 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	Yes
Part 3 Welfare, health and safety of pupils, including Other legislation	Yes
Part 4 Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors	Yes
Part 5 Premises and accommodation	Yes
Part 6 Provision of information	Yes
Part 7 Manner in which complaints are handled	Yes
Part 8 Quality of leadership and management	Yes
National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools	Yes

Action points

3.1 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Progress since the previous inspection

3.2 The governors and leadership have effectively addressed the regulatory failings noted in the previous integrated report (2012). They have ensured that all barred list checks are carried out before those requiring them start at the school, and that the school receives all the necessary information from a supply agency before a member of staff from the agency joins the school. This information has been appropriately entered on the central register of appointments.