



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

King Henry VIII School

May 2023

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School's Details

School	King Henry VIII School			
DfE number	331/6016			
Registered charity number	528961			
Address	King Henry VIII School Warwick Road Coventry West Midlands CV3 6AQ			
Telephone number	02476 271111			
Email address	info@khviii.net			
Headmaster	Mr Philip Dearden			
Chair of governors	Prof Ian Dunn			
Proprietor	Coventry School Foundation			
Age range	11 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	573			
	Seniors	408	Sixth Form	165
Inspection dates	3 to 5 May 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 King Henry VIII School is an independent co-educational day school, located near the centre of Coventry. It was founded in 1545 and has stood on its present site since 1885. The school became part of the Coventry School Foundation in 1975. The foundation's trustees oversee the running of the school and other schools in Coventry. The schools share a principal and administrative function, such as human resources. The school shares the same site as King Henry VIII Junior School, which was inspected separately at the same time, as were other schools in the Coventry School Foundation. The school comprises seniors, for pupils aged 11 to 16 years, and the sixth form, for pupils aged 17 to 18 years.
- 1.2 The current chair of governors was appointed in October 2021. The principal took up his post in September 2022.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school seeks to allow pupils to discover their potential by providing an education which is exciting and challenging. It aims to encourage pupils to pursue excellence in all they do, to respect the beliefs and opinions of others and to develop a concern for the world community and the environment.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of families with professional and business backgrounds, mostly living within 20 miles of the school. Standardised data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is above average overall compared to those taking similar tests nationally. The school has identified 108 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, including dyslexia, dyspraxia, and other emotional needs, all of whom receive additional support. Two pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. 18 pupils in the school speaks English as an additional language (EAL), none of whom require additional support. Data used by the school have identified 48 pupils as being more able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for three other pupils because of their special talents in sport, music, art and drama.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

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

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#).

Key findings

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

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's GCSE and A-level results in the years 2020 to 2022 confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships and sex education, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are

appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils.

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

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

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

- Pupils have an excellent base of knowledge, skills and understanding which they apply effectively across the curriculum.
- Pupils are very respectful when listening to their peers and their teachers and are highly articulate when expressing their views.
- Pupils attain high levels of numeracy and confidently apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils excel in a wide range of co-curricular activities.

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

- Pupils develop excellent self-understanding, self-belief and self-confidence as they mature through the school.
- Pupils are naturally inclusive and demonstrate particularly strong acceptance of those who have different backgrounds or beliefs to their own.
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of the difference between right and wrong and their behaviour in and out of class is excellent.
- Pupils understanding of spirituality and their awareness of non-material aspects of life are excellent.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

- Strengthen pupils' higher-order thinking skills and their ability to take the initiative and demonstrate independence in their learning.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 In 2022, four-fifths of A-level results were graded A* to B. This mirrored the strong teacher- and centre-assessed results in 2020 and 2021. In 2019, around three-fifths of entries at A level were graded A* to B. As a result of these strong results, most pupils gain places at their first choice of university, including those with highly selective entry requirements. During the period 2019 to 2022, pupils

demonstrated equally high levels of attainment at GCSE with around half of results at one of the top two grades. Data provided by the school indicate that in public examinations, pupils attain grades at least in line with, and often beyond, the level expected for their ability, indicating strong progress from their starting points. Pupils with SEND achieve in line with their peers at A level, though slightly underperform relative to their peers at GCSE level. Most parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching enables their child to make progress and that their child's needs are met effectively.

- 3.6 Pupils display excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum. They readily recall previous knowledge, which they deploy effectively to deepen their understanding as they tackle new areas of study. For example, in a Year 11 religious studies lesson, pupils used their extensive knowledge of Buddhism to extend their understanding of the concept of Nirvana. Pupils often display a sophisticated awareness of ideas and concepts, such as in a Year 12 English lesson, where they engaged in a mature discussion of the themes emerging from their study of a Chaucer text. Many pupils also exhibit extremely strong subject-specific skills. In a Year 11 design and technology (DT) lesson, pupils produced highly accurate isometric drawings. In a drama lesson, Year 7 pupils were adept at using a wide range of physical techniques to convey meaning and portray their characters. In the questionnaires a very large majority of pupils said that their skills and knowledge improve in most lessons. Evidence from lesson observations, pupil interviews and the scrutiny of pupils' work supports these views. Beyond the classroom, pupils develop and discover their gifts and talents and hone their skills in a wide range of co-curricular activities, some, such as advanced robotics, requiring a high level of technical skill and knowledge. Pupils' development of excellent knowledge, skills and understanding is enabled by teachers who are committed to helping pupils to improve and achieve well not just in public examinations but as individual members of the school community.
- 3.7 Pupils of all ages show a genuine enthusiasm to engage in conversation and discussion and have excellent communication skills. They offer considered answers, often pausing to marshal their thoughts before responding. When contributing during lessons, pupils express their ideas fluently and coherently. For example, in a Year 13 law lesson, pupils presented clear and logical arguments to support their views on the implementation of criminal law. Similarly, in a Year 10 art lesson, pupils presented their ideas carefully and persuasively when discussing the next stage in their work. Pupils are adept at using subject-specific vocabulary, as seen in a Year 10 English lesson where pupils correctly identified a variety of literary features within a text. Pupils are excellent and courteous listeners. In a Year 7 drama lesson, pupils listened attentively to instructions before experimenting with voice control and in a Year 8 geography lesson, pupils listened respectfully to one another as they shared ideas on settlement patterns. Pupils of all ages write persuasively and creatively and are able to provide sustained and developed text, as seen in many examples of their written work.
- 3.8 Pupils are highly competent mathematicians. Throughout the school, pupils display an extremely strong grasp of numerical concepts and methods, which they apply confidently to solve mathematical problems. For example, in a Year 10 mathematics lesson, pupils readily tackled new work in calculus, applying previous knowledge to inform their reasoning. Pupils confidently use their skills in numeracy to support their learning in other subjects. In a Year 12 economics lesson, pupils successfully calculated the effects of variable exchange rates using formulae and graphs, demonstrating a natural ease when handling complex number problems. Similarly, in a food and nutrition lesson, Year 7 pupils accurately calculated and weighed ingredients when making their rock buns. Throughout the school, pupils' evident enjoyment of mathematics is facilitated by their regular involvement and success in various external local and national competitions.
- 3.9 Pupils display good and sometimes excellent information and communication technology (ICT) skills. For example, in a Year 12 ICT lesson, pupils showed a high level of subject-specific knowledge and technical expertise when discussing and analysing utility software. Similarly, pupils involved in the robotics activity are extremely competent in constructing, programming and operating their machines. In a Year 8 DT lesson, pupils used a software package successfully to produce a 2D design.

Pupils with SEND use ICT well to support their learning across the curriculum, often employing specialist software to help them access the curriculum and to present their work. Beyond these specialist areas, pupils said they sometimes use the ICT rooms to research or to word process their work but pupils' application of their ICT skills more regularly across the curriculum is limited.

- 3.10 Pupils often display excellent study skills. In their extended project qualification (EPQ) work, sixth-form pupils exhibit a wide range of such higher-order thinking skills in their planning, research, evaluation and synoptic reasoning. When pupils take charge of their learning, they relish the opportunity to deepen their understanding and extend their knowledge. For example, in a Year 12 business studies lesson, pupils enjoyed debating the effects of interest rate changes on the local economy, speculating about the impact on individuals and on businesses and drawing on their wider knowledge to analyse and hypothesise. Similarly, in a Year 10 art lesson, pupils skilfully analysed the techniques used by different artists as they sought to refine their own work. However, in some lessons, pupils' natural curiosity was inhibited by tasks that lack challenge or by teaching that was very directive or narrowly examination focused. As a result, in these lessons, pupils made less progress and demonstrated limited application of their higher-order thinking skills or ability to take the initiative and demonstrate independence in their learning.
- 3.11 Pupils reach an extremely high level of achievement in a range of physical and creative activities because of the many opportunities provided by the school to compete in sport, to perform in drama and music or to participate in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE) and the extensive outdoor education programme. School teams have enjoyed local and regional success in rugby, cricket and netball and individual pupils have achieved national and regional honours in swimming, rugby, netball and hockey. Additionally, a significant number of male and female pupils are enrolled in the development programmes of professional rugby and national netball clubs. Participation rates in DofE are extremely high with over 50 pupils currently working towards their gold award. Pupils eagerly participate in drama clubs and activities and enjoy the opportunity to perform in major school productions, such as the recent performances of *Les Misérables* and *Hairspray*. In music, pupils are actively involved in a wide variety of choirs, ensembles and rock groups, with some also involved in the Coventry cathedral choir and the county orchestra. Those pupils who enter for music and drama examinations regularly achieve high grades and distinctions. Similarly, pupils perform extremely well in mathematics and science competitions, especially in robotics, where a school team recently represented the UK in the world championships in the USA. In response to the questionnaire, most parents felt that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. Inspection evidence confirms that most pupils enjoy busy and successful lives beyond the classroom and this represents a successful fulfilment of the school's aim to encourage each pupil to discover and develop their talents.
- 3.12 Pupils are extremely conscientious in their learning and determined to succeed. For example, in a Year 9 history lesson, pupils were deeply attentive and focused as they sought to interpret photographs of the aftermath of bombing raids on Coventry in the 1940s. Pupils collaborate naturally and instinctively, helping one another to solve problems or to reach a shared understanding, as seen in a Year 11 physical education lesson, where pupils worked productively in small groups, sharing ideas as they refined their answers to examination questions. When given the opportunity, pupils love to rise to the challenge of working independently and to take charge of their own learning, exploring ideas and expanding their thinking. This was evident in a Year 12 politics lesson where pupils had researched independently in order to contribute to a discussion on liberalism. In the questionnaire responses, a minority of pupils did not agree that most lessons are interesting. Inspectors found this to be justified in some lessons where the teaching was more directive and lessons did not allow pupils to engage their natural curiosity, which meant that pupils made less progress as a result.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils are innately self-confident, often in a quiet understated way. They know their own strengths and weaknesses extremely well and are very self-aware. For example, in discussion, pupils recognized articulately how they could improve their work because of the clear oral and written feedback from staff and teachers' constructive comments in reports. Pupils understand that making mistakes is an opportunity for personal development, as seen in a Year 8 design technology lesson where pupils experimented with a variety of techniques as they sought to make a jewellery box. Similarly, in a climbing activity, pupils were determined, through trial and error, to devise a viable route across the climbing wall using specific moves. Pupils of all ages commented how leadership opportunities, such as being a house year group captain or anti-bullying ambassador, can help them to know themselves better and to overcome any self-doubts. In discussions, pupils spoke about how the school encourages them to discover and develop their talents to the full and how this affirms their sense of self-worth, which demonstrates a successful fulfilment of the school's aims.
- 3.15 Pupils are extremely accepting of individual difference and identity within the school community, stressing that people's worth as individuals transcends any diversity of race, gender or religion. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and different faith groups report that they mix easily in and out of the classroom and inspectors' observations confirmed this view. Pupil diversity and inclusion ambassadors of all ages work hard to inform their peers and to create a sense of a united community within the school. In lessons, pupils readily share their cultural and religious experiences. For example, in a Year 11 food and nutrition lesson, pupils proudly presented ideas from their own cultural traditions and listened carefully and respectfully to each other's contribution. Pupils of all ages were eager to speak to inspectors about the values of a recent pupil-inspired and pupil-led culture day, where they wore their own cultural dress and celebrated the diverse cultural heritage within the school and the city. In the questionnaire, most parents agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people, indicating a successful fulfilment of the school's aims. Inspection evidence supports this view.
- 3.16 Pupils have a deep and sensitive awareness of spirituality and the non-material aspects of life. In this multi-cultural school community, many pupils speak naturally and openly about their beliefs in lessons and assemblies. Others recognise that the school's ethos of promoting respect and wellbeing encourages the development of a strong moral character. Pupils who wish to express or explore their faith say that they appreciate the various opportunities for prayer or group discussion provided by the Chaplain, the Christian union and the faith council, which brings together pupils from different faith backgrounds. Pupils also say that they value the many quiet areas around school, such as the library, the prayer room or outside in the school grounds, where they can find time for quiet reflection.
- 3.17 Pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is excellent. They have an extremely strong moral compass, understanding what constitutes right and wrong both in the school and in wider society. For example, in a Year 9 computer science lessons, pupils quickly identified key moral implications of the application of artificial intelligence. Similarly, in a Year 12 geography lesson pupils contributed maturely to a debate on the effects of climate change, displaying a nuanced awareness of the dilemmas facing modern society. In their responses to the questionnaire, almost all pupils said the school expects them to behave well, but a small minority expressed the view that pupils do not always treat each other with kindness or respect. In conversation with a significant proportion of pupils, almost all of whom expressed a contrary view, pupils expressed the view that, on the few occasions when unkindness occurs, it stems from a clumsy rather than malicious choice of words. They commented that the school responds rapidly but sensitively to any misbehaviour, adding that the emphasis on restorative sanctions often helps pupils learn from their mistakes. Pupils' excellent moral understanding is promoted by deeply caring pastoral staff and highly effective pastoral support systems, which enable pupils to feel safe and secure in school.

- 3.18 Pupils are very confident in making their own decisions. Older pupils are ambitious in planning the next stage in their lives and spoke appreciatively of the high quality of the guidance offered by the careers department. Younger pupils expressed how they feel confident to make decisions about subject choices because of the support and helpful advice offered by teachers and form tutors. In a Year 10 art lesson, pupils spoke convincingly and confidently about their choices in project work and, similarly in a Year 12 physics revision lesson, pupils carefully and individually selected topics which they needed to revisit. Pupils of all ages feel very well informed to make wise personal choices because of the carefully structured and comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme.
- 3.19 Pupils' social development is excellent. Collaboration and a sense of mutual support lie at the heart of the house system, which facilitates a wide range of activities and competitions. Pupils spoke warmly about their involvement in the pupil-led house music and drama competitions, where different year groups enjoyed working together. Similarly, others were enthusiastic about how team sports or their involvement in music, drama productions or the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) builds a strong sense of camaraderie and fosters teamwork. In lessons, pupils often work together supportively to reach a desired outcome, as seen in a Year 13 classical civilisation lesson, where pupils collaborated profitably to produce a deeper response to a practice examination question. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are excellent. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school encourages pupils to develop strong teamwork and social skills. Inspection evidence supports these views.
- 3.20 Pupils show a very strong sense of service to the school and the wider community. Pupil leaders are excellent ambassadors for the school and relish opportunities to serve as prefects, house officials, captains or charity leaders. Younger pupils willingly volunteer to act as tour guides on open days and enjoy the opportunity to represent their form on the school council or as a junior house official. Senior pupils are keen to offer guidance to younger pupils as peer supporters or as mentors and coaches in departments and activities. This sense of service extends beyond school. Pupils of all ages willingly support a wide range of charitable fundraising during the year, including donating to a local food bank. Older pupils visit local care homes to entertain residents with music and drama. They also support local primary schools by organising sporting competitions. Pupils are hugely supported in their personal development by enthusiastic leaders and staff, who encourage and promote an ethos of service within and beyond the school community.
- 3.21 Pupils value the opportunities they are given to remain physically and mentally healthy. They spoke perceptively about how the school's PSHE programme helps them to make informed personal choices in matters of health and wellbeing. Pupils understand the importance and benefits of physical exercise and of a healthy diet and lifestyle. For example, in a Year 8 biology lesson on the effects of smoking, pupils demonstrated acute awareness of the medical and societal problems caused by tobacco. They enthusiastically embrace the opportunities provided by the school to maintain their fitness through a wide range of team and individual sports. Similarly, many pupils spoke maturely about the importance of maintaining good mental health and the need to establish a sensible work-life balance. Pupils say that they are able to recognize when they need mental health support and they value the recent investment in additional mental health support for pupils by the leadership and management of the school. Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire were confident that they know how to remain safe when online.

4. Inspection Evidence

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

Inspectors

Mr Stephen Holliday	Reporting inspector
Mrs Katie Corbin	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr David Bradbury	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mrs Becky Hayes	Team inspector (Deputy head, ISA school)
Mrs Kate Hurley	Team inspector (Former assistant head, IAPS school)