



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

KINGSTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

MAY 2017



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Kingston Grammar School			
DfE number	314/6067			
Registered charity number	1078461			
Address	Kingston Grammar School London Road Kingston Upon Thames Surrey KT2 6PY			
Telephone number	0208 547 1499			
Email address	head@kgs.org.uk			
Head Master	Mr Stephen Lehec			
Chairman of governors	Mr Dermot Rice			
Age range	11 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	807			
	Boys	434	Girls	373
	Day pupils	807	Boarders	0
	Sixth Form	226		
Inspection dates	4 to 5 May 2017			

PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any unmet standards identified at their previous inspection.

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.

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

This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting 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.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

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 the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chairman of governors and two other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended tutorial sessions and an assembly. Inspectors visited the library and took lunch with pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Timothy Holgate	Reporting inspector
Mrs Sarah Dawson	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Emma Hattersley	Team inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mr Richard Knott	Team inspector (Former deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Matthew Mostyn	Team inspector (Second master, HMC school)

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Kingston Grammar School is a selective day school for boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 18 years. The school was founded by royal charter in 1561 as the “free grammar school of Queen Elizabeth, for the education, training and instruction of boys and youths in grammar”. In 1904, the school became Kingston Grammar School, and boarding was discontinued in 1914. The school assumed independent status in 1978, the same year it began to accept girls. The school was housed in the ancient Chapel of St Mary until it moved to larger premises nearby in the centre of Kingston-upon-Thames. The school is a registered charity, whose trustees act as the school’s governors and hold proprietorial responsibility.
- 1.2 Since the previous interim inspection, the current Head Master took up post in 2014, and the composition of the school’s executive team has been restructured.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to create an environment in which all involved work together to encourage the highest academic aspiration and promote independent thought. It aspires to provide opportunity for engagement in a rich and diverse co-curricular programme. It seeks to ensure that everyone shows a proper regard for people and the environment and that a culture of service, partnership and personal integrity is developed.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from mainly business and professional family backgrounds of predominantly White British origin in south-west London and local towns. Almost all pupils live within a 45-minute travelling distance of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils up to Year 11 is well above average. In Years 12 and 13, the pupils’ ability profile is above average for pupils in sixth-form education. No pupil has English as an additional language, a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified 52 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Of these, 21 receive specialist support for their learning needs.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school’s own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
First Year	Year 7
Second Year	Year 8
Third Year	Year 9
Fourth Year	Year 10
Fifth Year	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils' high standards are reflected in their well above average examination results.
- Pupils exhibit outstanding communication skills, both written and oral.
- Their very strong study skills enable them to display highly independent learning, fostered by challenging and supportive teaching.
- Pupils show conspicuous success in the comprehensive co-curricular and enrichment programmes.
- They show excellent attitudes to their work and exceptional collaborative learning.

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

- Pupils' outstanding social development enables them to take responsibility for themselves and make a highly beneficial contribution to the lives of others.
- Pupils possess a strong moral awareness and are supportive and tolerant of others.
- Their marked self-confidence and self-awareness enable them to understand the importance of the decisions they make about their lives.
- They value the school's commitment to promote their well-being.
- Pupils show very strong teamwork, co-operation and initiative in their co-curricular activities.

Recommendation

2.3 Within the context of these excellent outcomes, the school is recommended to make the following improvement:

- Develop its strategic vision for ICT so that pupils' collaborative learning and preparation for higher education can be enhanced still further.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils show high levels of subject knowledge, understanding and skill, as appropriate to their age and ability. Pupils of all ages have a strong command of subject-specific vocabulary; they use technical terms and grammatical structures with confidence. Pupils are quick to absorb new knowledge and apply it to unfamiliar and different situations. For example, they relate their acquired knowledge, often linking cause and effect very cogently, to everyday situations, such as understanding the work of the International Monetary Fund, the impact of widespread flooding, or the outcomes of transport privatisation. Their practical and investigative skills are well developed. Pupils' creative, design and performance skills are notable and are strongly displayed around the school, through their bold and sensitive artwork in many different media, the high-quality artefacts produced in design technology, and the strong performances of many musical groups and ensembles.
- 3.3 Pupils' academic success is reflected in their public examination results. The following analysis uses the data for the period from 2013 to 2015, the most recent three-year period for which comparative statistics are currently available. GCSE and A-level results have been well above the national averages for maintained secondary schools. Results at IGCSE have been above worldwide norms. Standardised measures of progress indicate good progress to GCSE and excellent progress to A level, compared with others of similar ability elsewhere. In lessons seen and pupils' work scrutinised, and during interviews with them, pupils of all ages and abilities make consistently good progress over time and, for many, it is excellent. As a result of the very effective support and feedback they receive, pupils with SEND make similar progress to their peers, as shown by the test data held by the school and the quality of their written work. Pupils' progress in lessons is enhanced by the appropriately high level of challenge and high expectations provided by the teaching. The very effective questioning techniques employed by teachers enable pupils to think hard about their learning and explain their reasoning. Pupils' progress at all ages benefits from the close and effective academic management and by the comprehensive and well-used tracking systems employed to identify quickly any pupils who may need additional support or encouragement to achieve their potential. Virtually every pupil responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that they were making good progress as a result of the supportive teaching they receive, and their parents agreed.
- 3.4 Pupils possess outstanding communication skills. Their oral contributions, both spontaneous and prepared, are of a particularly high quality. They write with clarity, accuracy, fluency and imagination, often at extended length. Pupils greatly enjoy learning through discussion and debate. They listen well to each other. From a young age, pupils can argue a case, using telling examples to support their view. In French, German and Spanish, pupils spoke eloquently in the foreign language to explore their views on literature and current affairs. They criticise each other's contributions sensitively, constructively and succinctly, and demonstrate a clear appreciation of the nature of feedback. Pupils say that this style of learning helps them to understand their work in greater depth. Pupils have a good understanding of the nature of philosophical argument. These strong communication skills owe much to the well-planned lessons and learning tasks employed by their teachers. Pupils understand the importance of effective communication skills in life outside the classroom, for example when taking the helm in a sailing boat, or communicating professionally with suppliers and other external organisations in enterprise projects. One pupil, volunteering in a special school, had to learn sign language.
- 3.5 Pupils are strongly numerate and apply their mathematical skills and understanding in a range of different subjects. They are confident in their use of equations in mathematics and the sciences. They understand how to correlate two sets of data collected from experimentation,

and can interrogate graphical data to identify the underlying patterns and trends in areas such as population statistics or the rates of chemical processes. Pupils generally apply their competence in information and communication technology (ICT) effectively as a natural tool to support their learning in many other subjects. They use music composition software, produce multi-media presentations, employ elementary coding techniques, and prepare imaginative stop-frame animation sequences to illustrate a particular concept. They use subject-specific software to enhance their design and artistic skills and to programme robots. Pupils value the virtual learning environment, although many do not yet use the potential of this powerful learning tool fully to enhance their collaborative learning further.

- 3.6 Pupils exhibit very strong study skills and are able to think for themselves and work independently, due in large part to carefully planned and well-structured lessons and a curriculum that challenges and captivates pupils. This represents successful fulfilment of a recommendation of the previous inspection. Pupils' success is also enhanced by the academic enrichment activities that give them opportunities to develop their learning beyond the classroom. Pupils, particularly the more able, display well-developed analytical and reasoning skills. This was demonstrated in a history lesson, where pupils analysed pictorial and written sources and then synthesised and justified their conclusions to great effect. Pupils show a strong ability to analyse plot and character in English. They can make predictions and construct hypotheses from data and information presented to them. Pupils' study skills benefit greatly from opportunities to carry out their own research and independent projects. Those in Years 8 and 9, as well as sixth formers, produce high-quality submissions as part of the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) at junior and senior level, choosing ambitious topics to research in depth and present their findings. Pupils have embraced a wide range of areas of interest to them, such as the political and economic implications of Russia's space programme, and the genetic modification of human embryos. Pupils' independent research skills are used very effectively to contribute knowledgeably to class discussions. They frequently acknowledge and pick up each other's good ideas and refine and develop them further. Pupils are taught to question and challenge ideas from an early age. These attributes represent very successful fulfilment of the school's academic aims.
- 3.7 Pupils enjoy marked success in the wide and challenging co-curricular programme that not only enables them to achieve at a high level, but also to develop their talents and interests. Almost all questionnaire responses praised the activities available. Success in sport is particularly notable, and pupils spoke appreciatively about how they were able to taste success, regardless of physical or sporting prowess, and this addresses a previous inspection recommendation well. Nearly every sport offered is available to both boys and girls, and this equality of opportunity is valued by them. Pupils have achieved individual and group representation at regional, national or international level in hockey, rowing, cricket and netball. Standards of musical and dramatic ventures are also high, and large numbers of pupils have achieved success and developed their confidence and skill in the performing arts. House plays and musical, debating and dance activities and competitions are much enjoyed by pupils, some of whom have then taken part in professional productions on stage and screen. Pupils have achieved strongly in a wide range of external academic competitions, Olympiads and awards. Pupils are national winners of a literary quiz, and now move on to Canada to take part in the international finals. A group of Year 9 pupils became the first school finalists in BBC's televised *Robot Wars* competition. The achievement of so many pupils outside the classroom is due significantly to the breadth of the co-curricular programme which caters fully for their interests and talents, and to the high levels of staff involvement and commitment. Large numbers of pupils enjoy the flourishing Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, and learn valuable skills of self-discipline, initiative and leadership. Over the last few

years, sixth-form leavers have been highly successful in gaining places on courses and at universities with demanding entrance requirements.

- 3.8 Pupils show great enthusiasm in their work and display excellent attitudes to their learning. Almost without exception, pupils declared their enjoyment of coming to school and taking part in lessons. They are very keen to do their best and please their teachers. Pupils take pride in their work, which is nearly always neatly presented and well organised. These attributes are prodigious, because they form highly supportive relationships with their teachers who inspire them to enjoy learning and do their best. Pupils are conscientious and do not easily give up when grappling with challenging and complex topics and abstract ideas. They sustain focus and concentration on the tasks given to them, often taking the initiative to extend their knowledge of topics raised in class. Pupils show originality and initiative in, for example, devising examination-type questions of their own to support the revision of their peers. Those doing the EPQ sustain high levels of effort, commitment and time-management in working at their project over an extended period. Pupils are exceptionally proficient at working in small groups and pairs, and benefit from the opportunities to support and learn from each other, as well as testing out and refining their ideas and thinking. The high levels of achievement derive significantly from the impact of a culture of all-round accomplishment for all pupils that is so effectively promoted by senior leadership and governors. Pupils are determined to live up to the school motto “Work well and be happy”, and in this they are conspicuously successful.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils show marked self-confidence in class and in their wider school lives. As they move up through the school, they are increasingly willing to speak their minds and are not afraid to express contrary views to those of others. They also learn to balance success and failure. They persevere with the challenges presented to them and develop strong self-reliance and independence. Pupils say that the school has enabled them to develop strong self-discipline, which helps them when it comes to revision for examinations. They feel that the support of their tutors is a major factor in enhancing the education that they enjoy. As they grow older, pupils realise that they are increasingly able to respond to personal challenges and become more resilient. Many commented that they enjoyed pushing themselves beyond their comfort zone in areas such as public speaking or the demanding regime of rowing training. Pupils understand their strengths and weaknesses and benefit greatly from the guidance and feedback from staff, which enable them to be well prepared for the next stage of their education, thus successfully responding to a previous inspection recommendation. Sixth formers, in particular, acknowledge the benefit of the self-evaluation process that enables them to assess their on-going progress.
- 4.3 Pupils recognise the importance of making decisions based on relevant information. They understand that the choices they encounter and decisions they make have consequences for them. Older pupils value having appropriate freedom and autonomy to make subject option and higher education choices. Younger pupils recognise the consequences of leaving homework tasks until the last minute. Pupils show a strong ability to learn from their mistakes. Prefects, for example, learn from the experience of controlling lunch queues and refine their strategies accordingly. Pupils learn to recognise stressful situations and adopt appropriate coping strategies. They learn how to respond to unexpected situations; for example, having to decide on alternative routes during arduous expeditions, when conditions suddenly change, or changing direction in Young Enterprise when their fundraising business ventures encounter obstacles.
- 4.4 Pupils develop a good spiritual awareness from opportunities to reflect on non-material aspects of life. Some pupils spoke appreciatively of the quiet moments in their busy lives, such as working and thinking silently in the library or rowing on the river in the early morning, although such occasions and opportunities for reflection are not widespread. Pupils take part enthusiastically in philosophical debates in class, such as whether science and religion are compatible. Younger pupils recognise the benefits of learning meditation and relaxation techniques in mindfulness classes to reduce stress and anxiety. Many pupils commented on the importance of harnessing the forces of good in society. Many feel that thought-provoking assemblies and tutor periods help them to retain a balanced outlook on life.
- 4.5 Pupils have a pronounced sense of right and wrong and instinctively understand the importance of taking responsibility for their own behaviour and being mindful of its impact on others. This strong moral awareness is enhanced by the supportive and inclusive school community and by the opportunity to test out their views in lessons. Pupils greatly value the stimulating programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) throughout the school, which enables them to face many challenging personal decisions and develop life skills. Older pupils set an excellent example to younger pupils. Pupils appreciate the school's reward-orientated approach to resolving disputes and conflict between them. They show a pronounced ability to discuss and rationalise contemporary issues, such as the ethics of payday loans or drug testing on animals, from a moral viewpoint. Without exception, those spoken to feel that this is a kind school where unkindness is never acceptable. Through the strong teamwork, developed in sport and many other co-curricular activities, pupils realise the

importance of rules and a code of conduct, without which life fails to run smoothly. Almost all pupils' questionnaire responses confirmed that they are encouraged to behave well.

- 4.6 Pupils show outstanding social development and display particularly mature personal qualities for their age. They are at ease in each other's company and socially confident with the adults in school and with visitors. They instinctively understand the importance of mutual co-operation in their busy school lives, illustrated, for example, by the courtesy shown to each other during lunch. Pupils, young and old, are appreciative of, and benefit from, the wide range of leadership opportunities available to them. Many of these require them to have the courage to apply formally, the skills to submit a written application, and the confidence to go through an interview. They show strong leadership and collaborative skills in the many activities and team events that they organise and in which they take part. The co-curricular programme and house events enhance pupils' teamwork, initiative and co-operation, and enable them to recognise the sense of achievement in working towards a common goal. This, in turn, greatly strengthens their sense of belonging to the school community. Key contributory factors to pupils' personal development are the strong ethos and commitment to pupils' well-being and the clear sense of purpose promoted by school leaders and governors, the coherent and well-planned pastoral care provision, and the strong and supportive school community which values equally academic success and personal growth. The vast majority of parent questionnaire responses stated that the school meets their children's pastoral and welfare needs well.
- 4.7 Their strong social development enables pupils to make a valuable contribution to the lives of others, both in school and beyond, and this, in turn, enables them to learn valuable personal and life skills. Pupil leaders, be they sixth-form prefects or junior form and forum representatives, fulfil their responsibilities well, to the benefit of others in school. Language leaders, pupils passionate about foreign languages in Years 8 and 9, prepare short lessons in their chosen language to support other pupils and also pupils in a local primary school. Pupils feel strongly that their extensive charity work and community involvement enable them to identify with, and appreciate, the lives of those they would not normally come into contact with. Many reflected that they gained a quiet sense of satisfaction and self-worth from the impact they felt they had on elderly people and disabled children. They also recognised the importance of perseverance in having to react to situations they initially found difficult.
- 4.8 Pupils develop a strong tolerance and respect for those different from themselves, a view confirmed by almost all the parents' questionnaires. All those pupils spoken to feel that this is a highly inclusive community where everyone gets on with each other. Pupils are interested in people's backgrounds and show a good understanding of gender equality. They recognise many of the differences between cultural traditions and beliefs and, in one lesson, respectfully compared and contrasted cultural norms and taboos in other countries with those in the UK. Pupils have a strong sense of equality and appreciate diversity of beliefs and opinions. Some pupils experience cultural differences at first hand, through trips to India and Peru and the link school in Ghana. Pupils' voluntary work gives them a greater understanding of cultural diversity within the local community. They appreciate their own rich cultural heritage through their art and music and study of literature.
- 4.9 Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. They feel they have benefited from their extensive knowledge about risks to healthy living, hygiene, the importance of exercise and good nutrition. They use their good decision-making skills to exercise choice in developing their lifestyles, and understanding the consequences of bad decisions. Sixth-form pupils recognise the greater freedom of lifestyle choices they will encounter at university and feel they are well prepared for it. Pupils feel safe and value the school's commitment to enhance their well-being, much of which is achieved through the ambitious and well-planned PSHE programme and the work of form tutors. Pupils understand

the importance of striking a balance between the demands of different areas of their busy lives. Pupils, particularly those who are older, have a strong understanding of the importance of mental and emotional health and discussed maturely the characteristics of good mental health from a psychological point of view.