



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

THE KING'S HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

MAY 2017



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	The King's High School for Girls			
DfE number	937/6089			
Registered charity number	1088057			
Address	Smith Street Warwick Warwickshire CV34 4HJ			
Telephone number	01926 494485			
Email address	enquiries@kingshighwarwick.co.uk			
Head Master	Mr Richard Nicholson			
Chair of governors	Mr David Stephens			
Age range	11 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	607			
	Boys	0	Girls	607
	Day pupils	607	Boarders	0
	Seniors	463	Sixth Form	144
Inspection dates	3 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 un-met 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 chair of the governing committee of the Foundation and the safeguarding governors, observed a sample of the co-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings, assemblies. Inspectors visited the learning support and educational resource areas. 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

Mrs Gwen Caddock	Reporting inspector
Mr Thomas Brooksby	Team inspector (Headmaster, SofH school)
Mrs Ellen Douglas	Team inspector (Head of department, ISA school)
Dr Christopher Enos	Team inspector (Director of studies, GSA school)
Miss Theresa Homewood	Team inspector (Senior deputy head, HMC school)

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 The King's High School for Girls is a day school for girls aged between 11 and 18 years. The school which now also incorporates Warwick Preparatory School forms part of The Warwick Independent Schools Foundation, with Warwick School. The school was founded in 1879 by the King's School governors who already oversaw a boys' school in the town. The school opened in Landor House in the centre of Warwick, and this historic building is at the centre of the modern school. Recent developments have included the refurbishment of the library and the opening of the Innovation Centre which provides study facilities and additional IT resources for the school. The current head master took up his post in September 2015.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to foster a love of learning in a vibrant school community where each pupil is inspired, challenged and valued, where trust and respect are key values, where pupils learn a sense of social responsibility, develop resilience, confidence and integrity and explore their abilities and interests.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds including the professions, academia, and business families and from a number of cultural groups. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicates that the ability of pupils is above average. The school has identified 53 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including dyslexia and processing difficulties. None of these pupils receives specialist support, their needs are met by in class teaching. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. No pupil has English as an additional language (EAL). The school has currently identified 253 pupils as more able. Challenge is provided both by extension work in the classroom and by the academic societies set up to extend experience outside the classroom. All pupils are encouraged to take part in these activities.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are excellent, strongly supported by academic challenges inside and outside of the classroom.
- Pupils make excellent progress.
- Pupils communicate freely, being articulate speakers who explore theories, ideas and their own views helped by the supportive, ambitious and respectful atmosphere of the school.
- Individuals, groups and teams demonstrate exceptional academic, creative and sporting achievements.
- Pupils of all ages have highly positive attitudes to learning.

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

- Pupils develop key skills for the future, including confidence, resilience and perseverance.
- Pupils develop strong moral values, take responsibility for their own behaviour, appreciate and value the world around them in response to the school's fertile environment.
- Pupils develop a strong sense of social responsibility, for example, through the leadership opportunities in the house system.
- Pupils gain a wealth of experience and develop high levels of organisational skills from participation in the wide and varied co-curricular and supra-curricular programme.

Recommendations

2.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:

- Spreading best practice in giving feedback, and pupils setting their own targets to further support pupils' learning.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils demonstrate excellent subject knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum and in all the activities in which they participate. The pupils' love of their work, and their pleasure and pride in their achievements demonstrate the fulfilment of the school's rigorous aims. Pupils achieve these levels in response to challenge in the breadth of the curriculum, the excellence of the teaching, the high quality resources available and by the opportunities offered by co-curricular and other activities. The school has met the recommendation given in the previous inspection report to ensure that the more able, gifted and talented pupils are appropriately challenged. Pupils of all abilities, including the most able, respond very positively to the school's supra-curricular activity programme. These largely pupil-led academic societies give opportunities for the pupils to meet and learn from leading experts in a wide range of fields and to create their own further challenges. For example, recently a proposal has been formulated by a pupil to win a direct radio link to the international space station. In response to pre-inspection questionnaires, a very large majority of parents and almost all pupils commented positively on the progress that pupils make.
- 3.3 Pupils' basic skills are strong in all areas of learning. They acquire competence in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative areas. Their skills are used across subjects and disciplines and pupils apply learning from one subject area to another with confidence, for example GCSE pupils followed up geography fieldwork with a mathematical exercise, and, in an A-level chemistry lesson looking at the mechanisms of organic reactions, pupils led the discussion to reinforce their understanding then applied this to a new situation. In discussions during the inspection pupils said that their learning does not stop when they leave the classroom. They spoke very positively about extending their learning using digital resources, including quizzes, apps and further challenges for those who wish to undertake them. Pupils demonstrate excellence in the creative arts, including in music, art and design technology (DT). Pupils participate with enthusiasm and high levels of success in a very wide range of sporting activities in lessons and in clubs. Pupils of all ages say they make progress because teachers support their learning within the class and individually if they ask for help. Many clubs and clinics also offer help and older pupils use their skills to encourage younger girls to succeed. In response to the recommendation made by the previous inspection the quality of marking has improved considerably to help pupils make further progress. Systems of feedback and target setting enable pupils to respond and improve their work although this best practice is not yet implemented in all areas of the school.
- 3.4 Pupils are highly competent communicators, they listen well, write with great maturity, read widely and are articulate speakers. The youngest pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their private and class reading, and sixth formers discussed the reading they were undertaking to support a researched essay. In pair and group work pupils listen intently to all members of the group and are respectful of the views and ideas of others. Pupils appreciate this atmosphere and become confident in answering questions in class and expressing their own views. They are helped by teaching which shows high levels of skill in asking open questions and waiting for pupils to respond. In a GCSE English literature class pupils clearly articulated their own analyses, their ideas and their interpretations. Excellent creative writing is displayed around the school, published in school magazines and was evident in pupils' work. Pupils are quick to discuss in groups, and they have courage to ask about interesting or new ideas. They are not worried about getting things wrong and are supported by the culture of the school, which encourages enquiry and risk taking. Pupils of all ages speak fluently, accurately and with engagement in modern foreign languages (MFL).

- 3.5 Pupils are highly numerate and able to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge effectively in other areas of the curriculum. In a DT lesson for younger pupils, all were able to use specialist terminology for geometric shapes, such as hexagon, isosceles and equilateral when designing 'nets' for their packaging projects. Older pupils appreciate and benefit from the support of additional and focussed mathematics lessons for sixth-form pupils taking chemistry or biology at A level, and that pupils studying mathematics support those who are not. Pupils use a wide range of information and communication technology (ICT) applications with skill and dexterity as an integral part of their learning, assisted by good ICT resources in classrooms and computer labs as well as mobile banks of devices to support research and personal work. Older pupils have their own devices which they put to good use to support and develop learning. Pupils with SEND said how much they appreciate support through strategies such as receiving emailed notes for the week's work and the provision of materials in accessible formats on the school system. Pupils of all ages use programmes to create effective presentations and develop public-speaking skills. Sixth-form pupils have created a magazine, *Mentis*, with the theme of mental health, and have been responsible for all aspects of the publication, including attending a workshop on the use of a commercial publishing programme. The magazine has just successfully passed the first stage of a national competition.
- 3.6 Pupils are highly effective independent learners. The curriculum and very carefully planned teaching deepens pupils' learning and instils curiosity. Younger pupils learn to think for themselves rapidly because teaching challenges them to explain their ideas. In geography such pupils synthesised information using an app to understand the reasons for sweatshops and in DT they posed a hypothesis to find out how many possible net configurations there would be to create a square based pyramid. Pupils learn to research effectively, evident in presentations to academic clubs on topics such as solar spots.
- 3.7 Pupils are highly successful in public examinations. The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2013 to 2015. These are the most recent three years for which comparative data is available. Results in GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools and those in IGCSE have been higher than world-wide norms. A-level results have been above the national average when compared with results for maintained selective schools. These high standards have been maintained in recent results. In the five years from 2012 to 2016 an average of 74% of grades achieved in GCSE have been at A* or A grades. In the same period an average of 82% of grades have been achieved at grades A* to B at A level. The majority of pupils gain places at their first-choice university, often those with very demanding entrance requirements. Results in A-level examinations and standardised measures of progress indicate that pupils make excellent progress by the time they leave the school compared to the average for pupils of similar abilities. This is confirmed by inspection evidence.
- 3.8 Pupils' exceptional achievements cross a very wide range of academic, creative and sporting activities; they regularly achieve highly in prestigious academic competitions on a national level, for example in biology Olympiads, mathematics and journalism competitions. Teams enjoy considerable success in netball, water polo and clay pigeon shooting in national competitions; in hockey, tennis, cross country, and athletics at county level and individuals who are supported by the school have gained national successes in, for example, sailing and riding. Pupils participate in great numbers in the musical life of the school through individual lessons and membership of a wide range of ensembles and choirs. Many pupils succeed each year in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DoE) at all three levels and across many other challenges such as Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and the Young Enterprise scheme.
- 3.9 Pupils display outstanding attitudes to all aspects of school life. Their excellent attitudes to learning enable pupils of all ages to excel in their chosen areas meeting the ethos of the school to aspire, achieve and enjoy what they do.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 The school meets its aims to build a vibrant school community built on trust and respect where pupils develop a sense of social responsibility, resilience, self-confidence and integrity, exploring their interests and developing new ones. In their questionnaire responses, most parents agreed that the school successfully promotes their children's personal development. Overall, parents were highly supportive of all aspects of the school. The most frequent comment made by parents was that the pupils love their school. The outstanding personal development commented upon in the previous inspection report has been maintained; it was apparent in all the discussions with pupils and is evident in the way pupils behave both in the school and in the neighbourhood.
- 4.3 Pupils develop high levels of self-confidence through the excellent range of programmes, experiences and activities in which they take part and the excellent support they receive from staff. Participation in the challenging activities included in the new "Springboard" programme for younger pupils is successfully developing pupils' well-being, self-esteem and resilience. Pupils said that they appreciate the theme of 'practice makes progress not perfect' which encourages them to try new things. Pupils from Year 7 upwards spoke of the way their drama lessons instil self-confidence, and the youngest pupils commented that the expectation that they would work with pupils they did not know was a great boost to their confidence. In discussions, pupils said that work in the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) programme helps them through providing strategies to cope with difficult times. Pupils understand how to manage their own learning through work on areas such as revision skills, and how to be responsible learners. Younger pupils gave the examples of deadlines for handing in homework and writing their own targets after a test, then assessing whether they have met them. Pupils' persevere well. Younger pupils writing codes in ICT went back over their instructions repeatedly and fruitfully when the expected shape did not appear on the screen. Pupils say that this excellent work ethic results in good behaviour and there is little need for sanctions in school.
- 4.4 Pupils learn to make careful decisions and understand the importance of making informed choices which will affect their own futures. Year 7 pupils, discussing the subject choice they had been making in MFL, explained confidently that the taster lessons enabled them to make an informed decision. Pupils felt that the coming mock election, with the opportunity to join a party, make a speech and vote, was very good preparation for life. Older pupils were very positive about the free choice of GCSE and A-level options they are offered and fully understood the importance of these choices for their future careers. In questionnaire responses, a very small minority of pupils did not feel that they receive good advice about choices of subject or career. Inspection evidence does not support this view. Pupils receive support and advice from Year 7 onwards and from Year 10 there is an extensive programme of consultation, preparation, visiting speakers who talk about both careers and universities, and visits, including visits to universities to meet past pupils who are currently students.
- 4.5 Pupils of all ages show an understanding of the non-material aspects of life, which was apparent in many varied discussions and pieces of work. In discussions pupils said that they appreciate the time given in form time and assembly for quiet reflection. They feel that assemblies celebrate the non-material values of the school such as perseverance, determination and being kind, and also pupils' achievements. Pupils learn to understand the values of different religions and faiths which are explored in religious studies (RS) lessons. In an assembly for younger pupils, based on a term's work exploring the different cultures of the pupils' families, pupils showed their respect and understanding of these cultures. Relationships in the school are harmonious, reflecting tolerance and understanding of people of different

cultures and faiths. Pupils learn to value and respect diversity through PSHEE, tutor programmes, RS and working with their friends from many different backgrounds.

- 4.6 Pupils develop strong moral values, take responsibility for their own behaviour and appreciate and value the world around them. This is in response to the school's fertile environment and curriculum and is a strength of the school. Pupils feel that the PSHEE programme helps them to consider right and wrong and the right thing to do in different circumstances. Pupils understand and support the school rules and code of conduct which have been devised by the school council alongside a full review of the ethos and aims of the school. Many pupils said how supportive and caring staff are. Pupils made thoughtful written responses to issues surrounding intensive farming, genetically-modified foods, and sustainability issues in a food and nutrition lesson. Older pupils debated abortion in an RS lesson and in PSHEE discussed discrimination issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers, on both occasions with sensitivity. Pupils say that they learn to resolve friendship issues, sometimes with the help of the well-being mentor. They feel that discussing matters such as these and creating their own code of conduct enables them to develop responsibility. Inspectors agree. Almost all parents agreed in questionnaire responses that the school actively promotes good behaviour.
- 4.7 Pupils of all ages develop skills which are highly valued in the world beyond school. They achieve excellent outcomes through working collaboratively and supportively with each other in both lessons and co-curricular activities. Younger pupils said that they regularly work together in science and in drama and feel this builds their confidence. Pupils develop their teamwork skills well in activities such as CCF and DoE and learn to consider others. A large number of pupils take on positions of responsibility, which have increased with the new house structure. House activities include a great deal of charity fund raising as well as competitions which the pupils organise within the school. Pupils contribute significantly to the local community and wider society through a range of charitable and volunteering activities. Pupils give freely of their time to supporting local schools, the local hospital, and many other organisations through CCF and DoE. Pupils collected a range of goods for distribution to refugees through a local charity. Pupils regularly raise funds for a school in India and undertake an annual visit when pupils work with the children in the school. Older pupils enjoy supporting younger pupils as subject mentors and by giving peer support. They run a number of activities including a drama club. Younger pupils greatly appreciate this and look forward to offering this help to others in the future.
- 4.8 The vast majority of pupils said, in questionnaire responses, that they feel safe at school, that the school provides a safe and healthy environment, and that they know how to keep safe on-line. Parents responses support this view. Issues of on-line and personal safety are regularly discussed with pupils in PSHEE lessons and by visiting expert speakers. Pupils endeavour to make healthy choices in terms of food and healthy menus are offered in the dining room. The majority of pupils are involved with physical exercise or team sport and understand the importance for good health of physical fitness. Through form discussions, the work of the well-being mentor, the nurse and form tutors, pupils develop a secure understanding of the importance of achieving good mental health.