

# Material change inspection report

20 June 2025

## **The King's School Canterbury**

25 The Precincts

Canterbury

Kent

CT1 2ES

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

## Inspection outcome

The school has requested a material change to increase the overall number of pupils from 960 to 1030, to change the age range of pupils from 13 to 18 to 13 to 19 and to provide additional boarding facilities for day pupils to flexi-board.

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school Standards if the material change is implemented. It is recommended that the material change be approved.

## Inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR Paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b), 11, 12, 14, 16(a) and (b); NMS 5.3, 6.1-6.3, 7.1, 7.3, 8, 9.1-9.4, 10 and 20.3-20.10

1. Leaders promote a robust safeguarding culture and ensure that all staff and governors receive regular ongoing safeguarding training and updates. Leaders provide comprehensive induction training for staff before they start, including on safeguarding policies and procedures, the 'Prevent' duty, which concerns the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, and the staff code of conduct. As a result, staff are knowledgeable about their safeguarding responsibilities. Leaders regularly check staff's knowledge of safeguarding procedures to ensure that the arrangements and statutory guidance are clearly understood. Policies and procedures for safeguarding are up to date and reflect statutory guidance.
2. The designated safeguarding leader (DSL) and deputy DSLs are suitably trained so that they fulfil their roles effectively, including providing appropriate support for boarders. The safeguarding team is advised and supported by the pastoral deputy head who is the safeguarding advisor to the King's organisation. The DSL and deputy DSLs access appropriate guidance and support from external agencies and know how to seek advice from adult care services for pupils over the age of 18, who are legally adults, if necessary.
3. The DSL keeps detailed records including the nature of concerns about pupils, rationale for actions taken and outcomes. Leaders ensure that all safeguarding records are regularly monitored and reviewed so that patterns and risks are identified and considered carefully. Any resulting action is implemented effectively.
4. Leaders maintain comprehensive records of any concerns raised about the conduct of staff. They seek advice from external agencies such as the local authority designated officer (LADO) and the police and report concerns to the relevant professional bodies where required.
5. Governors regularly review the safeguarding policy to ensure that it reflects current statutory requirements. They maintain effective oversight of how effectively it is implemented. The designated Safeguarding Governor (DSG) regularly visits the school, including the boarding houses, to review safeguarding processes and reports to governor board meetings. Leaders provide an annual review and termly reports of safeguarding practice. Governors give suitable support and challenge to leaders to ensure that they fulfil their roles well, including their safeguarding responsibilities.
6. Leaders have reviewed the current safeguarding arrangements to ensure they are sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed number of additional pupils, pupils over the age of 18 and pupils who

board occasionally. The arrangements are likely to be appropriate to promote the wellbeing of all pupils if the material change is implemented.

7. Pupils know they can speak to teaching, pastoral or boarding staff, as well as medical staff or counsellors if they are worried or need support. They can also raise any concerns via online forms. Counselling support is available to pupils. Boarding and day staff liaise effectively so that pupils' needs are understood, and appropriate support is in place during the school day and boarding hours. Leaders ensure that issues are acted on quickly so that pupils receive suitable support in a timely way.
8. Leaders review the school's internet filtering and monitoring system regularly to ensure its effectiveness. As a result, two new systems have been implemented since the previous inspection to ensure that school devices and the network are filtered and monitored well. Leaders receive alerts of any potentially inappropriate internet use and respond swiftly.
9. Leaders maintain an up-to-date health and safety policy that is implemented in accordance with relevant health and safety regulations. The required health and safety checks are undertaken systematically and detailed records are kept.
10. Boarding houses are secure and have suitable storage to protect boarders' personal possessions. Pupils can personalise their rooms, and common rooms are provided for boarders to socialise and relax. Main meals are taken in the school dining hall and each house has facility for boarders to prepare food and snacks.
11. A suitable fire risk prevention policy is in place. Fire risk assessments are undertaken by external specialists and any recommendations are completed in a timely manner. All staff received fire marshal training. Fire procedures are understood by pupils and staff. Evacuation drills are practised regularly, including during the night for boarders. Leaders understand the need to practise fire drills more frequently for pupils who will flexi-board.
12. An appropriate policy for the assessment of risks is implemented effectively. Governors and leaders have assessed the risks of having pupils over the age of 18, who are legally adults, in the school. Leaders ensure that boarders do not have access to the dormitories and bathrooms for pupils who are not close in age. Individual risk assessments have been completed for all areas of the school site, including boarding houses, educational activities and the risks associated with being in the city centre. Leaders have thoroughly assessed the potential risks related to the proposed material change.
13. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

#### **Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

ISSR Paragraphs 18-21 and NMS 19

14. Leaders ensure that those responsible for recruiting staff are appropriately trained in safer recruitment practices. The school maintains a comprehensive single central record (SCR) of appointments which includes the dates on which the required pre-employment checks have been completed. Staff who complete the required checks are knowledgeable about what is required and how to obtain the relevant information. Governors and leaders regularly check the SCR. An administrative error was corrected promptly during the onsite inspection.
15. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

## **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

ISSR paragraphs 23, 24(a) and (b), 25, 26, 27, 28, 29; NMS 4

16. Governors and leaders ensure that the premises are maintained to a good standard to promote the health and safety of pupils. Leaders have carefully and effectively planned the refurbishment of an existing building to provide an additional day house for the envisaged increase in pupil numbers from September.
17. Boarding accommodation throughout the school is of a good standard and meets the requirements of the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools. Leaders have carefully planned boarding facilities of an equally good standard and with appropriate levels of privacy, for the proposed introduction of flexible boarding from September.
18. Suitable changing and shower facilities are provided and appropriate accommodation is available for pupils' medical needs. Acoustics and lighting are appropriate, including suitable external lighting, and are checked regularly. Water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor spaces are provided for physical education and outdoor play. A dedicated and well-staffed medical centre is available for both day and boarding pupils.
19. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

## **Part 6. Provision of information**

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

20. The particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website and are available to parents.
21. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

## **Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools**

ISSR paragraphs 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c), 34(2); NMS 2

22. Governors assure themselves that all the required safeguarding policies, updates and procedures are implemented and that the Standards are met consistently. They visit the school regularly, talk with leaders, staff and pupils and undertake routine visits to boarding houses. Governors and leaders ensure that policies and procedures are relevant to the school's needs, reflect current statutory guidance and are effectively implemented.
23. Governors ensure that leaders employ good knowledge and skills in their decision-making so that a robust safeguarding, health and safety and risk awareness culture is evident across the school. Leaders and managers fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the wellbeing of pupils is actively promoted.
24. Leaders and governors have carefully and strategically planned for the increase in pupil numbers, the change in age range to accommodate pupils who turn 19 before they leave the school and the introduction of flexible boarding for day pupils. They have given due attention to safeguarding and assessed potential risks, including those relating to pupils who are over 18, who are adults in the eyes of the law, and have taken action to mitigate these risks.
25. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

## School details

<b>School</b>	The King's School Canterbury
<b>Department for Education number</b>	886/6048
<b>Registered charity number</b>	307942
<b>Address</b>	The King's School Canterbury 25 The Precincts Canterbury Kent CT1 2ES
<b>Phone number</b>	01227 595501
<b>Email address</b>	head@kings-school.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.kings-school.co.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	The King's School Governors
<b>Chair</b>	Count Benoit De Vitry D'Avaucourt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Jude Lowson
<b>Age range</b>	13 to 18
<b>Number of pupils</b>	912
<b>Number of boarding pupils</b>	701
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 to 29 February 2024

## Information about the school

26. The King's School Canterbury is a co-educational day and boarding school situated in Canterbury. The school includes an International College for overseas pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11. The school is a charity, overseen by a board of fourteen governors, four of whom are drawn from the Canterbury Cathedral Foundation.
27. There are thirteen boarding houses as well as the International College, together with three separate houses for day pupils.
28. The school has identified 243 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
29. The school has identified 403 pupils for whom English is an additional language.
30. The school states that its aims are to anchor a twenty-first century education within the continuing history of the oldest school in the country. It seeks to encourage pupils to discover and share their talents through a balance of academic and co-curricular experiences. The school intends for pupils to achieve their own version of excellence, success and fulfilment and to develop a global mindset. It aims to create a nurturing and inspiring environment in which pupils belong, engage, connect and thrive as they prepare for a technologically driven future and to contribute positively to the world.

## Purpose of the material change

Inspectors carried out this inspection following an application made by the school to the DfE to make a material change to the school's provision. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about whether the school is likely to meet the Independent School Standards and the requirements of the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools if the material change is implemented.

## Inspection details

**Inspection date**

20 June 2025

26. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for one day.

27. Inspection activities included:

- scrutiny of a range of policies and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- scrutiny of a range of documentation including plans for the proposed changes
- tour of the school site to view boarding houses and the proposed new day house
- discussions with the chair of governors and members of the governing body
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders and managers
- discussions with pupils and staff.

### **How are association independent schools in England inspected?**

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant Standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **[www.isi.net](http://www.isi.net)**.

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