

School inspection report

27 to 29 January 2026

King's Bruton

Plox

Bruton

BA10 0ED

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'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders work together to ensure the wellbeing of the pupils. Through regular monitoring of pupils through the house system and tutorials, and the well-structured pastoral system, pupils are supported to develop academically and pastorally.
2. The governing body provides oversight, support and guidance in all areas, ensuring that the school meets the Standards. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding offers appropriate oversight of safeguarding arrangements, visiting the school regularly and meeting with staff and pupils.
3. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach well-planned lessons using a range of good-quality resources. They have very positive relationships with their pupils and give of their time willingly to help pupils make good progress. Teaching is well structured, but some lessons do not stretch or challenge the pupils sufficiently to enable them to develop their intellectual curiosity and encourage them to think and learn for themselves.
4. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are assessed on entry to the school and offered a programme of tailored support to accommodate their needs. This ensures that they make good progress over time.
5. Pupils build self-esteem, self-confidence and awareness through pastoral tutorials and a focused personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme led by specialist tutors. Relationships and sex education (RSE) is woven into the PSHE curriculum, taught appropriately for each age group and is adapted to ensure it remains current.
6. Sport and physical education (PE) are designed to promote high standards of performance and wide participation. Staff adapt the programme to pupils' interests and all pupils can participate, regardless of prior skill or experience. Pupils develop an understanding of aspects of a healthy lifestyle, resilience and skills of leadership and teamwork.
7. Through the PSHE and RSE programmes, assemblies, religious studies (RS) lessons and the tutorial programme, pupils develop an understanding of the importance of tolerance and respect for those of different cultures and beliefs.
8. Careers guidance is based on the eight Gatsby benchmarks that identify components to tailor guidance to meet the needs of pupils. Pupils start learning about careers in the youngest years, using online tools to assess skills and direct them towards potentially suitable careers. One-to-one guidance and a programme of talks and activities ensures that pupils in the older years are well prepared for the next steps in their education or employment.
9. Leaders foster a robust safeguarding culture, where all staff work collaboratively to maintain a supportive environment. Staff benefit from appropriate safeguarding training, ensuring they are both knowledgeable and vigilant in identifying and responding to concerns. When safeguarding concerns arise, the school promptly identifies and addresses the child's needs.
10. Leaders of boarding ensure the consistent application of boarding policies and procedures across the houses. Staff have relevant training and experience and provide a welcoming and supportive environment for the pupils in their care. House parents actively promote boarders' physical and

mental wellbeing through individual pastoral support and well-planned activities in the evenings and at weekends.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- strengthen the level of challenge within teaching to encourage pupils to develop their intellectual curiosity and think and learn for themselves.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Leaders across all sections of the school work together to ensure that pupils develop academically and pastorally in a supportive and nurturing environment in which their physical and mental wellbeing are of the highest priority. Leaders are well known to the pupils and, through surveys, committees and pupil forums, ensure that their views are sought and considered, hence developing their self-confidence.
12. Leaders and managers have the appropriate skills and knowledge to carry out their roles effectively. They receive ongoing training and their performance is regularly reviewed by the governing body, along with guidance and support to enable leaders to provide pupils with high-quality education and care.
13. The school has a strategic plan which is under review to provide direction for the next five years. The plan is developed following consultation with staff, pupils, parents and governors and is supported by detailed self-evaluation of the school.
14. The school is overseen by a board of governors who take an active part in school life, visiting regularly and offering support and guidance in key areas such as finance, safeguarding and health and safety. Governors monitor the suitability of policies and their implementation to ensure that the Standards are met.
15. The school provides parents of current and prospective pupils with all necessary information via the school's website. The website offers details about the school, policies and events and, along with the weekly newsletter, helps families stay informed and engaged with the school community.
16. Parents are well informed about their child's progress and personal development through the provision of regular reports. These detailed updates inform parents of the academic achievements and the wellbeing of their child. The school provides the local authority with the required information relating to the use of funding for pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
17. Leadership of provision for pupils who have SEND is highly effective. Specialist expertise, combined with collaborative working across academic and pastoral teams, ensures that pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points.
18. Leaders identify potential risks to pupils' wellbeing effectively. Risk assessment policies and procedures are methodically implemented for all buildings, and for activities around the site and off site. Welfare risk assessments are in place to ensure the wellbeing of pupils in the school.
19. Leaders manage complaints in a timely manner, in line with the school's policy. Detailed records are kept of all concerns, investigations and their outcomes and any actions taken as a result. Boarders' complaints are considered separately and analysed for any patterns or trends.
20. Leaders work collaboratively with external agencies, such as specialists in provision for pupils who have SEND and safeguarding partners.
21. The school complies with the Equality Act 2010. A suitable accessibility plan is in place to support pupils who have SEND in accessing the curriculum and the premises. The plan outlines the current

situation and actions to be undertaken to develop such access further. Leaders promote the value of tolerance and respect in a diverse society and ensure that no pupils are discriminated against.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

22. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

23. The school's curriculum is tailored to develop the skills and knowledge of pupils across a suitably wide range of subjects and to promote their personal development. The curriculum is supported by detailed schemes of work that develop topics in an age-appropriate way and link themes across subjects, such as that of democracy in history and PSHE. The curriculum is subject to continual review and is flexibly adapted in response to the evolving requirements of the pupils. For instance, a literacy programme has been introduced in Year 9 to ensure all pupils have the skills required for their GCSE studies. Where necessary, individual adjustments are made to accommodate individual pupils' circumstances. For example, some pupils may opt to study three A levels instead of four, if doing so better meets their needs.
24. The curriculum is designed to prepare pupils for life in modern British society. Values such as mutual respect, tolerance and individual liberty are embedded throughout the curriculum and are also taught explicitly within the PSHE programme, ensuring pupils understand and appreciate these principles as a foundation for their future.
25. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and foster positive relationships with pupils, which enable good progress. Lessons are well structured and make use of a range of good-quality resources. Teachers sometimes use carefully targeted questioning to encourage pupils to think independently and draw their own conclusions, such as in Year 12 discussions on how HIV acts in the human body and in a Year 10 geography lesson on sustainable urban development, where pupils are challenged to evaluate information from a video they have seen. Some lessons actively challenge pupils and encourage pupils' curiosity and ability to think and learn for themselves. However, this is not consistently evident across all teaching.
26. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and willingly settle to the task in hand. They work well independently and enjoy working collaboratively when given the opportunity. Pupils appreciate the feedback they receive from their teachers, both verbal and written, as it helps them to improve their work.
27. Leaders meticulously track pupils' progress using a comprehensive database that incorporates baseline entry data, assessment results and attitude grades. Where underperformance or lack of effort is identified, leaders ensure that appropriate academic or pastoral support is promptly put in place. Teachers are dedicated, offering their time generously to provide individual assistance within lessons as well as through extra revision clinics available across all subjects. This personalised support helps ensure that pupils make good progress from their starting points. Overall results at GCSE, A level and in BTECs are above the national average and history and geography results are consistently above the national average at GCSE and A level.
28. Pupils who have SEND have their individual needs identified by the learning support team, who share the relevant information appropriately with the teaching staff. A range of effective strategies is employed to support these pupils, including classroom assistance, small-group or one-to-one support, and additional support from teaching assistants. This enables pupils who have SEND to engage well in lessons and participate in them confidently alongside their peers. These measures ensure that pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points.

29. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) have their language needs assessed on entry to the school. When required, the school provides these pupils with individual learning plans (ILPs), developed in consultation with the pupils and shared with all teachers. Support is tailored to pupils' individual needs, including through the use of specific resources, such as vocabulary sheets, when appropriate. Progress for these pupils is tracked on a half-termly basis, with the level of support adjusted accordingly.
30. The school offers a wide range of activities tailored to the varied interests and needs of its pupils. Beyond the core sports programme, the activities and enrichment offer is extensive, including early-morning cricket, after-school activities and Friday enrichment sessions. Activities offered include the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE), music, computer programming, art, golf and first-team training. Clubs such as chess, international matters, cooking and 'Greenpower' further enrich pupils' experience. Through the extra-curricular activities and clubs, pupils develop their interests and skills and their self-confidence and self-esteem, as well as leadership skills. Boarders benefit from a specific programme of weekend activities, such as cinema and cultural visits and Thursday evening house events to which day pupils are welcomed.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

31. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

32. Pupils enhance their self-esteem, self-confidence and self-awareness through a comprehensive PSHE programme delivered by a team of specialist tutors, complemented by a tailored pastoral tutorial system. Relationships and sex education lessons are taught within the PSHE programme, with male and female pupils receiving separate and age-appropriate guidance about subjects where this is deemed sensible, such as menstruation and contraception. Themes such as supporting one's own health and wellbeing, what makes relationships healthy or toxic and the importance of consent are taught in an age-appropriate way. The PSHE programme is adapted in response to current world events, should this be of benefit to the pupils. By addressing topics such as resilience, mental health, fake news, vaping and personal safety, the course helps prepare pupils for their life beyond school.
33. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate the non-material dimensions of life through a variety of experiences provided by the school. Pupils receive education about different faiths and ethical perspectives as part of their PSHE and religious studies (RS) lessons. This approach helps pupils develop respect for the beliefs of others. Regular services of worship and assemblies form a key part of this provision, fostering a sense of reflection and community spirit. These services are fully inclusive and ensure that pupils of different faiths or none can feel welcome. Pupils explore themes, such as the nature and impact of love and hate, in a supportive environment. Through participation in art, music and drama, pupils are able to explore and express their ideas, emotions and beliefs, deepening their understanding of themselves and the world around them.
34. Sport and physical education (PE) are carefully and strategically planned to provide pathways for high performance and offer broad opportunities for participation. The programme is planned to meet and respond to the changing interests and requirements of the pupils. For example, hockey is available to all pupils and the girls' cricket offering has been expanded to encourage greater involvement. This flexibility ensures that every pupil can engage meaningfully in sport, regardless of their skill level or previous experience. The PE programme helps pupils to develop specific skills in sports such as rugby, hockey, tennis and athletics, as well as resilience and a positive attitude towards physical activity and teamwork.
35. School and house prefects have a range of duties and responsibilities that contribute to the daily life and culture of the school. Prefects play a key role in promoting a sense of community, taking assemblies, leading activities and charitable ventures. Prefects in the boarding houses take an active role in organising activities and supporting younger pupils, such as by helping them with homework in the evenings.
36. Leaders implement a clear and effective behaviour management strategy. On the rare occasions when incidents of poor behaviour arise, they are addressed promptly, including through the proportionate use of suitable sanctions when appropriate. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that pupils are able to learn from their mistakes and resolve any disagreements that they might have. Leaders and staff have consistently high expectations of behaviour. As a result, pupils are polite, well-mannered and behave well. Bullying is infrequent and any instances of bullying are managed swiftly and effectively by leaders and staff.

37. There is well-planned supervision of pupils throughout the school day and during boarding time. House parents and resident tutors enable boarders to develop their independence and remain available for support should this be required, including overnight.
38. The school provides boarders with good-quality sleeping and living accommodation that is comfortable and secure. Pupils who board are provided with nutritious and varied meals and have access to food and drink between mealtimes. Boarding staff establish warm and supportive relationships with pupils. These positive relationships make a clear contribution to pupils' emotional wellbeing, helping to foster a sense of belonging and community within the school.
39. Leaders ensure that all required checks and maintenance are carried out methodically and recorded comprehensively. Staff receive regular training relating to health and safety and fire safety so that they understand their responsibilities in these areas. Leaders analyse records of any accidents or near misses for any trends and take action accordingly. Leaders arrange regular external audits of health and safety and fire safety arrangements and follow up all recommendations within the required timeframe. Fire drills are regularly conducted, including during boarding time, ensuring that all pupils and staff are well versed in evacuation procedures. The school premises, including boarding accommodation, are suitable and well maintained.
40. Attendance and admission registers are maintained in line with current statutory guidance. Attendance is tracked and leaders work with families and external agencies in the case of any extended absence. Leaders inform the local authority whenever pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times of transition.
41. The school's arrangements for first aid and medical care are comprehensive and robust. Staff receive appropriate training in first aid, with many members of staff holding advanced qualifications. Suitable first aid measures are put into place for trips, sports and activities. Accommodation for those who are unwell or injured is suitable. Medicines are stored securely and all procedures relating to the administration of medication or first aid are stringent and carefully managed.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 42. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

43. The school promotes understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity through assemblies, PSHE and events such as 'culture week', providing opportunities for pupils to reflect on people's differences and similarities and common humanity. Assemblies on themes such as Black History Month, International Women's and Men's Days and Holocaust Memorial Day enable pupils to understand the importance of treating everyone with respect and the consequences of not doing so. The pupil-led equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) group provides a further route for pupils to explore and celebrate diversity through activities such as assemblies on LGB awareness. Inter-house debates and debates within tutorials promote understanding of the importance of listening with respect and developing one's own moral understanding.
44. The PSHE programme, tutorials and lessons in different subjects develop pupils' understanding of democracy, mutual respect and the notion of individual liberty in society. Topics such as legal rights, the rule of law and talks from external speakers on subjects such as human rights develop pupils' ability to distinguish right from wrong and help prepare them for life in British society. A recent mock election gave pupils hands-on experience with democracy. The school ensures that pupils receive a balanced view on political issues by having comprehensive schemes of work in place, conducting book trawls and vetting all visiting speakers and their presentations. All discussions with political content are conducted impartially and without bias.
45. Pupils actively participate in a range of charitable endeavours, demonstrating a meaningful commitment to supporting both their local and wider communities. Initiatives include regular work with the local foodbank, where pupils from all year groups contribute by sorting and organising donations, and recent fundraising for the farming community. This hands-on involvement allows pupils to gain a direct understanding of the impact their efforts can have on those in need within their community.
46. Extensive links with the local community are developed through a wide range of opportunities, including participation in DofE and sixth-form community service placements. Community service placements are extensive and purposeful, including activities such as reading to pupils in a local primary school, supporting the elderly and gardening. The school invites the local community into school for events such as the annual community concert, in which local schools and the local community participate.
47. Economic education is embedded within the PSHE programme for all year groups. Pupils in lower years learn about budgeting and older pupils explore topics such as tax and mortgages, developing pupils' understanding of issues likely to affect their future management of finances. Pupils in Year 12 take part in a 'challenge day', where they have to plan and budget and pitch an enterprise challenge.. Outside speakers contribute to this programme by discussing themes such as the dangers of gambling.
48. Careers guidance based on the Gatsby benchmarks begins in the younger senior years, where online platforms are used to provide assessments of pupils' skills and to signpost possible careers in an age-appropriate way. In addition to these digital resources, pupils in Years 10 and 12 benefit from individual career guidance sessions. Pupils receive impartial advice regarding their options after the age of 18. The guidance encompasses a broad range of pathways, including international

universities, degree apprenticeships, apprenticeships and traditional university routes. Pupils receive support with gap year preparation and direct entry into the world of work. The guidance given in careers sessions in school is enhanced by a range of external speakers on such topics as 'creative careers and entrepreneurship' and visits such as to the UCAS Careers Fair and the US Fulbright Colleges Fair. Dedicated staff members are on hand to support pupils with applications for higher education and pupils in Year 13 participate in an 'interview day' with external professionals. This experience helps pupils to build resilience and confidence, in preparation for life beyond school.

49. Pupils contribute to school development through the school council and other pupil-led committees such as EDI, eco- and food committees. Through these committees, pupils have influenced school initiatives, such as the opening of a refurbished junior common room to facilitate social mixing outside of the houses.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

- 50. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Safeguarding

51. The school upholds a rigorous safeguarding ethos. There is a collective understanding that safeguarding issues can arise within the school. The safeguarding policy is carefully aligned with both local and statutory guidance. It undergoes annual updates, ratified by the governing body. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding maintains regular contact with the school, providing the safeguarding team with effective oversight and advice.
52. Members of the safeguarding team receive regular training to equip them for their responsibilities. They respond to safeguarding concerns quickly and appropriately. Referrals to external agencies are made promptly and appropriately, when required. The safeguarding team maintains suitable and detailed safeguarding records and monitors these to identify any patterns.
53. Staff receive regular training, including on the 'Prevent' duty, which relates to concerns about radicalisation and extremism. Every September, comprehensive staff training takes place both in person and online, with understanding assessed via an online quiz. Throughout the school year, staff are kept informed of current issues through regular updates and half-termly safeguarding newsletters. As a result, staff exhibit a secure understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and procedures, including how to report safeguarding concerns about pupils and any concerns or allegations about adults through the school's whistleblowing processes.
54. Pupils are able to identify staff to whom they could turn if they have a concern. Additionally, they have access to an online anonymous reporting system and can seek support from an independent person.
55. Leaders implement appropriate internet monitoring and filtering systems. Alerts generated by these systems are promptly followed up by the safeguarding team. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online through PSHE and information and communication technology (ICT) lessons. Parents are supported with advice about online safety and are invited to attend online safety events at the school. The use of mobile phones is appropriately restricted for pupils in the day school and in boarding.
56. Safer recruitment procedures are rigorous. Leaders ensure that all required pre-employment checks are completed and accurately recorded on the single central record of appointments (SCR).

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 57. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	King's Bruton
Department for Education number	933/6004
Registered charity number	1071997
Address	King's Bruton Plox Bruton Somerset BA10 0ED
Phone number	01749 814200
Email address	office@kingsbruton.com
Website	www.@kingsbruton.com
Proprietor	The Governors of King's School
Chair	Eur Ing Nick Buckland
Headteacher	Mr Matthew Radley
Age range	13 to 18
Number of pupils	306
Number of boarding pupils	124
Date of previous inspection	25 to 26 January 2023

Information about the school

58. King's Bruton is an independent co-educational day and boarding school situated in Somerset. It was founded in 1519. The school is a charity and is overseen by a governing body, the members of which are trustees of the school. The current headmaster took up his post in September 2025 and the chair of governors in March 2025.
59. The school has six boarding houses, three for female pupils and three for male pupils. The houses are situated on site and adjacent to the school site.
60. The school has identified 72 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
61. The school has identified English as an additional language for 27 pupils.
62. The school states its aims are to deliver a broad and balanced education, fostering academic achievement and personal development across a wide range of subjects and extra-curricular activities. It intends to support pupils in reaching their full potential. The school endeavours for its Christian ethos to underpin the community and promote both spiritual growth and high standards in all areas of school life.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

27 to 29 January 2026

63. A team of six inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

64. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

65. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

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**.

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For more information, please visit isi.net