ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

School inspection report

14 to 16 October 2025

Kingswood School

Lansdown Road

Bath

Somerset

BA1 5RG

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 are effective in fulfilling their responsibilities to actively promote pupils' wellbeing across all aspects of the school's provision. They engage in a rigorous and detailed process of self-evaluation, in which the opinions and views of pupils are highly valued. Well-considered development plans, with measurable targets, are in place for all aspects of school life. Leaders' implementation of the plans has positive impact on pupil outcomes, such as the recent improvement in GCSE results.

2. Governors maintain effective oversight in ensuring that leaders have the relevant knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities. They monitor the implementation of school policies closely through frequent visits to the school and the work of a focused group of committees that report termly to the governing board.

3. Leaders are successful in promoting a culture in which everyone is treated with equal consideration and respect. This enables pupils to develop their spiritual knowledge and grow in self-confidence and self-esteem, knowing that they are valued as individuals. As they mature, pupils gain a comprehensive understanding of moral issues as well as an awareness of the importance of looking after their mental and physical health.

4. Pupils achieve well at all stages of their education and make good progress in relation to their starting points. Pupils' attainment at GCSE, A level and BTEC is at a consistently high level. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who speak English as an additional language (EAL) also make good progress.

5. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a range of well-chosen strategies to enable pupils to make good progress overall. However, some teaching does not challenge or stretch pupils sufficiently well to enable them to develop their independent thinking to its full potential.

6. The majority of pupils have a positive attitude to their learning. Pupils enjoy the challenge of working independently and learn equally well in collaboration with their peers. However, in the lower school, some teachers do not effectively manage the behaviour of a small number of pupils who occasionally become disengaged from their learning, resulting in inconsistent progress.

7. Leaders in boarding, alongside well-trained staff, promote a culture of collaboration, sharing and mutual support within the boarding houses. This has a positive effect on pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Boarders take on positions of responsibility in their houses, which enables them to develop leadership skills as well as their social awareness.

8. The school ensures that pupils are well prepared for their lives beyond school. They develop a clear understanding of right and wrong and the importance of being responsible for their actions. The curriculum includes activities that enable pupils to develop their financial awareness. Pupils carry out considerable amounts of voluntary work in the local community, which enables their self-awareness and confidence to grow rapidly. Leaders support pupils in making decisions about their post-school pathways through well-structured and age-appropriate careers guidance.

9. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained for their safeguarding responsibilities and implement the school's safeguarding procedures effectively. They take prompt action when needed and liaise appropriately with local safeguarding partners. Safer recruitment procedures are followed

scrupulously to ensure the suitability of all employees and volunteers, including those who work and live in the boarding community.

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:

- ensure that all teaching extends and challenges pupils' thinking to enable them to make consistently good progress
- ensure that classroom behaviour management is consistently effective in enabling all pupils in the lower school to be fully focused on their learning so as to enhance their academic progress.

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Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders draw up clear policies and protocols for all aspects of school life to promote pupils' wellbeing. These are well understood and consistently implemented by staff. Regular reviews of practice and policy are embedded into a leadership culture that aims to ensure that each individual pupil thrives both academically and in terms of their personal development.

11. Leaders have a clear vision for the ongoing development of the school. They maintain a culture of continuous improvement to enhance pupil wellbeing, which is informed by a reflective and collaborative approach to self-evaluation. Senior leaders actively seek and listen to the views of pupils, staff and parents so as to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact of their decisions. This informs annual action plans targeting all areas of school life, resulting in improvements such as the raised profile of the pupil council and an enhanced staff professional development programme.

12. Governors maintain effective oversight of the implementation of school polices and actively monitor leaders' progress in achieving the targets identified in the annual development plans. They satisfy themselves that leaders have the relevant skills to carry out their roles and to ensure that the Standards are consistently met. The governing body provides challenge for school leaders and scrutinises all areas of the school's operation through regular visits, meetings with staff and termly reports on all aspects of school life.

13. Leaders have a clear understanding of how to mitigate against any potential risks to pupils' wellbeing. Risk management is an important aspect of the school's future planning, including the consideration of possible unintended consequences of new initiatives. Staff are well trained and produce suitable risk assessments that identify and manage possible risks effectively. The risk assessment policy is implemented well across all aspects of school life, including for educational trips, on-site vehicular movement, pupil use of the school grounds, boarding houses and individual pupils' welfare.

14. Senior and subject leaders maintain close oversight of the development of pupils' learning. They identify any areas of the curriculum that need development through regular lesson observations, departmental reviews and listening to the views of pupils. They use their findings effectively to inform plans for teachers' further training.

15. The leadership and management of boarding is well organised, with effective oversight of the implementation of school policies. Boarding house leaders have a detailed understanding of the needs of individual boarders. They liaise with tutors to ensure the welfare and learning needs of each boarder are met. The inclusive boarding community enables boarders' self-confidence and self-esteem to grow rapidly after their arrival at the school.

16. Leaders are highly effective in promoting a culture in which everyone is treated with equal consideration and respect. They ensure that there is equality of opportunity for staff and pupils alike. A detailed accessibility plan is in place. The school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

17. Leaders liaise effectively with a range of external agencies such as safeguarding partners and the local authority's attendance officers. They work closely with the local authority when informing them about the use of funding to support pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).

18. Leaders and staff work closely with parents to follow up and resolve any concerns they may have. They communicate constructively with parents in a timely manner. The school maintains detailed records of complaints submitted and any actions taken as a result, in line with the complaints policy.

19. The school regularly provides parents with reports on the progress of their own child throughout the academic year. Other required information, such as policies and school contact details, is provided on the school's website or otherwise made available to parents and other agencies.

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

20. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. Leaders maintain a broad and inclusive curriculum in which pupils are able to study an extensive range of subjects. Schemes of work are planned effectively to enable clear progression in the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils are provided with opportunities to apply their skills across different subjects, such as when using their numeracy skills to analyse data in the sciences and geography. The sixth-form curriculum allows all pupils to study one or more of a range of advanced elective subjects such as criminology, public speaking and art history. These courses help pupils to develop their intellectual interests and take responsibility for their own learning.

22. There is a suitable framework for assessment in place. Leaders use assessment data to measure pupils' progress from their starting points and to identify patterns across different groups of pupils and by subjects. Subject leaders use this information to put in place action plans and structured feedback to support pupils' learning and improve their rate of progress. Pupils meet with their tutors at least every half term to review their learning strategies and overall progress. This has a positive effect on their motivation and self-confidence. As a result, pupils make good progress over time, attaining high levels at GCSE, BTEC and A level. Pupils gain places at high-quality universities and on highly competitive professional apprenticeship schemes, such as engineering with Rolls Royce.

23. Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils who have SEND are identified and their progress is effectively monitored. Subject teachers and learning support specialists work together to put in place appropriate support, including targeted support outside lessons when appropriate. Teachers ensure that their lesson planning incorporates suitable strategies to support the learning of pupils with different needs. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress relative to their starting points.

24. Pupils who speak EAL are given specialist support to enable them to fully access the curriculum and the technical language that is required at GCSE and A level. As well as in-class support, pupils receive additional focused lessons with specialist teachers. Pupils who speak EAL are supported to ensure that they are prepared effectively for university English language assessments. As a result, pupils who speak EAL make good progress with their English and achieve high levels of attainment at GCSE and A level.

25. Teachers consistently demonstrate good subject knowledge, use resources effectively and manage lesson time efficiently. They use their detailed knowledge of pupils' needs and prior attainment to plan lessons that enable pupils to develop their understanding, skills and knowledge. Teachers use a range of strategies to enable pupils to increase their depth of understanding. They use extended questioning to prompt pupils to think critically, such as when analysing the motivation of characters in *Animal Farm*. Pupils are encouraged to think deeply and apply their understanding through challenging tasks, such as when presented with unusual data in an investigation of variable resistors in physics. However, in some lessons, teachers do not provide sufficient academic challenge to enable pupils to fully develop their independent thinking and make consistently good progress.

26. Most pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and the feedback they receive from teachers on how to improve their academic work. They thrive on being challenged and work equally well in collaboration with others or independently. As a result, pupils achieve high levels of attainment in sixth form extended research projects and in individually-focused subjects such as art. However, in

some lower-school lessons, teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour effectively. When this happens, pupils become distracted and disengaged from their learning, which hinders their progress.

27. In the boarding environment, tutors work closely with teachers and boarding leaders so that effective academic support is in place for each boarder. This has a positive effect on boarders' progress, confidence and their ambition to achieve academic success. Boarders take part in the wide-ranging co-curricular programme during the week. Leaders provide activities at weekends, ranging from school-based cooking and art activities to trips to adventure centres and places of historical interest. Pupils' active engagement in the weekend programme helps them to build friendships, collaboration skills and self-confidence.

28. Leaders have established an extensive co-curriculum that provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their skills in sport, music, art and drama. As a result, pupils achieve high levels of performance in sport and the performing arts, which is often recognised at national levels. Well-planned academic and intellectual enrichment activities and clubs enable pupils to develop new interests and challenge themselves, including taking part in national science competitions and essay-writing challenges. In the lower school, the 'Westwood gold award' motivates pupils to develop their skills across a range of different activities, such as extending their knowledge and intellectual understanding through academic enrichment. The co-curricular programme enables pupils to extend their learning beyond their academic subjects and this has a positive effect on the development of their intellectual skills.

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

29. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

30. Leaders maintain a well-structured pastoral support system that is highly effective in supporting pupils' emotional wellbeing. Tutors gain a deep knowledge of pupils' needs through the opportunities provided by small tutor groups and frequent, extended tutorial sessions that allow time for individual meetings. The 'Kingswood for life' personal development programme is led by tutors and provides opportunities for pupils to discuss and learn about subjects such as neuroplasticity, growth mindset and mindfulness. This enables pupils to develop strategies for supporting their own mental health.

31. Staff are trained to understand the needs of their pupils in line with leaders' commitment to promoting every individual's wellbeing. Leaders hold regular staff meetings devoted to considering how best to support those who may be struggling, lacking motivation or having friendship problems. The health and wellbeing centre is well staffed with specialists, such as counsellors and nurses, who work effectively alongside school staff to support pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing.

32. There is a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum in place, which places particular emphasis on promoting pupils' emotional wellbeing. Teachers are trained to deliver PSHE effectively and incorporate regular opportunities to assess pupils' understanding. Feedback from pupils enables leaders to adapt the PSHE course content to meet pupils' changing needs. In the sixth form, PSHE evolves into the age-appropriate 'life skills' course, which prepares pupils for their life after leaving school, with increased focus on the social and practical aspects of living independently.

33. The school's PSHE programme includes relationships and sex education (RSE). This is taught effectively by discussion and consideration of different types of real-life scenarios. This enables pupils to learn, for example, about the nature of different types of healthy relationships, recognising sexual harassment, consent and the risks associated with social media.

34. Leaders ensure that the curriculum enables pupils to learn about respect for different faiths and develop their moral understanding. The school's values of inclusivity and tolerance are promoted in chapel services and assemblies, which also support the spiritual growth of pupils of all faiths or none. Pupils' moral understanding grows through opportunities in PSHE and religion, philosophy and ethics (RPE) lessons to discuss issues such as the ethics of weapons of mass destruction, genetic engineering and the just war theory.

35. The physical education (PE) curriculum and associated games programme are well planned and support pupils in developing their self-confidence and self-esteem. Teachers adapt sporting options for individual pupils to ensure that everyone can participate in some form of physical activity. A range of team sports, such as hockey and rugby, allows pupils to develop collaborative group skills within activities that take account of their prior attainment. Leaders provide older pupils with the opportunity to select their own sporting pathways from a range of individual sports. As a result, pupils make good progress in developing a range of physical and sporting skills as well as their overall physical fitness. Pupils gain a clear understanding of the link between physical activity and mental wellbeing, which is reinforced within science topics on nutrition and healthy diets.

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36. Leaders implement clear and appropriate policies to encourage positive behaviour and to prevent and manage bullying. Staff are trained to identify signs of bullying and have a secure understanding of the thresholds for child-on-child abuse. Leaders and staff respond swiftly to any concerns or allegations. Records of any incidents of bullying or inappropriate behaviour are constantly reviewed by leaders. They identify patterns and put suitable action plans into operation as needed. Leaders draw up a clear set of sanctions for poor behaviour, which staff apply fairly. When pupils do misbehave, leaders ensure that the primary focus is reflection and learning from mistakes, which enables pupils to understand the importance of taking responsibility for their actions.

37. Pupils' social awareness and sense of responsibility are enhanced by the many opportunities for pupil leadership in the school and boarding communities. Older pupils are trained to take on a range of leadership roles, including leading clubs and as senior prefects. Prefects take on a number of responsibilities, including the leadership of pupil discussion groups focused on matters such as cultural awareness, inclusivity and social justice. These initiatives help pupils to recognise the positive contribution they make to supporting others and to be confident that their voices are heard.

38. Leaders draw up health and safety policies and procedures that are comprehensive and implemented effectively, including those related to preventing risk from fire. The school site is secure and well maintained to provide a suitable environment in which pupils can learn, play and socialise. Pupils are supervised effectively throughout the school day and in boarding time. First aid provision is appropriate and effective, including staff training, medical facilities and record-keeping. Staff ensure that boarders have full access to nearby medical facilities when needed.

39. The boarding houses provide an inclusive and welcoming environment. Well-trained staff ensure that the welfare needs of boarders are met and help boarders to maintain a healthy balance of work and leisure. The privacy of boarders is respected in well-maintained houses that provide suitable accommodation. Older boarders are suitably trained for the responsibility of leadership roles in their houses. They supervise and support younger pupils effectively. Suitable supervision levels are consistently maintained in the boarding houses, including overnight.

40. The school's attendance and admission registers are accurately maintained in line with current statutory guidance. Leaders inform the local authority of any pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard transition points or where there are concerns about their attendance.

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

41. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

42. Leaders review the curriculum regularly to ensure that it enables pupils to learn about the values of equality and inclusivity. The school's values of mutual respect and care for the individual are evident in the behaviour and collaborative learning demonstrated by pupils and staff. Leaders meet with a range of pupil-led groups to seek their views and consider how to improve learning opportunities for all pupils in relation to gender, race, sexuality and disability. Pupils work alongside leaders to promote respect for individuality through assemblies on issues such as Black History Month. They have taken a leading role in reviewing the school's age-appropriate books with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) themes.

43. Pupils gain considerable insight into different cultural and social perspectives of people from different parts of the world through assemblies and subjects such as RPE and geography. The pupil-led social justice group helps pupils understand the different social challenges faced in, for example, different African cultures. Staff support pupils in celebrating different cultural events, such as when Nepalese boarders organised a meal for the festival of Dashain. Pupils respectfully listen to and learn from different views that challenge their thinking. The school's vertical house system enhances opportunities for pupils to work with and learn from each other, further promoting mutual respect throughout the school.

44. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern British society through their learning across the curriculum, particularly through PSHE lessons. They develop respect for the rule of law and an understanding of the rights of people in British society. They understand the principle of free but responsible speech. Pupils have a clear sense of what is right and what is wrong, demonstrated through their knowledgeable discussion of the school behaviour code. Pupils learn about the democratic process by engaging in mock general elections and voting for pupil positions of responsibility. They appreciate the different forms this may take, such as when discussing how change can be brought about by online petitions.

45. Through the well-planned PSHE and life skills curriculum, pupils are regularly given opportunities to apply their numeracy skills to develop their financial literacy. Pupils increase their appreciation of how to manage money as they mature, including their understanding of salary, tax and investment. Pupils in Year 9 acquire a secure financial understanding through developing their own business models as part of the 'global goals' course. Older pupils learn how to construct a personal budget, in preparation for leading independent lives when they leave school.

46. Leaders provide opportunities within the co-curricular programme for pupils to make a positive contribution to the local community. They promote the principle of serving others through building time for volunteering into the weekly timetable so that it is embedded into the school culture. Pupils in the lower school are given leadership training, which enables them to represent the views of their peers at pupil council meetings effectively. Upper-school pupils engage in a wide variety of activities, such as voluntary work as part of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and mentoring younger pupils within the school and in nearby primary schools. Pupils raise money for local and national charities, often through pupil-led initiatives, such as organising stalls for the school's Christmas fair. As a result, pupils develop a growing social awareness and sense of social responsibility as they mature.

47. Leaders recognise the cultural diversity within the boarding houses and foster a highly collaborative community in which boarders enjoy sharing their experiences and ideas. Boarders respect different views to their own and enjoy each other's company. Their social understanding grows through the many opportunities to work together and engage in voluntary work, both for the benefit of their houses and in the local community.

48. The school has an age-appropriate careers programme, which leaders regularly evaluate against national benchmarks to ensure that it meets pupils' needs. The careers programme prepares pupils well for the next stages of their education, training and employment. Pupils learn about how to apply for jobs and the consequences of subject choices for future career pathways. They benefit from opportunities to meet with professionals from the world of employment through various careers networking events. Pupils in Year 12 undertake work experience in line with their interests and aspirations. Staff provide pupils with bespoke guidance in making applications to higher education institutions across the world, as well as when applying for professional apprenticeships.

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

49. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

50. Leaders have established an effective safeguarding culture in which staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. This is enhanced by the well-structured and highly visible safeguarding team. The school has a clear and appropriate safeguarding policy that is in line with current statutory guidance. Leaders ensure that this policy is implemented effectively.

51. Governors have a comprehensive oversight of safeguarding. They conduct a thorough annual review of the safeguarding policy and monitor its implementation through termly reports from safeguarding leaders. Governors' oversight of safeguarding is extended through frequent visits to the school to scrutinise safeguarding records and meet with the safeguarding team.

52. Leaders provide staff and governors with wide-ranging and updated safeguarding training, including weekly updates and online questions to confirm understanding. They implement a well-planned induction programme for new staff, so that they are clear about the school's safeguarding arrangements as soon as they join the school. Staff understand the procedures for ensuring online safety. They are aware of the potential risks to pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Members of the safeguarding team receive appropriate training for their role in line with local procedures.

53. Leaders have established clear procedures, in line with the protocols of their local safeguarding partner, to manage any allegations against adults in the school. They ensure that staff understand the code of conduct and the importance of reporting allegations, including low-level concerns, about adults working in the school.

54. The safeguarding team responds to safeguarding concerns promptly and effectively, including through liaison with relevant external agencies when appropriate. Members of the safeguarding team communicate frequently and effectively with the school's pastoral teams to consistently monitor and review the support in place for individual pupils. Safeguarding concerns are suitably recorded, showing actions taken and decisions made. Child protection records are maintained appropriately.

55. Boarding leaders work closely with the safeguarding team. They ensure that the welfare needs of boarders are met, with appropriate support from house staff. In addition to adults in the wider school community, boarders know that they can talk confidentially to staff in their houses. If needed, they can also contact the school's independent listener.

56. There is an extensive range of adult contact points in the school for pupils to share any concerns or worries, including anonymously. Pupils are aware of the many trusted adults in which they can confide and they are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Suitable and extensive filtering and monitoring of internet use are in place. The safeguarding team receives daily reports on any suspicious internet activity and responds quickly to any concerns about online activity.

57. Leaders undertake the required safer recruitment checks for all staff, governors, contractors and volunteers before they begin work in the school. This includes staff and family members who live in the school's boarding accommodation. A suitable single central record of appointments records these checks accurately and staff files contain the information required by current statutory guidance.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

58. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Kingswood School
Department for Education number	800/6000
Registered charity number	309148
Address	Kingswood School Lansdown Road Bath Somerset BA1 5RG
Phone number	01225 734200
Email address	reception@kingswood.bath.sch.uk
Website	www.kingswood.bath.sch.uk
Proprietor	Kingswood School Trustee Limited
Chair	Mr Paul Baines
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Gordon-Brown
Age range	11 to 19
Number of pupils	890
Number of boarding pupils	167
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2024

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Information about the school

59. Kingswood School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school situated in Bath, Somerset. The school is organised into a lower school, for pupils aged 11 to 13, the middle school, for those aged 14 to 16, and a sixth form. The school is an associated member of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust and retains a Christian ethos. The school is a charitable trust overseen by directors who also take on roles as governors. The current chair of governors took up his post in January 2025.

60. Boarders are accommodated on the school site in one co-educational boarding house for lower school pupils, two senior boarding houses for female pupils and two senior houses for male pupils.

61. The school has identified 245 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).

62. The school has identified English as an additional language for 78 pupils.

63. The school states its aims are to provide the highest quality of all-round education that meets the needs of each individual child. It seeks to encourage confidence, open-mindedness, collaboration and respect, along with creativity and the courage to take risks. The intention is to ensure that pupils' academic achievement takes place in the context of all personal development, where high standards are combined with a sense of responsibility and service.

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Inspection details

Inspection dates	14 to 16 October 2025

64. A team of ten inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

65. 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 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.

66. 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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