

Kings Oxford

St Joseph's Hall, Temple Road, Oxford, OX4 2UJ

Inspection dates

30 April – 2 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Good leadership and management have played a pivotal role in continually improving the college, including student achievement and the quality of teaching.
- Consistently good teaching over time has ensured that students attending the wide range of courses the college offers make good progress and achieve well.
- Behaviour is good and at times exemplary. Good relationships and high levels of respect abound to help create a cohesive, tolerant learning community among students from many different countries.
- Students' welfare, health and safety are given a high priority. Students value the attention that is given to their ongoing welfare and the voice that they are given to help make the college a better place.
- When they leave the college students are well prepared academically and socially to further their academic studies, often at the universities of their choice.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Not enough teaching is at the highest level to ensure that students achieve exceptionally well.
- The highly effective staff performance management system in operation at one of the college sites is not yet fully embedded across the whole college.
- The college does not consistently make the best use of its copious amount of test and assessment data to track the progress that all students are making.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The school was inspected with a day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 28 lessons or parts of lessons. The majority of teachers were observed. Students' work was sampled. Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents relating to students' achievement, the curriculum, teaching, leadership and students' welfare.
- Meetings were held with students from the different college sites, the Principal, senior leaders, teaching staff, welfare and admissions staff and one of the proprietors.
- Only a very small number of parental responses were posted on Parent View. Inspectors evaluated the 34 responses from the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Martin Newell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jerome Freeman, Team inspector	Additional Inspector
Helen Griffiths, Team inspector	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kings Oxford is part of the Kings Colleges group which runs international colleges in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Kings Oxford specialises in helping students prepare for attending universities in the United Kingdom and America. Courses for these students and a small number of GCSE students are provided at the college's St Joseph's campus which is situated about three miles from Oxford city centre.
- The college also provides a range of English language training courses for international students. Some of these students transfer on to the university preparation courses. All the English language training courses are held at the college's St Michael's campus and annexe which are situated in the centre of Oxford.
- The mission statement of the college states that its aim is 'to provide a general and linguistic education for young people from all over the world intent on studying in an Anglophone environment'.
- The college is registered to accept up to 370 students aged from 15 to 25 years. There are currently 343 male and female students on roll aged between 16 and 19 years. Approximately 200 students are educated at the St Joseph's campus and the remainder at the St Michael's campus.
- There are no students with disabilities or special educational needs. In addition there are no students with a statement of special educational needs.
- All students attending the college are from a wide range of countries around the world including China, Russia and from many other countries within Europe and Africa. Students studying for courses to help prepare them for university entrance must have acquired a stipulated command of written and spoken English to gain entry onto the courses. Students opting for the English language training courses are at varied stages of acquiring English.
- This is the college's first inspection.
- The college does not provide any additional provision for its students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring that all teachers:
 - help students develop the necessary skills to become active and participant learners as well as attentive learners
 - ask searching and demanding questions that promote greater discussion and enable students to learn more readily from one another
 - help further develop and improve students' linguistic skills as well as subject-specific knowledge and skills across all subjects.
- Ensure that the effective performance management systems that operate in certain sectors of the college are embedded across the whole college and that information collated is used to further improve teaching and better inform the professional development of staff.
- Make the most effective use of the extensive test and assessment data of students' academic performance to more rigorously track their progress.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students' achievement is good. Students start on the English language courses with differing levels of English. Teaching is effective and engages students by using a wide range of learning strategies so students quickly gain a grasp or extend their spoken and written English to become confident, articulate and accomplished learners. On completion of their studies, some students choose to attend some of the higher-level courses that the college offers. These higher-level courses are geared mainly for equipping students with the necessary academic skills to attend a British university or a university in another country such as the United States of America. A small number of students successfully study and complete GCSE courses.

The university preparation courses take the form of Foundation courses or A level. The Foundation course provides students with qualifications equivalent to A level. Most, but not all, universities in the Britain accept this qualification. The extensive college data indicates that students achieve well on the Foundation course with almost all students moving on successfully to their first choice university. A similar picture emerges with A-level students. The number of students attaining A* to B grades is well above the national average and the percentage attaining A* and A grades is above the national average. Attainment is particularly high in mathematics. Importantly, this trend of high attainment is consistent and sustained over time.

On leaving the college almost all students move on to their first choice university, which is often one of the top 50 British universities. On leaving the college students are very competent in spoken and written English as well as acquiring detailed subject knowledge and skills in their specific areas of study.

Inspection evidence from lesson observations, students' work and college assessment data clearly indicates that across the college students make good progress and when teaching is at the highest level, progress is outstanding. This is the case for students at different levels of English language competence.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Students' behaviour and personal development are good. Students behave consistently well and at times behaviour is outstanding. Students come from many different countries and reflect a wide range of beliefs, cultures and opinions. Students embrace these differences and use them as an opportunity to widen their awareness and understanding of the world. As a result, relationships between students are good, racial harmony abounds and differences are recognised and celebrated. Students state that the good behaviour exhibited during the inspection is typical. On the odd occasion that behaviour drops below this level it is dealt with well. Students state that bullying, in any form, is a rare event but experience has shown them that if it was to occur it would be dealt with swiftly.

Almost all students are self-motivated and are keen to achieve well. They value the quality of teaching and learning and social experiences that the college offers. In lessons, students are attentive and focused learners. However, some students are not always ready to play an active role in discussion or to express their own views and opinions. At the college forum students are given a genuine voice in helping make the college a better place.

Discussions with students indicate that many enjoy attending the college which is reflected in the good attendance of most students.

Good provision is made for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students readily take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour. Through their studies and interactions with each other, students gain a good understanding of different cultures and beliefs and this is reflected in the respect that pervades college life. The curriculum enables students to study global issues such as the impact of poverty, materialism and injustice and use the experiences in their own countries to contrast and compare. The proprietor has ensured that where political issues are brought to the attention of the students, steps have been taken to offer a balanced presentation of opposing views. The curriculum is also effective at ensuring that students are given a good grounding in the workings of public institutions and services in England. This is supported through visits to places such as the Houses of Parliament.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good and contributes much to the good progress made by students. On both college sites, relationships in lessons are of a high standard. Teachers provide good academic guidance that enables students to recognise what they may have done wrong and importantly what is needed to improve. Much good teaching is characterised by a display of strong subject knowledge by teachers. In the best teaching this is used to good effect to motivate, question and challenge students so that their knowledge and understanding are deepened. On occasions however, not all teachers ask demanding questions or provide opportunities for students to discuss possible answers or solutions with each other.

Good opportunities are provided in some lessons to learn through practical and investigative tasks with teachers often ensuring that students make the best use of their mathematical skills to provide accurate predictions or answers. In some outstanding teaching, for example seen in the English language courses, questioning is sharp and students are constantly encouraged to work with one another and to check the work of classmates. Excellent use of well-chosen and relevant text in these lessons helps promote discussion and writing that is both provocative and challenging and keeps the students on their toes from the start of the lesson to the end. The best practice sees teachers seeking to improve students' understanding of the nuances of spoken and written English alongside the content knowledge and skills of specific subjects. This good practice is not yet embedded across all subjects.

The college is effective at regularly assessing students' progress through a range of ongoing tests and assessments, some of which are externally moderated. Students are made aware of the progress they are making and clear targets for improvement and further success are regularly shared with them. The college recognises that test and assessment information is not yet organised in the most effective way to more simply demonstrate students' progress.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The curriculum is good and contributes well to students' good progress. The English language courses provided at the St Michael's campus are well organised and cater very well for the differing linguistic needs of the students. The provision strikes a very good balance between spoken and written English. The course content provides many opportunities for students to put their English skills to the test in both oral and written presentations. Much of the text used has a real relevance to everyday life and situations and helps promote much discussion and debate. All these factors help promote an enthusiasm for learning and this is reflected in the number of students that complete the courses successfully.

There are a number of courses on offer at the St Joseph's campus. GCSE courses provide a pathway to a British university for students who have not yet finished high school education in their home country. The Foundation courses are based on the A-level syllabuses and students can opt for an extended course if their English language entry point is not at a high enough level. A

wide range of A-level courses is on offer, which include mathematics, sciences, economics and politics.

The curriculum at the St Joseph's campus is supported by detailed long-, medium- and short-term planning which ensures that students progressively build up their knowledge and skills over time. Good provision is also made for students' personal, social and health education so that they develop personal and social attributes to add to their constantly developing academic skills.

The college provides a good range of extra-curricular sporting and academic activities that add to students' enjoyment of college life. Although the college does not have its own sporting facilities it makes good use of local sports halls, swimming pools and outdoor areas. One of the primary aims of the college is to secure university places for students. It is very successful in this mission and staff provide good levels of support and guidance in helping students make the right choices.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good and all of the independent school regulations for welfare are met. Discussions with students indicate that they feel safe and secure at the college. The college's on-site welfare officer is highly regarded by students. The high quality of relationships between staff and students means that students always have someone to talk to if they have any worries or concerns.

The college has a full set of policies including those for child protection, health and safety, behaviour and anti-bullying. They are well written and understood by staff.

The procedures for checking the suitability of staff to work with students are robust and are also rigorously applied to other adults, such as contractors, who may visit or carry out jobs at the college, and checks are recorded as required on a single central register. The designated person responsible for overseeing safeguarding, including child protection, has attended high-level training and all staff have attended and completed an appropriate level of training. Social services ensure that all the required checks are made on families that provide accommodation for students.

Risk assessments are regularly carried out at all college sites and any issues that arise are dealt with swiftly. Robust procedures are in place to ensure that students are safe when they attend any off-site activities or trips. A good number of staff are trained in paediatric first aid and regularly attend update training events. All the necessary fire risk assessments and maintenance are all carried out on a regular basis and electrical appliances are regularly checked by appropriately qualified contractors.

Leadership and management

Good

Leadership and management are good. The Principal has played a pivotal role in the college's development as it has grown in size and provided a much wider array of courses and subjects for students to study. An effective senior leadership team has been established across the two sites with a clear understanding of its roles and responsibilities. There is a shared focus, from all who work at the college, on continually seeking to improve students' achievement.

Established procedures are in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and these have increasingly brought about sustained improvements in the classroom. These procedures have been particularly effective at the St Michael's campus because they have been closely linked to a very effective performance management system that feeds into the professional development of staff. This same system is being embedded at the St Joseph's campus but is not yet as effective as it could be, particularly in providing professional development that is well matched to the individual needs of the teachers as well those of the college.

The college's self-evaluation provides a detailed picture of where the college is at and what is needed to move it to the next level. Sustained improvements over time have ensured that the curriculum provides learning opportunities for the students to make good progress.

The college leadership and staff have also played a significant role in creating an environment where cultural diversity is celebrated. These are all factors that demonstrate the capacity for continued improvement at Kings Oxford and its continued commitment to ensuring that all students have an equal chance to succeed.

The quality of information for parents and carers is good. The college's website provides a good insight into college life and alerts parents and carers to the college policies which are available for them to read on the website. Reports on students' progress are regular, detailed and informative. Appropriate procedures are in place for handling complaints. The college's accommodation is good. Classrooms and buildings in general are attractive, spacious and well decorated and help to create an environment that is fit for purpose.

The proprietors and college leaders have ensured that all of the independent school regulations are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	138602
Inspection number	420266
DfE registration number	931/6010

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	International college
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	15–25
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	343
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Prime Education
Chair	Nigel Pamplin
Headteacher	Simon Fenn
Date of previous school inspection	First inspection
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,586 – £19,482
Telephone number	01865 711829
Fax number	01865 747791
Email address	simon.fenn@kingscolleges.com

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