

Kings London

25 Beckenham Road, London, BR3 4PR

Inspection dates

5–7 November 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

Outstanding 1

Leadership and management

Good 2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Students make good progress and achieve well as a result of good teaching. They behave well, work hard and learn rapidly to communicate effectively in English.
- There is a broad range of well-planned English and academic courses to suit the students' interests, abilities and aspirations. A strong programme of enrichment promotes their social and cultural development.
- Students receive very good guidance and preparation for higher education. The college is highly successful in helping them to gain places at British universities of their choice.
- There is exceptional provision for students' welfare, health and safety. Comprehensive induction and pastoral procedures ensure that they receive excellent preparation and support for their studies in the UK. The college successfully helps international students to feel welcome, make friends and get on well together.
- It is well led and managed. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the college's performance and a clear direction for its future development.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure that all students make exceptional progress, particularly across the full range of subjects.
- Procedures for assessing and tracking students' progress are not yet firmly established in all areas. Targets set for students are not specific enough to be measured easily.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The college 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

- This inspection was carried out with one day’s notice.
- The inspectors observed 22 lessons or parts of lessons. They looked at some of the students’ work and assessments, and examined a wide range of documentation relating to the curriculum and management of the college and to the students’ achievements and welfare.
- Meetings took place with the proprietor and acting Principal, senior leaders, and members of the teaching, welfare and administrative staff who have key responsibilities in the college.
- No information was available from Parent View, but the inspectors spoke to students about their work, aspirations and experience of college life in Britain. They also considered the views expressed by 38 members of staff in their responses to a questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jane Cooper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patricia MacLachlan	Additional Inspector
Rory O’Doherty	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kings London is part of the Kings group which runs international colleges in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The college has been operating since 1966 as an English language school, but four years ago introduced an academic programme alongside English language tuition, with the aim of preparing overseas students for entry to higher education in the UK. It was registered as an independent school in 2012 and admitted students of compulsory school age from this time. This is its first inspection as an independent school.
- There are 273 students on roll, the vast majority of whom are aged between 15 and 25 years. A few students above this age are studying on the English language courses. There are just seven students of compulsory school age. None of the students has a statement of special educational needs.
- The students come from countries all over the world. They are all non-native speakers of English and for many this is their first extended experience of living and studying away from home.
- The college is located in the London Borough of Bromley. It operates from two customised premises in Beckenham Road, and makes use of a nearby spa and gymnasium for physical education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of the teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring that all teachers consistently:
 - teach and reinforce English vocabulary which is relevant to their subject
 - plan challenging opportunities for students to demonstrate initiative in lessons
 - provide students with helpful feedback on how to improve their work.
- Ensure that students are making the best possible progress by:
 - establishing a clear baseline from which to measure their progress
 - setting targets for students which are specific and measurable
 - tracking their progress closely and using the information from this process to help students improve.
- Implement the improvement plan for better coordination between the language and academic departments so that the best practice may be shared across the college.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students' achievement is good overall. Those on specialist English language programmes make substantial progress in improving their various levels of language proficiency as a result of the consistently good teaching they receive. Even comparative beginners understand spoken and written English well. The students acquire an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and expressions and a good understanding of grammar. Advanced students are fluent speakers with a keen awareness of the nuances of English.

The students on the academic courses also achieve well and make good progress. Test results show that most students improve on their previous performance. The A-level students achieve very well across the range of subjects. Results last year, albeit from a small cohort, were well above the national average, with A being the most common grade. The results of AS examinations were spread more widely, with some high attainment in all subjects, particularly in mathematics, but also instances where a few students did not reach the pass mark. The college uses the AS results to guide students accordingly into the A2 or the Foundation courses, where better results are achieved over a longer period of study as almost all students complete the Foundation course with pass or merit grades. On completing their course at Kings, all students move on to a university of their choice, generally in the United Kingdom.

Last year was the first year in which the college prepared a very small number of students for GCSE. The results were disappointing, particularly in mathematics. The college has reflected on the reasons for this and taken appropriate action to adjust the course and improve internal assessment.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Students' behaviour and personal development are good. They arrive at classes well-prepared, work hard and participate actively in lessons. Around the college, students behave in a courteous and considerate manner. Attendance is good and most students arrive punctually to class. The college has created a welcoming and inclusive community in which students from all over the world feel valued and respected. They told inspectors that they feel safe and happy at Kings, make good friends and get on well together. None of the students considered bullying to be an issue, but they felt sure that the college would deal effectively with any occurrence.

The college makes good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and meets all the requirements of the independent school standards. Two prayer rooms are set aside for students' use. The system of awarding merits for academic and extra-curricular contributions helps students to build confidence and self-esteem. The enrichment programme and extra-curricular activities strongly support the students in developing good social and cultural awareness. Opportunities for fund-raising help them to make contact with other sections of British society and appreciate the lives of those who are less fortunate. The school councils give students a say in college life. There is a structured programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education for students of compulsory school age which is well suited to their needs and helps them to understand British customs and the expectations of a democratic, multi-cultural society. Where political issues are brought to the attention of the students, the college ensures that they receive a balanced presentation of opposing views.

Quality of teaching**Good**

The quality of the teaching is good and enables the students to make good progress. Consistently good features of the teaching are the quality of lesson planning and the preparation of teaching materials, particularly for use with interactive whiteboards, which enable the brisk pace of lessons to be maintained. Relationships are excellent and many lessons are infused with courtesy and good humour. The teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use relevant teaching techniques. Language teachers employ lively strategies for encouraging students to improve their English. These include good opportunities to ask as well as answer questions, spot mistakes, and engage in role play and debate. Up-to-date video clips and recordings are very well used to provoke discussion. All teachers are aware of the different learning cultures of their students and the difficulties some experience in learning through the medium of English. However, only the best teaching supports students' language needs proactively by preparing and reinforcing subject-specific vocabulary and reshaping questions where needed. Most lessons include a good mixture of varied and interesting activities. While planning acknowledges the differentiated outcomes expected of students, teachers do not always vary questions and tasks sufficiently to ensure that they challenge all students fully, particularly the potential high-fliers, for example to think independently, show initiative and become more active learners.

A variety of assessment takes place. This includes routine marking of assignments, weekly, mid- and end-of-term assessments, and mock examinations. Teachers mark work regularly, but the quality and usefulness of the feedback offered to students varies unduly. The results of internal tests feed into the students' profiles, and most show good progress. Targets are set for students, but they are not always sufficiently specific or easily measured. Students' proficiency in English is tested before entry onto the language courses so that they are placed at the right level. Their competence in English and mathematics is also assessed for entry onto the academic courses. Assessment in other subjects has been introduced this year, but is not fully developed, and is vital for establishing a baseline from which to make an accurate and objective assessment of the progress students make.

Quality of curriculum**Good**

The quality of the curriculum is good and meets all the requirements for independent schools. It is well planned and supported by useful schemes of work, and makes a good contribution to the students' progress. There is a very wide range of English language courses at all levels of proficiency which cater very well for the students' differing linguistic skills. Intensive courses in English for specific purposes such as business, finance or law are also available. The afternoon sessions offer excellent opportunities to develop fluency through discussion. The college offers a good variety of academic courses. These include AS- and A-level studies in science, mathematics, business and humanities. Alongside these, the college runs an accredited Foundation course preparing students for entry to British universities, which enables them to reach a standard equivalent to A level over a shorter timeframe. The international high school programme is also available. Younger students follow a broad range subjects leading to iGCSE accreditation. Their study programme includes physical education (PE) and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) which helps them acquire life skills and a good understanding of life in the United Kingdom.

The curriculum is extended by an impressive array of enrichment opportunities which includes a full lecture programme, cultural visits and sporting activities. Students are also required to take part in at least one extra-curricular activity.

The college gives students good guidance about selecting higher education courses, making university applications, writing personal statements and preparing for interviews. The college is highly successful in helping students to gain places at British universities of their choice.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety**Outstanding**

The quality of the provision for students' welfare, health and safety meets all the required standards and is outstanding. The students' well-being is of paramount importance to the college and it is highly successful in safeguarding and promoting their welfare. There are clear and comprehensive written policies which cover all aspects of the students' health, safety and well-being at college. These are implemented consistently and kept under review. Staff training in safeguarding, child protection, fire safety and first aid is fully certificated and up to date. The designated persons for safeguarding and child protection, and their deputies, have completed training at an advanced level. The college has extremely robust procedures for recruiting and vetting staff and recording the information meticulously on a single central register. The college has also minimised risks to students by checking volunteers and other visitors to college and ensuring that signing-in procedures are secure.

Excellent attention is given to ensuring students' health and safety. The college buildings are secure and well maintained. There are detailed policies for health and safety, e-safety and anti-bullying. Thorough assessments are made of risk. The college meets the fire regulations. Electrical appliances, equipment and water are tested on a regular basis. There are suitable medical facilities and staff are trained in first aid. The college deals with instances of poor or anti-social behaviour fairly and records appropriately any sanctions given for serious disciplinary offences. Robust procedures are in place to monitor and record attendance and admissions.

There is an excellent induction procedure which is particularly well designed for the needs of overseas students. This involves careful matching of students to host families within walking distance of the college. The students told inspectors how happy they were in their host families and spoke warmly of the welcome and support they received.

Leadership and management**Good**

The leadership and management of the college are good. The proprietors have ensured that all the requirements of the independent schools standards are met. There are robust policies and procedures in place to safeguard students' welfare, health and safety. The quality of the curriculum, teaching and pastoral systems enables students to make good progress, enjoy their time in college, and move successfully to the next stage of their education.

The acting Principal and senior leadership team share an accurate and insightful view of the college's performance, which is supported by clear plans for its continuous improvement. These include closer coordination of the language and academic departments so that good practice may be shared. The senior leadership team is supported very well by the proprietors. The college is well organised and runs smoothly. There are clear lines of accountability and staff are well trained for their roles. Performance management systems are in place, with senior staff monitoring and evaluating accurately the quality of the teaching, and this has led to well-focused professional development.

The quality of the college's accommodation is good. The college provides, through its brochures and website, all the information required by the independent schools standards. There is an appropriate complaints procedure. No complaints were received in the last academic year.

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/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	138384
Inspection number	420250
DfE registration number	305/6009

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 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	273
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Prime Education and Training Ltd
Acting Headteacher	Nigel Pamplin
Date of previous school inspection	First inspection
Annual fees (day pupils)	£14,586 – £19,482
Telephone number	0208 650 5891
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