

Kings Oxford

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

Inspection dates 10–12 May 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for students	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and students

This is a good school

- School leaders and directors have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. They have created a strong welcoming open ethos. Students from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds have developed secure, trusting relationships.
- Students display positive attitudes to learning. They are attentive and keen to do their very best in lessons and in all their work. They are determined to be successful.
- Teachers plan interesting and stimulating activities that engage students well. This enables them to make good progress in their learning.
- Students' behaviour is mature and self-disciplined. Their discussions and conversations show that they have a deep respect for the thoughts and ideas of their fellow students.
- Adults provide effective pastoral support for students. Students' welfare is a high priority. Swift action is taken to provide additional support for those students who face challenging personal issues.
- Students achieve well. Almost all secure a place at the university of their choice. Students on the English as a foreign language (EFL) courses improve their command of English well. This enables them to access further training successfully.
- Students in the sixth form achieve well. They develop effective social skills and make strong progress. They are provided with high-quality careers guidance which helps them to make the most suitable choices for their next stage of learning.
- Students feel safe and learn how to keep safe and healthy. They make a positive contribution to their community during their time in Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Outcomes for students are not yet outstanding. They do not make rapid progress in lessons or over time.
- Teachers are not using information about students' starting points and the progress they make well enough to identify underachievement quickly. They do not measure students' progress over time with sufficient precision.
- School leaders do not always provide sharply focused feedback to teachers about their teaching to enable them to know the most important aspects they need to improve.
- Although performance management has improved across all sites, it is not rigorously holding teachers to account for students' progress.
- School leaders are not using their monitoring activities effectively enough to analyse the school's performance.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase rates of progress by improving the quality of teaching in all subjects to outstanding.
- Analyse students' starting points, measure their progress more precisely and ensure that assessment information is used to identify and address any underperformance swiftly.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - providing sharply focused feedback to teachers following lesson observations to help them to know what they need to do to improve
 - increasing the rigour of performance management systems across all sites to ensure that teachers are held accountable for students' progress
 - improving monitoring systems to enable school leaders and directors to accurately analyse the school's performance.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- School leaders and directors have a clear vision for improvement and are passionate about ensuring that all students achieve as well as they can. As their school improvement plan states: 'Inspiration, aspiration and encouragement underpin our student-centred approach to teaching and learning.' Their focus on creating a strong caring ethos successfully enables students to settle quickly when they arrive, and get off to a good start in their learning.
- The new principal has made an accurate assessment of the school. School leaders and directors have devised a suitable development plan which correctly identifies the most important areas for improvement for the school. It is rightly focused on maintaining and improving students' personal and academic achievement.
- The leadership of students' personal development and welfare is a strength of the school. All staff are well trained in these aspects. Careful monitoring ensures that any student facing challenging personal issues is supported well. Concerns are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Students are able to select the right learning opportunities for them because there are a wide range of courses on offer. The curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of individual students. Some study English for academic purposes (EAP) to further enhance their command of English speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- Students at St Joseph's campus are able to select GCSE or A-level courses that best suit their needs. This enables them to achieve the standards required to secure a place at prestigious universities in the United Kingdom. Students attending St Michael's and Alfred Street campuses are able to choose from a range of levels of English language learning. This helps them to reach the levels required in their International English Language Test System (IELTS) exams to secure further learning in English-speaking countries.
- The curriculum is enhanced further through trips and visits to places of interest. Students' recent visit to the Houses of Parliament provided them with the opportunity to develop a better understanding of democracy, the rule of law, and life in modern Britain and the global community.
- Bespoke careers guidance enables students to make the most suitable choices for their next stage of education. Almost all students successfully secure places at the university they choose.
- Staff training and development is a key feature of the school's work. Staff are knowledgeable about how to promote fundamental British values and to protect students from exploitation and extremism.
- School leaders and directors monitor the work of the school, but some of the systems in place are not geared to check on the school's overall performance robustly. For example, students' progress is recorded, but the information is not used well enough to identify any patterns of underperformance of individuals and groups.
- Senior leaders check on the quality of teaching. They provide feedback to teachers following lesson observations. However, the feedback is not always focused sharply enough on identifying the most important development points to improve teaching to become outstanding.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Directors support the school well. They are proactive and skilled to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. They have a wide range of knowledge and expertise, including in finance, business management and education. During the inspection, they quickly addressed a number of issues identified that required swift action, finding suitable short- and long-term resolutions.
 - Directors regularly check on the performance of the principal. There are new systems in place across all parts of the school to check on the performance of teachers. However, currently the system does not fully hold teachers to account for the progress of their students.
 - Directors have ensured that all the independent school standards are met for leadership in and management of the school's work, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Very well-organised systems ensure that all suitable checks are made on staff prior to their appointment. Safeguarding training is a routine for all staff. Those with particular safeguarding responsibilities in the school have received up-to-date training at a higher level. The pastoral care systems within the school ensure that the welfare, health and safety of students are of the highest priority. Swift action is taken to address any issues that arise. Parents are kept fully informed if concerns are raised. School leaders involve parents and agents at an early stage if required.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers know their students well and plan interesting and stimulating activities in lessons to enable students to make good progress in their learning over time.
- Teachers and students have positive and respectful relationships. Discussions between students and teachers contribute to effective learning. Students support each other well in lessons. In one communication and study skills lesson, they worked effectively together in pairs to prepare presentations to deliver to their peers. Students' mature and diligent approach to their learning enabled them to work productively, negotiating responsibilities for preparing the presentation, to complete the task successfully.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and convey their knowledge clearly and unequivocally. This helps students to gain new knowledge and skills well. Teachers devise memorable and helpful visual prompts to aid students' understanding. For example, in a physics lessons on electromagnetic induction, the teacher provided students with a useful mnemonic on how to remember orientation conventions.
- Teachers check students' understanding effectively through questioning. They provide useful feedback on the quality and content of students' work. Teachers use this information to provide additional support to students who are struggling with any aspect of their learning. During the inspection, a number of support group sessions took place, providing bespoke lessons to address misunderstandings or to further consolidate students' learning.
- Teachers delivering lessons in English as a foreign language (EFL) carefully devise interesting activities. The planned activities not only support students to deepen their understanding of how to pronounce English words correctly, but also to help them understand the deeper meaning of specific technical language which supports their learning in other subjects. This was evident in a lesson on the media, where specific phrases and vocabulary were explained clearly and precisely to support students to improve their English language speaking, reading and writing skills.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards for teaching and assessment are met.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote students' personal development and welfare is good. Students are confident and self-assured learners. They know they are valued and known as individuals. They take their responsibilities for managing themselves very seriously. As a result, in lessons and around school, students moderate their own behaviour, use self-control and show an awareness of the needs of others. The school is a calm and purposeful learning environment.
- Adults place a clear emphasis on promoting tolerance, mutual respect and self-discipline. The personal, social, health and economic education programme provides students with a wide range of opportunities to become self-confident, effective learners.
- Students learn about how to keep themselves safe when using mobile technologies, the internet and in the wider community. They have also received up-to-date training on extremism and radicalisation.
- Students are confident that bullying does not exist at Kings Oxford. They know that if they have any concerns or anxieties, adults listen and are readily available to provide guidance and support.
- All the independent standards are met for students' personal development and welfare.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. They act with maturity and self-discipline throughout the school day. During breaks and lunchtimes, students conduct themselves sensibly and responsibly. They use the time to further their learning and discuss issues with each other in a quiet and focused manner.
- Students know that there are sanctions available in the behaviour policy, but their respect for one another and adults means that these measures are rarely required.
- Students attend well. This is because they are keen to learn and eager to be successful. Sometimes, the punctuality of some students is not as good as it should be. Adults take this very seriously and take effective steps to help these students to arrive promptly for lessons.
- Leaders have ensured that a full range of policies and procedures are in place, so that the independent school standards for this aspect of the school's work are met.

Outcomes for students are good

- Students achieve well. Almost all academic students successfully secure a place at their first-choice university. A-level results improved dramatically in 2015 following a dip in 2014. The proportion of students achieving A* to C grades across a wide range of subjects was well above average.
- Students studying EFL achieve well. This is because they access the course that is most appropriate to their level of ability and their starting point. Teachers provide students with additional support when required, which helps them to make good progress. As a result, almost all students become sufficiently proficient in speaking, reading, writing and understanding English to be eligible to continue their education at English universities.
- The most able students achieve very well. In 2015, two thirds of Year 13 students achieved A* or A in A-level examinations.
- Currently school leaders are not analysing the information on students' achievement well enough to enable them to help all students to make accelerated progress. The breakdown of information on the progress of different groups of students is at an early stage of development.
- All students are encouraged to read widely and improve their vocabulary in English. Teachers provide useful guidance to students to direct them to helpful reading matter which widens their understanding. In preparation for a visit to the Houses of Parliament, a useful list of websites and reading material helped students to prepare carefully and gain the most from the visit.

Sixth form provision is good

- The leadership of the sixth form is strong. Senior leaders work effectively to ensure that students make good progress and achieve well.
- Induction and pre-course preparation ensure that students are directed to the most appropriate course for their studies. Students' prior learning is checked through initial baseline assessments to establish their suitability for each programme.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good. It supports good outcomes for students. Teachers assess work accurately and use their knowledge of how well learners are doing to plan effectively. As a result, students move through the courses successfully. Although parents live outside the United Kingdom, close links are forged through their agents to ensure that parents are kept fully informed. Regular reports and a range of methods ensure that parents are provided with students' current progress.
- Students are very involved in the broader life of the school and the wider community. The student forum encourages student participation in project management, decision making and negotiation skills. The recent May Ball was used to raise funds for charity. Over £400 was donated to good causes. Students regularly fundraise for the United World Schools, which is the school's chosen charity.
- Students in the sixth form attend well and are generally punctual to lessons. They experience a carefully constructed personal, social, health and economic education programme that ensures everyone is well informed about equality and diversity as well as other aspects of fundamental British values.
- The strong school ethos supports students' personal development very well. Students are reflective and responsive to feedback. They engage effectively in self-study and project assignments and take their academic studies very seriously. Retention rates on all courses are very high.

School details

Unique reference number	138602
Inspection number	10012969
DfE registration number	931/6010

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Boarding School
School status	Independent school
Age range of students	15–25
Gender of students	Mixed
Gender of students in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of students on the school roll	299
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	155
Number of part time students	14
Number of boarders on roll	299
Proprietor	Prime Education and Training
Chair	Nigel Pamplin
Principal	Mike Smith
Annual fees (boarders)	Academic £7,616–£22,848 EFL £339–£4,048
Telephone number	01865 711829
Website	www.kingseducation.com
Email address	oxford@kingseducation.com
Date of previous inspection	30 April–2 May 2013

Information about this school

- Kings Oxford is part of Kings Education, providing international education in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. It was founded in 1957 to bring people from different cultures and values together. Kings Oxford opened in 1986. Prime Education became the owners in 2008. There are three schools in the United Kingdom run by a board of directors.
- The school is registered as an independent co-educational boarding school for boys and girls. It is registered to accept 370 students aged 15 to 25 years, although some students are older. There are currently 299 students on roll, but this number fluctuates due to the types of short courses available for students. All students are boarders, either living in residential accommodation owned by Kings Education, lodging with host families or in private fostering arrangements during their studies in the United Kingdom.
- Kings Oxford specialises in preparing students to gain academic qualifications to enable them to be eligible to attend universities in the United Kingdom. Courses for these students and a small number of GCSE students are provided at the 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. The EFL courses are delivered in two locations in the centre of Oxford, one at the St Michaels' site and the other in Alfred Street. The EFL courses range from two weeks to a few months.
- There are no students with special educational needs or disability. There are no students with education, health and care plans or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The last inspection was in May 2013. A material change inspection took place in June 2015. Following that inspection, the school was granted approval to be registered as a boarding school. The principal, who was in post at the time of the last inspection, has since retired. A new principal was in post for one year. The current principal started in December 2015.
- All students attending the college are from a wide range of countries around the world, the largest proportions from Korea, Saudi Arabia and China and from many other Asian, South American and European countries. Students study courses to help them to acquire a stipulated command of written and spoken English to prepare them for university entrance. Students are at various stages of learning the English language.
- The school works in partnership with educational agents to promote their programmes and provide links with parents and the school.
- The mission of the college is 'to provide a general and linguistic education for young people from all over the world intent on studying in an Anglophone environment – developing and nurturing every student to help them achieve personal growth, personal achievement and the best learning outcome for their individual circumstances, ability and needs. We strive to create life-changing and long-lasting memories, and to help our students make ambitious, well-informed and broad-minded choices about the way they lead their future lives.'
- The college does not provide any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a number of lessons. Five lessons were jointly observed with the vice-principal. Inspectors also carried out a scrutiny of students' work.
- Her Majesty's Inspector visited all three sites.
- Meetings were held with the principal, members of the senior leadership team, directors of studies, heads of department, the school's human resources manager and three directors.
- Inspectors considered the views of students through informal discussions and during a meeting with a group of students selected by inspectors.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, for parental views to be considered during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 39 members of staff who completed the Ofsted questionnaire.
- A range of documents were scrutinised including the school's own evaluation of its work, the school improvement plan, records of meetings, curriculum plans and schemes of work, and records of students' achievement. Information about safeguarding arrangements was checked, as was the single central record, risk assessments and a range of policies.
- This was not an integrated inspection. A social care inspection will take place in due course.
- All the education independent school standards were checked during this inspection.

Inspection team

Ann Henderson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Davies

Ofsted Inspector

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