

# Kings Oxford

Touchload Limited

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

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this boarding school

Kings Oxford is part of the Kings Education group, which runs international colleges in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The residential facility is within walking distance of the school or a short bus journey. The college is registered to accept up to 370 students aged from 15 upwards. At the time of the inspection, there were 139 students boarding at the school.

The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school. The inspection was part of an aligned inspection with His Majesty's Education Inspectors.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

### Inspection dates: 16 to 18 May 2023

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account**      **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected      good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers      good

The boarding school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Date of last inspection:** 15 October 2019

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Students in the school are happy and talk positively about their care and how they are looked after. All students come to the school with clear plans and aspirations as to what they want to achieve and join a culture that fully promotes this.

Parents are positive about their children's experiences and are happy with communication. Some students board with homestay families. Robust checks and vetting processes are in place to ensure that there are appropriate safety arrangements prior to students staying. Host families note that there has been a significant improvement in communication from the school in recent months. Students talk positively about their homestay experiences. However, despite information being given to students when they first join the school, some students are unsure who to contact if there are any concerns.

Students make progress educationally and with their independence skills. Students' physical health is well understood with good sharing of information between families, students and staff. There is generally good oversight of how students' health needs are managed. However, some students' specific health conditions, such as allergies and epilepsy, are not always fully understood by those who look after them. This is because the protocols in place of actions to be taken should they be necessary are not always clear.

Students' views are considered by leaders on regular basis. There are ongoing surveys to help students to consider their experiences in the school, as well as more-focused surveys into areas such as activities. There is also a focused student council which meets regularly. The council has a strong voice in the school and has clear plans as to what it would like to change. However, with recent changes in senior leadership, there has been a lack of engagement with the school council. This has caused students in the council to feel that they are not listened to on areas that cause concern. This is a missed opportunity, as students have a strong view with creative and positive ideas.

There is an emerging pattern for several students arriving late to school. Boarding school staff communicate well with education staff to make sure that students' whereabouts are known and that there is appropriate support to help them get to school.

Students are well prepared for moving on from the school and their future. There is a high expectation in relation to independent living and for students to develop the skills they need to live healthy lives. Students are well supported to plan their next steps in education and are clear about where they want to go and what they want to study. A high percentage of students are supported to move on to a university placement following their time in the school.

There are enough staff to look after the students' needs and students are positive about always being responded to if they raise issues. However, there is no flexibility in the boarding provision to go beyond that. This is because staff have a variety of roles that they need to carry out, which means that their time is of a premium. It is clear whenever there are safeguarding concerns that immediate action is taken and there is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. However, minor issues that are less urgent may not be responded to or even known about.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

There is a culture of high expectations for students, and this is in relation to both academic achievement and behaviour. Students show peers and staff respect and respond well to the expectations of them. Students do not go missing from the boarding school. There are occasions where students are late home and do not adhere to their curfews. When this occurs, students are spoken to and reminded about levels of risk and expectations.

There has been some concern regarding students trying to bring other people into the school. This is well known by leaders and safeguarding measures are being continually evaluated to ensure that the site is as safe as possible. Leaders are creative in their possible responses but are somewhat impacted by the physical way the school is organised.

Safeguarding arrangements are suitable. The school has a proactive and knowledgeable safeguarding lead who is supported by several deputies. This ensures that there is always someone available to manage any emerging safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding records indicate that swift action is taken to resolve any concerns and report them to external safeguarding professionals.

Recruitment procedures are robust. Extensive checks are carried out that show due diligence from leaders, which is reflected in the information held in the single central record. However, some minor gaps in the interview process were identified. This includes lack of clarity about who has carried out and scored the interview. As a result, it is not always possible to see what decision-making has occurred regarding applicants' suitability.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The current head of boarding has high aspirations for students, staff and the outcomes for the boarding provision. There are robust systems in place for leaders to monitor and evaluate what is happening in boarding and what progress is being made. Clear review of progress against the national minimum standards is carried out monthly. This forms the basis of a comprehensive and detailed action plan that helps to demonstrate work that has been done and plans for the future.

This level of oversight and review has not extended to some other areas of work, such as safeguarding welfare reviews. Comprehensive records are in place on the

school's recording system, but this is not part of the review process. Consequently, it is difficult for leaders to see what actions have been taken if there are any concerns raised. This is an ongoing issue for the school and links back to staff capacity and whether people have sufficient time to carry out this work.

Leaders have a positive understanding of the progress that students make. The boarding provision is achieving its stated aims and objectives with students doing well and moving on to university.

Staff do not receive formal supervision. There is ongoing communication from all in the department to ensure that everyone knows what is going on, and leaders regularly check in with staff to ensure that they are ok. Despite this, staff do not have formal opportunity to individually reflect on their work and focus on their own professional development.

Leaders have good relationships with staff across the school, local safeguarding professionals and local health agencies. Staff are quick to refer to external agencies if there are any concerns and make sure that students' needs are met.

## **What does the boarding school need to do to improve? Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools**

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools:

- 7.1 The school has, and implements effectively, appropriate policies for the care of boarders who have medical conditions and/or are unwell, ensures that the physical and mental health and emotional well-being of boarders are promoted and prompt action is taken when health concerns are identified. The policies include first aid, care of those with chronic conditions and disabilities, dealing with medical emergencies and the use of both prescription and non-prescription medication, including controlled drugs. Policies for administration of medication should reflect, where appropriate, guidance provided by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the Royal College of Nursing.
- 20.3 The staff supervising boarders outside teaching time are sufficient in number, training and experience for the age, number and individual needs of boarders, and the locations and activities involved.

### **Recommendations**

- Leaders should ensure that students staying with host families are clear of who to contact if there are any concerns about their care arrangements.
- Student council members should receive feedback on their ideas and suggestions from school leaders.
- Records to demonstrate actions taken should ensure that leaders are able to assess what work has been done, specifically in relation to welfare and safeguarding concerns.
- Recruitment interview notes should reflect who carried out the interview and the reasons why applicants have or have not been recruited.
- Staff supervision sessions with boarding staff should be formally recorded.

### **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

## **Boarding school details**

**Social care unique reference number:** 1159262

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** John Gale

**Type of school:** Boarding school

**Telephone number:** 01865711829

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## **Inspectors**

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