

Inspection of Kings Education (Oxford)

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

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 May 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

Students are friendly and welcoming, yet highly focused on their academic studies. Their behaviour is exemplary. Their attitudes to school and interactions with their peers, both on and off site, are equally positive. They know they come here to learn and expectations of what they can achieve are high.

Students were almost incredulous when asked by inspectors about feeling safe or about their experiences of any poor behaviour. They said that harassment or any form of bullying is not a problem here. Their relationships with staff are strong. The school's induction processes give priority to enabling students to settle well into living in the local community. They describe the school as 'totally inclusive'. One described it as 'a happy place that is culturally mixed up, but in a good way'.

Inspectors' visits to the different sites of the school revealed a high degree of commonality in approach by staff. There is a strong community feel here, no matter which pathway you follow. This is the same for those students who stay for short periods of time, or those who stay longer and take full advantage of what the school has to offer, including beyond the classroom.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have developed a strong culture of learning here. Students are self-motivated and teaching staff maintain high academic expectations across the different subjects and pathways the school offers.

The ethos is that of a 'college' preparing students for successful applications to top universities in the United Kingdom or further afield. Many students use the school's differing pathways to develop their English language skills, as well as gaining academic qualifications. Others study on more bespoke programmes, including the school's own level 3 foundation diploma in art and design, accredited by the University of the Arts, London. The school also offers a range of GCSE and A-level courses. Whatever the pathway followed, leaders have designed a curriculum that supports students well in their next steps in education.

Many students on the school's academic pathway study a mix of mathematics and science. Business studies, or the school's own foundation pathway, are also popular elements of the curriculum. These subjects are carefully mapped out to enable students to gain the qualifications they need.

Subject leadership is strong here. Curriculum leaders are experts and experienced. They know what is working well within their subject areas. They also know what needs to be developed further. Classroom visits also showed this to be the case with most teaching staff. However, on occasion, some staff miss opportunities to confirm students' understanding or to answer questions clearly and fully during lessons. Leaders know this is the case, as do students, some of whom have developed strategies to mitigate the impact this has on their learning.

Those few students with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Leaders and staff are aware that students arrive from a range of countries where their additional needs may not have been identified or acknowledged. However, where a need is identified, staff try hard to make suitable adjustments. Although there were few replies to Ofsted Parent View, one was particularly positive about this aspect of the school's work.

The science curriculum is carefully planned. Leaders have a good grasp of the unique challenges faced by international students who speak English as an additional language. Baseline assessments pitched at GCSE level capture foundational knowledge while building understanding of students' differing starting points. Regular assessments are used effectively to target interventions when required. Students are supported through weekly meetings that also help ensure that staff know their students well.

The business education and art and design programmes are equally well designed. These cater for students who have varying degrees of experience and expertise. Some students study aspects of art as part of the school's own foundation programme. Others have strong portfolios to support their A-level studies in art and design to gain entrance to high profile and well-respected universities.

The programme to support students' personal development is evolving. A range of additional opportunities to enable better understanding of life in modern Britain are appreciated and enjoyed by students. The school's personal, social and health education programme has recently been overhauled and includes statutory relationships and sex education. While still at an early stage, weekly sessions build students' confidence and resilience, as well as their understanding of aspects such as equality and the protected characteristics.

Although behaviour at the school is excellent, leaders are aware that some students do not attend as punctually or as often as they should. Procedures to track attendance are well established. Leaders are about to introduce additional measures to address this issue for some students.

Governance of the school is well established. The proprietor company has good oversight of the school. This includes at a strategic level and also relating to the day-to-day work of the school. Much of this work is completed by executive staff who report regularly to the board of directors in order to hold leaders to account. This means that all aspects of the independent school standards are consistently met. It also means that the school continues to offer a good quality of education to all students, no matter what their pathways or intended destinations are after leaving the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders place a very high priority on making sure that all staff understand their responsibility to keep pupils and students safe. This starts at the top, with strong oversight from executive staff who work for the proprietor. Staff's safeguarding training is up to date. Recruitment processes are sound. Staff know what to do if they have the slightest feeling that things are not right. Crucially, students know who to talk to if they are worried about any aspect of their life at the school, including in the school's boarding provision.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Not all teachers adapt their teaching to respond to students' questions or provide the necessary feedback when needed in lessons. They do not present subject matter clearly enough and do not check students' understanding as well as they might. This means that, on occasion, some students struggle to understand the key knowledge they need to know. Leaders need to ensure that teachers take a more consistent and systematic approach to providing students with direct feedback when needed.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	138602
DfE registration number	931/6010
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10267661
Type of school	Independent school
School category	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	15 to 25
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	160
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	155
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Prime Education and Training Ltd
Chair	Nigel Pamplin
Headteacher	John Gale
Annual fees (day pupils)	Academic £14,026 to £31,518 EFL £9,540 to £15,480
Telephone number	01865 711 829
Website	www.kingseducation.com
Email address	oxford@kingseducation.com
Date of previous inspection	26 to 28 February 2019

Information about this school

- Kings Education (Oxford) is part of a group of schools and colleges that offers international students English language tuition and preparation for university entrance. At the time of the inspection, the vast majority of students were attending the college's post-16 or post-18 provision.
- The college offers a range of courses for international students, including at GCSE and A-level, as well as an arts foundation course, an advanced-level foundation course and the international business foundation course.
- The college operates over four sites, with academic courses offered on the main St Joseph's site in Cowley. The English and arts courses are offered on the St Michael's campus, OX1 2EB, which comprises three buildings in close proximity in the city centre.
- The school's last standard inspection took place in February 2019, when the school was named Kings Oxford.
- The school also provides boarding accommodation. The boarding accommodation was inspected by Ofsted at the same time as the education provision, in an aligned inspection.
- The majority of students are international students from a range of countries, although most are from Asia and Western Europe. Therefore, the number of students who speak English as an additional language is particularly high.
- The college does not make use of any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school's education provision received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with the principal, senior leaders, curriculum leaders and teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and two executive officers from the proprietor company.
- Inspectors talked informally and formally to different groups and individual pupils and students to gain their views about the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, business studies and art and design. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at students' work, and talking to leaders, teachers and students about how teaching in these subjects builds on students' knowledge over time.
- Inspectors had a tour of the school's premises and accommodation on all four sites of the school. They checked a range of policies and documents, including the school's single central record. They also reviewed the school's website and other records regarding the welfare, health and safety of students and staff linked to the independent school standards.
- Inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of students' behaviour, the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted's parent survey. Ofsted's surveys for staff and for students were also considered.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

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