



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

KING EDWARD'S SCHOOL, BIRMINGHAM

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

King Edward's School

Full Name of School	King Edward's School	
DfE Number	330/6076	
Registered Charity Number	529051	
Address	King Edward's School Edgbaston Park Road Birmingham West Midlands B15 2UA	
Telephone Number	01214 721672	
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Email Address	office@kes.org.uk	
Chief Master	Mr John Cloughton	
Chairman of Governors	Mr David Holmes	
Age Range	11 to 18	
Total Number of Pupils	822	
Gender of Pupils	Boys	
Numbers by Age	11-18	822
Inspection dates	10 May 2011 to 11 May 2011	

PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule for INTERIM inspections*. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in May 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 King Edward's School, an independent day school for boys, was founded in 1552 by King Edward VI. In the late nineteenth century, six other schools were opened within the single Foundation of the Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham, comprising King Edward VI High School for Girls and the five King Edward grammar schools. The Foundation also sponsors an academy which opened in September 2010. The Foundation Board provides governance of all eight schools, with a further group, the Independent Schools Governing Body, overseeing the two independent schools.
- 1.2 Situated on a spacious site of almost fifty acres, in close proximity to the main campus of Birmingham University, the school draws its pupils from over 100 different maintained and independent schools across Birmingham and the West Midlands. The school aims to make available to the widest possible range of able boys an educational experience that is the richest, most diverse, and most exciting possible in an atmosphere that provides support, encouragement and care for everyone, pupils and staff; for pupils to love coming to the school and to go from it prepared for all that human life has to offer; to reflect the ethnic, cultural and social diversity of the area and make the school accessible to all boys, whatever their background. It enjoys close links with the neighbouring King Edward VI High School for Girls, particularly in drama, music and societies.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, 822 boys were attending the school, aged eleven to eighteen, including 227 in the sixth form. The school is academically selective, with admission to Year 7 dependent on its own entrance examinations and interview, and to the sixth form dependent on an examination and specified achievement in GCSE examinations. The analysis of standardised tests shows that the ability profile of pupils is far above the national average, with four-fifths being of far above average ability, and none being of less than average ability. The school has identified 102 pupils as having a learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD), of whom 60 receive specialist learning support. One hundred and forty-seven pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), of whom three receive additional support in English. None has a statement of special educational needs.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Shells	Year 7
Removes	Year 8
Upper Middles	Year 9
Fourths	Year 10
Fifths	Year 11
Divisions	Year 12
Sixths	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills

- 2.1 The quality of the pupils' achievements is excellent and fully in line with the school's aims. The pupils display excellent knowledge, understanding and skills, are highly articulate, reason well and apply previous knowledge effectively, including their knowledge of mathematics. The most able pupils achieve levels which are, at times, equivalent to the standard of university work. The pupils' writing skills and technical accuracy reach a high standard, including for those pupils with LDD and EAL who make excellent progress and achieve at a high level. The pupils listen attentively, answer questions willingly and seek clarification when necessary. They respond quickly and accurately to instructions and perform experiments and tasks in a responsible and thoughtful manner. They are efficient and well-motivated learners, collaborating positively with teachers and their peers, and most develop highly effective independent learning habits and skills. They make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) and of the library.
- 2.2 Pupils are highly creative, as shown by their work in drama and music, in which they achieve high standards. Pupils regularly play with national performing ensembles. Amongst many other outstanding achievements, pupils have been national water polo champions at under-16 level or under-18 level for the last three years. This year, pupils won the national Schools Challenge and came second in the national Mace debating competition. Sixteen Arkwright Scholarships have been awarded in the last four years. Most pupils go on to their first choice university, many gaining places on the most competitive courses.
- 2.3 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2007 to 2009, which are the most recent years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE and at A level are excellent in relation to the national average for maintained schools, and above the national average for maintained selective schools. Results at IGCSE are higher than worldwide and UK norms. These results indicate that the pupils' progress is above the average for pupils of similar abilities.
- 2.4 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent. The curriculum is broad and well-balanced, allowing pupils to have a good choice of options at GCSE and IGCSE. The recent introduction of the International Baccalaureate (IB) in the sixth form, which replaces A levels, offers each pupil challenge across a range of subjects and activities, and provides increased opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking skills and their extended writing skills, in line with the school's aims. The extra-curricular programme provided is exceptional, remarkable in its quality and in the extensive choice of activities on offer, ranging from a historical re-enactment society to scuba diving to caving..
- 2.5 The pupils' achievements are well-supported by the teaching, which is excellent. The teachers know the pupils well. They establish a good rapport, with most discipline being handled with a light touch. They have excellent subject knowledge and use a good variety of teaching styles and strategies to engage pupils. Teaching is well-planned, making good use of resources, often including effective use of ICT. It offers a high level of challenge: all pupils, including those with LDD and EAL, are well supported. The best teaching stimulates thinking and animates pupils, questioning them effectively to draw out knowledge and understanding and

encourage reasoning and critical thinking. The best marking is regular and includes comments to aid improvement, but some marking is more limited in scope. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all pupils said that teachers help them to learn.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.6 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent. They develop well spiritually and have a clear awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs and values. They are highly respectful of each other's faiths. Their self-awareness and their self-confidence develop well, aided by their involvement in the excellent programme of extra-curricular activities. They take advantage of opportunities offered in assemblies, in lessons and in societies to reflect on the non-material aspects of life and to consider moral and ethical dilemmas, which they do in a mature manner. They behave well and show a clear sense of right and wrong. They readily take on positions of responsibility. They are keen to put forward ideas via the school councils and to participate in decision making. They are aware of the needs of others, responding with great generosity of their time and their money. They take full advantage of the outstanding opportunities for cultural development that the school provides in the arts, in the wide range of trips offered, and through opportunities to learn about and share in each other's cultures.
- 2.7 Arrangements for pastoral care, welfare, health and safety are excellent and support the pupils' personal development. Staff are highly committed to the well-being of pupils, ensuring that any concerns are quickly identified and followed up. The pupils are confident they have someone to turn to for support should that be needed. However, a number of pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their overall workload is not sufficiently monitored and this was borne out during the inspection. The pupils know that bullying is not tolerated and are confident that, should it occur, it will be quickly and effectively dealt with. Relationships with teachers are positive. Measures to promote good behaviour are in place and are effective. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils said they like being at school and feel safe and well supported. A few pupils said that teachers do not always treat pupils equally: however, this was not borne out during the inspection. All necessary measures have been taken to reduce the risks from fire and other hazards. Staff receive regular training in fire-risk awareness, in child protection and first aid. All safeguarding measures are in place and effectively implemented. Provision for sick and injured pupils is appropriate. The dining room provides a broad choice of meals, of which some are healthier options. Pupils have many opportunities to take exercise. Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and kept.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.8 The quality of governance is excellent. In line with the recommendation of the last inspection report, governance has been restructured. The school has benefitted from the resulting greater clarity of purpose and the support of the Foundation. The governing body is highly committed to the ethos and aims of the school. The governors bring to their role an excellent range of experience and expertise and are conscientious in undertaking further training. They have an excellent understanding of the school, meeting regularly with the senior management team to discuss the work of the school. Governors attend events and a programme of visits to lessons has recently been instigated. They exercise effective oversight of the finances and strategic direction of the school, provide good resources and oversee regulatory matters with due care, including the safeguarding of children.

- 2.9 The quality of leadership and management is excellent. The senior management team gives clear and energetic leadership, constantly and highly successfully reviewing what the school offers, and working to enhance its already excellent provision. Since the last inspection, they have successfully overseen a number of significant developments including changes to the curriculum, in pastoral care and the use of data, in the admission process, in creating a development office, in fund-raising and in building new facilities. The roles of the three deputy heads have been re-defined, enabling more focused leadership and management, particularly in monitoring teaching and learning, in line with the recommendation of the previous inspection report. The school is successful in securing well-qualified and highly committed staff who are well deployed. They are supported effectively by the senior management team, informed by the recently re-designed system of professional review. Both teaching and support staff make a significant contribution to the overall well-being of the pupils. The premises and accommodation are kept in excellent order. All requisite policies and procedures are in place and effectively implemented. All necessary pre-appointment checks for staff and governors are carried out and correctly recorded.
- 2.10 The quality of links with parents is excellent. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly supportive of all aspects of the work of the school, which the inspection findings support. Parents receive all necessary information, which is helpful and easily accessible via the school's website or on request. Reports on the pupils' progress are produced and stored electronically. They show an excellent knowledge of the individual and give clear guidance on what the pupil needs to do to improve. Parents have ample opportunity to be involved in the life of the school and many do so enthusiastically, attending a wide variety of events, including those organised by the Parents' Association. Parents have easy access to staff, either by email or by telephone: requests for information are quickly addressed. An appropriate complaints procedure is in place, although this is rarely needed. Concerns are usually settled speedily and informally.

3. ACTION POINTS

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendation for further improvement

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
1. Monitor more systematically the overall balance in the workload of pupils, taking into account their academic studies and their involvement in activities.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chairman of governors and another governors' representative, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Jean Marsland

Reporting Inspector

Mr Alan Cooper

Professional Tutor, HMC school