

School inspection report

18 to 20 November 2025

King Edward's School, Birmingham

Edgbaston Park Road

Birmingham

B15 2UA

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Governors know the school well and maintain effective oversight of its activities. They meet regularly with senior leaders, pupils and staff and understand how the school's policies and procedures work in practice. They ensure that leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the Standards are met.
2. Leaders and governors are committed to self-evaluation and the school's continuous improvement. Where they identify areas for development, leaders ensure that change is managed thoughtfully and explained clearly so that pupils, parents and staff work together well. This enables the school to develop successfully.
3. The curriculum provides pupils with a broad range of qualifications, alongside non-examined courses that broaden their skills and encourage wider thinking beyond traditional subjects. Pupils explore philosophical and aesthetic concepts and make connections between their academic studies and the wider world.
4. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan challenging and relevant lessons. This enables pupils to learn and attain at levels that often exceed age-related expectations. Teachers give clear explanations and model examples to help pupils deepen their subject-specific skills and knowledge. Pupils express their ideas clearly and accurately during discussions and in their writing. However, in some lessons, teachers' chosen activities do not fully engage pupils nor develop their skills as effectively as they could.
5. Staff create an environment in which pupils from different faiths and backgrounds form close and supportive relationships. They develop high levels of trust and respect for each other. In the extensive extra-curricular programme, pupils develop positive relationships with their peers from different backgrounds. Pupils celebrate their own faiths and heritage in school events and share this with others. Pupils develop a clear sense of belonging to the school as well as their own community. This is a significant strength of the school.
6. Staff provide effective pastoral support to pupils and promote their mental health and emotional wellbeing. Form tutors provide clear guidance to pupils and identify any concerns at an early stage. Pastoral leaders monitor pupils' wellbeing, and work with a range of professionals to provide additional support for pupils where necessary.
7. Leaders promote pupils' understanding of service and their responsibility to others effectively. Pupils take part in a wide range of voluntary activities in the local community, many of which are pupil-led. Pupils understand the importance of service. They are keen to engage with, and help, the local community and beyond.
8. Pupils are well prepared for life beyond school. Staff give pupils clear guidance to choose subjects within school and identify the best options for further study when they leave. The well-structured careers programme helps pupils plan their futures and develop the skills they need to succeed.
9. Leaders prioritise safeguarding throughout the school. Staff at all levels understand their responsibilities well and take prompt action if they have any concerns. Leaders maintain robust systems for ensuring the suitability of adults working or volunteering in the school.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- support teachers to share and learn from the best practice of teaching and learning within and across departments so that teaching is consistently as effective as possible throughout the school.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Governors oversee the school's activities. They consider detailed reports at committee meetings and question senior leaders on the effectiveness of their actions. Governors are aware of current priorities within the school and focus their scrutiny on these areas, for instance on the effectiveness of changes to the pastoral structures.
11. Governors supplement their formal meetings with regular visits to the school and attend events both in school and beyond. They use these opportunities to speak to staff from all aspects of school life. This enables governors to understand how leaders' actions help staff to carry out their roles. Prior to formal meetings, governors meet with pupils and ensure they consider a wide range of views. This supports governors to assess the impact leaders' actions have on pupils' wellbeing and outcomes.
12. Governors and leaders evaluate the school's provision regularly. They reflect deeply on the effectiveness of different aspects of the school's provision. Leaders make extensive use of external specialists, for instance to complete regular audits of safeguarding, and health and safety. Leaders conduct regular parent and pupil surveys to identify any areas which require improvement.
13. Governors and leaders share a clear vision for the school in which secure pastoral support enables pupils to develop and succeed in a range of academic and extra-curricular activities. This clear vision has guided recent developments to the curriculum and changes across academic and pastoral systems. Leaders manage these changes thoughtfully and explain them clearly to staff, pupils and parents. This enables the school community to understand the work of the school and the part they can play in the school's development. The school continues to improve and develop successfully at the same time as celebrating its history and achievements.
14. Leaders have a systematic and rigorous approach to risk assessment. Governors and leaders meet regularly to monitor the effectiveness of risk management within the school. Leaders provide staff with appropriate training in risk assessment and management so that the staff are confident to manage the school's activities as safely as possible.
15. Leaders maintain a clear and organised set of policies which outline the school's operations. Staff understand these policies well and implement them effectively. Where new policies are implemented, leaders ensure that staff are well trained on any new procedures and expectations.
16. The school's website provides detailed information for pupils and parents. They are able to access relevant policies, documents and information about recent and upcoming events. Teachers provide parents with clear and regular reports on their child's progress.
17. Leaders continuously review their provision to ensure that it is inclusive. This is supported by governors who make appropriate resources available, for instance to improve the facilities and support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders work with the admissions department to identify any pupils who have additional needs as soon as they join the school so that the right support is put in place quickly. Leaders maintain a detailed accessibility plan which documents plans and actions to enable all pupils to access the curriculum and the school's facilities. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

18. Leaders maintain close links with external agencies and organisations. Where necessary they work with local partners, including public services and other professionals, to promote the wellbeing of pupils. They liaise effectively with local schools and community groups to address any local issues or incidents. There are no pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) or for whom the school is in receipt of any state funding. There are, however, processes in place to provide appropriate information to local agencies if necessary.
19. The school has a suitable complaints policy. Leaders investigate any complaints from parents thoroughly and respond appropriately. Governors and leaders reflect on complaints received and use these as part of their effective self-evaluation.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

- 20. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. Leaders provide a curriculum which is well planned to meet pupils' needs. Pupils in Year 7 study a broad curriculum which introduces them to a wide range of subjects. As they move through the school they exercise increasing choice, initially in which modern languages and creative subjects to study and then which courses to take at GCSE. Subject leaders plan schemes of work carefully to help pupils deepen their understanding as they progress through the school. Pupils in the sixth form choose from a comprehensive range of A-level courses. Pupils make good progress and typically achieve above national averages in public examinations.
22. Alongside studying for their GCSE and A-level qualifications, pupils study non-examined courses which develop a wide range of additional skills. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 study 'school for thought', an introduction to philosophical thinking, covering historical and contemporary issues. For instance, pupils reflect on the nature of education when studying the novel *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens and how this compares to modern theories of education. Pupils in the sixth form undertake an enrichment course which includes philosophical and aesthetic themes. Pupils develop an understanding of how their A-level subjects relate to other areas of knowledge and maintain a breadth of understanding to complement their specialisms.
23. Teachers routinely plan and teach lessons with ambitious content that extends pupils' learning. This, combined with clear explanations of difficult concepts, helps pupils to grasp skills and knowledge quickly. Pupils' outcomes regularly exceed what is nationally expected for pupils' age groups in both breadth and complexity. Teachers know their pupils well and use this knowledge to successfully adapt their teaching, for instance by asking pupils questions and setting tasks with different levels of challenge. However, in some lessons the specific activities chosen by teachers, or the mix of activities within lessons, are less successful at engaging pupils. This means that pupils in these lessons do not develop their knowledge and skills as effectively as possible.
24. Pupils are taught to articulate what they have learned both verbally and in written form. In lessons, teachers encourage pupils to present their ideas to their peers and then engage in challenge and debate, often around complex ideas. For instance, pupils debate the paradox of omnipotence in religious studies lessons, thinking critically about the theology and engaging in mature dialogue. Teachers manage these discussions skilfully and pupils learn to refine their ideas and learn from each other. Pupils express their ideas fluently and persuasively on paper. Pupils in the sixth form conduct an extended research project to explore their interests and develop their speaking and writing skills further.
25. Teachers support pupils to develop high levels of mathematical, technical and scientific skills as they move through the school. In mathematics lessons teachers spend time clarifying the foundational ideas of number theory, algebraic manipulation and problem-solving so that pupils are well prepared to apply these skills across the curriculum, for instance, in science, and design and technology (DT) lessons.
26. Pupils develop their aesthetic understanding and creative skills throughout the curriculum. Teachers provide support and model essential knowledge through exemplar materials which enable pupils to make good progress. Teachers in art and DT establish a calm and purposeful environment in which older pupils are supported to focus and work successfully on extended individual projects. Teachers

use their subject expertise to help pupils pursue their own interests, for instance developing a safety light for bicycles or a drying rack for hockey kit.

27. Pupils develop creative flair and physical dexterity in both drama and music. In music lessons, teachers use probing questions to teach pupils about different rhythmic concepts. In rehearsals, teachers balance high expectations with encouragement to help pupils give their best. During drama lessons, teachers provide pupils with the freedom to explore their ideas, intervening with timely guidance to help pupils develop their dramatic skills.
28. Teachers use a range of techniques to assess pupils' learning and provide them with helpful feedback. Pupils understand their current levels of attainment and know how to improve. Teachers intervene promptly to provide additional support, including catch-up sessions at lunchtime and after school for pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Leaders track the outcomes for different groups of pupils in public examinations and use this information to identify any changes needed to the curriculum or pupils who may require targeted support.
29. Leaders provide a supportive environment for pupils who have SEND. Staff in the specialist department share detailed information with teachers to guide them in how to adapt their teaching to support pupils. Recent improvements to training for teachers has resulted in increasingly effective support for pupils who have SEND. Where necessary, staff provide specialist one-to-one support to pupils and liaise closely with internal and external specialists.
30. Staff assess and identify the best way to support pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) with their learning. Teachers use information regarding pupils' acquisition of English to provide them with appropriate support in lessons, such as using glossaries and modelling the structure of language. Where necessary, staff provide specialist English language support for pupils in small groups. Consequently, pupils who speak EAL develop confidence and fluency in their spoken and written English.
31. Leaders provide a highly varied and extensive extra-curricular programme. Pupils benefit from the many opportunities to develop a wide range of skills beyond their academic subjects in intellectual, sporting and creative disciplines. Many pupils achieve success in sporting, musical and debating competitions at a national level. Form tutors sensitively support pupils to choose activities which suit them and enable their development. As a result, pupils identify their areas of interest and pursue their passions. Form tutors also check that no pupils are overcommitted and help them to plan their time effectively. Staff encourage pupils to recognise and celebrate the value of participation at all levels of attainment. Pupils understand the importance of developing their skills across a wide range of areas and are able to articulate the positive impact this has on their confidence and wellbeing.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

32. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

33. Leaders prioritise the pastoral support for pupils and the promotion of their emotional wellbeing. Leaders co-ordinate specialised staff to provide this, including a school nurse, counsellor and mental health practitioner. Form tutors develop highly positive relationships with pupils, providing clear and helpful guidance to help them manage their school lives. Heads of year meet regularly with form tutors to share information and identify any trends and needs across year groups. Where a pupil requires additional support, leaders quickly engage with internal and external specialists to secure this.
34. Leaders create an environment in which pupils of different faiths and community backgrounds develop a commendable degree of trust and respect for each other. Through the high levels of engagement in the extra-curricular programme, pupils develop friendships and trusting relationships with pupils of different backgrounds and ages with whom they may not otherwise spend time. Regular whole-school celebrations such as the Langar and Iftar events enable pupils to gain a deep understanding of their own faith and share this positively with others. Pupils are knowledgeable and proud of their own heritage and at the same time celebrate that of others. Pupils develop a strong sense of belonging to the school community and form close and supportive relationships.
35. Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of moral, religious and spiritual ideas. In 'school for thought' lessons, pupils study ethics and global religious thought. In regular assemblies and form time discussions, pupils explore complex moral and social concepts, including equality and fairness, and link these to their own experiences. Opportunities outside of lessons, such as the pupil-led 'agora' society, provide pupils with the space to explore their own interests. Pupils benefit from a well-planned programme of visits that gives them direct experience of the main world religions practised within the local community. As a result, pupils build informed, respectful attitudes towards diverse faith traditions and deepen their understanding of Birmingham's multicultural context to which they belong.
36. The physical education (PE) curriculum integrates physical activities, games and extra-curricular sport to develop pupils' skills. This prepares them to lead healthy, active lives beyond school. In PE lessons, pupils increase their technical skills in a wide variety of disciplines and learn about the different components of fitness. As pupils move through the school, they focus on particular sports and teachers support them to perform at their best. Staff promote the development of positive attitudes and characteristics such as resilience, being organised and working as a team. This sporting provision is highly inclusive. Teachers find ways to engage and involve pupils who cannot participate directly, for instance by developing their coaching skills.
37. A well-sequenced curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) provides pupils with an understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and develops self-awareness. Pupils learn to make informed choices about their diet and exercise. Pupils understand how to manage different types of stress and how to avoid risky or unhealthy choices.
38. Leaders provide a comprehensive curriculum for relationships and sex education (RSE) which is well adapted to pupils' needs. In lessons, pupils learn how to recognise safe and unsafe relationships, understand consent and the nuances of personal boundaries. Leaders assess pupils' confidence and understanding of different topics and adapt future lessons in response. Leaders liaise closely with

pastoral staff to ensure that the PSHE curriculum is relevant and constantly refine this in response to local and national contexts.

39. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. Teachers supervise the school site effectively. Where any incidents of misbehaviour occur, leaders respond thoughtfully and support pupils to improve their behaviour in future. Leaders maintain clear records of any incidents and review them regularly for any patterns. Where these are identified leaders take appropriate action, for instance by increasing supervision in the affected areas.
40. Pupils understand how to identify bullying and how to respond. Pupils' positive relationships with teachers mean that pupils report any concerns promptly. The rare instances of bullying are dealt with appropriately.
41. Staff take a systematic approach to maintaining the school premises and promoting health and safety. A clear schedule of equipment checks and servicing ensures that this work is completed in a timely manner. Firefighting equipment is appropriate and routinely maintained. Regular fire drills ensure that pupils and staff understand what to do in an emergency.
42. Leaders have a clear strategy for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance. Staff register pupils efficiently and follow up any unexplained absence promptly. Heads of year review attendance statistics and provide additional support for any pupils who fall below expectations. Leaders share appropriate information with the local authority, including any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard times.
43. A well-appointed medical centre supports pupils who become unwell, are injured or have specific medical needs. The school nurse provides appropriate support and ensures suitable first aid provision around the school site and during the extensive off-site trips. Staff record any accidents fully and analyse these records for any trends. The school nurse works closely with staff in the SEND department and pastoral leaders to ensure pupils with specific medical needs are supported effectively.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

44. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

45. Leaders embed the concept of service into school life. Younger pupils study a 'preparing for service' course where they consider challenges facing the local community and how they can play their part in addressing these. The majority of service opportunities are pupil-initiated and remain pupil-led. Pupils understand how global issues impact on their local community. Pupils continue to organise and support a foodbank that was first developed by the school during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils run a chess club at St Chad's Sanctuary which provides refugees and asylum seekers with recreation activities alongside opportunities to practise their skills in speaking English. Pupils develop empathy and an understanding of their social responsibility. They value this service to their peers and the wider community.
46. Pupils benefit from a wide range of leadership opportunities. Leaders entrust pupils with responsibilities such as school prefects and house captains. Pupils learn leadership skills and how to support others through the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Many of these activities take place with local community groups, such as attending training events or joint parades with other local schools. Pupils develop their social skills and understand what it means to take responsibility.
47. Pupils learn the importance of mutual respect throughout the curriculum, including for people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010. Pupils are taught about the negative impacts of stereotypes and discrimination, both historically and in the present. Teachers support pupils to respectfully challenge other's beliefs and model constructive disagreement. Pupils in the sixth form learn about more subtle forms of stereotyping and discrimination, for instance the way that people form judgements of others based on their accents or clothing choices.
48. Pupils learn about democracy and the rule of law in PSHE lessons, assemblies and form time. Pupils learn about different types of voting systems and engage in thoughtful discussions such as whether votes should be weighted for different constituencies. Pupils are taught about various laws and learn to understand the difference between moral decisions and lawful ones. Pupils recognise where legal requirements can appear counterintuitive, for instance that 16-year-olds can make a solo flight but not drive a car.
49. Pupils develop a broad understanding of the public institutions and services of modern Britain. Through the CCF and events such as the Remembrance Day ceremony, pupils learn to appreciate the armed services and their history. Pupils in the sixth form learn about professional institutions in the United Kingdom and the role these play in individuals' lives.
50. Teachers prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education. The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 introduces them to possible areas for study at GCSE. When pupils choose their GCSEs and A levels, teachers ensure that they understand the requirements of the courses and the impact of their choices. Pupils in the sixth form benefit from a well-structured programme of guidance to prepare them for study beyond school. The 'futures day' for pupils in Year 12, regular talks and detailed presentations ensure that pupils understand the full range of options available to them when they leave school.

51. Careers education is integrated into the curriculum effectively. Teachers use their deep understanding of the subjects they teach to ensure that pupils are aware of potential employment associated with their studies through dedicated lessons and informal discussions. Assemblies, PSHE lessons and form time provide pupils with a clear sequence of opportunities to think about their futures and develop relevant skills. Pupils reflect on their own interests and skills as they explore possible careers in work experience placements. A series of networking events, mock interviews and training sessions help pupils develop the skills they will need in the modern workplace.
52. A programme of economic education is integrated into the PSHE programme. Younger pupils learn how to manage a bank account and debit card. They develop an understanding of essential topics such as saving, borrowing and budgeting. Older pupils learn about broader economic concepts such as economic growth and interest rates and the impact these large-scale trends can have on them as individuals. They are taught to manage their finances beyond school, including learning about student finance, investments and pensions.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

- 53. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Safeguarding

54. Leaders prioritise safeguarding within the school and maintain an effective safeguarding culture. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding focus on the early identification of concerns and appropriate action. They use various sources of information including the observations provided by teaching staff and attendance statistics to identify vulnerable pupils who may be at risk of harm and support these pupils effectively.
55. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding work with the staff safeguarding team who have extensive experience and specialist training. Leaders meet regularly with heads of year and form tutors to discuss individual cases. All staff take part in regular training to develop their understanding and professional curiosity. As a result, staff understand their responsibilities well, including the importance of reporting any concerns about pupils or other adults.
56. Leaders put in place a tiered structure of support where concerns are raised about pupils. Leaders recognise that pupils may have very different needs and are highly effective at co-ordinating the range of help on offer within the school to achieve positive outcomes. Staff communicate effectively with parents and work with them to support their child.
57. Leaders maintain close links with local agencies and organisations. Where necessary, they make prompt referrals to the local authority to secure additional support. Leaders arrange regular safeguarding audits using the expertise of external organisations to check that the school's procedures are effective. Leaders have close links with nearby schools so they can share information on local issues and trends.
58. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. In PSHE lessons pupils are taught about risks such as grooming and online extremism. They are able to identify these risks and understand what action to take should they have any concerns.
59. Leaders' suitable filtering and monitoring systems oversee pupils' internet use. If pupils attempt to access inappropriate materials, staff respond promptly and sensitively to support them. Staff regularly test the internet filtering and monitoring systems using appropriate tools.
60. Leaders ensure that all adults who are employed or volunteer at the school undergo appropriate recruitment checks prior to working with pupils. These checks are recorded accurately on a suitable single central record (SCR) of appointments.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 61. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	King Edward's School
Department for Education number	330/6076
Registered charity number	529051
Address	King Edward's School Edgbaston Park Road Birmingham West Midlands B15 2UA
Phone number	0121 472 1672
Email address	office@kes.org.uk
Website	www.kes.org.uk
Proprietor	The Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham
Chair	Professor Hywel Thomas
Headteacher	Mrs Kirsty von Malaisé
Age range	11 to 19
Number of pupils	815
Date of previous inspection	12 to 14 January 2022

Information about the school

62. King Edward's School is an independent day school for male pupils situated in Edgbaston, Birmingham overseen by a governing body. The school comprises a senior school for pupils aged 11 to 16 years and a sixth form for pupils aged 16 to 19 years. Since the last inspection a new chair of governors was appointed in January 2024 and a new headteacher was appointed in September 2024.
63. The school has identified 88 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
64. The school has identified English as an additional language for 70 pupils.
65. The school states its aims are: to offer a rich and ambitious programme of academic, co-curricular and service opportunities in a stimulating and supportive environment; to foster self-reflective and grounded individuals who have a strong moral compass; to generate a culture of scholarship, in which academic outcomes and learning for its own sake are both valued; and to celebrate the diversity of its communities, cherishing both difference and all that unites its pupils.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

18 to 20 November 2025

66. A team of 8 inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

67. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the area providing support for pupils who have SEND and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

68. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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