

# School inspection report

3 to 5 December 2024

## **Kingston Grammar School**

London Road

Kingston Upon Thames

London

KT2 6PY

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'.

## Contents

<b>SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS .....	4
<b>SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....</b>	<b>5</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE .....	6
<b>SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....	8
<b>SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....</b>	<b>9</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....	10
<b>SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....</b>	<b>11</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY .....	12
<b>SAFEGUARDING .....</b>	<b>13</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING .....	13
<b>SCHOOL DETAILS .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>INSPECTION DETAILS .....</b>	<b>16</b>

## Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders, governors and staff work well together to promote pupils' emotional wellbeing. Leaders actively promote the school's aims and ethos so that its community is welcoming and inclusive. Pupils are encouraged to be aspirational and are supported by their teachers effectively. Pupils approach their education with self-confidence and esteem. They are prepared well to take their place in British and global society.
2. Governors have a thorough understanding of the school. They provide regular support and challenge to leaders so that they fulfil their specific and shared responsibilities competently. Governors assure themselves of the effectiveness of key aspects of the school, such as the quality of education and safeguarding, through their well-focused committees. They provide rigorous oversight of the school's policies and procedures and ensure that the Standards are met consistently.
3. Leaders meet regularly with staff to review school practices. Leaders consider the educational provision carefully, making changes where appropriate. The school's development plan focuses on suitable areas for improvement. The plan is followed closely and regularly evaluated.
4. The curriculum is broad and covers all the required areas of learning. Pupils make good progress during their time at the school. Teachers have thorough knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Generally, teaching is well planned and effectively delivered so that pupils participate well in their learning. However, some teaching is less effective because it limits pupils' engagement and participation and opportunities for them to think and learn for themselves.
5. Leaders provide a stimulating and varied programme of extra-curricular activities which are well attended by pupils. Pupils' participation in extra-curricular activities helps them to develop confidence and new skills.
6. Leaders implement thorough health and safety procedures and manage risks effectively. Leaders identify risks well, assess them carefully and put suitable measures in place to mitigate them. Appropriate systems are in place for staff to report any health and safety concerns. Any issues raised are quickly resolved. Pupils are taught in a secure and suitable environment.
7. Pupils learn to take responsibility and show kindness towards others. Pupils give their time generously to support people who are less fortunate than themselves. Prefects and school captains guide and mentor other pupils well. The school provides a broad range of opportunities for pupils to become socially and morally responsible.
8. The school community is inclusive and respectful. Pupils have well-developed knowledge and understanding about individual rights. Pupils maintain positive, friendly and supportive relationships with each other.
9. The school has a vigilant and robust safeguarding culture. Staff are trained well and have a clear understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures. Those with designated safeguarding responsibilities consult with local safeguarding partners effectively. Processes for the safer recruitment of staff are thorough and appropriate.

## 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:

- ensure that teaching consistently engages pupils so that they participate more actively in their learning.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders maintain a respectful culture throughout the school which aligns well with the school's aims. Pupils have a secure understanding of the school's motto to 'work well and be happy'. As a result, pupils are effectively encouraged to enthusiastically participate in all areas of school life.
11. Governors, leaders and staff ensure that pupils' wellbeing is prioritised and promoted. The pastoral needs, mental health and emotional wellbeing of pupils are carefully, collectively and individually prioritised.
12. Governors provide rigorous and extensive oversight of the school's procedures and practices. For example, governors regularly visit school to meet leaders, staff and pupils and observe lessons. This helps them to know and understand the school well. Leaders write detailed reports, such as about safeguarding and health and safety, which governors scrutinise and challenge. These measures help governors to assure themselves that leaders have effective knowledge and skills and fulfil their responsibilities competently. Governors and leaders work well together so that the Standards are met consistently.
13. Leaders promote an effective, inclusive and strategic approach to decision-making. Leaders consult well with staff, taking note of their thoughts and suggestions. Leaders make changes in response to benefit pupils, such as revising the tutor system so that pupils receive more regular and focused support. Leaders and staff maintain a shared vision for the school. New initiatives are carefully considered and implemented well.
14. Leaders develop clear and detailed policies which reflect the latest statutory guidance. They select a different school policy for staff to focus on each week. As a result, staff understand policies and procedures well so that they are applied consistently. Policies are shared appropriately with pupils, who understand them well.
15. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders implement a suitable and inclusive plan which focuses on improving accessibility for all. For example, leaders have reviewed the site and made changes where necessary, such as the installation of a new lift, so that classroom facilities are accessible for all pupils and staff. The school supports pupils who have disabilities effectively so that they can access the curriculum and wider provision.
16. Leaders provide a suitable range of information to parents, mainly via the school's parent portal and website. Parents receive regular and detailed information about their child's academic progress and attainment, including termly reports. Leaders provide the local authority with all required information relating to pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
17. The school has a suitable complaints procedure. Leaders investigate informal concerns quickly. If complaints reach the formal process, leaders respond well and in line with the published timescales. Appropriate records of complaints are maintained, including of successful resolutions.
18. The management of risks is thorough and appropriate. Governors check the effectiveness of arrangements regularly, including through the work of their committees. Leaders are skilled and knowledgeable. They identify risks carefully, including those that are not immediately obvious, and take suitable actions to mitigate them. Leaders implement appropriate risk assessments including for the premises and off-site trips. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) always meets with staff

who are leading trips to inform them about any safeguarding concerns. This robust oversight means that risk assessments for trips consider individual pupils' needs well. Leaders review risk assessments regularly and systematically so that they continue to be effective.

19. Leaders engage constructively with other agencies, as appropriate. They seek advice so that any decisions they take, about individual pupils or the school as a whole, are well informed. For example, leaders work with educational psychologists and other professionals, as necessary, to ensure that provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) meets their needs as well as possible.

### **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 implement a well-developed curriculum of appropriate breadth which suits pupils' ages and abilities well. Older pupils choose from a wide range of A-level options including psychology, business and classics. Younger pupils develop effective skills in mathematics, science and literacy so that they are prepared well to meet a range of academic challenges. Leaders analyse the effectiveness of the curriculum annually. This is informed by a range of measures such as visits to lessons, looking at pupils' work and meetings with pupils. Leaders adjust and adapt the curriculum, as necessary, so that it remains relevant to pupils' needs.
22. Teachers plan the curriculum well. They think carefully about what should be taught when and how. Teachers choose activities for pupils that interest and motivate them. For example, in art, pupils work studiously to learn about colour-mixing and use acrylic paint effectively. In music, sixth-form pupils explore how to refine a composition so that the melody and accompaniment work more closely together. Pupils respond positively to the curriculum and are motivated to do well.
23. Teaching is generally effective and pupils make good progress throughout the school. For example, in design and technology, pupils create musical toys and develop strong skills in two-dimensional design. Pupils use resources confidently and respond well to precise instructions and feedback from their teachers. For example, in Year 8 drama, pupils write plays based on fairytales following helpful guidance such as to include actions to engage the audience. They work collaboratively and evaluate reflectively to refine and improve their performances. However, some teaching is less effective because teaching methods do not fully engage pupils consistently. Some lessons lack variety and limit opportunities for pupils to collaborate and to actively participate in their learning.
24. Leaders use assessment well to monitor the progress pupils make. Assessment information is shared across all departments so that teachers can evaluate how well pupils are doing in their subject compared to other subjects. Staff share effective practice and are well informed about the pupils they teach. Teachers implement additional strategies to support pupils in response to assessments. For example, in mathematics, weekly clinics are provided for pupils who require further support or to provide additional challenge for those who demonstrate high mathematical attainment.
25. Leaders set high academic expectations for pupils. Pupils receive focused marking and feedback from their teachers. This means that pupils know what they need to do to make further progress. Pupils make good progress and their results at GCSE and A-level examinations are above the national average. Pupils are typically successful in securing places at their chosen universities or colleges.
26. Pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points and achieve in line with their peers in their GCSE and A-level examinations. Leaders quickly identify when pupils will benefit from additional support or different strategies, such as recording work digitally or being provided with text in a larger font. A member of staff from each subject department is responsible for disseminating information about pupils who have SEND. This means that all staff are provided with helpful and focused strategies to meet pupils' individual needs.
27. The school offers a broad and stimulating range of extra-curricular activities for pupils. Pupils acquire confidence in public speaking through debating and philosophy clubs. The 'chemistry for medics' club increases sixth-form pupils' understanding and knowledge about topics such as x-rays and influenza. In the 'boxercise' club, pupils are taught boxing skills such as sparring. The well-planned

extra-curricular programme enhances pupils' learning and provides effective opportunities to develop skills and understanding.

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

**28. All the relevant Standards are met.**



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

29. Leaders and staff promote pupils' emotional wellbeing effectively. Leaders act as thoughtful role models and demonstrate kindness in their daily interactions. Assemblies and a well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme teach pupils the value of tolerance and encourage mutual respect. Pupils explore how to build and maintain healthy and supportive relationships. They are moral, considerate and kind. Pupils approach new opportunities with confidence.
30. The PSHE curriculum is balanced and appropriate. It covers a wide range of well-chosen issues and has a positive impact on pupils' development. For example, pupils explore the topic of peer pressure and learn to be empathetic towards others. The programme is enhanced by visiting speakers who inform pupils about important themes. For example, a nutritionist supports pupils' understanding of how to eat well and maintain a healthy lifestyle. The PSHE curriculum includes learning how to practise yoga which helps pupils to develop a sense of calm and mindfulness. The PSHE programme is effective in supporting pupils to gain self-knowledge and learn how to look after themselves well.
31. The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum teaches pupils about real-life themes in a structured manner. Visiting speakers discuss relevant topics so that pupils have the knowledge they need to make informed choices. For example, pupils learn about human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), contraception and drugs and alcohol misuse through talks from visiting specialists. Leaders assess pupils' knowledge and understanding of PSHE and RSE topics effectively. Parents are informed before sensitive topics are taught.
32. Pupils develop an understanding of spirituality through religious education (RE), assemblies and PSHE lessons. Leaders provide a multi-faith prayer room and organise a multi-faith forum. Pupils attend Christian Union and consider the positive impact of religion on the school community. Speakers from other religions, such as from the Muslim and Jewish faiths, provide pupils with opportunities to widen their understanding of world religions and diverse cultures.
33. Leaders reinforce positive behaviour so that pupils behave well. They seek to 'catch the good' so that pupils' kind and respectful behaviour is recognised. Leaders send letters to pupils to recognise positive actions and award commendations in assemblies. Staff implement the behaviour policy fairly and consistently. All staff promote a firm anti-bullying message and pupils understand the harm bullying can cause. As a result, bullying issues are rare. When incidents do occur they are dealt with promptly and effectively. Leaders maintain detailed behaviour and bullying records and identify and respond to any patterns quickly.
34. Pupils are provided with a broad and well-developed programme of physical education (PE). Pupils participate in team sports and develop the values of self-discipline, leadership and teamwork. PE lessons teach skills such as how to improve focus, reactions and reflexes when catching with the weaker hand. Pupils value the PE programme and understand that it contributes effectively to their sense of physical health and personal wellbeing.
35. Pupils are supervised well. Leaders maintain a vigilant presence when pupils arrive at and depart from school. At breaktimes, staff are deployed around school to supervise appropriately so that pupils play and relax in a sensible manner. The school has a prefect system that works well. Prefects'

duties and responsibilities are clear and appropriate. They are provided with suitable support and training to carry out their roles effectively.

36. Health and safety procedures are robust. Leaders ensure that fire safety equipment is regularly checked by an external company. Staff understand how to report any health and safety concerns and do so promptly, when necessary. Leaders respond to health and safety concerns that are raised quickly and effectively. Governors provide robust oversight of the school's health and safety measures. Leaders keep clear and detailed health and safety records. The premises are maintained well so that they remain secure and suitable for pupils.
37. First aid procedures are thorough. Full-time nurses manage the medical centre and are supported by well-trained counsellors. Nurses meet with the PE leaders every week so that medical arrangements at sporting events are appropriate. Medical records are maintained competently. The first aid arrangements provide effective support for pupils' physical and mental health.
38. The admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained. Leaders set high attendance expectations. Attendance levels are high but leaders remain alert to any downward trends. The school correctly notifies the local authority when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.

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

**39. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

40. The well-planned curriculum supports pupils' understanding of how to become responsible and inclusive citizens. Assemblies are used to explore issues such as the harmful consequences of discriminatory attitudes. The curriculum includes plentiful opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of diversity, equality and other social issues. For example, the school celebrates Black History Month during which pupils discuss racial identity in RE lessons. In English, pupils study poetry and consider the importance of nationality and personal identity. In geography, pupils explore the impact of sustainable tourism in Jamaica. Pupils have a mature understanding of diverse cultures and extend tolerance towards each other. Pupils celebrate and respect individuality.
41. The effective careers' programme offers pupils impartial guidance about a wide range of future opportunities including university, career apprenticeships and taking a gap year. The school holds separate information days to inform pupils about GCSE and A-level courses and the pathway to university. Leaders build and maintain effective links with parents and alumni, who share their career paths with pupils at the school's annual careers fair.
42. Leaders provide an effective range of opportunities for pupils to hold responsible and appropriate positions. Pupils apply to be prefects whilst others serve as school captains. Sixth-form pupils provide mentorship to younger pupils, such as helping those in Year 7 to manage their commitments and time effectively. Each house adopts and raises funds for a different charity through pupil-led initiatives. For example, pupils organise a clothes swap, where pupils exchange unwanted clothes with each other, which also develops their understanding of sustainability. Pupils benefit well from leadership positions and contribute positively to their school community.
43. Pupils explore the themes of law and order, British institutions and democracy through appropriate lessons and other opportunities. Leaders encourage an active school parliament, which is represented by pupils from every class. Sixth-form pupils lead the school parliament which votes on issues directly raised by pupils. As a result, leaders have increased the number of water fountains and revised school menus. During the previous general election, pupils participated in a mock election and learnt about voting and the democratic process.
44. The PSHE curriculum teaches pupils about the rule of law and relates it to pupils' school experiences. Pupils are taught about institutional power and consider the importance of the monarchy, government, the police and British laws. Pupils learn how British institutions provide services and help society. As a result, pupils have a well-developed understanding that democracy and responsible behaviour are important and civilised values.
45. Pupils are taught to be kind and considerate towards others. Leaders establish and maintain effective links with local organisations which pupils keenly support. For example, they prepare gifts for families who are experiencing hardship and visit a local hospital to talk to patients. Pupils prepare modern foreign language lessons and teach them to younger pupils in local schools. As a result of these well-developed opportunities, pupils make a positive contribution to others and deepen their understanding of social responsibility. Pupils are prepared well for taking their place in British and wider society.

46. Pupils are taught about financial matters through effective PSHE lessons. Pupils learn about important issues such as investment, taxation and financial scamming. They learn about income and expenditure and the minimum wage. Pupils explore how to budget sensibly and contribute to a pension fund. Pupils are taught to think carefully about the future and to understand how to be financially responsible.
47. Pupils learn about politics in an unbiased manner. Sixth-form pupils explore political philosophy and discuss newspaper articles which are written from different political perspectives. Leaders implement a 'parliament week' which includes topical quizzes and considers what it means to be a Member of Parliament. Pupils discuss current political issues with a serving member of the House of Lords through an online initiative. This deepens pupils' constitutional understanding of the role the House of Lords plays in British democracy.

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

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

## Safeguarding

49. Leaders maintain a robust and thorough approach to safeguarding which reflects current statutory guidance. Two governors with specific designated responsibilities provide systematic oversight of safeguarding.
50. Induction procedures for new staff are effective and all staff receive regular training updates, including about the 'Prevent' duty and child-on-child abuse. Staff are tested on a different aspect of safeguarding every week. Staff understand how to report any safeguarding concerns and do so promptly when they arise. They share in a school-wide responsibility to safeguard pupils effectively.
51. Leaders and staff have a thorough knowledge of safeguarding risks faced by pupils. Leaders take effective actions to manage such risks. Leaders provide pupils with additional support, when needed. This means that the individual safeguarding needs of pupils are supported carefully and compassionately.
52. Those with designated responsibilities are appropriately trained and fulfil their safeguarding roles effectively. When safeguarding concerns are raised, leaders take prompt and appropriate action, where necessary. They maintain detailed and clear records. Leaders consult regularly and constructively with local safeguarding partners when concerns arise.
53. Leaders implement a range of appropriate systems for pupils to seek support, if needed. For example, pupils can send an anonymous online alert through the school hub, visit school counsellors or approach any member of staff. Pupils can also speak to prefects, who are provided with suitable safeguarding training. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of how to ask for help. Their emotional wellbeing is promoted effectively.
54. Pupils are taught about a range of personal safety issues such as the dangers of radicalisation and drug taking. Pupils also learn how to navigate London's transport systems and are regularly reminded how to cross the local roads responsibly. Leaders implement robust monitoring and filtering systems so that pupils are protected from inappropriate areas of the internet. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online through well-planned PSHE lessons, assemblies and computing lessons. When alerts are raised, leaders investigate quickly. Any subsequent actions taken are suitably recorded. Pupils understand how to act responsibly and stay safe when online.
55. All the required recruitment checks are carried out before new members of staff join the school. Records of these checks are accurately recorded in the school's single central record of appointments, in accordance with current statutory guidance. Leaders provide staff with regular training in this area so that safer recruitment procedures are thorough.
- 56. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## School details

<b>School</b>	Kingston Grammar School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	314/6067
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1078461
<b>Address</b>	Kingston Grammar School London Road Kingston Upon Thames London KT2 6PY
<b>Phone number</b>	0208 546 5875
<b>Email address</b>	head@kgs.org.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.kgs.org.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Kingston Grammar School
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Robert O’Dowd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Stephen Lehec
<b>Age range</b>	11 to 18
<b>Number of pupils</b>	918
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 June 2024

## Information about the school

57. Kingston Grammar School is an independent co-educational day school in Kingston upon Thames, London. The school is a charitable company governed by a board of trustees. The school's previous inspection was a material change inspection in June 2024.
58. The school has identified 142 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
59. The school has identified no pupils as speaking English as an additional language.
60. The school states its aims are for pupils to live out the school's motto to 'work well and be happy in all that we do'. It aims for pupils to achieve excellence with integrity. The school endeavours to foster personal ambition alongside the development of social conscience. It promotes commitment and determination in all areas of school life for pupils to strive for their goals. The school seeks to support each individual pupil whilst developing in them an individual sense of self-reliance. It intends for all pupils to become leaders within a better and kinder world. The school's aims are underpinned by three core values: aspiration; respect; and engagement.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

3 to 5 December 2024

61. A team of seven inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

62. 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 head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- a health and safety tour and scrutiny of related documentation
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

63. 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

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