

Kings Oxford

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

Inspection dates

26–28 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The principal, supported by staff and directors, has been committed to improving the college and ensuring that all the independent school standards are fully met.
- School leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college. However, written development plans lack precision and do not focus on exactly what the college needs to do to improve. Data is not always analysed in depth to check progress.
- Teachers demonstrate very strong subject knowledge and careful planning. Teaching challenges students to think. It does not always take sufficient account of students' evolving literacy skills.
- Marking is undertaken in line with the college's assessment policy. Feedback is supplemented through regular reports with useful targets to support improvements. Students are keen to receive feedback and use this to improve their performance.
- Students make good progress because of the good teaching they receive. Some students make even better progress due to the personalised and targeted support they receive. However, this is not yet consistent enough across the college.
- Students are happy and feel safe at all four sites. Relationships between adults and students are extremely positive. There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Students' welfare and well-being are actively supported.
- The curriculum ensures that students develop effective skills in English and mathematics. The curriculum is well suited to students' aspirations to move to university courses. Extra-curricular activities enrich students' lives and support their understanding of fundamental British values.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is promoted well across the college. All students receive high-quality careers advice to support them in their applications to universities of their choosing.
- The college is very harmonious, and students behave well in and out of lessons. Students are confident, determined and sociable. Attendance rates are high because students enjoy college and relish opportunities to meet with friends.
- The college directors have a very good grasp of the college's effectiveness. They are ambitious for the college and systematically challenge and encourage college leaders. Best practice is shared across the Kings schools.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - embedding the existing good practice and creating opportunities to share effective teaching
 - ensuring that all lessons in the academic section give a focus to developing students' literacy skills and subject-specific vocabulary.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the college improvement plan includes clear actions, monitoring and timescales that demonstrate how leaders will secure improvements
 - available information is more forensically analysed to identify and act upon trends in attainment and progress, as well as informing development planning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management are good. The principal, supported by staff and directors, has worked with determination and commitment to ensure that the college meets all the independent school standards.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have been focused and persistent in their efforts to improve the college. They have been successful. The principal has provided confident, strategic leadership and is well supported by other leaders, including subject leaders, in the college.
- Leaders have an accurate appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the college. The college development plan sets out priorities for further improvement, based on leaders' accurate assessment of the college. However, the plan does not include clear actions, success criteria or timescales. Targets are not sufficiently prioritised.
- Relationships are strong and morale is high. All leaders ensure that a culture of fairness and equality prevails. Staff enjoy their work as confirmed by one member of staff who wrote: 'Staff as well as the students make this school a pleasure to work in.'
- Senior leaders and directors are relentless in their desire for students to succeed. They are uncompromising in their efforts to ensure that students are listened to, understood and respected. As a result, students are well known and actively supported.
- The college is genuine in its desire to see students achieve as well as they can. However, available data is not forensically analysed so that nuances in terms of performance, especially progress, can be easily recognised and addressed.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a broad and balanced curriculum that is helping to prepare students well for life in modern Britain. The curriculum is entirely suited to the students and their aspirations to move onto academic courses.
- The college's work to improve students' SMSC education is good. Staff lead by example and model values such as tolerance, empathy and respect. These values underpin the culture of the college.
- Fundamental British values are rooted into the life of the college. Students' understanding of different cultures is particularly strong. Occasions such as lunchtime are convivial, sociable and communal affairs which allow students to enjoy social interactions.
- Extra-curricular activities enrich and bring to life work taking place in the classroom. For example, clubs covering debating, engineering, mathematics, global citizenship and a beginner guitar club are fully subscribed. Such activities are further supplemented by sporting pursuits and weekend trips.
- All students receive high-quality careers advice to enable them to make informed choices about their futures. They are well supported in their applications to universities of their choosing.
- The college's website meets statutory requirements for the publication of information. The website contains a comprehensive, up-to-date safeguarding policy as well as policies covering behaviour, bullying, the curriculum, first aid and health and safety.

Governance

- Governance is strong and the college directors have a very good awareness and appreciation of the college's effectiveness informed by the views of students, parents and teachers as well as their regular visits to the college. Governors systematically challenge and support college leaders.
- Governors have an appropriate oversight of the independent school standards as well as a full grasp of safeguarding procedures, which are supported through regular monitoring and staff training. Good practice is shared across the Kings schools and safeguarding arrangements are rigorously pursued in terms of compliance and sharing good practice.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that the child protection policy is up to date, comprehensive and written in conjunction with the latest government guidance. Leaders have also ensured that day-to-day procedures are in place which enable the policy to be applied in practice.
- Checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children are up to date, thorough and complete. Such checks on the suitability of staff are made in accordance with the requirements of the independent school standards and suitably recorded on the single central record.
- There is a strong safeguarding culture at the college. Arrangements for checking health and safety requirements are regular and well documented. Leaders ensure that alarms, lighting and firefighting equipment meet requirements. The college is a safe environment. Students who were spoken to all agreed that they feel safe and secure at the college.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use their very strong subject knowledge to plan lessons and support students in their understanding. Lessons observed proceeded at a fast pace.
- Questioning is used well to test for understanding and to rectify any misconceptions students may have about their learning. Teachers often relate the current learning to previous skills or knowledge. This enables students to build on their skills and put what they are learning into context.
- Relationships are particularly strong, and all students are well known. Teachers have high expectations of the students. Students' very positive engagement ensures that they make good progress in their lessons.
- Students' attitudes to their work are positive. This is because most teaching motivates them and keeps them engaged even at the end of the long school day. Students quickly involve themselves in the work of the lessons and cooperate well in pairs and groups.
- In the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) department, teaching is directly focused on language improvement, developing vocabulary and study skills. Students in the academic department are also supported in their English acquisition skills through English classes which help familiarise them with the style of language used in academic texts and express ideas confidently using appropriate language.

- However, literacy development is less evident in other academic subjects, where teachers do not always make sufficient allowances for the level of English of students in their classes. Teachers are aware of the problem as evidenced in teachers' comments such as 'limited ability in English' and 'poor written English holds him back'. However, not enough is being done to support literacy in these lessons so that students do not always make the progress which they might.
- Students are keen to receive feedback and use this to improve their performance. This was particularly noticeable in art where detailed and extensive feedback was offered and supported students in the improvement of their project work.
- Marking is undertaken in line with the college's assessment policy. Students take a pride in their written presentation. Feedback is also supplemented through regular reports. These reports are detailed and offer useful targets to aid students' improvements.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The college's work to promote students' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders maintain detailed risk assessments for the day-to-day running of the college and activities which are organised outside of the college.
- Students' attitudes to learning are positive. Relationships between students and adults are consistently constructive and supportive. Students treat each other with respect and courtesy. Students learn to recognise and celebrate others' differences and achievements. Students are tolerant and respectful of one another.
- Students are known as individuals and their well-being is as important to staff as their academic progress. Students are regularly discussed at staff meetings and their social and emotional development is regularly evaluated.
- Good-quality careers education is delivered to all students. Students are encouraged to explore a range of pathways and the college works with them to ensure that they make the right choices. All students spoken to have clear plans for their future.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is very good. The college is a very harmonious environment and students behave well in and out of lessons. They follow adults' instructions quickly, therefore enabling lessons to run smoothly and without interruption.
- Students told inspectors that they feel safe in the college. They said that instances of bullying and low-level disruption are very rare. They are confident that adults follow the college's behaviour policy consistently and fairly.
- Students are confident and determined. They work hard on their studies and achieve well as a result. Attendance rates are high because students enjoy college and relish opportunities to meet with friends representing a breadth of cultures. Attendance is particularly high on the short courses and for students below the age of 18. Punctuality is carefully monitored and late arrivals to college or to lessons are quickly picked up.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Students achieve well across a broad range of academic and pastoral areas. Outcomes are good overall and current students make consistently good progress considering their different starting points. Across the college, students' performance in English and in mathematics is particularly strong. Performance in biology and physics is more variable.
- In the EFL department, most students arrive at the college with limited English, but leave with qualifications in a variety of subjects as well as with increased personal confidence. During their short time at the college, students make good progress from their very different starting points. This is particularly true for the highly valued International English Language Testing System (IELTS) tests, where students make rapid progress to achieve the levels required to study at undergraduate level.
- Students taking English for academic studies also do well. They achieve a level of proficiency in reading, listening, speaking and writing which enables them to move into higher education. However, their literacy skills are not supported in all their academic lessons.
- In 2018, a small number of students studied for a range of GCSE qualifications in subjects including English, mathematics, combined science and geography. They obtained creditable passes in all of their subjects.
- Students in the academic department achieved a range of A-level qualifications including mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, economics and further mathematics. Students achieve well across the range of curriculum subjects that are available. All students take A levels in their home language thus adding to their achievements. Other students, enrolled on the arts foundation course and the international business foundation course, meet and exceed their targets.
- The inspectors' scrutiny of students' work across a range of subjects as well as the college's own limited information on students' progress confirms that the overall progress made by current students continues to be good given their starting points. The most able students make strong progress, because of the effective support and challenge they receive from teachers.
- Students are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education and achieve the qualifications necessary to pursue appropriate university degrees. The very large majority of students proceed to good universities following highly regarded courses such as accounting, art, business and engineering as well as medical and veterinary sciences.

School details

Unique reference number	138602
DfE registration number	931/6010
Inspection number	10076617

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

Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	15 to 25
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Number of part-time pupils	7
Proprietor	Prime Education and Training
Chair	Nigel Pamplin
Principal	Mike Smith
Annual fees (day pupils)	Academic £6,585–£23,970 EFL £652–£12,408
Telephone number	01865 711 829
Website	http://kingseducation.com
Email address	oxford@kingseducation.com
Date of previous inspection	10–12 May 2016

Information about this school

- Kings Oxford is part of a group of schools that offers international students English language tuition and preparation for university entrance. The college opened in 1986 and is owned and operated by Prime Education and Training. The principal has been in post since December 2015.
- The college offers a range of courses for international students, including English, GCSE and A-level examinations, as well as an arts foundation course, an advanced-level foundation course and the international business foundation course.
- The school operates over four sites with academic courses offered on the St Josephs

campus in Cowley. The English and arts courses are offered on the St Michaels campus which comprises three buildings in the city centre.

- 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 with English as an additional language is particularly high. The college does not make use of any alternative providers.
- There are no students with education, health and care plans.
- The college meets all requirements for the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Ofsted announced the inspection to the principal the day before the inspection began.
- Inspectors observed the learning in 34 lessons across the four college sites. In 16 lessons, they were accompanied by senior members of staff. Inspectors reviewed students' books, folders and test papers across a range of subjects to check attainment, progress, feedback and presentation.
- Inspectors held a range of meetings with the principal, vice principal, subject leaders, the college bursar and the directors. They also held meetings with students on the St Josephs and St Michaels campuses as well as speaking informally to students inside and outside of lessons.
- Inspectors looked at the college website as well as a range of documents including those relating to the curriculum, assessment, students' progress, college improvement planning, attendance and records relating to safeguarding. All the independent school standards were checked during this inspection.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's Parent View, including the free-text service, although additional information from surveys was offered by the college. There were 15 responses to the students' questionnaires and 12 responses to the staff surveys.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Bowes	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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