

School inspection report

18 to 20 March 2025

King Edward's School Witley

Petworth Road

Witley

Godalming

Surrey

GU8 5SG

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. The governing body maintains effective oversight of the school. Leaders successfully fulfil the aims of the school to promote the wellbeing of pupils. However, the attendance policy and the relationships and sex education (RSE) policy were not published on the school's website as is required. The attendance policy was amended and both policies were uploaded to the website during the inspection.
2. Complaints are managed appropriately. Logs of complaints are maintained appropriately so that patterns can be identified and addressed.
3. The curriculum is suitably broad and is designed to meet the needs and aptitudes of pupils. Leaders monitor pupils' performance systematically. Teaching is generally effective in considering the needs and prior attainment of pupils so that they make good progress. However, the extent to which teaching meets the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is inconsistent and is not monitored effectively.
4. Pupils of all ages benefit from a wide-ranging co-curricular programme, which is designed to support their skills, interests and personal development. Leaders promote the importance of participating in physical activity resulting in large numbers of pupils taking part.
5. Pupils' emotional and mental health is supported successfully. Pupils have a number of adults to whom they can go with any concerns. Leaders have put in place clear policies and procedures to ensure that behaviour is appropriate around the school. However, occasional low-level misbehaviour is not addressed in lessons. An effective strategy is in place to prevent bullying.
6. Teaching of relationships and sex education is generally effective. Consequently, pupils are well informed. However, assessment in this area is not sufficiently systematic.
7. Leaders have created a welcoming and supportive boarding environment which is successful in fostering pupils' personal development. Pupils learn to co-exist effectively and respond positively to the needs of others.
8. Leaders have a systematic approach to the management of health and safety at the school. Measures to mitigate risk are suitably implemented and reviewed. Fire safety protocols are well understood. First aid is readily available.
9. Leaders have developed effective links with the local community to ensure that pupils are well informed and well prepared for their next steps. Pupils have a ready understanding of tolerance and respect for others. Pupils benefit from a well-structured careers education programme which enables them to make informed choices.
10. Governors review safeguarding practices at the school and staff understand the school's procedures for reporting concerns. Leaders carry out recruitment checks correctly and these are recorded appropriately. Pupils know how to keep safe, including online.

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:

- monitor the provision in lessons for pupils who have SEND to ensure that their needs are consistently being met appropriately
- ensure that the attendance and RSE policies are made available to parents via the school's website as required by statutory guidance
- establish a systematic framework for assessment in relationships and sex education to inform curriculum planning and to gain a deeper understanding of pupils' progress in this area
- develop strategies to ensure that positive behaviour is consistently promoted in lessons.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Leaders and managers possess the required knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively and are supported, as appropriate, by the governors.
12. Leaders successfully promote the aims of the school. They conduct self-evaluation and formulate strategy for improvement as a result.
13. Boarding provision is led and managed by well-trained and experienced staff. Conscientious supervision and a rigorous approach to safety ensures that pupils feel safe in their houses. A suitable statement of boarding principles is in place alongside clear support and written guidance for new pupils.
14. Leaders manage any parental complaints appropriately and keep thorough records of these and any actions taken by the school in response. Complaints are dealt with within the timeframes stated in the school's policy.
15. Parents receive reports regularly about pupils' progress, attitudes and attainment. Most other required information and policies, including the school's aims and ethos, are made available to parents, largely through the school's website. Before the inspection, the attendance policy did not fully reflect the statutory guidance relating to attendance issued by the Secretary of State. Leaders had not ensured that the school's attendance and RSE policies were available on the website as required. This was rectified during the inspection.
16. Leaders liaise with external agencies effectively. The school annually reviews the provision for any pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are no pupils for whom the school is in receipt of state funding.
17. Leaders have a comprehensive approach to risk management. They have an effective understanding of physical, welfare and safeguarding risks and respond with urgency to areas of risk when identified. Risk assessments identify potential risks thoroughly and detail the appropriate steps taken to reduce or remove these. Leaders systematically monitor risk assessments to check their continued effectiveness.
18. Leaders have developed a detailed accessibility plan which includes actions to facilitate access to the premises and curriculum for any pupils with a disability. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

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

19. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. The curriculum is suitably broad and takes into account the age and aptitudes of the pupils. Leaders adapt the curriculum so that it best matches with the knowledge and skills that the pupils need to develop and enables them to make progress over time. At GCSE, pupils have a range of options including three sciences, modern foreign languages, Latin, classical civilisations and design technology. High numbers of pupils study modern foreign languages. In the sixth form, BTEC and level three courses are provided in food technology, music and sports science alongside A-level courses to take account of pupils' interests and prior attainment.
21. Leaders devise schemes of work which are detailed, well planned and age appropriate. Leaders' planning promotes the development of pupils' literacy and evaluative skills alongside course content knowledge and understanding. Effective teaching develops pupils' level of linguistic skill so that they can express themselves effectively verbally and in writing.
22. Teaching in lessons demonstrates to pupils how to make progress. Leaders have devised effective procedures to provide feedback to pupils on their work. Teachers provide feedback to pupils which is detailed and systematic. This system is in place across all years and is consistent across subjects meaning that pupils are confident about the next steps to take in their learning. Teachers ensure that pupils understand examination requirements. Pupils' good progress is evident in their GCSE and A-level results.
23. Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils who have SEND are identified promptly. Specialists construct learning plans which are designed to be used by teachers to inform teaching strategies. However, these are not systematically updated or implemented, and pupils' needs are inconsistently met in lessons. Consequently, the achievement of pupils who have SEND varies significantly across subjects.
24. Leaders identify the linguistic aptitudes and prior attainment of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) on entry to the school. Specialist teachers provide additional support in small groups or individually to these pupils. This allows pupils who speak EAL to access the curriculum and make good progress.
25. Teachers supervise independent study sessions for boarders in order to help pupils to use this time in a focused manner. Staff who supervise these sessions provide support and guidance to help boarders maximise their learning during this time.
26. The school's co-curricular programme is well structured and inclusive. The sports programme is wide, catering to all abilities and encouraging enthusiastic participation in sport. There are a wide range of activities on offer from organised sport to more recreational offerings. Outside of sport there are opportunities to be involved in the creative arts through drama productions and musical opportunities such as orchestras, bands and chapel choir, and to be involved in clubs and societies. These provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop skills such as collaboration, leadership and communication.

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

27. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

28. Leaders track attendance patterns and discuss these at the weekly pupils' wellbeing committee. They produce individual support plans for pupils whose attendance is of concern. They also liaise with the local authority where required and follow-up persistent absence with parents or carers. The local authority is notified of pupils who join or leave at non-standard transition points.
29. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme is well structured and covers an appropriate breadth and includes relationships and sex education (RSE). The PSHE curriculum is adapted to respond to pupils' views and needs. Assessment of RSE is informal and is not used systematically to address misconceptions nor to inform curriculum planning and future teaching.
30. Leaders encourage pupils' spiritual development through weekly chapel services. Pupils are provided with opportunities to take a leadership role in delivering the chapel services which develops their sense of responsibility. The chaplain also runs the charity committee, has drop-in sessions for pupils and runs the big questions club. Consequently, pupils are encouraged to develop their spiritual and moral understanding.
31. The school provides opportunities which allow the pupils to develop their self-esteem and self-confidence. Through a presentation in Chapel, pupils develop strategies to combat anxiety so that they are confident to present in front of the entire school community. In class, pupils confidently debate topical issues with pupils from different year groups.
32. Provision is made for pupils to maintain and develop their physical health. All pupils have timetabled physical education (PE) and sport. Sports fixtures are arranged for the weekend, and a wide range of co-curricular sports clubs are provided for pupils. Pupils participate in high numbers in these clubs. Leaders respond to pupils' views and have introduced a female-only gym session to encourage participation. Leaders are aware that not all pupils like to participate in sports, so they offer an outdoor activity club as an alternative to games to ensure that all pupils are encouraged to take part in physical activity.
33. Supervision of pupils is well managed, both during the day and in boarding time. Pupils have trusted staff who they can go to if they need help. Behaviour outside of the classroom is positive, with pupils engaging in the expectations of the school's leadership. Sanctions are given, where necessary, to discourage poor behaviour. There are occasional low-level behaviour issues in classes which are not always dealt with in the moment. Pupils understand the sanctions which are applied for more serious behaviour issues. However, teachers do not always apply the behaviour policy with consistency for low-level behaviour meaning that pupils do not always have a clear understanding of the consequences of their actions.
34. Pupils understand that they can report concerns about bullying. Pupils also understand that there can be friendship issues and incidents of unkindness at times. Pupils know that there are adults who they can turn to if they are concerned about an issue.
35. Premises, including the boarding houses, are well maintained. Sleeping and washing areas are appropriate. The boarding houses offer a mix of study and social spaces which meet the needs of the

boarders. All boarding houses have kitchen areas for boarders to prepare snacks, to complement the meals provided in the communal dining hall. The oldest pupils have access to a wider range of kitchen appliances, to help them prepare for university living. This system allows the older pupils to take on more independence, to prepare them their next steps.

36. A thorough induction is provided to boarders, including those who join the school during the school year. Due regard is given to monitoring the role of guardians. Leaders work to ensure effective communication between guardians and the school. In doing so, a close relationship between home and school is formed, in the best interests of the pupils.
37. Boarding leaders develop the leadership skills of older pupils. Senior pupils form a house management team in the houses. They are given a range of appropriate responsibilities around building house and community spirit and actively engaging with the younger pupils in their houses.
38. Leaders' approach to health and safety at the school is rigorous. The site is well maintained, through robust health and safety processes. A comprehensive system is in place to monitor routine maintenance through records and logs. Issues are quickly resolved by an experienced on-site maintenance team. Fire safety procedures are followed appropriately, including regular fire practices during the school day and during boarding time.
39. Leaders ensure that the health centre is equipped with clean and appropriate premises, which provides a place for first aid to be administered as well as for accommodating more serious cases of illness.

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

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

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

41. The school's curriculum, in keeping with the school's ethos, ensures that pupils experience a wide-ranging education that allows them to develop respect for each other and a sense of their place in the world. Across many subject areas, pupils are given opportunities to develop their social and cultural understanding. This helps to prepare pupils for wider British society and their time beyond school.
42. Leaders encourage pupils to value the opportunity to build friendships with others from a wide range of international backgrounds represented in the boarding and day houses. There are opportunities for pupils to share their culture through weekly themed cooking nights. Pupils are taught about people of different backgrounds. Pupils are taught to respect one another. This enables pupils to develop an understanding of how other pupils feel.
43. The school promotes pupils' understanding of different cultural traditions, religious backgrounds, sexes and sexual orientations. British values are explored through the taught curriculum as part of PSHE and also through chapel services, lectures and tutor time. There are also co-curricular societies that enable pupils to develop mutual respect and an understanding of different cultures. These include the politics society, debating, Model United Nations (MUN), and the sustainability society. As a result, pupils form an understanding of global issues.
44. Older pupils are prepared for their next steps through a programme which provides skills that they will need in preparation for life beyond school. Leaders promote pupils' learning and skills in a range of areas including basic cooking. Pupils learn about managing tax, student finance and budgeting in preparation for life beyond school. This is a culmination of financial literacy that has been embedded in the curriculum throughout the school as part of the PSHE programme.
45. The school's careers education follows national benchmarks and is designed to help pupils consider their next steps. All pupils, including the youngest pupils, use an online platform to consider future careers and the subjects needed to undertake them. Older pupils receive guidance on a range of university and alternative destinations, across a range of institutions. The school engages well with parents and alumni to provide interview practice and to hear about potential careers they may choose to go into after school. Alumni educate pupils about a range of career opportunities. Consequently, pupils are aware of a range of options open to them and how to achieve them.
46. Leaders help pupils to develop a sound understanding of right and wrong. Pupils understand laws such as those around alcohol and driving and how to ensure that they are followed. Consequently, pupils are well placed to make informed decisions.
47. Pupils are encouraged to positively contribute to the school's local community. Pupils volunteer their time at local care homes and to run stalls at local village fetes. There is a focus on 'local but global' education and pupils organise and undertake events to raise money for local, national and international charities.
48. Pupils experience democracy in action. Pupils vote for prefect representation and for pupils to be members of the school council. In the boarding houses, pupils hold a vote about what to spend the

house budget on. Consequently, pupils develop an understanding of the importance of expressing their views and are prepared to make a positive impact in their lives beyond school.

49. Lessons cover a range of political issues, such as the US election and decisions of the UK government in a balanced manner. This gives pupils the opportunity to develop their understanding and to discuss issues without prejudice or judgment.

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

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

Safeguarding

51. Leaders instil a robust culture of safeguarding. Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities respond promptly and appropriately to any safeguarding concerns that arise. They consult with external safeguarding partners and refer safeguarding concerns to them when appropriate.
52. Suitable arrangements for the handling of allegations against staff or senior leaders are in place. These are well understood by staff and followed when required. Leaders keep suitable records of safeguarding concerns and the decisions and actions taken in response to these.
53. Governors maintain an effective overview of the safeguarding policy and procedures. Governors with particular responsibility for safeguarding assure themselves that measures that are put into place to safeguard pupils are effective. All governors undertake training in safeguarding.
54. Safeguarding training for staff, including that for the safeguarding team, is thorough, regular and in line with local requirements. Leaders provide safeguarding updates and scenario-based training for all staff, followed by quizzes to review understanding. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to escalate concerns when required. A suitable induction process is in place to ensure that new staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
55. Leaders are aware of the contextual risks and challenges faced by pupils, including risks relating to radicalisation and extremism.
56. Leaders provide a number of ways for pupils to raise any concerns that they might have. Pupils are informed of whom they can go to should they wish to share any concerns. The availability of the school's independent person is known to boarders and their role is understood.
57. Leaders ensure that all appropriate recruitment checks on adults are made in a timely manner and are accurately recorded in a suitable single central record (SCR) of appointments. Staff files are well organised and accurate.
58. Pupils are well informed about how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Suitable internet filtering and monitoring procedures are in place. These systems are tested regularly by the school and any alerts are immediately reviewed by members of the safeguarding team, who take action as required.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

59. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	King Edwards School Witley
Department for Education number	936/6103
Registered charity number	311997
Address	King Edward's School Witley Petworth Road Witley Godalming Surrey GU8 5SG
Phone number	01428 686700
Email address	head@kesw.org
Website	www.kesw.org
Proprietor	Bridewell Royal Hospital
Chair	Mrs Justine Voisin
Headteacher	Mrs Joanna Wright
Age range	11 to 19
Number of pupils	468
Number of boarding pupils	102
Date of previous inspection	11 to 14 January 2022

Information about the school

60. King Edward's School Witley, founded in 1553 in the City of London as 'a house to lodge Christ in' is an independent, co-educational boarding and day school. To provide boarding facilities, the school moved to a larger campus in Witley, Surrey in 1865. The governing body is known as The Court of Bridewell, reflecting its historic foundation.
61. Boarders are accommodated in eight boarding houses. There is a mixed boarding house for pupils in Years 7 and 8 and another for pupils in Year 13. Pupils in Years 9 to 12 are accommodated in six boarding houses: four for male pupils and two for female pupils.
62. The school has identified 215 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
63. The school has identified English as an additional language for 40 pupils.
64. The school states it aims to provide a proudly diverse community with strong foundations rooted in kindness and mutual respect. It aims for pupils to flourish academically, socially and emotionally through varied and inspiring educational and pastoral journeys tailored to individual needs, strengths and personalities.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

18 to 20 March 2025

65. A team of five inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

66. 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 another governor
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

67. 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**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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For more information, please visit isi.net