



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**KING'S COLLEGE**

**BOARDING WELFARE  
INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## King's College

Full Name of School	<b>King's College</b>
DfE Number	<b>933/6023</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1103346.</b>
Address	<b>King's College South Road Taunton Somerset TA1 3LA</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01823 328200</b>
Fax Number	<b>01823 328202</b>
Email Address	<b>reception@kings-taunton.co.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mr Richard Biggs</b>
Custos	<b>Mr Roger Knight OBE</b>
Age Range	<b>13 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>448</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (278 boys; 170 girls;)</b>
Numbers by Age	13-18 <b>448</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total: <b>184</b>
Number of Boarders	Total: <b>264</b>
	Full: <b>264</b>
Inspection dates	<b>17<sup>th</sup> March to 19<sup>th</sup> March 2015</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule* for intermediate inspections, focusing primarily on compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (NMS). The inspection occurs over a period of two and a half continuous days in the school.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended. This inspection focuses on the school's compliance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection.

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

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

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgement.

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors conducted formal interviews with boarders, held discussions with senior members of staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended registration sessions. Inspectors visited each of the boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and boarding pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Colette Culligan	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Elizabeth Hewer	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy head, GSA/HMC school)
Mr William Yates	Team Inspector for Boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 King's College, situated in the Somerset County town of Taunton, is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged 13 to 18. It was founded as a boys' school in 1880 by Nathaniel Woodard and became fully co-educational in 1991. The school's associated preparatory school, King's Hall, is a short drive away. The schools remain members of the family of Woodard schools and are governed by the same school council, whose members have overall responsibility for determining general policy and strategy.
- 1.2 The school seeks to provide an education rooted in the Christian ethos while welcoming pupils of all faiths. It aims to encourage the development of the attitudes, skills and confidence pupils will need to flourish in an adult world. Boarding is central to its ethos and it sets out to provide a safe, secure and welcoming environment in which each boarder is valued as an individual and encouraged to contribute to the community as a whole. It aims to enable the physical, spiritual, social and moral potential of all its boarders, instilling and developing personal values.
- 1.3 The seven boarding houses are all located within the school grounds. Taylor, Meynell and Carpenter all accommodate girls only. Boys live in one of four houses, Woodard, Tuckwell, Bishop Fox or King Alfred. Currently there are 264 boarders in in the school, 109 girls and 155 boys, out of a total pupil population of 448. Boarders come mostly from white British professional families located in the south-west of England, although a number live further afield. There are 79 boarders of other nationalities, mostly from the Far East, Europe and Africa. The 42 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and who need extra tuition in the language are provided with specialist lessons appropriate to their linguistic ability.
- 1.4 Since the previous inspection the school's senior management team has been expanded by the appointment of a head of boarding. An on-going programme of refurbishment has provided improved common room facilities for boarders.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
3 <sup>rd</sup> form	Year 9
4 <sup>th</sup> form	Year 10
5 <sup>th</sup> form	Year 11
6.1	Year 12
6.2	Year 13

## **2. SUMMARY**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

2.1 The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2013.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

2.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Ensure that the privacy of boarders is appropriately respected when day pupils stay overnight.
2. Ensure greater consistency of practice across the boarding houses in the provision of snacks and in setting rewards and sanctions for boarders.
3. Ensure that all required welfare records are monitored in such a way as to identify emerging patterns or inconsistencies of practice more efficiently.

### **(iii) Progress since the previous inspection**

2.3 The previous boarding welfare inspection was undertaken by ISI in March 2012 as part of an integrated inspection. It judged the boarding to be excellent but recommended that measures should be put in place to ensure greater consistency in the implementation of policies across the boarding houses. The school has put in place structures to act upon this recommendation but some inconsistencies remain.

### **3. COMPLIANCE WITH NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS**

#### **3.(a) Boarding provision and care**

- 3.1 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.2 Boarders receive induction handbooks and are appropriately supported by older boarders as mentors when joining the school. Boarders named a number of staff or older pupils to whom they can turn for guidance. Information on suitable sources of outside help, including the Children's Commissioner and an independent listener, is displayed. [NMS 2]
- 3.3 Suitable medical policies guide staff in dealing with first aid, chronic conditions or disabilities, emergencies and the use of household remedies and are effectively implemented. The medical accommodation is appropriate for both genders and staffed by qualified nurses. The school's male and female doctors are available at the frequent surgeries and boarders have access to other healthcare professionals as required. Prescription and non-prescription medicines are dispensed appropriately and boarders may self-medicate if assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so. Information is shared appropriately between houses and the medical centre. Boarders' rights and confidentiality are respected. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a few pupils commented that they did not feel looked after when ill or injured, but arrangements seen by inspectors did not support this. [NMS 3]
- 3.4 Boarders may contact family and friends using mobile phones, landline phones or electronic media. Appropriate measures are in place to ensure internet safety. [NMS 4]
- 3.5 Suitably furnished sleeping, relaxation and study accommodation is provided for boarders although a few reported concerns about privacy when day pupils stay overnight. Inspectors agreed. Houses are warm, light, clean and maintained, with suitably private washing and toilet facilities. Boarders may personalise their accommodation. Access to boarding areas is restricted to those boarding and security measures do not intrude on boarders' privacy. [NMS 5]
- 3.6 In the pre-inspection questionnaire a minority of boarders expressed dissatisfaction with the food, while a majority reported unhappiness with the availability of snacks in houses. However, inspectors found that menus are varied and meals are adequate in nutrition, choice, quality and quantity. Special diets are catered for and drinking water is readily available. Meals are hygienically prepared in clean kitchens and dining areas are suitable. Inspectors agreed, however, that there is inconsistent and limited provision of food stuffs for evening snacks. [NMS 8]
- 3.7 There are appropriate laundry arrangements, including the provision of machines for boarders to launder small items. All boarders have access to the local town to purchase personal items. A minority of boarders indicated in the pre-inspection questionnaire that they felt their belongings are not safe. Conversations with boarders did not corroborate this complaint. All boarders have personal lockable spaces and staff look after valuables as requested. [NMS 9]
- 3.8 In the pre-inspection questionnaire a small minority of boarders expressed dissatisfaction with the balance of free time and activities. Inspectors disagreed, judging that the range and balance of evening and weekend activities and unstructured time are appropriate. Boarders have access to a choice of safe indoor and outdoor recreational areas, and have places to go to if they wish to be quiet or



alone. Information about events in the wider world is disseminated through assemblies, newspapers, television and the internet. [NMS 10]

### **3.(b) Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding**

- 3.9 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.10 The school's written procedures for health and safety meet requirements and are appropriately implemented. Inconsistencies in recording minor issues which had made the monitoring of emerging patterns difficult were corrected by the end of the inspection. [NMS 6]
- 3.11 Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure that the risk of fire is minimised. Fire alarms and equipment are tested on a regular basis and outcomes appropriately recorded. Houses carry out fire drills each term during boarding time. [NMS 7]
- 3.12 The school's safeguarding and child protection policy meets requirements. All staff are suitably trained, so that the school effectively promotes the safety and well-being of the boarders. Procedures for the recording and secure storage of confidential child welfare matters were improved in the course of the inspection. Governors carry out the required annual review of the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements. [NMS 11]
- 3.13 Suitable written policies and procedures promote good behaviour, and are understood by boarders and staff. Policies for conducting searches and for restraint are appropriate; the school has not had to implement the latter. A minority of boarders in the pre-inspection questionnaire said that they are not treated fairly by staff. Inspectors' scrutiny of house sanction files and conversations with boarders revealed some inconsistency between houses in expectations and in the setting of sanctions. A few boarders and parents indicated in the questionnaire that the school does not deal well with bullying. In interviews, however, boarders told inspectors that such incidents are rare and usually dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. This is confirmed by records seen. [NMS 12]
- 3.14 Appropriate safe recruitment procedures ensure that all necessary checks are carried out and recorded before an individual is allowed to start work at the school. Non-employee adults living on site sign agreements specifying the terms of their accommodation and undergo a criminal record check. Security measures ensure that visitors to the houses do not have inappropriate access to boarders or their accommodation. The school requires parents of overseas boarders to nominate guardians and provides clear guidance for those undertaking this role. [NMS 14]

### **3.(c) Leadership and management of the boarding provision**

- 3.15 The school meets all of the NMS under this section.
- 3.16 The school's boarding principles are published on the website and displayed in the boarding houses. The sense of community and supportiveness throughout is evidence that these work in practice. [NMS 1]
- 3.17 Governors and senior leaders, who are responsible for boarding policies and their implementation, effectively oversee boarding management and development. Policies are suitable; however, inconsistencies in practice, as mentioned in the previous inspection report, remain. The house-based tutorial system ensures effective monitoring of boarders' academic and pastoral progress. All required records are maintained and monitored, although some in a manner which has not always allowed emerging patterns to be quickly identified. [NMS 13]
- 3.18 Boarding staff have appropriate job descriptions. They receive suitable induction and training prior to taking up their roles. Reviews of their boarding practice are regular and provide opportunities for further professional development. There are sufficient staff on duty in houses to ensure the safety and care of boarders at all times. Staff sleeping in the houses overnight are easily contactable by boarders. Spouses and partners of boarding staff have no formal role in running the houses. Registrations and signing out systems enable staff to monitor boarders' whereabouts and clear procedures are in place should a boarder be missing. Suitably separate staff accommodation, to which boarders' access is appropriately controlled, is provided. [NMS 15]
- 3.19 Boarders do not experience discrimination on any grounds and care is sensitive to their differing needs. A very large majority of boarders say they enjoy boarding and spoke in interviews of their appreciation of the supportive community which boarding provides. [NMS 16]
- 3.20 A minority of boarders said in the questionnaire that the school does not ask for or respond to their views, but evidence does not support this. Boarders' suggestions are sought through a variety of forums, for example the food committee, the minutes of which show the school's responsiveness. House staff also seek boarders' views about the running of the houses, although not all do this formally. [NMS 17]
- 3.21 The school deals with any complaints in accordance with its appropriate complaints policy. [NMS 18]
- 3.22 Older boarders act as prefects and help with the day-to-day running of the houses. They receive appropriate training and guidance, are supervised, and are supported in their roles. They do not impose sanctions on other boarders. [NMS 19]
- 3.23 The school does not use long-term lodgings for boarders. [NMS 20]