



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Additional Inspection Report

King's School, Rochester

April 2023

School's details

School	King's School, Rochester			
DfE number	887/6000			
Registered charity number	1084266			
Address	King's School, Rochester Satis House Boley Hill Rochester ME1 1TE			
Telephone number	01634 888555			
Email address	seniorschool@kings-rochester.co.uk			
Principal	Mr Ben Charles			
Chair of governors	Mr John Maas CBE			
Proprietor	The Governors of King's School			
Age Range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	669			
	Day pupils	639	Boarders	30
	EYFS	64	Pre-Prep	111
	Prep	233	Seniors	163
	Sixth Form	98		
Date of inspection	24 April 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 King's School, Rochester is a co-educational day and boarding school. It has three sections. The school's principal is the headmaster of the senior school and delegates responsibility to the heads of the pre-preparatory and preparatory schools. Boarding is available from the age of 11. The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. The school has 102 pupils who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil has an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for 43 pupils. The school's previous inspection in January 2020 was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an unannounced additional inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) which focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 2022. The visit was focused in the preparatory and senior schools.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraphs 7 (safeguarding) and 8 (safeguarding of boarders); NMS 8	Met
Part 3, paragraphs 9 (behaviour) and 10 (bullying); NMS 15, 16 and 17	Met
Part 3, paragraphs 11 (health and safety) and 16 (risk assessment); NMS 9 and 18	Met
Part 3, paragraph 13 (first aid); NMS 7	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision); NMS20	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 to 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors); NMS 19	Met
Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 7, paragraph 33 (complaints); NMS 14	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management); NMS 2	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding and safeguarding of boarders [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 7 and 8; NMS 8]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.2 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.3 The school meets the standards.
- 2.4 The school implements its policy effectively to safeguard the welfare of pupils, including boarders. Pupils report that they have a range of staff they are happy to confide in if they feel unsafe or anxious. They state that relationships with both teaching and pastoral staff are positive so that they are confident that the school will provide them with support if necessary. Safeguarding records, which are maintained with suitable confidentiality, confirm that the school responds promptly when any concerns are raised and provides ongoing support to pupils involved.
- 2.5 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs are suitably trained and provide effective coverage for the role since they are distributed through all sections of the school, including in boarding. All other staff are trained at a suitable level for their responsibilities and those who spoke with inspectors demonstrated appropriate knowledge and understanding of types of abuse. This included child-on-child abuse and also the potential vulnerabilities of pupils with protected characteristics, including those with SEND. Effective liaison between staff with pastoral responsibilities and the safeguarding team ensures welfare considerations for any pupils with mental health or other specific needs are communicated to the staff who teach them.
- 2.6 Staff understand the importance of following their own code of conduct and the necessary procedures should they have a concern about any adult working with pupils in the school. Scrutiny of records confirms that the school responds to disclosures or allegations in accordance with local inter-agency procedures, acting on external advice, where necessary. The safeguarding team monitors all concerns and meets regularly to ensure appropriate support is available to pupils involved. Records provide a clear narrative of actions taken and these follow statutory and local agency guidance appropriately. The school monitors pupils' online activity effectively to identify and address any misuse and pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet and social media. As a result, pupils state that they are not aware of many instances of device misuse. This is confirmed by relevant records. Governors monitor the school's oversight of technology effectively.
- 2.7 Governors all undertake suitable safeguarding training. The board maintains effective oversight of the safeguarding policy and procedures through regular liaison between the safeguarding governor and DSL. Governors undertake regular reviews of safeguarding overall, which include reviewing any incidents and taking action where necessary. Boarders' wellbeing is similarly monitored with staff by a designated governor.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – behaviour and bullying [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 9 and 10; NMS 15, 16 and 17]

- 2.8 The school meets the standards.

- 2.9 The school has suitable behaviour and anti-bullying policies which are implemented effectively. Pupils report that behaviour is generally good in school. Staff are mindful of the additional vulnerabilities of pupils with SEND. They therefore look for causes of poor behaviour as well as its impact when deciding on the most appropriate response to incidents. Pupils state that staff administer sanctions fairly. Scrutiny of behaviour logs shows that serious misbehaviour is comparatively rare and that appropriate sanctions are given.
- 2.10 The school views bullying as serious and senior leaders show suitable understanding of the thresholds where bullying can become a safeguarding matter. Pupils state that instances of bullying are uncommon. This is confirmed by scrutiny of records which show that bullying is infrequent and addressed promptly. The school encourages desired behaviour and attitudes by rewarding pupils who display kindness, resilience and confidence. Details of any misbehaviour, unkindness or bullying are recorded clearly so that safeguarding and pastoral staff can identify any trends and patterns and decide how best to address them. Records show that pupils with SEND do not experience bullying any more often than their peers. Pupils can obtain advice and support for their wellbeing from a number of staff.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety and risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraphs 11 and 16; NMS 9 and 18]

- 2.11 The school meets the standards.
- 2.12 The school has a suitable health and safety policy and provides a safe, well-maintained environment for the pupils. This is confirmed by a tour of school buildings and grounds, together with evidence from records of maintenance checks. The school ensures that the various sites on which the school is housed are secure. Staff confirm that any defects or issues that they report are prioritised and dealt with efficiently. Pupils are not able to access hazardous substances. The school has an effective system to assess risk in areas of the school and pupil activities, including in boarding and off site. Risk assessments are reviewed, updated and monitored regularly. Staff complete risk assessments for vulnerable pupils which inform appropriate care plans for their support. Governors maintain regular oversight of health and safety through the estates sub-committee.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – first aid [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 13; NMS 7]

- 2.13 The school meets the standards.
- 2.14 The school has suitable first aid and medication policies which are effectively implemented. Arrangements ensure that there is prompt provision of first aid across the school when pupils hurt themselves or are unwell. The medical centre is staffed during the school day by qualified medical staff and suitable numbers of other staff are trained as first aiders, including in paediatric first aid. Boarders receive appropriate medical care overnight. Parents are informed of any injuries, especially to the head. In the case of more serious injury, the school follows its procedures effectively in contacting parents and transferring the pupil to hospital. There are clear arrangements for the administration of both homely and prescribed medication to day pupils and boarders, and suitable records of both accidents and medication are maintained.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14; NMS 20]

- 2.15 The school meets the standards.

- 2.16 The school has suitable arrangements to supervise pupils, including before and after school, and at break and lunch times. These include a clear procedure to locate any pupil who is missing. Younger pupils are supervised in designated locations at lunch and play times. Additional arrangements are made so that sixth formers can easily locate a member of staff when they are allowed to go into the town at lunchtime. Boarders are supervised by resident tutors in boarding time and the school uses electronic location software to ensure staff know their whereabouts.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21; NMS 19]

- 2.17 The school meets the standards.
- 2.18 The school carries out all the required checks on staff prior to their commencing employment, including gaining assurance of these checks for agency staff. Governors are checked appropriately. These checks are accurately recorded on the single central register of appointments and confirmed in staff files. Suitable oversight is provided by the designated governor for safeguarding who regularly checks arrangements for recruitment.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]

- 2.19 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

Manner in which complaints are handled [ISSR Part 7, paragraph 33; NMS 14]

- 2.20 The school meets the standards.
- 2.21 The school has a suitable policy for recording and responding to complaints, available to parents on its website. The log of formal complaints provides sufficient information about the nature of the concern and actions taken by the school in response, whether or not a complaint has been upheld. It identifies any complaints which concern boarding. Records show that the school follows its procedures appropriately when following up complaints and takes suitable action in response to findings of an investigation.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34; NMS 2]

- 2.22 The school meets the standards.
- 2.23 The governors and leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards for independent schools and boarding are consistently met and they promote the wellbeing of pupils. Governors have reviewed their committee structures to increase the effectiveness of their oversight. Similarly, senior leaders ensure effective communication and monitoring across all sections of the school to promote pupils' welfare.

3. Regulatory action points

- 3.1 For the regulations which were the focus of this inspection, the school meets all of the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

4. Summary of evidence

4.1 The inspectors held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with a governor. They visited different areas of the school and talked with groups of pupils. They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Mrs Jan Preece

Reporting inspector

Mrs Wendy Martin

Assistant reporting inspector