

School inspection report

19 to 21 November 2024

Kingham Hill School

Kingham

Chipping Norton

Oxfordshire

OX7 6TH

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. Leaders have appropriate knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities. They maintain pupils' wellbeing effectively and create a secure environment in which pupils flourish. Governors keep close oversight of the school's work. They offer regular challenge to leaders to continue to improve the quality of the school's offer.
2. The curriculum is designed to provide a broad choice of subjects and qualifications to meet pupils' needs and interests. Knowledgeable teachers are aware of pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses. Typically, they adapt and plan learning carefully. As a result, most pupils make good progress. While leaders and teachers monitor and track pupils' academic progress, there is inconsistency in the systems used and in their effectiveness. This impacts negatively on planning so some pupils do not always make as much progress as they could.
3. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well provided for by suitably trained staff, who give carefully targeted support.
4. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress in developing their fluency in English.
5. The extensive programme of co-curricular activities enhances pupils' learning and provides opportunities for them to acquire new interests and skills. The programme is well managed and structured to allow pupils to build their skills at an age-appropriate level as they move through year groups.
6. Pupils' personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) covers the required areas, including relationships and sex education (RSE), and consideration of different types of relationships. Leaders continue to evaluate and develop the programme, with input from pupils, to ensure that it remains current and relevant to needs.
7. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in education, employment and/or training through a suitable programme of careers education. They feel well prepared to take the next steps as they move through different year groups.
8. The small boarding houses enable house parents to know pupils well. Boarders feel secure, happy and cared for while at school. Boarding staff are experienced and well trained, so boarding is effectively organised and well led. The boarding accommodation is comfortable and well equipped.
9. The school is safe and well maintained, necessary checks are conducted. The medical provision is appropriate to needs. Health and safety policies, risk assessments and fire management systems are in place to mitigate risk and to safeguard members of the school community.
10. There is a suitable accessibility plan for the site. The school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Diverse cultures are celebrated. The school values and ethos permeate through pupils' daily life in the school, supporting the development of a tolerant and inclusive society. Pupils are happy and encouraged to do the right thing. They interact with each other respectfully.

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:

- reduce inconsistencies in the effectiveness of tracking pupils' progress across subjects, so that learning is systematically well matched to needs and supports all pupils to make the progress they should.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Governors and school leaders collaborate closely with one another to secure continuous improvement. Their rigorous oversight means that policies are implemented effectively, responsibilities fulfilled and the standards are met consistently. Pupils' wellbeing is promoted effectively in a safe and supportive environment. Consequently, they feel valued and cared for. Collectively, leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for further development. They understand the positive difference that their actions have on pupils' wellbeing and when further improvements are needed.
12. Leaders' ambitious aims and vision are well promoted. Governors and school leaders have appropriate skills and training. They work closely together. Consequently, the school's aims and ethos, to provide an all-round education within a Christian context, are secured. Governors oversee designated aspects of the school's work. They attend meetings and visit the school regularly. Their knowledge of the school's offer means that they constructively challenge, evaluate and contribute to the identification of any changes needed. They ensure that staff have the relevant training and expertise to fulfil their roles effectively.
13. A suitable complaints procedure is available on the school's website. This is implemented effectively. The written record of complaints shows the actions taken when complaints arise. These are appropriate and timely. Any complaints relating to the boarding provision are clearly identified. Leaders' follow-up actions ensure concerns are resolved appropriately.
14. Arrangements for communicating with parents are effective. These include, for example, termly reports about pupils' progress, attitudes and attainment. The regular reports are supported by annual parent and teacher consultations. For those pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), leaders provide local authorities with the necessary information about how the school spends the funding it receives. The school's website provides parents and prospective parents with access to important information, including the school's policies and procedures.
15. Leaders manage potential risks effectively. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly. These are well considered, taking account of the mitigation of any potential risks linked to the school's premises, including boarding houses, and activities that take place both on and offsite.
16. Leaders fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 so that pupils are not discriminated against. There is an up-to-date accessibility plan which takes account of pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils have secure access to the curriculum and the school's facilities.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Leaders understand the growing range of pupils' needs and abilities in the school. They plan and implement appropriate strategies to ensure that pupils continue to achieve well. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. Subject specialists are in place to support pupils' effective subject-specific knowledge and skills development as required.
19. Pupils attain well in A-level and GCSE examinations. Lessons are typically well resourced and well planned. Teachers have up to date subject knowledge. This helps pupils to access new ideas and concepts quickly so most achieve well. However, in a few lessons, learning is not consistently well matched to pupils' needs. When this happens, pupils do not make as much progress as they could. While leaders and teachers monitor and track pupils' academic progress, there is inconsistency in the systems used and in their effectiveness.
20. Pupils behave well. Most staff know their pupils' needs and respond appropriately. Curriculum leaders understand the strengths and weakness of their departments. They make improvements when needed, including through curriculum changes linked to checks on pupils' progress. Many pupils feel confident to challenge each other's ideas respectfully in the classroom. In English, teachers' clear explanations and guidance allow pupils, for example, to understand specific language and structural features in the text being studied. In drama, pupils demonstrate their creativity in directing and performing their own version of Julius Caesar as part of their GCSE coursework.
21. Pupils access a wide choice of courses. They can combine some courses externally accredited in the United States (US) with A-level and BTEC courses. Pupils achieve well in the US advanced placement examinations.
22. The library is designed to support collaborative learning and the development of the wider skills required for independent study. The librarian leads courses in developing digital technology for younger pupils.
23. The curriculum is flexible, inclusive, and based around pupils' needs. Pupils who have SEND have their needs met effectively in a caring environment. The support includes clear guidelines for teachers, underpinned by relevant feedback and clear direction from staff. Consequently, these pupils make good progress. This is monitored effectively, including for those pupils with EHC plans. All pupils who have SEND have a record, which logs their challenges, and the strategies needed to support them. As with their other pupils, the school ensures that these pupils increase their self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-knowledge over time. They are especially encouraged to aim high via competitions, such as 'The Green's Cup.'
24. Sport plays a significant role in the school. Many pupils enjoy getting involved in sporting activities. The extensive co-curricular programme of sport runs alongside many other activities such as the academic society, 'Octagon', and the performing arts club, 'Academy', Combined Cadet Force, choir, farm club, mathematics club, and bee keeping.
25. Specialist staff ensure that the needs of pupils who speak EAL are met. Teaching focuses on language and understanding of texts. Staff give specific and individualised feedback to pupils, so they make good progress. Dedicated lessons provide an important social and cultural experience for pupils arriving from overseas. This means that they also understand conversational nuances and humour. This helps them to integrate into the school community quickly.

26. A comprehensive range of pupil and teacher-led activities, in the evenings and at weekends, allows pupils to gain different skills. This enhances their wellbeing. These activities include trips to places such as theme parks and premiership rugby, as well the opportunity to participate in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. The relaunched Kingham Hill scout troop recently took part in a climbing activity. Pupils enjoyed developing their collaborative skills, learning new movements, how to control their body and how to solve problems in a safe environment.

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. Pupils are conversant with the school's aims. They know they are expected to embrace the school's values of resilience, integrity, humility, and responsibility. These values are embedded successfully through the PSHE programme and in wider school life. The effective promotion of the school's values fosters a tolerant, inclusive, and well-behaved pupil body.
29. Pupils are happy. They enjoy being part of the community. Boarders and day pupils mix well together. Pupils are cared for, supported, and well supervised. Pupils feel confident. They trust the adults who support them. The staff welfare group meets regularly to discuss pastoral matters, flag safeguarding concerns and any behaviour issues. A pastoral log is disseminated to staff weekly so that information about the required pastoral care for individuals is communicated to relevant staff.
30. The school seeks to develop pupils' spiritual and moral understanding through the curriculum. Interactions between staff and pupils in the classroom, as well as on the sports fields, help to educate pupils in acquiring good habits. Pupils behave well. The importance of punctuality, presentation and politeness is systematically reinforced by section heads. Pupils understand what is meant by protected characteristics, such as race and religion. They are taught to respect individual differences. Any poor behaviour is challenged effectively.
31. The school's anti-bullying strategy is effective. Any rare instances of bullying are dealt with appropriately. Senior and middle leaders know their pupils well. Consequently, they identify patterns of behaviour which may be of concern quickly. Staff know how to report concerns. Leaders respond swiftly when issues are raised.
32. Staff are alert to and supportive of pupils experiencing wellbeing difficulties. Effective action includes help from trained mental health first-aiders, providing parents with mental health support tools and the 'shelf help' bookshelf in the library with self-help books available to borrow.
33. Boarders feel safe and well cared for. The boarding houses have a welcoming, family atmosphere. Pupils benefit from the small and comfortable boarding communities. Pastoral staff know their pupils well and maintain close relationships. They promote positive behaviour, empathy, sympathy, and care. The boarding accommodation is well maintained. There is a suitable induction programme which helps new boarding pupils to settle in. Communication between house parents and the school's pastoral team is effective. Any misdemeanours are dealt with appropriately and consistently, in line with school policy. Pupils enjoy taking leadership roles as boarding house prefects.
34. Health and safety procedures are monitored effectively. The premises and boarding accommodation are well maintained, including through a suitable programme of electrical and water testing. The site is secure, with locking systems in place on external doors and closed-circuit television in operation. Any maintenance issues are rectified quickly. Suitable toilet, washing and drinking water facilities are provided.
35. Effective risk assessments are in place. Regular fire drills, including during boarding time, are appropriately conducted and recorded.

36. The medical centre is suitably equipped. There are many trained first-aiders. Boarders who are unwell are looked after and supervised well. First-aid records are appropriately maintained. Medicines are checked regularly.
37. The admission register is kept in accordance with the regulations. Attendance is logged appropriately and monitored. Any concerns arising are investigated and addressed with appropriate support provided for individuals.
38. The school's filtering and monitoring of internet use is comprehensive. This supports pupils' online safety effectively. Pupils understand why this is needed. In PSHE, for example, a lively and engaging discussion between pupils included consideration of the dangers of social media, whether social media posts reflect real life, how to report harmful content and thoughts about employers' views on social media use.

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. Leaders encourage pupils to show respect for diverse cultures. Lessons in PSHE and initiatives such as the 'culture day', when pupils are encouraged to wear national dress, give opportunities for diversity to be celebrated. The effective promotion of the key school values of resilience, integrity, humility, and responsibility, underpin pupils' awareness of issues related to equality and inclusion. Pupils understand the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. They are knowledgeable about individual differences, such as disability and religion.
41. Leaders prepare pupils for life beyond school and their role in wider British society. Fundamental British values, such as respect and the rule of law, are well understood. Respect is promoted well through the school's ethos and culture. This is securely embedded in the relationships between staff and pupils and across the pupil community. Pupils are knowledgeable about British law, institutions and services. The 'Octagon Society', which is the academic society, frequently discusses current affairs. Before the general election the school held mock elections involving local candidates invited to the school.
42. The culture of respect and mutual understanding is well developed. A wide variety of activities promote service to others. This includes visits to primary schools, making Christmas presents for other children, visiting children in hospital and local charity work such as the 10K charity run.
43. Pupils' moral and social development is well promoted. Pupils are supported to develop a strong understanding of right from wrong. This is underpinned by the school's values and ethos. Pupils learn to think critically as they explore philosophical concepts such as utilitarianism and consequentialism. Opportunities for personal reflection are supported, such as through the Christian Union, and chapel time. A climate of respect and tolerance for other religions is facilitated. For example, in making alternative arrangements during religious events and services for those who wish to opt out of the Christian events.
44. Economic wellbeing is discussed in PSHE. This builds pupils' understanding of positive financial choices. Topics include good and bad debt, accounts, interest rates and loans. In the sixth form, pupils are taught about finance to support the transition to adulthood and next steps.
45. The careers programme is comprehensive. Senior pupils receive suitable advice about choices of subjects and careers. Guidance is tailored to individual needs. The head of sixth form and head of destinations know and encourage each sixth-form pupil to pursue suitable courses and careers. Opportunities for apprenticeships are well promoted. Younger pupils access careers-related online learning and quizzes. They explore a range of careers and courses throughout their time at school.
46. Opportunities for leadership roles and for pupils to express their views through pupil voice are supported through the pupil committees. These include the boarding council, the catering committee, and the inclusion committee. Pupil leaders in boarding houses supervise in-house tasks and leadership training for positions of responsibility in the combined cadet force. Initiatives such as 'The Hub', a breaktime initiative run by the sixth form, supports younger pupils to come and chat about their wellbeing. This is an example of how sixth-form pupils and prefects initiate and lead activities as part of their duties and responsibilities.

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

47. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

48. Safeguarding is a high priority throughout the school. Safeguarding arrangements are effective. The comprehensive safeguarding team is professionally qualified and knowledgeable in their roles. The school is a small, caring, trusting community who know one another well. Within the boundaries of confidentiality, staff and pupils are open in their safeguarding discussions. The strong safeguarding culture raises awareness of safeguarding as everyone's responsibility. Staff training is updated regularly, so that when concerns arise, they understand what they need to do and act accordingly. There is a comprehensive safeguarding induction for new staff, including familiarisation with policies and the required completion of training.
49. Pupils are aware of the support available if they are worried. Staff take effective action to meet pupils' safeguarding needs. The school has additional pastoral support, including a visiting doctor, school nurses and a counsellor. This enhances the work of the boarding staff. Pupils share concerns. They are aware of trusted adults they can speak to, such as tutors, house parents, section heads and the independent listener. Pupils know that their concerns are managed swiftly and effectively.
50. Pupils feel safe and happy. They understand the rules regarding boundaries and visitors on site. There is a general sense of respect and community in the school.
51. Governors oversee the implementation of safeguarding arrangements. They check that staff training is up to date and that safeguarding policies and procedures meet requirements. Leaders liaise with external agencies effectively, act on their advice and refer concerns to them when required. A recent safeguarding audit conducted by Oxfordshire County Council is one example of the useful ways in which the safeguarding team liaise with various external agencies and partnerships to help safeguard pupils.
52. Effective measures are taken to manage risk and to protect pupils from harm. Pupils understand the rules and how they are designed to keep them safe. Appropriate risk assessments and care plans are in place. These are reviewed regularly and effectively. Leaders ensure that staff receive the necessary information, so they provide effective support for vulnerable pupils. Suitable filtering and monitoring systems are established. These are checked frequently to keep pupils safe when using the school network.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Kingham Hill School
Department for Education number	931/6004
Registered charity number	1076618
Address	Kingham Hill School Kingham Chipping Norton Oxfordshire OX7 6TH
Phone number	01608 658999
Email address	administration@kinghamhill.org
Website	kinghamhill.org.uk
Proprietor	Kingham Hill Trust
Chair	Mrs Caroline Pellereau
Headteacher	Mr Pete Last
Age range	11-18
Number of pupils	331
Number of boarding pupils	132
Date of previous inspection	12 May 2024

Information about the school

54. Kingham Hill School was founded in 1886 by Charles Edward Baring Young, a Christian philanthropist. Initially, it was established as a refuge for disadvantaged boys from the east end of London. Today, the school is a co-educational independent day and boarding school for children aged 11 – 18 set in 96 acres in Oxfordshire.
55. There are seven boarding houses.
56. The school has identified 63 pupils who have SEND.
57. There are six pupils in the school with an education, health, and care (EHC) plan.
58. English is an additional language for 17 pupils.
59. The school states its aims are to provide an excellent all-round education within a distinctively Christian context. It welcomes pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances, and aims to produce young people of vision, faith, and character, who are well qualified and equipped to flourish in their adult lives.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

19 to 21 November 2024

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

61. 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
- 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.

62. 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**.

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