

Kings College Guildford

Southway, Guildford, Surrey GU2 8DU

Inspection dates

17–18 July 2018

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders' determined and focused actions promote rapid school improvement. Staff share leaders' commitment to ensuring that pupils' academic and pastoral needs are met well.
- Leaders make careful checks on standards in the school. Their effective use of training supports whole-school priorities alongside teachers' specific development needs. Consequently, teaching has improved.
- Pupils learn well because of the consistently effective teaching they experience. Their progress is increasingly strong over time. Sometimes learning activities do not deepen pupils' thinking as much as they could.
- Pupils in Year 11 have made very good progress over the past year. However, this is not enough to make up for the less effective teaching they experienced in the past. Their attainment and progress since joining the school are, consequently, too low.
- In other year groups, standards are rising. Pupils now make strong progress across a range of subjects. This is helping them to catch up from their typically below-average key stage 2 starting points.
- Leaders use additional funding successfully to help pupils who most need to catch up. Disadvantaged pupils, and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, make good progress and are catching up with their peers in school.
- Leaders make creative use of limited resources to ensure that the curriculum is suitably broad and appropriate. They use a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities to develop pupils' deeper understanding of the world and to raise their aspirations.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff use policies and procedures successfully to promote a safe culture in the school. Adults know pupils well and work conscientiously to meet their needs.
- Pupils who use alternative provision and those supported by the physically disabled centre (PDC) attend regularly and are successful. Leaders keep in close contact with pupils being educated elsewhere, to ensure that they are safe and are making academic progress.
- Governors and the trust provide useful support and challenge to leaders, supporting the school's sustainability and development. They hold leaders effectively to account for the difference their work is making to pupils.
- Pupils report how behaviour has improved dramatically since the last inspection. Pupils work hard and respond well to clear and consistent routines. The atmosphere around the school is typically calm and purposeful.
- Pupils now attend school regularly. The proportion who are persistently absent has declined to below the national average. Leaders work effectively with the families of pupils whose attendance needs to improve.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain the current improvement in academic progress throughout the school, so that:
 - pupils' attainment by the end of Year 11 improves to be at least in line with all pupils nationally
 - disadvantaged pupils catch up with their peers and other pupils nationally
 - pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities continue to make strong progress.
- Ensure that teachers plan learning activities with greater precision to deepen pupils' thinking so that they make consistently strong progress from their starting points.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal and his staff have worked with determination to address the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Their actions have led to notable improvements across the school, securing good standards of teaching and behaviour. They are deeply committed to providing pupils with high-quality education and care.
- Leaders identify the school's strengths accurately, using clear evidence to support their judgements. Governors and colleagues from the Guildford Education Partnership (GEP) trust support leaders in checking that their evaluations are valid. Leaders know which parts of the school need to improve most urgently and are taking useful steps to tackle them.
- Middle and senior leaders use helpful systems to check on the effectiveness of teachers' work. Where standards do not meet leaders' high expectations, they challenge colleagues supportively to improve, putting appropriate help in place. Alongside this, a well-planned and comprehensive programme of staff training successfully meets the school's improvement goals.
- The trust provides valuable additional capacity to this small school. Staff benefit from working closely with colleagues across and beyond the trust to improve aspects of teaching and leadership. Leaders are creative in exploring ways to manage resources efficiently and for everyone's mutual benefit.
- Leaders are determined that limited resources will not restrict pupils' access to a suitably broad curriculum. Pupils' formal learning at key stage 3 is complemented well by a diverse range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities, which pupils appreciate and enjoy. Leaders keep the curriculum under constant review to ensure that it continues to meet pupils' needs appropriately.
- Pupils benefit from a useful range of additional opportunities that raise their aspirations and develop their wider understanding of the world. Themes from their learning in personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons are built on as part of learning in other subjects. Close partnership work with the University of Surrey enables pupils to be well informed about future career paths. This motivates them to strive for the educational standards they will need to achieve in order to access appropriate further or higher education.
- Leaders have refined their use of additional funding to support pupils with specific needs. The inclusion team works together to support disadvantaged pupils, those who have SEN and/or disabilities and those needing to catch up in literacy and numeracy. Leaders make careful checks to ensure that extra help leads to rapid improvements in attendance and academic achievement and make prompt changes if it does not. Consequently, these groups of pupils are making very good progress that is helping them to catch up with their peers in school and nationally.

Governance of the school

- The executive working group (EWG) was put in place in spring 2017, following the last inspection. It assumes responsibility for governance of the school and is accountable to the GEP trust.

- EWG members are suitably skilled and experienced in their role. They understand the school very well, visiting regularly to test out what leaders tell them about improvements, priorities and challenges. They recognise accurately where standards in the school are secure and where they most urgently need to improve.
- The EWG provides useful challenge to school leaders about the impact of their work. Its members monitor pupils' achievements carefully and precisely to ensure that they are sufficiently strong. They hold senior leaders effectively to account for the impact of their work on pupils' outcomes, attendance and behaviour. They share leaders' high aspirations for the school.
- Members of the EWG understand their legal duties with regard to safeguarding. They make careful checks to ensure that policies and leaders' records are fit for purpose. They undertake appropriate training that supports them well in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders make careful checks on adults working in the school to ensure their suitability, keeping appropriate and diligent records. Staff participate in regular and useful training, which ensures that they know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. Their understanding is supported effectively by relevant policies and by senior staff, who are well equipped to oversee this vital aspect of the school's work.
- Pupils report that they feel safe at school. They learn about how to keep themselves safe and to be vigilant about the risks in the world around them, in an age-appropriate way. They are confident that adults would listen to and act on any concerns they reported to them. They feel that their school is a place where people are accepted, regardless of their differences.
- Leaders recognise the potential risk to safety that results from pupils not attending school regularly. Persistent work, supported by the educational welfare officer, has led to strong recent improvements in this regard. Leaders remain committed to ensuring that all pupils attend as regularly as they should.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have established consistent routines that support learning in lessons. In almost all classes, pupils are prepared to work hard and want to do their best. They rise to their teachers' high expectations of their behaviour and engagement with their work. This enables pupils to learn well across a range of subjects.
- Teachers know their subjects well. They plan learning and structure tasks to ensure that pupils access suitably challenging knowledge. At times, they do not match learning activities to pupils' different starting points as well as they could. This lack of precision limits pupils' opportunities to think more deeply or apply their learning in unfamiliar contexts.
- Pupils trust teachers and other adults to help them when they get stuck with their work. They ask thoughtful questions to check their own understanding or to make sure

that they know what is expected of them. Teachers give pupils useful feedback about their work, in line with the school's policy. Some pupils use this information very well to further develop their knowledge and skills. Occasionally, pupils are overly reliant on adults' help, lacking the resilience to persist with a tricky question or task.

- Leaders have successfully raised the profile of homework across the school this year, following the school's policy. Pupils value the new approach, saying that it complements their learning in lessons well. Most parents and carers express similarly positive views. Teachers expect homework to be completed and take appropriate action if it is not.
- Teachers recognise the importance of promoting literacy to ensure that pupils can express their understanding successfully. Pupils experience regular opportunities to expand their vocabulary through reading appropriately challenging texts and being introduced to new words and their meanings. Pupils' written work in English and other subjects shows that they use these words to write with increased sophistication over time.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding. In the most effective instances, such as in mathematics, teachers' questions help pupils to focus on deeper thinking and reasoning skills, not just the answer to the problem. As a result, pupils develop more sustainable learning that they can apply elsewhere. Occasionally, teachers move learning on before they have checked carefully that all pupils understand.
- Leaders have put useful support in place to improve the small minority of lessons where they judge teaching to be less effective. This is leading to ongoing improvements in the overall quality of teaching.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff know pupils well, and so can recognise promptly where concerns exist about their welfare. Adults work closely with experts from beyond the school to support pupils' various and complex vulnerabilities. This helps to keep pupils safe and remove barriers to their learning.
- Leaders make effective use of alternative provision to support the specific needs of a small number of pupils. They match placements carefully and work closely with those who provide them. As a result, pupils are kept safe and engage with learning more successfully than in the past.
- The PDC provides careful nurture and support for pupils who have physical disabilities, as well as a safe haven for other vulnerable pupils during social times. Pupils integrate successfully into the life of the school, demonstrating leaders' commitment to ensuring that all pupils are included.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in an age-appropriate way. They trust teachers to resolve the few instances of bullying that occur, although a resolution occasionally takes longer than some of them would like. Pupils are keen to contribute

to the ongoing improvements to the school, such as through their involvement in the recently revived student-leadership council.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff have transformed the atmosphere in the school through raising expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils appreciate the clear rules that are now in place and the consistency with which teachers apply them. As a result, the majority of pupils conduct themselves well as a matter of course.
- Leaders have worked tirelessly to reduce the number of instances of negative behaviour, including those leading to pupils being excluded from school. They look widely at patterns in misbehaviour and make effective use of alternative strategies to encourage pupils to make more positive choices. Consequently, incidents of poor behaviour, and exclusions, have reduced considerably over time.
- Pupils' attendance has improved in recent months because of leaders' tenacious work. Attendance rates are now broadly in line with the national average and have improved for key groups of pupils such as the disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is now below the national average. Pupils who attend alternative provision do so much more regularly than when their learning was based entirely at school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Leaders are absolutely determined to improve pupils' academic outcomes. Their recent work has unquestionably led to pupils making better progress than in the past. However, a notable minority of pupils, particularly those in the upper part of the school, have not made good progress from their end of key stage 2 starting points.
- Pupils who have just completed Year 11 arrived at the school with below-average starting points. Although they have made very good progress over the past year, this has not eradicated the impact of the legacy of ineffective teaching and their weak progress in the past. Consequently, pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 4 remains below average.
- In other year groups, pupils make better progress, because teaching has been more consistently effective over time. As a result, attainment across a number of subjects is rising, even though pupils' starting points remain below average. In the lower part of the school, pupils' outcomes in the majority of subjects are good.
- Disadvantaged pupils make better progress than their peers in school, as do those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Consequently, many are catching up with other pupils nationally, although leaders know that there is still further work to do.
- Pupils who join the school needing to catch up in English and mathematics are supported effectively to make good progress. Leaders successfully identify and reduce pupils' barriers to learning, which are often related to their engagement or social,

emotional and mental health. Pupils' reading and spelling ages subsequently improve faster than their chronological age.

- Leaders monitor the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils precisely. Their resulting action has improved progress for specific groups, such as boys, who have historically not performed as well as others. The progress of Year 11 girls has not improved as much as that of other groups. However, their collective progress has been affected by a small but significant group of pupils who have needed very careful support to manage their highly complex circumstances or challenges.
- Pupils supported in alternative provision are all on track to achieve at least one qualification at a good standard, although a number will not access a suitably broad range. All pupils currently in Year 11 have secured a sixth-form placement or apprenticeship to move on to next year.

School details

Unique reference number	141200
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10045407

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	355
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board (executive working group)
Chair	Bob Arnold
Principal	Alastair McKenzie
Telephone number	01483 458956
Website	http://www.kingscollegeguildford.com/
Email address	office@kingscollegeguildford.com
Date of previous inspection	6–7 December 2016

Information about this school

- Kings College Guildford is a smaller-than-average secondary school for pupils aged 11 to 16. The sixth form, which previously formed part of the school, closed just before this inspection took place.
- The school is a sponsored academy which belongs to the GEP trust. School leaders work closely with colleagues from other schools across the trust to facilitate extra help that supports ongoing school improvement. GEP has also supported the school in forming a working partnership with the Royal Grammar School (RGS) in Guildford.
- The trust delegates responsibility for governance to an interim executive board known as the executive working group (EWG). The EWG was put in place after the last inspection, when the previous governing body was dissolved.
- The principal took up his post in September 2016, shortly before the last inspection. His vice principal has been in post for the same length of time. During 2017/18, the

senior leadership in the school has been supplemented by a vice principal and assistant principal seconded for a year from other schools.

- The school incorporates a specialist resource base, the PDC, for up to 12 pupils who have physical disabilities. This resource is commissioned by the local authority. Pupils attending the PDC each have an education, health and care plan. There are currently three pupils supported by this resource base.
- A small number of pupils, mainly in key stage 4, attend an alternative provision for part of their education. School leaders work with Wey Valley College, the Well Project at Guildford College, the Change of Scene farm, Normandy Therapy Garden and Skillway to cater appropriately for pupils' specific needs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 23 lessons and three tutor sessions. Some of these visits were carried out with school leaders. Inspectors reviewed samples of pupils' work, both in classrooms and separately with school leaders. They talked to pupils about their work.
- Inspectors met with the principal and members of his senior leadership team, groups of pupils and staff, and with representatives of the executive working group. The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer who represented the trust. An inspector spoke by telephone to representatives of the alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding arrangements, including the school's central record of recruitment checks, relevant policies and leaders' records of their work to support pupils considered to be vulnerable. They also considered other pertinent documents on the school website and provided by school leaders.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from Years 7 and 9 and spoke informally to other pupils and staff during visits to lessons and while moving around the school, including at lunchtime. They took account of 217 responses to a recent anonymous pupil survey carried out by school leaders. They also considered 46 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Kathryn Moles, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ann Fearon

Ofsted Inspector

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