

Inspection of a good school: Kings College Guildford

Southway, Guildford, Surrey GU2 8DU

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 June 2024

Outcome

Kings College Guildford continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Alastair McKenzie. This school is part of Learning Partners Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jack Mayhew, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Isherwood.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils' achievement and well-being are centre stage at Kings College. This is a very happy school where pupils learn and achieve well. When pupils produce exceptional work, they are sent to school leaders, who take the time to pause and reward the efforts made. Staff ensure that pupils know and follow clear and consistent rules for work and behaviour. As one pupil said, 'It is strict, but a good strict, because the teachers really care.' Bullying is rare but dealt with quickly if it happens. Consequently, the school is safe and harmonious.

In the past, pupils achieved in line with their peers nationally. Improvements in teaching have now led to even higher standards of work. Pupils know and remember more of what they are taught. They talk about their learning with fluency. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) flourish. Parents describe the support their children receive as 'phenomenal' and 'second to none'. Pupils are proud of their school.

The school has built excellent links with its local community. Staff run interesting and varied extra-curricular activities. Many pupils attend at least one of these in addition to their lessons. Pupils get superb opportunities to support their next steps when they leave school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders at all levels have a strong, shared vision for their pupils' education. Supported by the trust, the school has set out ambitious goals for what pupils of all ages will learn in each subject. The well-ordered curriculum is carefully adapted to help make lessons focused, relevant and interesting to pupils. For example, in history, the curriculum includes local studies of places that pupils will recognise. They explore why the local area looks the way it does. In mathematics, pupils take on challenging problem-solving, which

they find very stimulating. In English, they study a good range of texts to help develop understanding of the different lived experiences of the characters they study. This gives pupils a greater insight into the world around them.

Pupils study a good range of academic subjects. However, too few of them learn a modern foreign language in key stage 4. This means the number of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is lower than the government's ambition. Leaders have begun to put measures in place to increase pupils' interest in studying a language but recognise there is still more to do.

Teachers know their pupils very well. The school keeps careful records of what pupils can do. When needed, staff use a variety of checks to identify if pupils have any specific learning needs. Staff benefit from the training and development opportunities they are offered in helping pupils to learn consistently well. Reading and vocabulary are whole-school priorities. Teachers introduce every topic with a careful study of new words and how to use them. Pupils with SEND especially benefit from this. Any pupils who have fallen behind with their reading get specialised help to catch up. This is very effective, and these pupils quickly become more confident readers.

Pupils behave well. Many attend school regularly, but this is not the case for all. Staff work hard to increase pupils' attendance, and absence for some pupils has reduced accordingly. Nevertheless, some pupils are still not in school regularly enough, meaning they miss out on the vital education the school offers.

The personal development of pupils, such as the teaching of the personal, social and health education programme, is a strength of the school. Numerous opportunities help prepare pupils for adult life. Sensitive topics are taught at an age-appropriate time. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when online and how to discuss important issues such as consent. They value and respect diversity. Innovative teamwork with higher education providers and employers gives pupils exceptional careers opportunities.

There is a strong sense of belonging at Kings College. Leaders and staff share distinct, common values to serve their community and continue improving their pupils' education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Despite the increase in pupils' attendance in recent years, too many are still absent from school too often. This has a negative impact on those pupils' learning and, as a result, can mean they achieve less well. The school should continue its efforts to ensure that pupils attend regularly.

- Very few pupils study a modern foreign language, as part of the EBacc suite of subjects, up until the age of 16. This may impact negatively on pupils' next steps or limit their choice of future careers. The school should ensure that pupils take the full suite of EBacc subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2018.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	141200
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10296405
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	544
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Isherwood
CEO of trust	Jack Mayhew
Principal	Alastair McKenzie
Website	www.kingscollegeguildford.com/
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 July 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Kings College is part of the Learning Partners Academy Trust.
- The school uses four registered alternative providers and two unregistered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the principal and other school leaders. They also met with the chief executive officer of the trust, governors and trustees.
- The lead inspector visited one of the alternative providers and spoke to staff and pupils there.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector also visited lessons in a range of other subjects and scrutinised a sample of work of pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed other documents, such as the school's self-evaluation, trust reports and information published on the school's website.
- Inspectors took into account the views expressed by pupils, parents and teachers through Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Keith Pailthorpe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Simon Potten

Ofsted Inspector

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