



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Regulatory and Educational Quality Inspection Reports**

**King Edward VI High School for Girls**

**March 2019**



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### School's Details

<b>School</b>	King Edward VI High School for Girls			
<b>DfE number</b>	330/6077			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	52905			
<b>Address</b>	King Edward VI High School for Girls Edgbaston Park Road Birmingham West Midlands B15 2UB			
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 472 1834			
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@kehsmail.co.uk			
<b>Principal</b>	Mrs Ann Clark			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Tim Clarke			
<b>Age range</b>	11 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	601			
	<b>Boys</b>	0	<b>Girls</b>	601
	<b>Seniors</b>	451	<b>Sixth Form</b>	150
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26 to 28 March 2019			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 King Edward VI High School for Girls is an independent day school for pupils between the ages of 11 and 18 years. It was founded in 1883 and, in 1938, moved from New Street, Birmingham to its present site close to the university.
- 1.2 The school shares some facilities, including a performing arts centre, with the neighbouring boys' school, which is part of the same foundation.
- 1.3 The school is governed by the trustees of The Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham, and this charitable trust is also responsible for other local schools. Since the previous inspection, the sixth-form facilities have been upgraded to provide an area, with access to laptops, for independent study in addition to space for socialising and relaxation.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to provide pupils with a distinctive academic education which will prepare them for their future, by inspiring a love of learning and giving them the confidence to aim high and pursue their ambitions.

### About the pupils

- 1.5 The ethnic mix and range of social backgrounds of the pupils is wide, reflecting the Birmingham community, with one-fifth of pupils in receipt of means-tested assisted places. Nationally standardised test data indicate that the ability of the pupils in the senior school is well above average. In the sixth form the ability is above average. The school has identified 31 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include autism spectrum disorder and specific learning difficulties, none of whom require specialist support. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan, or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 37 pupils, none of whom require additional support. Data used by the school has identified 42 pupils as being the most able in its population. The school makes suitable provision for these pupils through varied teaching and learning approaches, additional opportunities for independent learning and a wide range of extra- curricular and enrichment activities.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

**This is a REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards.** The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

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 specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#).

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

### **PART 1 – Quality of education provided**

- 2.2 At GCSE in the years 2015 to 2017, performance has been well above the national average for maintained schools and above the national average for maintained selective schools. IGCSE results have been higher than the worldwide norms.
- 2.3 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2015 to 2017 have been well above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools and above the national average for maintained selective schools.
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.5 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

### **PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.7 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

### **PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

### **PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

## **PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

**2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

2.14 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

**2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

## **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

**2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

## **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

**2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.**

### 3. Educational Quality Inspection

#### Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

**The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.**

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Third Form	Year 7
Lower Fourth	Year 8
Upper Fourth	Year 9
Lower Fifth	Year 10
Upper Fifth	Year 11
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

## Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of the curriculum.
  - Pupils are extremely articulate communicators, both inside and outside the classroom.
  - Pupils of all ages demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning and take responsibility for their own progress.
  - Pupils enjoy exceptional levels of success in the diverse extra-curricular programme.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils are naturally inclusive and demonstrate strong acceptance of those with different backgrounds to their own.
  - Pupils show exceptional maturity when reflecting on the non-material aspects of life.
  - Pupils have an exceedingly strong sense of community and are passionate about supporting a wide range of local and global issues.
  - Pupils display a particularly well-developed sense of self-understanding and are extremely confident in their own ability to succeed.

## Recommendations

- 3.3 Within the context of the excellent outcomes the school may wish to consider:
- Ensuring that current best classroom practice is widely disseminated so that pupils experience greater opportunities to participate actively in lessons and to be further challenged.

## The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 This judgement reflects not only the high academic standards achieved in external examinations, but also the wide range of skills that pupils develop and the knowledge they gain as they progress through the school.
- 3.6 The pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning are excellent. They explore ideas in depth and make excellent use of concepts acquired in previous lessons, thanks to some well-prepared and high-quality teaching, probing questions, and high expectations. For example, in a lower school English lesson, pupils displayed an advanced knowledge of literary analysis and engaged in a philosophical discussion about Gothic literature. Pupils relish the challenge of extending their knowledge beyond the confines of the examination syllabus through departmental seminars which enable them to think critically and reflect on the latest academic research. Pupils have highly developed aesthetic and creative skills, as seen in a lower school art lesson where they used their excellent observational skills to create sgraffito etchings from direct observation.

- 3.7 National data from 2015 to 2017, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available, show that results at GCSE have been well above the national average for maintained schools and above the national average for maintained selective schools. Results in IGCSE have been higher than worldwide norms. Results in A-level examinations have been well above the national average for maintained schools and above the national average for maintained selective schools. As a result, most pupils gain their first-choice places at universities with high standards of entry, thus fulfilling the school's aim to give pupils the confidence to aim high and pursue their ambitions. Pupils' levels of attainment, as indicated by the evidence from lesson observations, interviews with pupils and scrutiny of their work, together with standardised measures of progress, show that pupils make excellent progress over time; and pupils with SEND and those with EAL keep pace with their peers. In discussion, pupils were keen to point to the tremendous support and constructive criticism provided by their teachers as key contributory factors to their academic success.
- 3.8 Pupils are highly articulate; they participate confidently in class and utilise and explain concepts acquired in previous lessons. They develop strong oral communication skills by being given numerous opportunities to speak in the classroom, but also in assemblies, debates, performance poetry and a myriad other occasions. For example, in GCSE language lessons, pupils express their views with confidence in the target language and sixth formers learn to communicate with younger pupils during registration and mentoring sessions. In lessons, pupils participate enthusiastically in discussions and listen carefully to each other's responses. Pupils spoke highly of the way in which extra-curricular societies improve their confidence in presenting and contributing ideas. Pupils' writing skills are well-developed, as seen through, for example, well-written and extensively researched projects for the Extended Project Qualification. Pupils also communicate effectively in the creative arts, whether in drama or dance performance, in creating individualised art work or in tackling music for performance. In all of these areas, a strong contributory factor is the commitment of the school's leadership team and the staff as a whole to seek every opportunity to develop new learning opportunities.
- 3.9 Pupils of all ages show advanced study skills and show independence in working on personal projects and pursuing subjects beyond the curriculum. This is because the school encourages them to enjoy taking responsibility for their own learning. Their strong ability to analyse, hypothesise and synthesise is evident through subject-specific tasks such as solving multi-step problems using calculus techniques in mathematics and synthesising information gleaned when studying complex poetry. Pupils of all ages have a love of learning and many are keen to extend their knowledge by undertaking online courses offered by world-class universities. During the inspection, sixth-form pupils showed an excellent ability to synthesise complex thematic elements into a carefully researched creative art project. Pupils demonstrate an intrinsic motivation to do well and, in their quest for a deeper understanding, they engage in extension tasks with great enthusiasm and skill. In a very small minority of lessons, over-reliance on their teachers' guidance restricted the pupils' ability to think things through for themselves.
- 3.10 Pupils have excellent levels of competence, knowledge and ability in numeracy and their skills are reflected in the high standards achieved in GCSE and A-level examinations and in the high quality work observed in lessons. Pupils are able to apply their strong mathematical skills to other areas of learning such as in an A-level economics lesson where pupils were seen to apply their mathematical knowledge when discussing financial and business scenarios. Exceptional mathematical reasoning skills are evident in enrichment activities such as the UK Maths Challenge and maths masterclasses where the pupils collaborate with pupils from other schools in Birmingham. Pupils are also competent users of information and communication technology (ICT). They use presentation software and conduct web-based research with ease and quickly learn the skills, for example, to compose rhythmic pieces in music, to build an application using pseudocode and to use an application for collaborative tasks.

- 3.11 Pupils' achievements in extra-curricular activities are outstanding. They are very keen to learn and benefit from the extensive opportunities to extend their learning outside of the classroom and they achieve highly in a wide range of expressive and creative arts, sports and academic competitions. Drama and dance productions of the highest standard involve large numbers of pupils from throughout the school. Musical successes abound with pupils belonging to national youth orchestras and winning a range of competitions including BBC Young Musician of the Year, and artistic achievement is evident in the quality of artwork on display around the school. Pupils achieve highly in a wide range of sports with team successes in netball, hockey, gymnastics, rowing, swimming, badminton, cheerleading and ultimate frisbee. Pupils have achieved national and county honours in a number of these sports and also in squash, fencing, cricket, athletics and rounders. Around 60 pupils each year achieve Bronze, Silver or Gold Award in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. At the same time, the measure of pupils' additional achievements lies not so much in these accomplishments, but in the fact that all pupils use the opportunities available to try a wide range of new activities, develop new skills, and achieve a sense of personal satisfaction. In their questionnaire responses, the overwhelming majority of parents agreed that the school provides a good choice of extra-curricular activities.
- 3.12 Pupils display excellent attitudes towards their learning and take a high level of responsibility for their studies. They take full advantage of the vast array of opportunities that are provided by the school to enable them to discover new interests and skills and they are keen to engage in discussion and challenge ideas. Within the classroom, pupils work co-operatively and collaboratively. Overall, the school is highly successful in developing well-rounded, confident, skilled young people who are very well equipped for the next stage of their education.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 As they progress through the school, the pupils make rapid progress in developing their self-confidence, self-discipline, resilience, ability to make decisions and other personal skills. This amplifies the school's aim to develop independent, resilient young women. They display great confidence, especially in their ability to voice their opinions, both in class and in the many opportunities available for public speaking. Pupils have well-developed self-understanding, as well as an excellent awareness of how to improve their own learning and performance. They show strong perseverance when challenged intellectually, such as in an A-level mathematics lesson when pupils chose to continue to work on a calculus problem rather than being given the solution by the teacher. Pupils spoke of how they had increased their resilience through balancing an academic curriculum with a full programme of extra-curricular activities and were appreciative of the support and advice they receive from their teachers. Pupils demonstrate an excellent level of self-knowledge and confidence in their ability to succeed. This is as a result of the high expectations of teachers, an environment that is conducive to learning, and through the extensive range of opportunities and experiences available to them. For example, in a swimming lesson, older pupils who had recently been unable to take their feet off the bottom of the pool, swam a length of the pool with confidence. Pupils understand how the decisions they make affect their own success both in the classroom and in regards to their well-being. They benefit from a programme of personal decision-making, embedded in the curriculum, which encourages pupils to make well-informed choices. Pupils show a strong ability to weigh facts and future career implications when making subject and university choices. In their questionnaire responses, a small minority of pupils did not agree that the school helps them to be confident and independent. In interviews, pupils reported that teachers are instrumental in developing their self-confidence, whilst encouraging them to be independent and to make their own decisions.

- 3.15 Pupils display maturity well beyond their years in their appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. They respond positively to the opportunities they are given for quiet contemplation during assemblies, as was seen when an atmosphere of stillness pervaded the hall whilst pupils listened to music. Pupils develop their spiritual thinking in philosophical and ethical discussions in lessons and in clubs. For example, in a lower school religious studies lesson, pupils developed a pronounced understanding of the Buddhist eightfold path and showed great perception when applying it to everyday scenarios. They are able to articulate their ideas about spirituality and explain how, due to the diversity within the community, the school embraces a variety of cultures and beliefs. Pupils have a very well-developed aesthetic sense and their appreciation of the arts is strong, both when creating a performance or work of art and also when appreciating what others have achieved.
- 3.16 Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of staying both mentally and physically healthy, and of how these are intertwined. They recognise the importance of being physically active and benefit from plenty of outside space and a well-equipped fitness suite. Pupils from Year 9 to Year 13 displayed an excellent understanding of how to improve their strength and fitness as they followed individual training plans in the gym. This exemplifies the fact that the school's leaders recognise the importance of encouraging all pupils to take personal responsibility for their fitness. Pupils know what constitutes a balanced diet as they are encouraged to make sensible choices from the healthy range of foods available at mealtimes. In a lower school food lesson pupils showed an excellent grasp of healthy eating and dietary requirements as they discussed sources of dietary fibre and alternatives to oily fish. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of mental health and balance in life; topics which are frequently addressed through the school's well-being programme. Teachers are highly effective in communicating and identifying any pupil who might be at risk, and pupils appreciate the support they receive from teachers and the school's counsellors and mental health nurse. In their questionnaire responses, most parents and the majority of pupils agreed that the school encourages pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle. In interviews pupils agreed that the school has introduced a range of measures to help pupils to find a healthy balance between study and relaxation, but some pupils in the sixth form find that the volume of work required for examinations has an impact on the time available for leisure pursuits.
- 3.17 The pupils' moral awareness and social development are excellent. Pupils accept responsibility for their own behaviour and are clear about what is right and what is wrong; behaviour throughout the school is excellent. Pupils believe passionately that their school is a community built on kindness and respect, which fulfils the school's aim to encourage respect for others and a sense of collective responsibility. An overwhelming majority of pupils, in questionnaire responses, indicated that they believe good behaviour is promoted. Pupils' excellent social awareness is evident in the ease with which they talk to and interact with adults and in their positive engagement with others in lessons and activities.
- 3.18 Pupils are extremely good at working collaboratively to benefit others, with older pupils supporting younger pupils in their learning and in extra-curricular activities. For example, sixth formers founded and led a very successful choir for Year 7 to Year 9 pupils. Pupils work very well together, as seen when pupils helped each other to learn to knit, as a means of relaxation before academic lessons began. They are at ease with each other and demonstrate excellent teamwork across a wide range of sporting, academic and cultural activities. Pupils spoke passionately about their sense of belonging to a supportive community that enjoys working towards a common goal.

- 3.19 Pupils are kind, compassionate and extremely thoughtful young people who understand the value of service to others both in their local community and across the world. They see it as their personal and collective responsibility to enhance the lives of others and are encouraged by teachers who are altruistic role models. For example, sixth-form pupils who implemented a period poverty initiative to raise awareness of the lack of sanitary products for women and girls in difficult financial circumstances, said how this had made them appreciate their own lives. Pupils have a strong sense of community and speak highly of the desire to take on responsibility and help other people, particularly beyond the classroom, for example through the school council. Pupils who contribute to the community through voluntary activities, supporting in residential homes and hospices or helping in nurseries and junior schools, said how much such activities have helped them to mature and develop empathy for others. The whole school is also involved in a number of global charitable initiatives, such as raising funds to support street children in South America.
- 3.20 Pupils are highly respectful of each other and demonstrate a strong appreciation of diversity within both the school community and wider society. They easily embrace cultural and social differences, and feel comfortable expressing themselves freely within the supportive environment of a harmonious and diverse multi-cultural school. For example, pupils from the school's Spectrum society delivered an assembly with exceptional confidence as they challenged pupils and staff to question whether there is a difference between gay and straight love. Pupils show respect for, and appreciation of, their own and other cultures through their wide-ranging involvement in the school's artistic, musical and theatrical activities and through celebrating cultural festivals. Pupils' outstanding acceptance of diversity is engrained in the ethos of the school and fulfils the school's aim to encourage respect for others and to think nationally and globally, celebrating diversity.

## 4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mrs Sue Clarke	Reporting inspector
Ms Alison Horton	Accompanying inspector
Mr Andrew Underwood	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, GSA school)
Mrs Pamela Hutley	Team inspector (Headmistress, ISA school)
Dr Olwen Wright	Team inspector (Headmistress, GSA school)
Mr Michael Yates	Team inspector (Head of science, HMC school)