



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**THE KING'S HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

**INTERIM INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## The King's High School for Girls

Full Name of School	<b>The King's High School for Girls</b>
DfE Number	<b>937/6089</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1088057</b>
Address	<b>The King's High School for Girls Smith Street Warwick Warwickshire CV34 4HJ</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01926 494485</b>
Fax Number	<b>01926 403089</b>
Email Address	<b>enquiries@kingshighwarwick.co.uk</b>
Headmistress	<b>Mrs Elizabeth Surber</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Jane Marshall</b>
Age Range	<b>11 to 18</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>646</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls</b>
Inspection dates	<b>10 May 2011 to 11 May 2011</b>

## PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule for INTERIM inspections*. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in May 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010\*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

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

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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## **1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1.1 The King's High School for Girls is a selective school for girls between the ages of eleven and eighteen. It was founded in 1879 on its present historic site in the heart of the town of Warwick and is one of three schools in The Warwick Independent Schools Foundation. The foundation has one governing body, members of which sit on the management (governance) committees of the individual schools and on a number of foundation committees. The principal support management functions are fulfilled by the foundation.
- 1.2 The school has a Christian ethos but welcomes girls of all faiths. At the time of the inspection, the school had 646 pupils on roll, including 148 in the sixth form. Entry to the school is based on the result of a selection test. There are eight pupils for whom English is an additional language, none of whom require additional support. Forty-nine pupils have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). The majority of pupils are from families with a professional background. A small number of pupils are from ethnic minorities. The ability profile of the main school is above the national average. A quarter of pupils are of far above average ability, with most of the remainder being of average ability, and there are no pupils below average ability. The ability profile of the sixth form is also above the national average, although with a wider spread of abilities represented.
- 1.3 Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in the senior management team, with several new positions created in order to increase the focus on particular aspects of the school. Major changes have been made to the structure of governance, both of the school and of the foundation.
- 1.4 The aims of the school are: to educate each girl as an individual, encouraging all skills, talents and abilities; to create a community based on Christian principles; to foster a sense of social responsibility and a love of learning; and to prepare each girl for life as a woman in the twenty-first century.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## 2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

### **The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills**

- 2.1 Pupils' overall achievement is excellent. The school fulfils its aims of encouraging and motivating each girl to develop all her skills, talents and abilities, and fostering a love of learning and excellence.
- 2.2 Pupils demonstrate good levels of subject knowledge and the volume of work produced is considerable, demonstrating excellent progress. Pupils have secure literacy, numeracy and oral skills, and use information and communication technology confidently. The artwork displayed throughout the school is evidence of pupils' outstanding creativity.
- 2.3 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. GCSE results have been far above the national average for girls in maintained schools, and above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. In 2010, 80 per cent of the grades achieved were at A\* or A. At A level, results were also far above the national average for girls in maintained schools, and above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools, with 75 per cent of the grades at A\* or A. These results indicate that pupils' progress in Years 7 to 11 and through the sixth form is exceptional when compared with the average for pupils of similar abilities, including those with LDD. It is usual for pupils to gain places at their first choice of university.
- 2.4 The curriculum is excellent, fully supporting the aims of the school, contributing to pupils' achievements and progress. It is well planned, stimulating and challenging. Its breadth prepares pupils effectively for the next stage of their learning. The senior management team regularly reviews the curriculum in order to ensure that it provides appropriate challenge to girls of all abilities.
- 2.5 An extensive range of extra-curricular activities, regarded by pupils as an important complement to the curriculum and supporting their academic, musical, creative and sporting interests, extends their skills and talents. Many pupils enjoy individual as well as team success. Young Enterprise teams have won awards, pupils' artwork has been exhibited at the American Embassy and newspaper reviews refer to performances in music and drama as outstanding. A substantial number of girls play sport at local, regional and national level, reflecting their eagerness to excel and the development of their skills and talents.
- 2.6 The overall quality of teaching is good, and during the inspection a few lessons observed were outstanding. Teachers are knowledgeable, have very high expectations of pupils and understand individuals' abilities well. Pupils with LDD are supported effectively, enabling them to achieve as well as their peers. In a minority of lessons observed, the most able or talented pupils were not provided with additional challenge. Interactive whiteboards are fitted throughout the school, but their application during lessons varies. Assessment data is used to monitor pupils' progress and increasingly to support learning. The quality of marking is variable. At its best, it indicates clearly how the pupil might improve. A variety of assessment methods is used by some teachers, including peer marking, self-assessment and target setting, but this is not applied consistently in all subjects. Pupils are

enthusiastic, articulate, well motivated and ambitious. Their attitudes to learning are excellent.

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

- 2.7 Pupils show outstanding personal development. The sense of community in the school ensures that all pupils feel valued and are given the help and support they need. Achievements are celebrated in assemblies and newsletters, and in photographs around the school. The school's ethos and values ensure that pupils' spiritual and moral development is embedded in everything they do. Pupils accommodate differences and respect the integrity of others. The senior management team is conscious of the need to widen the pupils' social understanding beyond their own experience. Pupils have good cultural awareness, instilled through the curriculum, and developed further through trips, expeditions and community projects. All pupils make a substantial commitment to charitable and community activities, some of which are co-ordinated through the school. For example, Year 12 pupils travel to India to work in a school. Other activities, such as fund raising and participation in educational expeditions to developing countries, are organised by the girls themselves.
- 2.8 Pupils' social development and awareness are considerable strengths. Pupils are polite to visitors and at ease when speaking with them. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils show initiative. New pupils are supported by more senior girls through a system of 'mothers, daughters and sisters.' Many report that they stay in touch with their 'sister' throughout school and beyond. Girls confidently accept positions of responsibility, responding well to the challenges of leadership.
- 2.9 Pupils' success is strongly supported by excellent policies and procedures for pastoral care, safeguarding and the prevention of bullying. Systems are in place to respond to individual needs, and staff go out of their way to provide support. Relationships between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils, are friendly and considerate, underpinned by clear expectations of all members of the school community.
- 2.10 The school is active in promoting the welfare of pupils. Staff are appropriately trained in child protection and the prevention of bullying, and the school maintains excellent relationships with the local authority safeguarding advisors. The personal, social and health education programme provides pupils with effective guidance, including addressing issues of internet safety, and increasing awareness, understanding and resilience. Pupils are confident that there is always someone to whom they would turn if they needed help. Girls are encouraged to eat healthily and to keep themselves fit. Arrangements for pupils who are sick or injured work well.

## **The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management**

- 2.11 Governance is excellent, ensuring that the school is highly successful in achieving its aims. The school benefits from its membership of the foundation, which provides management support services in health and safety, human resources and estates. This enables the senior management team to focus on improving teaching and learning. The new foundation structure ensures that the three schools are working together, sharing best practice, broadening the available curriculum and ensuring the smooth transition of younger pupils.
- 2.12 Governors are well informed about the school's successes and challenges, and they visit the school frequently. The quality of strategic decision making is excellent. The senior management team provides governors with statistical and qualitative indicators of achievement, and governors engage fully with the team. This includes attendance, by invitation, at some senior management team meetings. There is a nominated governor for health and safety, and another for safeguarding. Members of the board have undertaken an extensive range of training, ensuring that they have a good grasp of their responsibilities. Feedback from parents is communicated to the board, and has an influence on decision making.
- 2.13 Excellent leadership is provided by the senior management team, which has developed since the last inspection by separating pastoral and academic responsibilities. The creation of several middle management positions has enhanced this development, establishing a drive further to improve teaching and learning. This is being supported through a programme of training to improve performance management by heads of key stage and heads of department.
- 2.14 The priorities of the senior management team are the promotion of the girls' welfare, the fulfilment of the expectations of governors, the foundation and parents, and the enhancement of teaching and learning. The priority given to the pupils' welfare is reflected in the excellent systems relating to safeguarding. Appropriate checks are undertaken during the recruitment of all governors, staff and volunteers, and the central register is accurately maintained. This emphasis is reflected also in induction for teaching and non-teaching staff alike, and in the supervision of existing staff.
- 2.15 Good links are maintained with parents, carers and guardians. The school very effectively manages communication centrally between parents and teachers, in order to ensure appropriate and timely responses to any concerns. Parents particularly like the use of their portal on the school website, through which concerns about work or pastoral matters can be shared swiftly. Any informal complaints or expressions of concern are dealt with efficiently, and there is a very effective formal complaints procedure. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the vast majority of parents expressed their delight in the academic and extra-curricular provision of the school. A significant minority indicated that they felt the school does not sufficiently encourage them to be involved in school life. Inspectors found that the headmistress meets the parents of all pupils by year group each September, ensuring that they are aware of activities and events with which they can engage and inviting them to be a part of the school community. The level and nature of communication between the school and the parents is excellent; very effective use is made of the school website and newsletters.

### **3. ACTION POINTS**

#### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

#### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Increase the consistency of marking and use of a range of assessment tools across subjects.
  2. Ensure that the more able, gifted and talented are appropriately challenged in all lessons and activities.

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior 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 registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mr Paul James

Reporting Inspector

Miss Jean Goodwin

Director of Studies, GSA school