

Kensington Park School

40–44 Bark Place, Bayswater, London W2 4AT

Inspection dates

16–18 October 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The proprietor and senior leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding schools are met.
- Leadership and the staff have high aspirations for pupils and students.
- Governors provide strong support and challenge to senior leaders to bring about improvements.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, and provides pupils with a wide range of experiences.
- Safeguarding is effective and pupils feel safe, including in the boarding provision.
- The quality of teaching is good, and pupils make good progress across subjects.
- The sixth-form provision is exceptional. Students are prepared extremely well for their next steps.
- The school effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour in class and around the school is impeccable.
- Strong pastoral support for pupils contributes to their exceptional personal development, safety and well-being.
- Pupils and students enjoy coming to school, and their attendance is above average.
- On occasions, most-able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to enable them to make substantial progress.
- Sometimes, pupils who speak English as an additional language do not have sufficient opportunities to develop subject-specific vocabulary. This limits their progress.
- There is insufficient focus on the main priorities to ensure continuous improvement.
- The skills of subject leaders are not sufficiently developed to check and improve the quality of teaching.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for boarding schools and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged so that they make the progress of which they are capable
 - pupils who speak English as an additional language are routinely provided with opportunities to extend their subject-specific vocabulary.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders have a sharper focus on the school's main priorities to bring about continuous improvement
 - the skills of middle leaders are strengthened so that they have a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding provision	Good
How well children and young people are helped and protected in the boarding provision	Good

- The proprietor, governors and senior leaders work effectively to bring about improvements. They have ensured that all of the independent school standards and national minimum standards for boarding schools are met.
- There are effective links between leaders and staff at the school, and with the boarding provision. The proprietor, governors and senior leaders work closely to ensure that the boarding provision is safe.
- Leadership of the boarding provision is strong. Recent changes have made an immediate and positive impact on the quality of care and protection offered to boarders. For example, staff said there are clearer structures and more purpose in the daily routines.
- Staff and boarders are very supportive of the leadership and management of the boarding provision. Leadership is highly visible and accessible to both staff and boarders.
- Leaders have high expectations and are ambitious for pupils. There is a committed and cohesive team of leaders, managers and teachers who work together effectively and have a marked impact on school improvement.
- Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching and provide effective feedback and support to teachers to improve their classroom practice. Clear plans are in place to strengthen the performance management system.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective. Leaders ensure that these pupils receive individualised care and support to meet their needs.
- Leaders and managers carried out assessments at the beginning of the autumn term to establish pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding across subjects. Consequently, they know pupils' starting points. This information is used well to track the progress of pupils. There is additional support for those who are falling behind.
- The curriculum is strong and broad and successfully balances academic subjects with technological, physical and creative education. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of co-curricular and enrichment activities, including educational visits, trips and outdoor pursuits. Pupils have opportunities to learn classics, Spanish and Mandarin, for example. They take part in theatre and musical productions. There are strong links with local providers, including universities and theatres, to widen pupils' experiences. The curriculum caters extremely well for pupils' needs and interests, and engages them in their learning to help them make strong progress.
- The school promotes well the British values of democracy, tolerance and respect through the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme, and assemblies. Pupils learn about the election system through voting for their classmates in the school council. The school council provides opportunities for pupils to discuss and debate current

issues, and to express their views and opinions. Pupils said that they put forward proposals for improvements to their teachers and school leaders, and that they are listened to.

- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils show respect for different cultures and religions, including for those with protected characteristics.
- The recent merger of two schools has led to a stronger pastoral system and a greater sharing of resources. Sixth-form students act as mentors to younger pupils.
- There is insufficient focus on the school's main priorities and the improvements leaders need to make in the future.
- The skills of middle leaders are not sufficiently developed to check the quality of teaching and contribute fully to school improvement.
- Leaders are in the process of improving systems to record and share information in relation to the health and well-being of pupils and boarders. However, systems for recording are not fully embedded, and some recording in relation to health needs is fragmented.
- The school's policy regarding the use of closed-circuit television in the boarding provision is not clear, and the information related to its use is not shared with boarders.
- A very large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, are supportive of the school's leadership. A few parents who responded to the questions on the boarding provision agreed that boarding is well organised and managed.

Governance

- Governance is effective. The proprietor and the governors are knowledgeable, skilful and experienced. They provide effective support and challenge to senior leaders to ensure ongoing improvements. They are highly ambitious for pupils and students.
- The proprietor, governors and senior leaders have ensured a smooth opening of the new school. The proprietor and the governors played a pivotal role in recruiting staff and senior leaders. Governors are trained on safer recruitment of staff.
- Governors have worked closely with senior leaders to design and shape the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of pupils.
- The proprietor and governors visit the school and the boarding provision regularly to find out for themselves any areas that need further attention. They talk to pupils and students, including in the boarding provision, and seek their views about their experiences, including about their safety.
- Governance monitors practice in relation to safeguarding in boarding, and has strong oversight of welfare issues affecting pupils and boarders.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding is effective through making checks on the suitability of staff, meeting senior leaders and conducting audits. They have a firm understanding of their duty to safeguard pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective, including in the boarding provision.
- The safeguarding policy reflects the latest statutory guidance and is published on the school's website.
- All staff, including boarding staff, have received recent training on safeguarding and child protection procedures. Staff place a high priority on pupils' welfare and keeping them safe. There is a strong culture of vigilance to ensure that pupils are safe and protected from harm.
- The voice of boarders is heard and acted on. A boarders' forum meets weekly and reports that leaders are responsive to their views and act on them. Boarders have access to an independent listener to talk about any concerns they may have, including about their welfare and safety. The head of boarding is the safeguarding lead for the school.
- The boarding provision prioritises the safety and welfare of boarders, and there is sufficient supervision of boarders to keep them safe.
- The boarding staff are alert to the potential dangers that boarders face in the local community, and when they are off-site in central London. Boarders are given advice about how to stay safe, including when online and from extremism and exploitation. They are closely monitored, and risks are managed well.
- Boarders are well behaved. They have no concerns about bullying, and report that they feel safe.
- Leaders work closely with parents, carers and external organisations, including the local authority, to ensure that pupils are kept safe. They ensure that safeguarding records, processes and procedures are robust and fit for purpose.
- Leaders ensure that buildings, including the boarding accommodation, are clean and well maintained to the appropriate safety standard. They ensure that all health and safety checks, including risk assessments, fire risks and hazards, are carried out robustly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use resources well to engage pupils in their learning.
- A strong feature of teaching and learning is the positive working relationship between pupils and staff. This ensures that pupils feel supported and are keen to apply themselves.
- Teachers routinely draw on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding when introducing new learning. This helps them grasp new concepts quickly. For example, in a history lesson, pupils reflected on what they already knew about World War 2 to help them understand how the League of Nations was structured.
- Teachers make good use of questioning to test pupils' understanding and reinforce learning. Strong questioning, for example, was seen in a lesson on 'Hamlet' to test pupils' understanding of quotations from different Shakespearean plays, and to draw parallels between them.

- Teachers monitor the progress of pupils closely to identify and address any misconceptions and gaps in their learning. Pupils are provided with helpful feedback, written or oral, on how to improve their work.
- Teachers use technology well to support pupils' learning. This was evident, for example, in a science lesson where pupils used their computers to access information on cell diffusion, and to record their results of an experiment.
- The teaching of music is strong and pupils enjoy learning music and playing a range of musical instruments. Pupils use their skills in music to perform in musical productions and concerts.
- Pupils said that teaching is 'good', and their teachers 'make learning fun'. They said that they are provided with 'hard work'.
- Homework is regular and age appropriate to consolidate learning, and pupils respond well to complete it.
- Occasionally, the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Sometimes, there is a lack of opportunity for pupils who speak English as an additional language to extend subject-specific vocabulary to help them make better progress.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their child is taught well at the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are confident, self-assured and successful learners. Their strong appetite for learning has a positive impact on the progress they make. They engage in discussions and debates readily, and show respect for different points of view.
- Pupils' welfare, physical and emotional well-being needs are very well met by staff through the tutor system. Pupils value the tutor system highly, and it encourages them to express and share any concerns they may have.
- There are strong links with parents and external agencies, including the local authority, to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils.
- Pupils know the importance of keeping healthy. They participate in a wide range of sporting events and activities to keep them physically fit and active. They enjoy the freshly cooked and healthy food options.
- Pupils, including boarders, said that they always feel safe at school, and that, if they had any concerns about their safety, they would not hesitate to speak to a member of staff. Pupils know how to keep safe online and when using the social media. They learn about the potential dangers of being drawn into extremism.
- Pupils, including boarders, have a secure understanding about different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Pupils said that bullying is extremely rare at school, including racism, sexism or homophobia.
- Pupils show respect for diversity represented in British society, and have a good

understanding of people from a variety of different backgrounds. Through the PSHE curriculum, assemblies and visits, pupils develop a secure understanding of British values, and are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

- The boarding provision is inclusive, and boarders from a diverse range of cultures and faiths enjoy living with each other.
- Pupils enjoy raising funds for a number of different charities. This also teaches them to be caring, responsible and active citizens.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable in lessons and at other times throughout the day. Lunchtimes are very calm, orderly and sociable occasions.
- Relationships between pupils and their peers, and between pupils and staff, are very positive. There is a strong atmosphere of care and respect.
- Pupils said that behaviour is always good and that 'bullying is not an issue in the school'. This is reflected in the school's records on behaviour that show very few incidents of poor behaviour.
- Levels of attendance are above the national average, and pupils are punctual to school and lessons.
- All parents who responded to Parent View agreed that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils typically arrive at the school attaining academic standards that are at, or above, those expected for their age and stage of education. Leaders identify each pupil's starting point to monitor their progress and to ensure that they receive appropriate support to do well.
- Since the new school has only recently opened, there is limited information available to consider pupils' progress and attainment over time. However, the quality of work seen in pupils' books shows that they make good progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils have plentiful opportunities to read, and they are very confident readers. There are a range of interesting reading materials and articles for pupils to read, including in lessons.
- Pupils' writing is good and well presented. They are able to write confidently and at length for a range of different purposes.
- Pupils are provided with challenging mathematical problems. They are encouraged to think, apply their knowledge and use their reasoning skills well to solve a range of mathematical problems.
- The very few pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are effectively supported, including through one-to-one support, to ensure that they make good progress.
- Staff support pupils well to consider their futures through comprehensive careers advice

and guidance. Pupils typically study for their GCSE subjects before entering the sixth form to undertake their A-level courses.

- Most-able pupils make good progress. However, their progress is not as strong when the work is not sufficiently challenging to make them think harder.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Their progress is limited when there is insufficient emphasis on subject-specific vocabulary.

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

- All of the independent school standards are met in relation to the sixth-form provision.
- The leadership of the sixth form is exceptionally good. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is rich and engaging, and caters well for the needs, aptitudes and aspirations of the students. It ensures that students make excellent progress, and prepares them well for their next steps.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and very high expectations of students. Leaders carry out regular checks on the quality of teaching, and provide positive feedback and support to teachers. This ensures that students make exceptional progress.
- Leaders assess students' knowledge, understanding and skills on entry to the sixth form, and use this information extremely well to monitor progress. Students, including those who may be falling behind, are provided with high-quality support, which ensures they make exceptional progress.
- Students are offered a wide range of subject options so that their career choices are met extremely well. They are provided with excellent careers advice and guidance, and opportunities for work experience. This prepares them for the next stage of their education, training or employment. Almost all students go on to study at university, including at universities abroad. There is strong advice and support for their application to universities.
- The most able students are sufficiently challenged. They are routinely provided with challenging work that helps them think hard and meets their needs.
- Students who speak English as an additional language are provided with extended English classes to improve their spoken English and vocabulary. In a lesson on managing stress, students were able to improve their language structure and vocabulary as they discussed and explained how they would manage stress in their lives.
- The tutor system is exceptional. Tutors meet individual students every week to discuss their progress and well-being. Staff ensure that the students are safe and well cared for. Students said they feel safe and well supported. They know how to keep safe, including when online and from those with extremist or radicalised views.
- Students show exceptional attitudes to learning, and their behaviour is excellent. They participate in decision-making through the school council. They show independence and maturity. They know about British values, and show respect for people from different cultures and backgrounds.
- Students are very positive about their learning and enjoy coming to school. They are

punctual and their attendance rates are high.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision **Good**

- Boarders benefit from the shared living experience of the boarding provision. They become more confident, develop social skills, make friends and enjoy their experience of boarding. They also make good progress in their education. There is a gradual process of induction and a high level of support. Boarders learn independence and how to stay safe in the community.
- Each boarder has a dedicated member of the boarding staff who meets with them regularly to check on their progress and to discuss any concerns. Links between the boarding provision and school are strong. This means that any concerns are picked up and shared, and the appropriate support is put in place to ensure that boarders make good progress in school and boarding.
- The boarding provision provides excellent facilities and support to ensure that boarders keep on top of their studies. The structures and boundaries in place ensure that young people have dedicated boarding time to study. Boarders enjoy free time, and engage in a variety of trips and activities.
- The school nurse is based at the boarding site and boarders have access to a local surgery where they can access specialist services for treatment and advice. Boarders are in good health, and benefit from healthy routines and a healthy diet. If boarders are unwell, there are always staff to care for them.
- The physical environment and accommodation in boarding is of a high standard. It is modern, spacious, clean and well maintained. Boarders typically report that they like their rooms.
- Boarders have a forum that meets weekly to share ideas about how to improve the service, and the head of boarding attends this. Boarders report that their views are taken seriously, and that improvements have been made in response to their feedback.
- Boarders have mixed opinions about the quality of the food in boarding. The head of boarding has arranged for boarders to meet with the catering team in order to get ideas about how to improve the menu.
- The provision has made significant improvements in relation to the experience and care provided to boarders since the previous boarding inspection. Boarders report that staff know them well, that they spend more time with them, and that the rules are clear. They were particularly positive about the way that the new head of boarding leads improvement and manages the service.

School details

Unique reference number	100536
Social care unique reference number	SC482934
DfE registration number	213/6389
Inspection number	10080981

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	11 to 20
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	131
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	67
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	31
Proprietor	Astrum Education
Chair	Richard Jaine
Headteacher	Paul Vanni
Annual fees (day pupils)	£24,000 to £25,000
Annual fees (boarders)	£43,000 to £47,000
Telephone number	020 7616 4400
Website	www.kps.co.uk
Email address	p.vanni@kps.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Kensington Park School is an independent, co-educational boarding school for up to 500 pupils aged 11 to 20 years.
- At the time of the inspection, 64 pupils were on roll aged 11 to 16 at the lower school. There were 67 students on roll in the sixth-form provision studying for A levels.
- There are no pupils who are disadvantaged, or pupils who have an education, health and care plan.
- The former Duff Miller College merged with the former Lansdowne College on 1 September 2018 to form one new school, Kensington Park School.
- The school's main building is at the lower school, and is located in Bayswater, London. The sixth form is located in Queen's Gate, South Kensington, London. The school also makes use of leased classrooms for teaching students in the sixth form in an adjacent building at Baden Powell House, Queen's Gate, South Kensington, London.
- All teachers in the lower school are newly appointed. Some of the teachers are new to the sixth form. The leadership team, including the head of boarding, is also newly appointed.
- The school's boarding provision is shared with Chelsea Independent College. The boarding provision is under the ownership of the proprietor, Astrum Education, and is located nearby, in Earl's Court, London.
- The predecessor school received its progress monitoring report in July 2018, when it met all the previously unmet standards from its integrated school and boarding inspection in September 2017.
- At the previous progress monitoring inspection of the boarding provision in March 2018, a few of the minimum standards for boarding schools remained unmet.
- Sixth-form students have optional access to off-site sports facilities at Imperial College London's Ethos gym in Kensington, London.
- The school does not make use of any other alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This integrated inspection took place with one day’s notice. This is the first inspection of the school since its merger and opening in September 2018.
- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in the lower school and the sixth form. Nearly all were joint observations with senior leaders, including the headteacher.
- The inspectors held meetings with pupils in the lower school and students in sixth form to discuss their learning and views about the school.
- The social care regulatory inspector spent time meeting with boarders during evenings, in the boarding provision.
- The inspectors checked the work in pupils’ and students’ books. Inspectors scrutinised the school’s pre-employment checks on staff, including the boarding staff, and looked at students’ attendance and behaviour records. The inspectors also examined policies and documents in relation to the independent school standards, including information on safety and safeguarding.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, including the head of boarding, teachers, and staff at the boarding provision. A meeting was held with five governors, including the chair of governors, who is also the proprietor’s representative.
- The social care regulatory inspector spoke with the local authority’s designated officer for safeguarding.
- The inspection took account of the 24 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View. There were also 24 free-text responses to Parent View.
- The inspectors considered 38 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Avtar Sherri, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lee Kirwin	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Kanwaljit Singh	Ofsted Inspector

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