

# Kings Brighton

27–33 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 4SB

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this boarding school

Kings Brighton is part of Kings Education, which runs international colleges in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. This independent boarding school is based on the edge of Brighton city centre. Students come from all over the world and undertake a range of academic and English language courses. Students under the age of 18 stay in the boarding provision on site or with host families. There are currently 125 students on roll, and 49 of these are either staying with host families or boarding on site. The head of boarding has been in post for seven years and has an appropriate level of experience and training to undertake the role. The school was last inspected in September 2021.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

### Inspection dates: 2 to 4 July 2024

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The boarding school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Date of last inspection:** 28 September 2021

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Students at the school thrive in a caring and supportive environment. They benefit from a modern, excellently maintained residence. Staff ensure that the environment feels homely and they work hard to ensure that students feel welcome. Students are highly complimentary about the standard of accommodation.

Students who live with families in the community are supported well by the homestay coordinator. Feedback received from the families providing accommodation and the parents of children using this accommodation was universally positive.

Students benefit from a well-planned admissions system. For many students studying at the school, it is their first experience of travelling abroad and living semi-independently. The diverse backgrounds and cultures of the students are well understood by staff and diversity is celebrated. Staff have successfully created a positive culture and students provide a lot of mutual support and encouragement to each other. This ensures that students settle quickly and get the very best out of their time at the school.

Staff have created excellent systems of integrated health and well-being support. Individual health needs are identified through admissions processes. The school has identified a sharp rise in mental health and well-being concerns for children since the COVID-19 pandemic. The school has a dedicated well-being team that is visible throughout the school and responsive to any emerging concerns. All students are supported to consider their own well-being through surveys, one-to-ones and check-ins with boarding staff. There are also two counsellors available during the week. The proactive approach of staff to these issues enhances early identification of concerns and enables strong systems of support to be placed around students.

Students describe making huge progress, not only academically, but personally and socially as well. Students benefit from a rich extra-curricular life, expertly managed by a dedicated enrichment coordinator and a team of activity leaders. Activities include excursions, sports, creative clubs and social events that all support students' learning. Students speak positively about the many choices that they have. Staff listen to the views and wishes of students and work hard to adapt the school offer in response to feedback they receive.

Staff work in a fully student-centred way to ensure that goals and targets for learners are ambitious but achievable. The head of education has created some innovative programmes that focus on the careers and aspirations of learners. Outcomes for students are excellent and, in many cases, transformational.

## **How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding**

Students are safeguarded effectively at the school by skilled and dedicated staff. There is highly developed integration between the safeguarding and well-being teams. This allows staff to work together to proactively identify early signs and indicators that students may be at risk. They then put in place preventative strategies to support students. This has significantly reduced the potential for crisis.

Where students do need additional support, the staff have an excellent knowledge of wider health systems and mental health support available in the local area. This joined-up thinking has enabled them to make excellent progress with some students with highly complex needs.

Students are also given guidance in effective ways to support their own mental health and well-being. They receive good education around safety and personal risk. There is excellent engagement with external agencies, including the police, social sector charities, and sexual health and substance misuse services, who provide students with up-to-date information about personal safety and risks in the local area. Online safety is a priority and features in induction materials and several focused sessions throughout the student's time at the school.

Behavioural expectations at the school are very clear and the consequences are also very consistently applied using the 'ladder of disciplinary actions'. This approach applies slowly escalating consequences that are aimed at giving students multiple opportunities to change the behaviour of concern. This graduated approach works effectively and the number of students who have required higher-level disciplinary intervention is negligible. Students say that they feel safe because other students behave well and there is no bullying or antisocial behaviour.

Recruitment of staff is carried out through a clear process of rigorous checking and vetting of applicants. If any issues are identified through the application process, these are then carefully risk assessed, and a clear chronology of records and decision-making is maintained. Leaders ensure that temporary staff are subject to the same scrutiny.

Health and safety functions are managed very effectively by the head of boarding. They ensure that records are meticulously maintained. Most elements of the school maintenance and safety functions are delivered by dedicated external professionals. This ensures that any actions or repairs can be completed at pace.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The leadership team at the school is ambitious and there is a drive for continuous improvement. Well-developed action plans enable progress to be tracked against the school's targets.

To ensure effective oversight of the school, there is a robust governing body. Regular meetings, visits to the school and comprehensive action plans ensure that the school remains focused on delivering a high-quality service to students from an academic, pastoral and safeguarding point of view. Plans are under way for an expansion of the board, to include more staff both from within the school and the wider organisation. The purpose of this forward-thinking strategy is to increase the expertise in governance and provide greater oversight, scrutiny and challenge to school leaders.

Staff are supported with regular and focused one-to-one sessions with their respective line managers. Support sessions are open and transparent. Staff are supported to reflect on their work and think about any concerns or challenges. Supervisors ensure that any themes or issues that are raised by staff are fed into weekly senior management meetings. This ensures that senior leaders are fully aware of any emerging challenges for staff so that they can work proactively to support staff. This open culture also allows for any safeguarding concerns to be shared promptly with key staff.

Staff praised the training offer at the school as it prepares them well to meet the needs of students. Bespoke training that is designed to support staff to meet the specific needs of individual students is also offered when required.

Senior leaders share an ethos of continuous professional development. They strive to use their learning and research to inform developments in practice across the school.

Leaders demonstrate exceptionally high levels of integration across departments. This joined-up way of working delivers excellent results. The ability to think about each student holistically allows leaders to ensure that all who come to live and study at the college have the very best experience possible.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

## **Boarding school details**

**Social care unique reference number:** 1241781

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Sarah Williams

**Type of school:** Boarding school

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## **Inspectors**

Peter Jackson, Social Care Inspector

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector

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