

School inspection report

25 – 27 February 2025

Queen's College London

43-49 Harley Street

London

W1G 8BT

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. In both the prep school and the college, leaders have created a positive environment where pupils enjoy their learning. Pupils flourish academically and personally because of the many opportunities made available to them.
2. Governors oversee all areas of the prep school and college life. They ensure that leaders fulfil their responsibilities in meeting the regulatory requirements, including those in the early years. Leaders evaluate the effect of their actions on the quality of education that the school provides. They develop a range of teaching strategies to support pupils' emotional wellbeing and neurodiversity needs. These enable pupils to make good progress.
3. The curriculum and extra-curricular programmes are well thought through. They meet the needs and interests of pupils in all year groups. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and an accurate understanding of what pupils know and can do. Teachers check pupils' progress, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers typically use this information to plan and teach lessons that match pupils' different needs.
4. Teaching is particularly effective in the prep school and the sixth form because it focuses on what pupils are ready to learn next. However, in some subjects and some lessons, the more able pupils in Year 7 to Year 11 are not sufficiently challenged and so do not make the progress they could. Generally, teachers give pupils helpful feedback including written comments that make clear where pupils need to improve their work and how they can do this. This is not consistent across the different phases, so pupils do not routinely benefit from teachers' guidance in this way.
5. Pupils are highly supportive of each other. They are kind and recognise the value of service to others. Pupils are keen to be involved in the leader mentorship schemes and contribute to external communities and school partnerships. They appreciate diversity and the positive impact of the many different national and cultural backgrounds represented within the school community.
6. The grade 2 listed buildings on both school sites are subject to central London planning constraints. Leaders adhere to these whilst ensuring that the premises are safe, secure and well maintained. Leaders minimise risk to pupils through systematic and detailed health and safety checks and fire procedures. Pupils from both school sites access physical education (PE) and games lessons off-site at local recreational facilities, a local swimming pool and within recreational areas of Regent's Park.
7. Safeguarding arrangements throughout the school are effective and promote pupils' wellbeing. Safeguarding leaders liaise with external agencies and respond to advice given. Effective pastoral care systems ensure that pupils with mental health or emotional needs are quickly identified and prompt action taken. Pupils receive personalised support to meet their specific needs if required.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that the more able pupils in Year 7 to Year 11 are given tasks that challenge them to apply what they know and can do in all subjects so that they deepen their subject knowledge and understanding
- ensure that teachers across the school provide pupils with clear and consistent guidance about how they can improve their work so that pupils learn successfully and make good progress over time.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders articulate a clear vision to ensure that throughout the school its values of collaboration, creativity, courage, compassion and curiosity are deeply embedded within the learning environment and pupils' experiences.
9. Leaders strike a very deliberate balance in their decision-making to enable pupils to reach good academic standards whilst paying close regard to pupils' personal wellbeing. This is well illustrated in the school's provision for pupils who have SEND and for those pupils who may be neurodivergent. Leaders' focus is very much on enabling pupils of all abilities to succeed.
10. Governors monitor the school effectively to ensure that leaders have the skills and knowledge to provide clear strategic direction and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Governors provide both support and challenge to senior leaders. This collaborative approach ensures that leadership responsibilities are carried out effectively, contribute positively to pupils' outcomes and ensure that the Standards are met consistently.
11. Early years staff are well supported and guided by experienced, well-informed leaders. The early years provision meets the statutory early years requirements. Children make a positive start to their education because they are supported to develop their academic and personal and social skills.
12. Senior leaders in both the prep school and college check the quality of teaching and learning. They do this through regular lesson visits. They encourage staff to develop and share best practice through training and accessing the latest research and teaching strategies. This enables teachers to improve their teaching and meet pupils' different needs.
13. Leaders work closely with external agencies, such as children's services and other local authority support services. Their positive relationship with such agencies, including safeguarding partners, ensures the school's co-ordinated approach to safeguarding. Annual financial reports for pupils funded by local authorities are provided to the relevant local authority, as required.
14. Leaders' thorough approach to reducing risk helps to keep pupils safe. For example, there are robust risk assessments for pupils as they move between the school sites and access local parkland environments and recreation centres. Detailed and appropriate risk assessments are also in place when pupils take part in potentially high-risk activities, such as adventurous training, the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme (DoE) and overseas expeditions.
15. Parents are well informed through the range of information published on the school's website. Parents can use the parent portal to access their child's progress reports and assessments, as well as communicate directly with the school.
16. The school has a suitable complaints policy which is followed consistently. Any formal complaints are managed through a structured three-stage process with clear timescales. The number of complaints received is published annually on the school's website. Records are kept appropriately, including any actions taken and the outcomes of any complaints.
17. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The accessibility plan highlights where adjustments are made to meet pupils' needs. For example, staff and pupils use the same directional

controls when moving up or down staircases. At both school sites there are disabled and unisex washroom facilities and lift access to all floor levels.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

18. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

19. The school's broad and extensive curriculum in all phases includes the required areas for learning. In the early years children are supported to learn as they explore the environment and try new things. Children develop their confidence and independence which contributes positively to the good progress they make. Early years staff develop children's vocabulary and language needs through purposeful interaction and play which results in children's early acquisition of good communication skills.
20. Pupils' achievement and progress over time are consistently good. Attainment at GCSE and A level across nearly all subjects is above the national average. Most pupils attain the highest grades at GCSE and A level. Many pupils gain entry to their first-choice universities and to higher and degree apprenticeships. Leaders' comprehensive assessment system is used well to monitor pupils' attainment and progress. This highlights pupils who need extra support. Teachers provide pupils with the required help to learn successfully.
21. Subject leaders have extensive subject knowledge. They support teachers to plan and teach lessons that take pupils' needs and interests into account. Teachers' enthusiasm in subjects such as English, mathematics, physics and religious studies (RS) inspires pupils to learn, think for themselves and to achieve well.
22. The creative and aesthetic curriculum includes a wide variety of subjects, such as dance, drama and art, which are popular subject choices. Pupils' participation in music and music-making is of a high standard and they engage readily in regular school productions. Pupils' high-quality artwork is evident in the displays of their work across both school sites, also reflecting pupils' enthusiasm for creative subjects.
23. Pupils are encouraged to be resilient learners, able to learn from their mistakes. This links to one of the school's key aims. However, opportunities to challenge the more able pupils in Year 7 to Year 11 are more limited. Activities are not always sufficiently demanding to enable pupils' knowledge and understanding to be extended further.
24. Teachers use a range of resources and specialist facilities to make learning interesting, exciting and relevant for pupils. Most teachers use a wide variety of strategies to achieve this. Teachers give feedback to inform pupils of their progress. Whilst acknowledging pupils' successes and achievements, teachers' written feedback does not always identify nor clearly explain to pupils what they need to do to improve their work and learn more.
25. Teachers willingly give of their time to support pupils' wider development. During voluntary academic clubs, teachers give advice on a range of different study skills and revision techniques. These clubs are well attended and result in pupils' increased focus on their learning. Parents are kept up to date regarding their child's achievements through a variety of assessment notifications, written reports and consultation evenings.
26. Pupils in the sixth form talk with enthusiasm and confidence about what they have achieved. They appreciate the time and care many teachers put into checking their work and guiding them with their next steps. Pupils are motivated by their teachers' support. They are keen to get better with what they know and can do in the pursuit of gaining positive examination results.

27. The curriculum enables pupils to access nationally recognised project qualifications and a range of competitions to stimulate pupils' interests. The oldest pupils explore sports, arts and intellectual pursuits. They acquire new skills through such activities as 'cheer', coding club and brain gym. Pupils in the prep school enjoy extra-curricular activities through participation in sports, learning foreign languages and taking part in 'cosmic' yoga.
28. Pupils who have SEND and those who are neurodiverse make good and sustained progress from their different starting points. This is due to the personalised learning support provided during lessons.
29. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive individual support provided by specialist teachers if they are at the early stages of English acquisition. This additional help enables them to access the full curriculum.
30. Pupils across all phases, including the early years and sixth form, benefit from a wide range of activities, enrichment trips and challenging opportunities. This deepens and extends their learning beyond the classroom. Pupils' enthusiasm for sport is evident, as is the high level of team participation. Pupils achieve well in individual and team sporting pursuits, some obtaining both regional and national success.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

- 31. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

32. The school successfully develops pupils' understanding of mutual trust and respect, within the school community and the wider world. The emphasis on being kind permeates all aspects of school life. This is supported by themed weeks on topics such as wellbeing and neurodiversity which help raise pupils' awareness and the possible impact on people's lives. Pupils recognise that they do not need to agree with everyone and that difference is to be appreciated and valued.
33. A suitable personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is taught in all phases. Teachers in the early years encourage children to help and cooperate with each other by sharing equipment and taking turns. Children learn to respect and value each other.
34. The PSHE curriculum is well planned, age appropriate and adapted to meet pupils' needs. This is supplemented with a suitable relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum. Pupils gain a clear understanding of the importance of making appropriate life choices and in developing healthy and positive relationships. The wider personal development programme is taught through assemblies, tutorials, drama and during form time.
35. Teachers make good use of praise and rewards which helps to foster a positive environment. A suitable system of sanctions is employed and in most cases pupils respond positively to any warnings given or the reflective conversations they have with staff. Random acts of kindness are celebrated, which boost pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
36. Relationships between staff and pupils are noticeably warm and friendly. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in both the prep school and college. Teachers and older pupils act as role models for younger pupils. Pupils in all phases are considerate and polite in their day-to-day interactions with their teachers and each other.
37. Leaders ensure that the anti-bullying policy is understood and followed. This includes maintaining detailed incident logs, providing regular staff training and counselling for pupils. There is a consistent zero tolerance approach to bullying and leaders respond swiftly to the rare instances of bullying that do occur. Leaders make sure to give support to both the victims and the perpetrators.
38. Health and safety protocols and procedures are robust and implemented, including safety measures and daily checks in the early years. Medical and first aid facilities and procedures enable pupils to receive appropriate help and assistance promptly when required.
39. Effective measures are in place to reduce the risk of fire, and regular fire evacuation and lock-down drills are carried out at both school sites. Leaders ensure that there is a safe, clean and well-kept environment that enables pupils and staff to work and socialise safely. Both school sites are kept secure, with clear signage and controlled access at the entry points.
40. Pupils are supervised appropriately. Pupils behave well both in lessons and informally outside the classroom. Pupils are safe in school and can concentrate on their work without disruption.
41. Pupils are taught a broad PE curriculum and sports training using the parkland sites and sports centres close to the school. Teachers ensure that pupils learn the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of physical activities and many pupils contribute to the school sports teams. Pupils access the specialist help of medical first aiders, counsellors and physiotherapists, if required. Both school sites have 'thrive centres' which provide a haven for those pupils who need some quiet during the school day. A therapy dog, based on the college site, is also available to provide pupils with comforting support, as and when needed.

42. The school maintains admission and attendance registers in line with current statutory guidance. Leaders keep track of attendance patterns and follow up any absenteeism in a timely manner. Local authorities are informed whenever pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition times.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 43. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

44. Leaders have established a school community characterised by mutual respect and inclusivity. This positively impacts pupils' social development and fully embraces the school's values. Pupils talk with openness and a sense of pride about the diversity of the school's community. Pupils learn about pioneering women, from different cultural backgrounds and 'Black History' month. This supports pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the place they hold in society, and how women have impacted on the lives of others.
45. Older pupils in the prep school and in the college help younger pupils with various activities such as house competitions, cheer leading, musical theatre and dance. This motivates pupils to contribute more to the school community as they progress through the school. Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong and work collaboratively to try and resolve conflict when it occurs.
46. British and global values are embedded in the school's culture thus enabling pupils to be well prepared for life in wider society. Pupils develop a clear understanding of the role of public institutions in a democratic and diverse society. This is supported by regular visits to important London landmarks. Children in the early years begin to develop an understanding of economic wellbeing through a range of activities including the use of paper money and card coins. Pupils in Year 6 complete enterprise activities such as creating a product to sell. Pupils in Year 10 to Year 13 are taught budgetary finance matters.
47. Teachers engage pupils in activities that support and challenge ethical and moral thinking. For example, assemblies focus on international conflicts and current world events. Pupils recognise the importance of individual liberty and free speech. Leaders encourage, listen and act upon pupils' views, for example through the work of the school councils and parliaments. Pupils understand the need for law and order in a democratic society.
48. Teachers in the early years and Year 1 and 2 prioritise pupils' social development through a variety of initiatives that encourage collaboration, responsibility, and respect for others. Pupils rapidly develop their communication skills because of the high-quality interactions with their teachers and other staff. Staff model positive social interactions and support pupils to interact with each other in a supportive and structured way. This development of essential life skills enables pupils to grow in confidence and increasingly develop their leadership skills as they move through the school.
49. Pupils in the sixth form undertake regular volunteering and work experience through which they engage with the local community. They gain a greater awareness of the world beyond school as well as developing a range of useful skills such as communication, collaboration and leadership.
50. Pupils learn about positive female role models right from the start in early years. Pupils are ambitious about their future lives. Pupils in Year 6 complete a homework project in which pupils interview their parents and share information about their parents' careers with their peers. From Year 7 onwards, pupils receive impartial careers guidance so they are equipped to make informed choices about a broad range of careers options. Older pupils are given opportunities to attend careers fairs, professional skills workshops and mock recruitment afternoons. Pupils engage with the Soutwark Schools Learning Partnership which helps pupils to understand their strengths, weaknesses and interests as they consider their next steps.

51. Pupils are encouraged to voice their opinions on potential initiatives and strategies that have a positive impact on themselves and the school, such as wellbeing initiatives and healthy food choices. Pupils in both schools are encouraged to take on leadership roles through the school council, eco-committee and peer mentoring programs. The school's anti-bullying ambassador programme, friendship initiatives, and workshops on kindness and resilience allow pupils to take action and contribute to a safer and more supportive school environment.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

52. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

53. Safeguarding procedures are robust and understood by all staff. Safeguarding records are well maintained, thorough and show clearly how concerns are followed up. There are detailed notes of actions taken, decisions reached and the resulting outcomes. Across both sites, the safeguarding team monitor vulnerable pupils who may be at risk of harm. This is followed up by regular review meetings with senior leaders so key staff are kept up to date.
54. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs are appropriately trained for their role. When required, they make prompt referrals to the local authority, children services and to the police. There is a suitably trained safeguarding leader for children in the early years.
55. Leaders provide consistent support, training and guidance to staff. Leaders ensure that the safeguarding policies and procedures reflect current statutory guidance and are effectively implemented.
56. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. There is a suitable system in place to filter and monitor the use of technology. This is scrutinised by the technology department on a regular basis to ensure that pupils work in a safe online environment.
57. Governors maintain effective oversight of the safeguarding policy and procedures. When safeguarding incidents occur, leaders and governors carry out a rigorous review and make changes to any protocols if necessary. The school produces an annual safeguarding report which is reviewed by the nominated safeguarding governor who reports to the governing board council.
58. Pupils know how to report any concerns about abuse or inappropriate behaviour that may arise in and outside of school. They have a wide range of adults in school to whom they can speak if they need to and use electronic reporting systems to alert staff of any concerns or worries.
59. Senior managers are trained in safer recruitment procedures. Leaders ensure that all required recruitment checks are carried out for staff, volunteers and governors. A suitable and accurate central record of appointments is maintained. Leaders and nominated governing board members check this record of appointments regularly and ensure that any anomalies are followed up swiftly.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 60. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	Queen's College London
Department for Education number	213/6036
Registered charity number	312726
Address	Queen's College London 43-49 Harley Street London W1G 8BT
Phone number	020 72917000
Email address	queens@qcl.org.uk
Website	qcl.org.uk
Proprietor	The Council of Queen's College
Co-Chairs	Mrs Alexandra Gregory Mrs Rae Perry
Headteacher	Mr Richard Tillett
Age range	4–19
Number of pupils	635
Date of previous inspection	8–11 February 2022

Information about the school

61. Queen's College, founded in 1848, is an independent day school for female pupils. The senior school, referred to as the college, occupies four joined buildings in Central London. The preparatory school, known as the prep school, operates on its own site a short distance from the college. The school is a charity governed by a council of governors under the terms of a Royal Charter of 1853.
62. The school has an early years provision within the prep school. This comprises two Reception classes for children aged four to five years.
63. The school has identified 192 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
64. The school has identified English as an additional language for 75 pupils.
65. The school states its aims are to be a community where every pupil thrives and is enabled to reach their full academic and personal potential. It intends that by the time pupils leave the school they are young women of character with a love of learning, empathy, tolerance, and the self-confidence to prepare for the challenges of adult life.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

25 – 27 February 2025

66. A team of 6 inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

67. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the co-chairs and safeguarding governor
- discussions with the principal, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

68. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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