

School inspection report

30 April to 2 May 2024

St Gabriel's School

Sandleford Priory

Newbury

Berkshire

RG20 9BD

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'.

Contents

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS	3
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....	5
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS	5
SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....	6
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE	7
SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	8
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	9
SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING.....	10
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	11
SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....	12
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY	13
SAFEGUARDING	14
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING	14
THE QUALITY OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE IN THE REGISTERED EARLY YEARS PROVISION	15
OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS PROVISION	15
QUALITY OF EDUCATION	16
BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES.....	16
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	17
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
SAFEGUARDING	18
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE	18
SCHOOL DETAILS	19
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	20
INSPECTION DETAILS	21

Summary of inspection findings

1. Governors have effective oversight of the work of leaders and managers and work well with them in planning for future development. These plans reflect the school aims, ethos and traditions and include the introduction of co-education through the school. They show consideration for mitigation against unintended consequences.
2. There is a consistent approach to effective teaching which is communicated clearly through school policies and guidance. This approach includes establishing supportive relationships, as the staff know pupils' needs well, and encouraging pupils to think deeply about their learning. This supports pupils to develop their own thoughts and understanding. Teaching enables pupils to develop their language skills across all subjects. This helps pupils to become confident communicators.
3. Children in the early years thrive in an environment where there is a rich variety of resources and opportunities to support learning through play. Comprehensive planning builds on good staff knowledge of how children learn. Teachers effectively adapt planning to meet children's needs and extend their knowledge and skills.
4. The development of a broad curriculum is supported by a range of complementary activities in the lunch time and after school activity programmes. These ensure that pupils are presented with varied opportunities for learning and to follow their interests. Pupils are helped to gain both skills and knowledge.
5. Subject clinics, a programme for sixth form activities and opportunities for extended learning, including in the Higher Project Qualification (HPQ) and Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) programmes, ensure pupils through the school are supported and challenged to achieve. Most pupils achieve their predicted grades and go on to higher education at university or through alternative career routes such as degree level apprenticeships.
6. The sports programme provides a range of physical activities, and this helps pupils understand the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle. Education on mental health is built into the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. The work of counsellors further supports the needs of individual pupils.
7. Leaders have identified the need to use different assessment activities and strategies in relationship and sex education (RSE) when planning lessons, so that the understanding and needs of pupils can be further developed.
8. Pupils gain an understanding of different cultures. Through the well-planned humanities and the English curriculums, pupils gain an understanding of different cultures. Pupils learn about and celebrate each other's cultures and traditions.
9. Teachers look for opportunities to include economic education in different contexts so that pupils are well prepared for this aspect of adult life. Pupils across the school are well prepared for the next stage in learning and a suitably planned careers programme helps pupils gain further understanding of their aptitudes which together with one-to-one support helps them begin to match their interests with potential careers.

10. Pupils are taught to manage their own safety in a wide variety of contexts. A robust policy for the management of risk is in place, and this is appropriately implemented.
11. Health and safety practices are secure. The wider culture of safeguarding is equally well established, with staff fully aware of effective supporting and reporting practices.
12. There are a variety of procedures in place to ensure that pupils feel their views are taken into account and that they are listened to when raising concerns. Teachers respond promptly when these systems are used. Pupils across the school are fully aware of the range of staff they can go to for support including the dedicated pastoral team.

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 assessment and recording of pupils RSE learning enables teachers to plan for the needs and understanding of pupils in this subject.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

13. Leaders carry out a thorough annual review of school processes and procedures to inform their planning for the next academic year. Governors review these plans and ensure that leaders have the skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles. This approach helps to ensure that pupils are well supported. School policies are regularly reviewed by governors and leaders. These give appropriate guidance to staff who are well aware of their content and implement them effectively.
14. In considering the phased introduction of coeducation, leaders review and embed practice in curriculum development and management of behaviour to ensure consistency of approach, by staff. Curriculum planning has involved a review of sports provision and staffing to ensure equality of opportunities for both male and female pupils.
15. Pupils have many opportunities to share their views and experiences and effect change. Leaders routinely include feedback from pupils in their development planning and pupils know that their views matter.
16. Early years leaders work closely with staff to plan and review the effectiveness of the curriculum, in regular meetings where the progress of pupils is monitored. The curriculum is well designed to meet the children's needs and stages of development. Children make progress and reach an appropriate level of development in the prime and specific areas.
17. Governors visit the school regularly and seek the views of pupils and staff. Staff are included in governance subcommittees, which report to the full board in termly meetings. Working closely with leaders, governors are able to assure themselves of the quality of education that pupils receive.
18. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding monitors the register of appointments and meets regularly with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and reports to the full governing body on the school's safeguarding practices. Governors have the information they need to carry out their oversight of safeguarding effectively.
19. The governor's education committee receives reports from each head of department after internal departmental reviews. These reports enable governors to ask targeted and appropriate questions to monitor the progress and attainment of pupils. Governors suitably review the actions taken and proposed, to improve provision. In this way subject leaders are held to account and given support.
20. The risk assessment policy is robustly implemented. There are risk assessments in place to both manage the site and activities such as school trips and the early years setting. Risk assessments are also integral in supporting pupils needs. Review and subsequent planning for the future includes detailed analysis of potential unintended consequences. Mitigation of potential risks is considered and appropriate.
21. Parents are provided with the required information through the school website. Reports to parents include suitable information on their child's progress and achievement. A comprehensive accessibility action plan is in place and the school meets its requirements under the Equality act. It pays particular attention to supporting and planning for the needs of pupils at the school, in discussion with their parents. Pupils' education health and care (EHC) plans are appropriately reviewed.

22. The complaints policy covers all the required information and is implemented well. Detailed records allow for any patterns to be recognised and indicate that complaints are dealt with promptly.

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

23. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

24. The school curriculum supports the pupil's development well. Pupils develop thinking skills, explore philosophy and experience a variety of technologies. Lessons provide for pupils linguistic, mathematical, scientific and creative development. Pupils extend their knowledge, interests and creativity through a broad range of subjects. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and this helps pupils to further their understanding. In science, for example, pupils develop good practical skills because teachers provide detailed explanations and make effective use of specialist resources. Pupils also gain a secure knowledge of mathematics which they apply to solve problems within other subjects.
25. The curriculum is well supported by the range of lunch time and after school clubs, such as chess. Robotics, jazz band and debating clubs, further allow pupils to pursue interests in their leisure time.
26. From the early years and through the school, teachers plan effective lessons to ensure pupils develop competency in reading, writing and speaking to become able communicators. These skills are a focus in lessons across all subjects. This includes regular discussion and debate. Teachers give pupils opportunities to explore their ideas which helps them deepen their understanding. Pupils apply techniques learnt in English effectively in other subjects, to enhance the quality of their verbal or written responses. For example, pupils' understanding of formal writing structures helps them present arguments in history.
27. In the early years, teachers model language and encourage pupils to use target words in speaking and during conversation. Children in the Reception class can write independently with a secure understanding of how to improve their work using correct finger spacing, full stops and capital letters. Children confidently engage adults in conversation about things they have noticed and found, such as when exploring the environment. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) are supported both in class and through specific individual strategies as needed, so that they speak with ease and confidence.
28. There is a programme of higher and extended projects offered to pupils in Year 9 linked to their aptitudes and interests. This is encouraged for all pupils in Year 12. Pupils explore areas of interest and apply their skills. Through these projects pupils further develop the ability to self-reflect and think independently.
29. In the early years, staff create a stimulating environment both indoors and outdoors. This helps children to learn creatively through play. Teachers and teaching assistants instantly adapt their planning when observing play, so that the child's interests are at the heart of their learning.
30. Leaders across the school use assessment effectively to identify pupils who need more targeted support and strategies are planned, monitored and communicated to parents. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEND) make good progress because of the appropriate and targeted support from teachers and teaching assistants who follow the clear guidance from the individual needs department.
31. Teachers use assessment data together with their thorough knowledge of pupils to ensure that the curriculum is appropriately adapted for pupils. Pupils make good progress from their starting points.

32. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and teachers know pupils well and understand their needs. Lessons are planned to personalise learning and use a wide variety of effective teaching strategies so that pupils develop autonomy and gain knowledge and skills at a pace which best suits their needs. Feedback from teachers is effective in informing pupils of what they need to do to improve and refine their work.
33. Pupils behave well in lessons, focus on their task and so maximise every opportunity to learn.

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

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

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

35. Pupils confidently share their ideas and experiences in lessons. Teachers are very supportive of pupil's ideas and contributions. Pupils are supported by the mutually respectful environment, where they feel safe to explore their thinking and express opinions. Through these pupils develop self-knowledge, and positive self-esteem. The many opportunities to perform in front of an audience, whether it be through interactive assemblies in the early years or through music dance and drama activities further supports pupils in developing their self-confidence.
36. The early years children develop confident personal social and emotional skills. Staff respond quickly to support children in understanding their emotions when minor disagreements occur. They help them to learn empathy and encourage them to think about how other children may be feeling.
37. The activity programme enables pupils to develop personal skills such those needed for leadership. In completing the different stages in the school's own 'Junior Dukes award' as well as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE) pupils gain many personal life skills and further develop self-confidence.
38. Pupils develop their understanding of spirituality and ethics, through opportunities provided through the religion philosophy education (RPE) curriculum. In addition, pupils are introduced to and debate wider theological and philosophical ideas in other lessons, through the assembly programme or through participation in the debating society. In the junior school, thinking skills lessons encourage creative thought and reflection on the intangible.
39. Behaviour management is based on restorative justice. This enables pupils to reflect on the impact of their actions. Sanctions are adapted to meet the situation and to take into account the needs of all pupils involved. Detailed behaviour logs record when sanctions have been applied, including for serious behaviour and allow trends to be identified. Pupils understand and accept behaviour management procedures.
40. An appropriate anti-bullying policy is in place and is effectively implemented. Incidents of bullying are rare and are suitably dealt with. A log of bullying allegations is kept and monitored.
41. The curriculum includes both tutor time and lessons dedicated to PSHE. This includes relationships education in the junior school and RSE in the senior school and sixth form. This curriculum is designed to cover all the required areas. It builds pupils knowledge by revisiting topics regularly with increasing complexity as pupils move through the school. Teachers use a limited variety of methods to assess and record pupils understanding of topics taught in RSE. Departmental review has identified the need to further refine the way work is recorded and assessed so that teachers can be more specific in assessing pupil's understanding and adapting future planning.
42. Activities such as yoga and mindfulness are in place to further raise awareness and promote development of positive mental health and wellbeing. This helps pupils to balance their emotions in readiness for learning and is in alignment with the school's aim for pupils to recognise the importance of balance in their lives.

43. The sports curriculum and activities programme meet the needs of pupils. It includes a range of team sports and programme a wide variety of alternative activities such as climbing and trampolining and non-competitive physical activities. Combined with subjects such as dance this all helps to ensure pupils are regularly engaged in a variety of physical activities. In the junior school 'pathfinder' club encourages pupils to gain awards and badges in areas such as den building and cookery. Pupils are encouraged to develop life-long habits for health and wellbeing.
44. The school curriculum includes, food and nutrition, which helps pupils to understand the importance of healthy eating. This builds on pupils' knowledge gained from the science curriculum in the junior school. The personal development programme for the sixth form, 'balance' includes training on personal safety and enrichment activities to promote wellbeing.
45. Staff understand their supervision duties and responsibilities and carry these out effectively when supervising pupils including children in the early years. Leaders consider the age and needs of pupils when they compile supervision rotas. This means that pupils are supported effectively at all times.
46. School policies relating to first aid and medicines are appropriately detailed and clear. Their implementation is thoroughly monitored and reviewed by leaders. Detailed records are kept of any incidents and medicines that are administered. Staff receive suitable training including paediatric first aid.
47. Robust procedures are in place to monitor and ensure the implementation of Health and Safety policies and procedures. These are clearly understood by staff who are appropriately trained for specific roles. The premises and accommodation are well maintained. The risk of fire is minimised appropriately including by acting promptly on any recommendations from the regular fire risk assessment. Detailed health and safety records and those relating to fire safety procedures including fire evacuations are kept in an orderly and detailed manner allowing monitoring and regular reviews action.
48. Clear systems for recording admissions and attendance are in place and are effectively implemented. Records are monitored weekly by pastoral leaders to ensure suitable levels of attendance, and action is taken to inform appropriate authorities where required. Pastoral leaders liaise with the local authority to report any changes in admission at non-standard times.

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

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

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

50. Through a variety of planned curriculum activities, pupils across the school are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They gain effective knowledge and insight into how democracy and the law work. This includes through talks from visiting speakers. A visiting magistrate, worked with drama students to enact a mock trial giving students insight into how the law works. During 'Parliament week' pupils looked at the legislative process. They reflected further in tutor time on the impact of this process. Work as part of the mathematics curriculum looks at the funding of public services.
51. In the junior school pupils gain an understanding of local democracy and how citizens can influence decision making through visits to the local town hall and council. The views of pupils are sought and acted on. For example, through the school council, pupils have initiated change in the dining menu and adjustments to the school uniform. Pupils are encouraged to value the right of freedom of speech as they have many opportunities to debate and defend their view in lessons and debating club. Pupils are active in making their own class rules and the clear behaviour code helps pupils to understand that they are subject to school expectations. This develops pupils' understanding of right and wrong.
52. The PSHE curriculum in the junior school is supplemented by a focus on the six pillars of character, including respect. In the senior school, pupils gain an understanding through PSHE discussions of the need to respect for all and this is further enhanced by the use of different texts in English and topics in history.
53. Through the PSHE and wider curriculum pupils understand principles of economics, and practice money management and budgeting for bills and taxes.
54. Preparation for the next stage in life in the junior school starts with Reception children as they are allocated houses in preparation for moving into Year 1. Older pupils are given support in terms of thinking of the skills needed in the following year for example to be more independent in organising work. In the senior school, topics within the PSHE programme, visiting speakers and more overt careers education, enables pupils to be well prepared for the world of work. Links with local businesses, one to one meetings with the pastoral team about careers, and the use of a digital programme to review personal skills and interests, support pupils in making option choices for GCSE and A level. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
55. Pupils understand the importance of contributing to the wellbeing of their own and wider community. For example, the youngest children happily tidy up their construction play toys to make space for lunch time. In the junior school pupils learn about citizenship as one of the six pillars of character. They take turns to support reception pupils at play time, acting as role models for co-operative social behaviour. Some act as reading buddies for younger children. Pupils run house meetings and the school councils. Sixth form pupils are trained as peer mentors by the school councillor to support staff in listening to pupil's concerns. Many also have specific roles of responsibility as prefects and sports captains. Some Year 6 pupils have similar positions.
56. Pupils through the school contribute to house fund raising activities for charities, voted for by pupils. They collect contributions for local food banks and visit homes for the elderly. Pupils are encouraged

to think about improvements they can make in school. Their comments and ideas have contributed to a focus in developing the outdoor education curriculum and on sustainability.

57. Modern foreign language culture clubs and residential trips and visits give pupils experiences of different European cultures. Parents and grandparents visit assemblies to share experiences, cook traditional foods or reading in their own language. These visits and talks from peers about their own cultures, enable pupils to learn about the variety of cultural backgrounds and traditions prevalent in modern Britain.

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

58. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

59. There are thorough procedures in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. These procedures include involving staff in safeguarding policy and practice reviews. In this way leaders help to ensure that all staff are fully aware of the arrangements to safeguard pupils.
60. Safeguarding training is thorough and regular from the point of induction to the school, for all staff, volunteers and governors. Leaders check staff's knowledge and understanding of procedures to ensure all staff are confident to report any concerns they may have. Early years staff are aware of who has DSL responsibility for their children and the members of the wider school team.
61. Safeguarding leaders have expertise, experience and a robust understanding of local procedures and thresholds. They keep meticulous records of concerns and actions and liaise appropriately with external agencies when required. The safeguarding team meets regularly to share practice and review safeguarding and pastoral concerns, monitor patterns and review actions. Information about minor pastoral concerns is appropriately disseminated to staff so that issues can be dealt with and pupils supported before the issues become more serious.
62. Governors monitor safeguarding through both termly reports and an annual formal review of policies and procedures. An appropriate 'Prevent' duty risk assessment is in place and this includes suitable control measures.
63. Suitable arrangements are in place to support pupils' online safety including appropriate filtering and monitoring procedures. The curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves and others safe. The single central register of appointment is carefully monitored. This register is kept as required and all requirements to ensure safer recruitment of staff are in place.
64. Teachers respond promptly when pupils raise concerns and pupils feel that they are listened to, and their views are taken into account and that staff will take appropriate action to help resolve any issues they may have.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

The quality of the early years foundation stage in the registered early years provision

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

66. The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
67. Leaders and their staff team share a secure understanding of the curriculum aims. They monitor staff practice on a daily basis and this helps them to ensure that the curriculum is implemented consistently well across all age ranges. Staff are able to articulate how their curriculum aims support children's development in the prime areas. Staff have high aspirations for all children and they take timely action to ensure that all children make rapid progress. For example, staff support children who have SEND highly effectively. They swiftly identify children who require extra support and they seek advice and guidance which they implement successfully.
68. Staff share a strong commitment to continuous improvement. Leaders implement their improvement plan precisely and ensure that staff have effective professional development to equip them with the skills to deliver the curriculum. For instance, all staff are trained in how to support children's communication and speaking skills, which is a priority in every room. Staff consistently implement what they have learned in their interactions with children. They demonstrate this by varying their tone and intonation, responding to children and repeating the sounds and words that they say. This helps children to hear and say new words and gives meaning to babies' babbling.
69. Leaders enrich the curriculum with varied experiences, which help to enhance children's understanding of people and communities. For example, visitors are regularly invited into nursery to talk about their jobs and experiences. Children find out about being a doctor and then go on to pretend to be a medical professional in their imaginary play. They learn about the postal service and explore the post van, helping to develop their knowledge of how letters get to their home address. Staff help children to learn about different cultures, such as by inviting family members to read stories in their home language and cook traditional foods with the children for celebrations, such as Diwali.
70. The calm and purposeful environment that staff create is highly conducive to developing children's focus and concentration. Staff recognise where children's levels of engagement are higher, such as in the role play area, and they enhance resources to enable children to make choices and extend their own play. For instance, younger children re-create everyday roles and experiences from home. They pretend to clean and cook, copying what they have seen adults do and they engage with visitors and their friends as they do this. These meaningful opportunities help to enhance children's confidence and creativity.
71. Staff demonstrate a secure understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. Leaders ensure that they have robust induction and safeguarding training, which means that they are familiar with procedures that they need to follow should they have a concern. Staff are able to talk about risks to children. They can explain signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and are highly aware of the risks to non-mobile babies.

Quality of education

72. The quality of education is outstanding.
73. Staff plan a well-balanced and sequenced curriculum. They consistently and highly effectively implement their precise plan of the physical skills that children should learn in each age range. This successfully helps children to build on what they already know and can do. For example, younger children are supported to drink from an open-topped cup and they progress from using a spoon to using two pieces of cutlery to feed themselves.
74. Staff identify children's next steps and interests and use this to inform their planning for each individual child. Leaders' regular monitoring and evaluation of the activities that staff plan and deliver ensure that learning intentions are appropriately challenging and support individual children to make the best possible progress.
75. Staff reflect constantly on experiences for children. They plan to extend opportunities whenever possible to provide appropriate challenge. They have a particular focus on supporting children's speaking skills. They have conversations with children at their level so that they can hear language being modelled and be introduced to new vocabulary. Staff understand that children learn language better when they are engaged with activities that fascinate, challenge and excite them. In particular, babies participate enthusiastically with action songs and rhymes, moving and bouncing as enthusiastic staff lead a successful song time.

Behaviour and attitudes

76. Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.
77. Children are taught to be kind and considerate and the high-quality support provided by staff encourages their positive behaviour. For instance, leaders ensure staff are appropriately qualified and knowledgeable about promoting children's emotional literacy. Staff take a consistent and positive approach across the nursery, modelling to children how to manage their interactions with others and helping to build their self-esteem. Children demonstrate they understand how to regulate their emotions and they refer to resources, such as books, to successfully help them to begin to recognise and explain how they are feeling.
78. Staff have consistently high expectations of what each child can achieve. They have a robust understanding of how babies and young children learn and develop. Staff make regular use of the abundance opportunities for children to explore. For instance, they encourage young babies to touch and smell the herbs in an exploratory session. They quickly became absorbed in this sensory experience demonstrating their positive attitudes to learning.
79. Children are given time and space to discover and use their imagination both indoors and outdoors. Young babies were supported to dig in the sand pit and pour water into containers, promoting their hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. They moved on to explore the texture of cereals while playing using bowls and spoons. This supports their physical development and helps them to learn how to feed themselves independently in the future.
80. Staff are sensitive and attentive. They praise children when they are doing their best and just need a little more support to master new areas. For instance, young toddlers were encouraged to explore

craft activities using glue and persevered using scissors independently. This helped to build hand strength, hand-eye coordination, and learning to focus on tasks.

Personal development

81. The personal development of children is outstanding.
82. Leaders and staff provide new opportunities for children to enhance their experiences at home and their interests in nursery. For example, staff provide a lending library in the rooms and use core texts linked to children's interests, such as 'Dear Zoo' in the baby room. Leaders invite parents in to talk about their jobs and children learn about different ways that people read, such as by learning about braille. Children have regular and exciting first-hand opportunities to learn about the wider world. They learn about where their food comes from when they collect eggs for their cooking from the school chickens. They plant herbs and vegetables and staff use these times to teach children about healthier lifestyles.
83. Staff encourage children to take and manage risks in their play and children do this with increasing levels of confidence. For instance, older toddlers balance on logs and planks, and climb on climbing frames and babies negotiate uneven surfaces and ramps supported by the staff. The nursery-wide approach to promoting challenge helps to develop children's character and confidence exceptionally well.
84. Staff develop extremely positive partnerships with parents and they are very responsive to what parents tell them about what their children are doing at home. Staff value information that is shared and they communicate this to the wider team to help them understand the whole picture of the child and ensure that they can spontaneously respond to their interests.
85. Staff support children's emotions superbly. The exceptional relationships that children have with the adults around them are built on strong, secure attachments. Each key person has a detailed knowledge of their children's unique needs to ensure they know how to respond effectively. For example, a key person swiftly noticed that a baby was becoming sleepy after snack time and gently encouraged them to fall asleep.

Leadership and management

86. Leadership and management are outstanding.
87. Leaders effectively identify areas of development in the curriculum. They work with external professionals well to provide training and support to enhance aspects of the curriculum, such as mathematics. Leaders recognise the importance of all staff completing professional development and training to ensure that new knowledge is implemented by all staff across the nursery. For progression, they also work successfully with school staff to ensure the sequence of learning is precise and helps children develop the knowledge they need as they progress to the Reception year. This is highly effective in developing staff subject knowledge and teaching.
88. The leadership team actively embrace the ideas of the staff team and empower them to use their skills to improve the provision. For example, staff have worked together to enhance aspects of outdoor learning. In particular staff have created several planting areas and children now benefit

from additional and different opportunities to learn about planting and growing unusual vegetables and herbs.

89. Leaders consistently monitor the standards of care and regularly scrutinise the curriculum to ensure that the high standards are maintained. They have high expectations of what children under three can achieve and support all children to achieve the best outcomes.
90. Staff are well qualified. Leaders monitor their performance carefully through appraisals and supervision meetings, which enable staff to discuss issues including their own wellbeing. Staff feel very well supported in their role. They have access to mental health support and leaders recognise and celebrate their achievements. This helps to promote staff self-esteem and job satisfaction.

Safeguarding

91. Safeguarding is effective.
92. Staff ensure that the learning environment is suitable for children. They complete regular risk assessments and can explain how they minimise risks in different activities, such as those with animals and those located in other areas of the main school.
93. Leaders ensure that staff keep their knowledge up to date and they provide safeguarding training as part of induction for new staff. Staff understand contextual safeguarding risks and they are aware of radical and extreme views and behaviours.

The extent to which the school meets the requirements of the early years foundation stage

94. The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006.

School details

School	St Gabriel's School
Department for Education number	869/6004
Registered early years number	EY482888
Registered charity number	1062748
Address	St Gabriel's School Sandleford Priory Newbury Berkshire RG20 9BD
Phone number	01635 555680
Email address	info@stgabriels.co.uk
Website	www.stgabriels.co.uk
Proprietor	The St Gabriel's School Foundation
Chair	Mr Nigel Garland
Headteacher	Mr Richard Smith
Age range	6 months to 18
Number of pupils	499
Number of children in the early years registered setting	17
Date of previous inspection	5 to 7 November 2019

Information about the school

95. St Gabriel's School is an independent day school for pupils aged from 6 months to 18 years, situated in Newbury Berkshire. It is a charity managed by a board of governors. The school consists of a registered nursery, a junior school with a non-registered early years setting, and a senior school with sixth form. It was established in 1929 as a day school for female pupils. In September 2022 the school expanded coeducation from the junior school to include male pupils into year 7. In 2023 this extended so coeducation also covered year 8. The school intends to complete this expansion and be fully coeducational by September 2026.
96. The early years setting is made up of both a registered and non-registered setting. There are three rooms in one building and two reception classes in a separate building. The baby room and some children in the toddler room are in the registered setting. Some of the children in the toddler room and the children in pre-school and reception are in the non-registered setting. There are 81 children in the non-registered setting.
97. The school has identified 65 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Six pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
98. English is an additional language for 20 pupils.
99. The school states its aims are to 'provide an educational environment that provides both space and time for our pupils to mature, to learn about and be confident in themselves, to explore and discover their abilities and to excel. To create a pathway to academic success through a balanced approach where excellence is encouraged, and wellbeing is paramount. To ensure our pupils feel supported within a community that is founded on a mutual understanding and respect of and for each other, where they feel safe, valued and able to express themselves as individuals free from prejudice, injustice, inequality, or sexism. To inspire our pupils to be curious and creative in their approach to learning, to challenge and question and develop a life-long passion for learning. To ensure our pupils acquire the personal skills and resources that will support them now and in the future'.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

30 April to 2 May 2024

100. A team of 6 inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.
101. 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 chair and other governors
 - discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
 - discussions with pupils
 - visits to facilities for physical education
 - scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
 - scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.
102. 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**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://www.isi.net)