

School inspection report

6 to 8 February 2024

St Olave's Preparatory School

106 – 110 Southwood Road

New Eltham

London

SE9 3QS

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. Trustees' oversight of the school's policies and procedures is effective. Trustees check that leaders meet their responsibilities fully to ensure that the Standards are met securely and consistently.
2. Leaders promote and support pupils' wellbeing effectively. They use a 'wellbeing index' to ascertain pupils' wellbeing needs with precision. Leaders then use this knowledge to create customised and individual support for pupils that is highly effective in meeting their wellbeing needs. Teaching about rights, including children's rights, is highly effective and leads to pupils developing a mature understanding in this area. The way leaders promote and support pupils' wellbeing is a significant strength of the school. It has a highly beneficial impact on pupils' emotional and mental health which, in turn, helps them to focus on their learning and make good progress.
3. Most teaching enables pupils to learn well and make good progress. Teaching typically and commonly features high levels of challenge and stimulates pupils so that they engage well and are motivated to learn. However, occasionally, teachers do not choose the most effective teaching methods, or they persist with approaches that are not working well. Where this is the case, some pupils lose interest in their learning and achieve less well than is usual across the school.
4. Leaders evaluate pupils' progress and attainment effectively overall. There is effective use of assessment information to ensure that teaching meets pupils' learning needs and targets any gaps in learning in subjects such as English and mathematics. However, assessment information is not always used as effectively across the wider curriculum as it is in these subjects. Leaders do not always identify and analyse pupils' progress to the same extent that they do in English and mathematics to enable pupils to achieve as well as usual.
5. Pupils develop strong knowledge of and respect for diversity. They demonstrate great respect for others who have faiths and backgrounds that are different to their own. Leaders and staff promote positive values, such as those of kindness and compassion. They manage behaviour well. Incidents of negative behaviour or bullying are rare and responded to effectively.
6. Safeguarding is effective. The school follows appropriate procedures when safeguarding concerns arise. Leaders and staff demonstrate a developed understanding of the importance of safeguarding and that it is everyone's responsibility.

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:

- all teachers select the most effective teaching methods to engage pupils in their learning so that all pupils make the good progress that is typical across most of the school
- the use of assessment information to match teaching to pupils' learning needs is as effective across the wider curriculum as it is in English and mathematics.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

7. Trustees maintain a systematic and regular oversight of the school's policies and procedures. They check that leaders use their good knowledge and skills to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Trustees ensure that the Standards are met securely and consistently.
8. Leaders carefully monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision in advancing pupils' learning and wellbeing. They use this evaluation to create well-considered plans for the school's improvement, which are implemented fully. These plans contain clear goals and identify the methods that leaders intend to use to reach them, including where appropriate providing training and support to staff.
9. Leaders communicate the school's aims and values well to staff, parents and pupils. As a result, pupils refer to these values spontaneously and regard them as important.
10. Leaders consider the potential impact on pupils' wellbeing in all their decision-making. They take definite and precise actions to promote and support pupils' wellbeing, notably through the school-wide use of a 'wellbeing index', which has a particularly positive impact on pupils' emotional and mental health.
11. The school has a systematic and effective approach to the identification and mitigation of potential risks. This includes any related to the premises and specific activities, and those related to pupils' welfare. Risk assessments carefully identify the nature and likelihood of possible risks and the measures taken to remove and reduce these. For example, risk assessments for residential trips include careful checking of the suitability of locations to be visited.
12. Leaders in the early years ensure that all specific early years requirements, such as those relating to the administration of medication, staff-to-child ratios and the provision of a suitable curriculum, are met. For example, early years staff maintain thorough supervision of children at all times. Staff's paediatric first aid training is recorded and updated systematically.
13. Leaders provide parents and prospective parents with all required information, most of which is published on the school website. There is much communication with parents about their children's progress, including through regular parents' evenings and twice-yearly reports to parents.
14. The school implements a suitable complaints procedure effectively. Leaders respond to any parental complaints appropriately within published timescales. The regular communication with parents and the accessibility of senior leaders to parents, such as through their presence at the beginning and end of the school day, help to ensure that most concerns are dealt with early and do not escalate into formal complaints.
15. The school meets its requirements under equality legislation. It maintains a regularly reviewed plan to facilitate full access to the curriculum for all pupils and to the facilities for any pupils, staff and parents who have disabilities. Leaders ensure that neither the curriculum nor teaching work against the positive and inclusive values of the school.
16. Leaders maintain effective links with external agencies, such as safeguarding partners and services that provide specialist forms of support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or

disabilities. For example, there are well-established links with external therapists and other professionals.

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

17. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. The curriculum includes a suitably broad range of subjects including in the early years. The youngest children develop their skills across all required areas of learning and development. They also begin to learn French. The curriculum across the whole school is planned for each week of the school year, though in different levels of detail in different subjects. Some subjects, such as mathematics, are based on commercial schemes or the content of the national curriculum. These programmes of study are adapted effectively for the different cohorts of pupils. Leaders monitor the curriculum closely to check that it provides sufficient coverage of the different aspects of each subject.
19. Pupils attain well. By the end of the Reception year, a higher proportion of children attain a good level of development than is typical nationally. The attainment of pupils in all phases of the school is above average compared to those taking the same tests across the country. Leavers are successful in obtaining offers to the grammar schools or independent senior schools of their choice.
20. Teaching typically enables pupils to make good progress and learn well. This is because teachers commonly choose teaching methods that engage pupils well and maintain high levels of challenge. They make effective use of resources that stimulate and motivate pupils. As a result, pupils engage thoroughly with their lessons and try hard to learn more about the subject at hand. However, in a very small number of cases, teaching lacks sufficient challenge to enable pupils to learn and make progress as effectively as is typical across the school. Sometimes this is linked to the continued use of teaching strategies that are not working as effectively as intended and are not altered despite pupils losing interest. During these rare times, learning slows and become less effective as a result.
21. Teaching in the early years is effective. Staff maintain a calm and purposeful learning atmosphere and provide children with much individual attention. They take advantage of spontaneous opportunities to advance children's understanding, such as through counting games during snack time. Teaching is planned to capture and reflect children's interests. Children develop their skills and knowledge rapidly, such as about the relationship between letters and sounds, because teaching is matched well to their needs and abilities.
22. Teaching enables pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to make good progress from their starting points. Pupils' needs are identified carefully, and teaching is adapted to meet those needs. Pupil support plans are used effectively to generate any additional support that might be required, including from external specialists, when appropriate. Staff provide pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) with effective additional support, when required. Leaders monitor the support provided to pupils who have SEND and those who speak EAL to ensure that it is effective and meets their needs.
23. The school implements a suitable framework for evaluating pupils' progress and attainment overall. However, the use of assessment information to match teaching to pupils' learning needs is not always as effective across the wider curriculum as it is in English and mathematics. In these subjects, assessment enables careful identification of pupils' learning and progress in clearly defined specific aspects of the subjects. This enables leaders and staff to identify gaps in learning and target these effectively. This is not always the case with regard to assessment in other subjects. For example, pupils' misconceptions and inaccuracies are not always addressed as effectively as they are in English and mathematics.

24. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities are available to pupils from Nursery upwards. This provision helps develop pupils' knowledge and skills in a range of areas. For example, the young explorers' club extends pupils' knowledge about different types of animals and their habitats, while the choir develops their singing and performance skills.

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

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

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

26. The school uses the curriculum effectively to develop pupils' understanding of the importance of respecting the other people regardless of race, religion, sex or background. Pupils are taught about rights, continuously and highly effectively, through the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme. Pupils display mature knowledge and appreciation of the importance of rights, including children's. The school's work in this area has led to it achieving a gold standard award as a 'rights respecting school'.
27. The PSHE programme develops pupils' understanding and appreciation of diversity well. Pupils learn strategies to cope with change and how to look after their physical and mental health. The PSHE programme complements the highly effective use of the 'wellbeing index' to identify pupils' wellbeing needs with precision. Leaders use this information to provide effective support for pupils designed specifically to meet the wellbeing needs identified. Staff receive pertinent training to aid them in providing this support. For example, in different forms of therapy and promoting emotional literacy.
28. Pupils develop their confidence through the reassurance they are given that it is okay to speak about emotions and how they feel. Pupils' self-confidence is clear, for example, in their PSHE work on 'what makes us unique', which demonstrates confident expression of pupils' ideas about their own identity and feelings. Pupils also receive helpful guidance about how to look after their own and others' wellbeing needs.
29. The relationships and sex education (RSE) programme contains appropriate content which pupils find helpful and relevant. This includes guidance about what constitutes healthy relationships and how to resolve disagreements and friendship issues. Pupils learn about consent and puberty in groups that they feel comfortable to talk in.
30. The physical education programme enables pupils to develop their physical skills and self-assess how their own skills and fitness are developing. Teachers develop pupils' understanding of how to use simple and clear fitness assessment tools to evaluate their own development in this area.
31. Behaviour is managed effectively and there are few incidents of poor behaviour or bullying. This is because the school communicates its high behavioural expectations and values, particularly the importance of kindness, clearly and consistently. Leaders and staff respond swiftly and effectively to any behavioural incidents that do occur, so that behaviour improves and repeated poor behaviour is rare.
32. Pupils are supervised effectively by staff who help to promote positive behaviour. Staff supervise children in the early years effectively. The required staff-to-child ratios are always adhered to, and children are always visible to or within the hearing of staff, so that they receive individual support and attention.
33. The school carries out necessary health and safety and fire safety checks and servicing methodically and effectively. As a result, the premises and accommodation are appropriately maintained. The school arranges regular fire risk assessments by an external provider and acts on their findings. Pupils and staff carry out regular fire evacuation drills.

34. The school's medical room provides suitable facilities. Appropriate procedures for the administration of first aid or medication are in place. A sufficient number of staff are trained in first aid, including in the early years.
35. The school maintains admission and attendance registers as required. It informs the local authority when pupils arrive or leave the school other than at the beginning or end of the academic year. There are high levels of attendance, and any non-attendance is monitored and followed up effectively.

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

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

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

37. The school develops pupils' social skills through messages in assembly, the PSHE curriculum and the ongoing promotion of the school's values, including collaboration and compassion. The effective development of pupils' understanding of rights enhances their moral understanding. Pupils talk thoughtfully about issues relating to fairness and equality. They demonstrate an understanding of the importance of mutual respect through these discussions and their interactions with one another. For example, pupils talk about neurodiversity intelligently and with respect.
38. Pupils develop their economic understanding in a way that helps prepare them for future life. For example, they learn about banking, prices and inflation, and how to manage money. Pupils also learn about British institutions, such as by studying the monarchy, visiting the Houses of Parliament and exploring the role of the Bank of England. They explore world news and the risks of fake news.
39. Pupils contribute to the school community well. Pupils from Nursery upwards take on roles of responsibility. Children in the early years and pupils in all year groups act as monitors, providing support for teachers and other pupils. Older pupils take on roles such as anti-bullying, wellbeing and 'rights respecting' ambassadors. Pupils demonstrate their commitment to these roles and the school by applying to take them on and undertaking the training that goes with them. The pupil ambassadors lead assemblies and talk to other classes about their areas of responsibility.
40. Pupils also make many contributions to the wider community. These include visits to a local residential home and picking up litter from the locality around the school. Pupils initiate and, with the support of staff, arrange fundraising events for causes and charities that are important to them. These have included children's and adults' hospices, charities relating to animal welfare, and others supporting autistic people and people who have cancer.
41. Pupils learn about democracy through subjects such as history and PSHE. They act on behalf of others through the elected pupil parliament. They suggest actions designed to improve the school or help the environment, such as ways to increase the amount of recycling.
42. The school readies pupils for future life and education well. Older pupils receive effective support towards taking tests and assessments for entry to grammar schools and independent senior schools. They receive visits from professionals representing a range of careers. Leaders and staff provide older pupils with strategies that they can use to guard against any feelings of pressure or anxiety when preparing for transition to their next schools.

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

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

Safeguarding

44. The school implements a suitable safeguarding policy effectively. It follows locally agreed procedures whenever any safeguarding concerns arise. Leaders liaise with and make referrals to relevant external agencies, when appropriate. Trustees maintain effective oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements, including through considering regular reports from safeguarding leads and a thorough annual review.
45. All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training, including when they join the school. The safeguarding team undertakes additional training to equip them for their role. Staff understand the expectations of the staff code of conduct. They understand different types of abuse and neglect, and the procedures to follow should a safeguarding concern arise. Any concerns that do arise are responded to effectively, including by providing affected pupils with appropriate support.
46. The school has strong procedures for responding to any concerns about child-on-child abuse or allegations against staff. Staff know who to report such concerns to and are confident to do so should the need arise.
47. The school teaches pupils how to keep safe, including when online. This starts when children are in Nursery. Pupils receive regular guidance about internet safety. Effective filtering and monitoring of the internet are in place.
48. Systematic and stringent safer recruitment procedures are in place. These ensure that all adults, including staff, volunteers and trustees, are appropriately checked for suitability before they commence working at the school. Leaders keep a clear record of all safer recruitment checks carried out and maintain staff files in line with the requirements of current statutory guidance.
49. The school has appropriate procedures to respond to any concerns about children absent from or missing education.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	St Olave's Preparatory School
Department for Education number	203/6170
Registered charity number	312734
Address	St Olave's Preparatory School 106 – 110 Southwood Road New Eltham London SE9 3QS
Phone number	0208 2948930
Email address	office@stolaves.org.uk
Website	www.stolaves.org.uk
Proprietor	St Olave's School Trust
Chair	Mr Peter Houillon
Headteacher	Miss Claire Holloway
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	214
Date of previous inspection	11 to 13 June 2019

Information about the school

51. St Olave's Preparatory School is an independent, co-educational day school situated in New Eltham, London. It was originally founded in 1959 and has been administered by a charitable trust since 1972. It is governed by the trustees.
52. There are 44 children in the early years, which comprises one Nursery class and two Reception classes.
53. The school has identified 11 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
54. English is an additional language for 64 pupils.
55. The school states its aims are to teach children to think for themselves and to flourish academically in an environment that encourages resilience and risk taking. The school seeks to foster the values of compassion, commitment, curiosity, collaboration, courage and creativity and to create a sense of happiness, warmth and vitality based on the principle that learning is fun.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

6 to 8 February 2024

56. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

57. 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 trustees
- discussions with the headteacher, 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.

58. 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

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