

School inspection report

19 to 21 November 2024

Banstead Preparatory School

Sutton Lane

Banstead

Surrey

SM7 3RA

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. Leaders have developed a school characterised by five values: for pupils to be ready, safe, kind, respectful and true to themselves. Leaders focus on enabling a community of happy, confident and mutually respectful young people who know through experience that their school motto is genuine. Pupils enjoy their education and thrive because explicit emphasis is placed on diversity and equality which supports the development of each pupil's self-confidence and self-esteem.
2. Governors maintain effective oversight of the school's operations through a comprehensive series of visits, meetings, scrutiny of documentation and challenges to leaders. This gives governors a clear picture of the school's areas of good practice and further development. Consequently, governors are successful in ensuring the Standards are consistently met.
3. Teachers are ambitious for pupils to achieve. They use the rigorous assessment system to accurately identify each pupil's current attainment and next steps for development. Teachers use their expert subject knowledge to deliver stimulating, well-resourced lessons at an appropriate pace. Pupils make good progress and attain highly in comparison to national expectations. Pupils leave Banstead well prepared for the subsequent stages of their education.
4. Pupils' self-knowledge is well-developed through the school's focus on supporting them to develop the right habits and attitudes to learn successfully, such as adaptability, collaboration, curiosity, independence, leadership and resilience. Pupils use and demonstrate these when learning in each subject. This increases their knowledge, skills and understanding. Furthermore, pupils recognise that these characteristics apply not only to their current learning but to their future lives, senior education and eventual employment as well. Pupils' progress and achievements are enhanced by their use of these characteristics when they work individually and in groups. This is a significant strength of the school.
5. The school has chosen to teach pupils to consider how they think most effectively and develop strategies to evaluate, develop and refine their ideas. Leaders and teachers are yet to embed strategies for helping pupils to think analytically and learn for themselves across all subject areas.
6. Pupils' physical and mental health is well supported through a diverse programme of sporting activities and the effective use of a range of techniques and resources which encourage their emotional wellbeing.
7. Pupils capitalise on various opportunities to develop their leadership skills. They make positive contributions to their school, to the local community of Banstead and to the wider world. Pupils learn how to use various technologies to produce high quality artefacts, from cakes and jewellery to electronic books and podcasts, which they then share with others. Pupils advertise and sell some of these in aid of charity, which develops their entrepreneurship.
8. An appropriate safeguarding culture is embedded throughout the school. The school takes effective measures to promote the welfare of pupils and protect them from harm. This includes comprehensive staff training, continuous vigilance from leaders and governors and clear communication systems amongst all staff.

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 teachers embed strategies in all subject areas that help pupils to understand how they learn most effectively.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Pupils benefit from applying a range of school initiatives, such as the learning habits, the behaviour traits (known as 'The Five Bes') and the overarching motto. Senior leaders make sure these are used consistently across the school and succeed in promoting all aspects of pupils' wellbeing.
10. Leaders employ a range of methods, including regular learning walks, work scrutiny and appropriate consultations with pupils to oversee and evaluate the effectiveness of their actions. These give leaders a clear picture of the school's areas of good practice and what needs to improve.
11. Staff training is well planned and thorough. It covers the induction of employees as they join the school, regular refresher sessions for those of longer standing, and the practical implementation of new initiatives. The effectiveness of staff training is diligently assessed and recorded. Leaders and governors are assured that members of staff have the appropriate knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities in line with both national expectations and the school's ethos.
12. Governance is effective. Governors take on roles and responsibilities linked to their areas of experience and expertise. They visit the school, scrutinise documentation, talk with pupils, teachers and leaders and analyse data. They know the school well. Governors challenge school leaders appropriately. They ensure that Standards are met over time.
13. School policies are clear, comprehensive and thorough. This supports staff to understand leaders' expectations so that policies are implemented effectively and consistently.
14. Governors, leaders, teachers and other employees are aware of risks facing the school and the measures put in place to mitigate these. A portfolio of dynamic risk assessment documentation is in place, which covers all required elements of school activity. It is regularly reviewed and updated by leaders to ensure its effectiveness and is overseen appropriately by governors.
15. Leaders of early years classes are knowledgeable and experienced. They create motivating, relevant and enabling learning environments, both inside and outdoors, which are used effectively to support each child's development as children explore their individual interests.
16. All required information is made available to parents, prospective parents and other interested parties in line with the Standards. This includes correspondence with the local authority regarding pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) including the necessary reporting on use of funds.
17. The school implements an appropriate policy for handling complaints. Leaders place emphasis on resolving concerns before they escalate. They keep detailed records which show that matters are rectified efficiently and effectively.
18. Leaders have forged links with a variety of external agencies, both to enhance the opportunities available to pupils and as sources for advice and guidance. These include the local authority and national bodies who advise on health and safety matters.
19. The school fulfils its responsibilities as detailed in the Equality Act (2010). A detailed and effective accessibility plan is in place. This includes clear measures which are taken to ensure that all pupils can achieve and make good progress.

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

20. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. The school's broad curriculum provides pupils with the necessary subject content and experiences to make good progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding throughout linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, aesthetic and creative areas of learning. Teachers enhance pupils' learning with a consistent emphasis on the school's learning habits. These behaviours for learning motivate pupils to give of their best and remind them how they can apply themselves most effectively to each task. Leaders' emphasis on the importance of the learning habits provides helpful preparation for pupils' secondary education and future lives in society.
22. Teaching is typically characterised by teachers' secure subject knowledge, effective planning that facilitates a suitable pace of learning, and appropriately ambitious expectations for each pupil. Pupils make good progress over time. Children in the early years sing, play percussion instruments and dance simultaneously in music rehearsals, whilst older pupils calculate the height of distant buildings using a mirror, a ruler and their knowledge of similar triangles. Pupils' attainment in all year groups is high in comparison to national norms. Teachers have begun to embed strategies which help pupils understand how they learn as an individual. However, this is not yet consistent across all subject areas.
23. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used appropriately and effectively to enhance learning in all subjects. Pupils complete practical and meaningful projects which result in valuable products being made for a range of audiences, including themselves, younger pupils, parents and teachers. Older pupils create picture books for younger pupils in the school which are accompanied by audio narration. They write material, record soundtracks, and edit both. They produce high quality final products in a range of appropriate media which they share with pride.
24. The school's robust assessment framework ensures that pupils' achievements and next steps are identified and the appropriate support put in place. This includes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
25. Teaching staff provide specific support and the use of practical resources to help pupils to learn successfully. Appropriate support is given, where needed, to pupils who speak English as an additional language. Leaders, teachers and parents share information to ensure that a pupils' individual needs are met and they make good progress from their different starting points.
26. Staff in the early years initiate meaningful conversations that develop children's speaking and listening skills well. Children respond positively to the interesting and motivating learning activities. Their creativity, problem-solving and independence are developed successfully through imaginative play and exploration. Children express their preferences confidently, such as which tools to use for painting animals' eyes in pieces of artwork. They respond enthusiastically to ambitious challenges like recalling the sequence of numbers when completing jigsaws. Links to the school's learning habits are discussed and celebrated as a natural and continuous thread right from the start of Nursery. Good communication skills are encouraged through 'chatterbag' presentations that support children's confidence in public speaking from their earliest days in school.
27. Pupils are encouraged to take calculated risks because teachers place emphasis on investigation and experimentation as a natural extension of play, even within the oldest year groups. This is successful

as pupils broaden their thinking and appreciate why mistakes are valuable opportunities for learning.

28. The formal curriculum is enhanced by an extensive and diverse programme of optional additional activities which are available daily to all pupils between Reception and Year 6. These include 'animal antics', construction, critical thinking, debating, mind and body exercise and playing orchestral instruments.
29. Parents are informed about their child's progress and achievements through a range of ways including termly written reports.

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

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

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

31. The school's philosophy recognises the value of diversity and the individuality of everyone. It is well-understood and consistently demonstrated by staff and pupils. This successfully generates an atmosphere of mutual respect that permeates the entire school community.
32. Teachers in the early years are effective role models who demonstrate empathy and care through their interactions with children, which nurture positive relationships. Children develop the confidence to cooperate and collaborate, thriving emotionally and socially as they engage happily with both adults and their peers. They show responsibility for their personal belongings when recalling which items they should take home and demonstrate their understanding of self-care such as explaining the importance of staying hydrated.
33. Pupils' self-confidence is nurtured through the school's commitment to hearing individuals' views and acting upon them. This extends to the youngest children who use technology to express, record and communicate their thoughts and opinions even before they can write. Pupils of all ages know that their teachers and senior leaders are genuinely interested in what they have to say.
34. Pupils' self-esteem is fostered through a wide-ranging rewards system which includes house points, commendations and individual congratulatory messages written on postcards. Half-termly hot chocolate celebrations enable senior staff to recognise and thank pupils for going above and beyond the call of duty in any aspect of school life.
35. Pupils' self-knowledge is developed effectively as they act on their teachers' oral and written feedback. In all areas of school life, pupils evaluate themselves against the eight habits which they know underpin powerful learning. Pupils in all year groups understand these characteristics to be the behaviours which help them be the best that they can be. They successfully identify the behaviours which come naturally to them. Pupils also analyse opportunities for improvement. During activities, they work hard to focus on the behaviours they find more challenging so that their progress and achievements rapidly increase.
36. Pupils' spiritual understanding is developed through a range of philosophical questions and specific 'Be Curious' activities. Pupils in all year groups explore the major world faiths during 'understanding the world' lessons alongside different celebrations and commemorations, including birthdays, Christmas, Divali and Remembrance Day.
37. The physical education programme includes individual activities such as health related fitness, badminton, swimming and cross-country as well as team pursuits like football, hockey, cricket, athletics, rugby and netball. These are further enhanced by a wide range of co-curricular options. As a result, pupils engage regularly in activities which encourage their physical wellbeing.
38. Pupils are taught different strategies to support their mental health such as meditation, breathing techniques and self-regulatory mechanisms. They are encouraged to use the ones which work best for them. Classrooms have 'calm corners' and 'sensory tents' which pupils can use when they need a quiet time. Pupils know that any worries or concerns they may have can be shared with staff, including those with specific responsibilities for emotional literacy support or delivering wellbeing

lessons. 'Worry boxes' are available in every classroom for those who would prefer to express their concerns anonymously in writing.

39. Teachers deliver a broad personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme to pupils through age-appropriate content in topics such as Being Me in My World, Celebrating Differences and Changing Me, which includes the concepts of privacy and consent. Lessons are supported by pertinent weekly articles in the Banstead bulletin newsletter, often written by pupils in collaboration with senior leaders. These not only set out what has been taught but also celebrate the knowledge, interests and passions of the pupils themselves. Pupils are keen to work as journalists and make their voices heard by a wide audience. Relationships and sex education (RSE) has been developed and refined following appropriate consultation with parents. Parents are kept informed about the content to be covered in each year group and the required provision for parents to withdraw pupils from certain lessons as necessary.
40. Pupils behave well. The school's three-step behaviour code of 'chance, choice and change' is effective at preventing bullying and promoting appropriate behaviour between pupils. This approach successfully enables pupils who initially find it challenging to conduct themselves well to improve. Consequently, good behaviour is very much the norm and rare occasions of inappropriate behaviour are not repeated.
41. The school premises are maintained well, including effective accommodation for first aid and medical care. Due attention is paid to all health and safety matters, including the completion of regular fire evacuation drills.
42. Attendance and admissions registers are kept as required, with appropriate notification made to the local authority when pupils leave and join the school at non-standard transition points. The attendance register is scrutinised daily. Leaders take prompt action when necessary, so that their expectations for high levels of attendance are achieved consistently.
43. Pupils are supervised appropriately during all activities and throughout the school day.

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

44. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

45. Children in the early years are taught to care for each other and their belongings. From the youngest age, children engage in meaningful activities that develop a sense of community and actively promote British values. Class story choices are decided by democratic votes and teaching staff emphasise concepts such as choice and fairness in conversations about events, festivals and celebrations. This promotes inclusivity and emphasises that people have different beliefs and expectations. Discussions about real-world situations, such as how parents work to provide for families and how money is used to purchase goods and services, nurture an appreciation of responsibility and effort.
46. The school provides pupils in all year groups with opportunities to develop their leadership skills. The active and dynamic pupil parliament is co-ordinated by three older pupils and includes democratically elected representatives from every other class. The pupil parliament recently made amendments to the lunch menu which has resulted in healthier, more popular foods being served. It has secured additional playground equipment for pupils, including a climbing frame. Further leadership opportunities are provided for pupils in the final school year, so that each has a meaningful part to play in areas such as the natural environment, the library, technology and the arts. Pupils are expected to speak in public forums such as assemblies or concerts and produce written contributions to publications, including the regular school newsletter.
47. Pupils of all ages, including those in the early years, play active roles in the local community. These include visiting the residents of a local care home, singing festive music in a local shopping centre and participating in collaborative events such as the annual Remembrance Day parade and May Fayre. Pupils plan and deliver a sports festival, to which they invite pupils from local primary schools.
48. Within the school's PSHE programme topics such as 'money skills' teach pupils the basics of finance, including banking, interest, credit, and the differences between wants and needs. Pupils design and produce their own products, such as digital art, and music resources that invoke calmness and tranquillity. During the annual fair the oldest pupils organise and run their own enterprises, such as selling home-made cakes and accessories, through which they generate profit. Pupils are taught to take responsibility towards those less fortunate than themselves and raise funds for various charities.
49. Pupils learn about national services and institutions. They visit the Houses of Parliament and the Bank of England. Representatives of public services such as the police force and the fire brigade visit the school, along with inspirational and motivational speakers who share insights into particular careers such as the financial services industry. The school takes appropriate steps to ensure the appropriateness of the content in all presentations made to pupils, including a balanced perspective on political issues. Drama projects involve pupils acting in role as professionals undertaking responsibilities within their jobs. Pupils are taught to reflect on how the school's learning habits have direct application in the modern workplace.

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

50. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

51. The school's thorough and detailed safeguarding policy is understood and followed closely by staff. This is the result of extensive training that staff receive, not only on induction to the school and in meetings at the start of each term, but also in weekly reminders of key issues that are shared throughout the staff team. All required topics are covered, including updates to national guidance, the Prevent strategy, and particular school procedures such as policies for whistleblowing and using mobile devices. Leaders and governors check that staff remember and apply their training, so they know how to be vigilant and respond appropriately when concerns arise, including making referrals to outside agencies when necessary.
52. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) maintains an oversight of safeguarding matters within the school, which she shares and discusses appropriately with her deputies and the nominated member of the governing board. Actions, including effective communication with local authorities, are taken in a timely manner and thorough records are kept. These are distributed appropriately amongst the staff team in order to promote the welfare of pupils and protect them from harm.
53. The school has robust procedures for filtering and monitoring the internet content which pupils access. Leaders take swift action when concerns arise.
54. The school follows an appropriate process for the appointment of staff, including taking the necessary steps when roles are advertised, when candidates are shortlisted and interviewed, and before those who are selected start to work at the school. All required checks are completed in line with a suitable timescale and are detailed accurately in the school's record of appointments.
55. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when online. The school gives pupils explicit instruction and guidance not only through the ICT and PSHE curriculums but also across other subjects and through the assemblies programme. Pupils confidently explain why pieces of personal information, including images of themselves and others, should remain confidential. They understand the significance of keeping passwords secure.
56. Governors maintain effective oversight of how the school fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities. They check the safeguarding knowledge of leaders and staff, speak to pupils to check they feel safe, and undertake regular reviews of documentation and the information that is sent out to parents.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

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| School | Banstead Preparatory School |
| Department for Education number | 936/6001 |
| Registered charity number | 313999 |
| Address | Banstead Preparatory School Sutton Lane Banstead Surrey SM7 3RA |
| Phone number | 01737 363601 |
| Email address | office@bansteadprep.com |
| Website | www.bansteadprep.com |
| Proprietor | United Learning Ltd |
| Chair | Mark Boxall |
| Headteacher | Jon Chesworth |
| Age range | 2 to 11 |
| Number of pupils | 246 |
| Date of previous inspection | 28 September to 1 October 2021 |

Information about the school

58. Banstead Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between two and 11. It was created in 2017 through the merger of three local independent schools. The school is owned by United Learning, a charitable company, and overseen by a local board of governors who report back to the main board of trustees.
59. The school is divided into two sections. The nursery and pre-school educates 37 children aged between two and four in two classes. The prep school includes a further early years foundation stage (EYFS) setting of 33 children in two Reception classes.
60. The school has identified 50 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
61. Extra support for those who speak English as an additional language is only necessary for a very small number of pupils.
62. The school states that it aims to challenge, develop and nurture every child, in an environment where all children are free to be themselves. The school aims to strive constantly to change and to improve, delivering a modern education that shapes children's character and prepares them for an exciting future, encouraging them to aim high and dream big.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

19 to 21 November 2024

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

64. 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 the learning support area and facilities for physical education, including the swimming pool
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

65. 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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