

# School inspection report

30 January to 1 February 2024

## **St James Preparatory School**

Earsby Street

Olympia

London

W14 8SH

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. Governors are effective in their oversight of school leaders. Members of the board utilise a broad and appropriate range of expertise to provide suitable challenge to the school's decision-makers, calling upon external advice when required. Governors ensure that risks to pupils' wellbeing are identified by school leaders and suitably mitigated.
2. Leaders have a clear vision for the school. The effective implementation of the vision is supported by a comprehensive development plan and an embedded culture of reflection. The development plan is formulated through discussion between senior leaders and staff and is reviewed by governors.
3. The curriculum is broad and balanced and enables pupils to make good progress across a wide range of subjects, including Sanskrit and philosophy.
4. Teachers provide helpful feedback to pupils which clearly explains how pupils can improve their work. Leaders implement effective systems which enable pupils' progress to be closely tracked. Leaders regularly analyse data from pupil assessment and review the impact of interventions, which are effective in addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
5. Children in the early years make good progress due to the individualised learning opportunities they experience and their access to a wide range of appropriate resources and well-chosen activities that promote learning and interest. An effective relationship between staff and parents supports children's positive outcomes.
6. Senior leaders support subject leaders to enable pupils to experience effective teaching and learning in their lessons. Regular observations of lessons by leaders and managers contributes toward a culture of reflection and improvement. Pupils' motivation to learn is enhanced by the effectiveness of the teaching they experience. However, pupils receive limited opportunities to think and learn for themselves in academic lessons.
7. Leaders and managers promote the emotional and spiritual wellbeing of pupils through the regular and effective use of meditation and targeted praise which supports pupils' high levels of self-esteem.
8. Pupils enjoy a broad, engaging extra-curricular programme and opportunities to participate in a wide range of competitions. The varied programme of physical activity available to all pupils enables them to maintain high levels of fitness. Pupils understand the benefits of the school's commitment to a vegetarian diet. Pupils' mental health is effectively promoted as a result of the regular moments of stillness built into the school day and the effectiveness with which concerns pupils disclose are addressed.
9. There is a deeply rooted culture of respect toward others, both within and beyond the school's diverse community. Regular positive interactions between older and younger pupils supports the personal growth of both groups of pupils. Pupils actively engage with and support local community events.
10. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage in education. Older pupils receive appropriate support in order to be able to transition to their senior schools successfully. Pupils readily take on positions

of responsibility in school. For example, pupils contribute toward the development of their school through forums such as the school council and eco-committee.

11. Effective safeguarding measures are in place. The designated safeguarding team works effectively with governors and external agencies to promote the safety and wellbeing of all pupils. Staff receive appropriate and regular training and contribute wholeheartedly toward a robust and effective safeguarding culture.

## 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 step

- Leaders should provide more opportunities for pupils to think and learn for themselves in academic lessons.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. Governors, leaders and managers work effectively together to fulfil the school aims and promote pupils' wellbeing. Governors support and challenge leaders and maintain effective oversight of the school's policies and processes.
13. School policies are in line with current legislation, meet applicable guidance and are relevant to the needs of pupils. A detailed accessibility plan identifies and appropriately addresses the needs of pupils with disabilities by ensuring effective measures are in place to enable access to the curriculum. Leaders rigorously monitor the implementation of policies and support staff by providing effective training from professional agencies or utilising appropriate governor expertise.
14. Leaders identify the school's strengths and areas for further development through regular lesson observation, discussion with staff and data analysis, including identifying trends from behavioural logs.
15. A dedicated leadership and management team effectively promote pupils' emotional and spiritual development through the regular opportunities for reflection and stillness built into the school day. Pupils know that they will be listened to by staff and trust that any issues that arise will be dealt with effectively and in a timely manner. Pupils' high levels of self-esteem is supported by the robust care provided by leaders and staff. A firmly embedded culture of meditation that occurs throughout the day supports pupils' wellbeing.
16. Leaders and managers actively promote the wellbeing of children in the early years. Leaders support teachers to develop a good understanding of individual children's needs which helps them to meet the needs of children. Leaders carefully track and monitor children's progress including their personal development. Children in the early years enjoy regular opportunities to initiate learning whilst securely embedding basic skills. Children's progress is further supported by the effective home/school partnership.
17. Suitable information is made available to parents and carers, as required by legislation. Parents are able to access relevant policies from the school's website. The school has a suitable complaints policy which is followed appropriately in addressing any complaints received. Pupils' progress, areas of strength and targets for further development are reported appropriately to parents.
18. Leaders foster a culture whereby pupils feel safe at school. Risks to pupils' health and safety are rigorously identified and appropriately mitigated. Thorough planning of offsite educational visits and residential trips rigorously address risks to pupils' safety. Leaders, with appropriate oversight from governors, oversee the effective implementation of the school's safeguarding policy and processes, including a thorough approach to staff recruitment.

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

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

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils extend their thinking skills in philosophy and Sanskrit lessons as a result of challenging and effective teaching. Appropriate plans, schemes of work and programmes of activities, suitable for pupils of all ages and abilities, support good progress in pupils' learning. Governance oversight contributes toward pupils' strong educational outcomes through their scrutiny and challenge of pupil progress data.
21. An effective framework enables staff to assess pupils' progress to identify when additional support or further challenge is required. Targeted support is provided by teachers to address gaps in knowledge, skills and understanding. Through the analysis of data, leaders and managers enable teachers to have a clear understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainment of pupils.
22. Assignments completed by pupils are carefully marked by staff who apply a judicious balance between praising effort and achievement whilst identifying areas for improvement. Staff intervene effectively in lessons to address concepts not understood by pupils. Pupils are successfully prepared for entry into a range of senior schools as a result of rigorous teaching. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to think and learn for themselves in subjects across the curriculum.
23. Skilled teachers motivate pupils to engage effectively in lessons. Knowledge, skills and understanding are embedded through the effective use of high-quality resources and a variety of appropriate approaches to the delivery of lesson objectives. Teaching does not discriminate against pupils or promote partisan political views. Effective use of resources enables pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) to gain good levels of fluency and to access the curriculum.
24. The leader of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) provides effective advice and support for staff who then make suitable adaptations in their teaching. Leaders carry out reviews of the provision for pupils who have SEND and use their findings to inform further school development planning.
25. Pupils possess positive attitudes to learning. They are resilient learners who take pride in their achievements and endeavour to attain high standards in their work. Pupils' positive attitudes are fostered by teachers' effective classroom management and their secure knowledge of and passion for their subject.
26. Pupils have access to an interesting and varied extra-curricular programme, which enhances their educational experience and supports the further development of their knowledge, skills and understanding.
27. The educational needs of children in the early years are skilfully catered for by well-qualified staff who effectively support the development of key skills. Children are able to articulate themselves clearly when explaining answers to mathematical problems due to the variety and effectiveness of approaches used by teachers. Children in the early years are highly responsive to opportunities to direct their own learning and are well supported through appropriate interventions by staff who seek to provide opportunities for pupils to build upon their personal interests.

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

**28. All the relevant Standards are met.**



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

29. Pupils care for one another and consistently demonstrate high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence which is built upon the secure, positive relationships they enjoy with staff and with each other. The meditation that regularly occurs through the course of the day, using 'The Pause', supports pupils' receptiveness to learning and their feeling of wellbeing.
30. Pupils understand how to safeguard their own mental health and emotional wellbeing as a result of the guidance they are given in lessons and the effective responses they receive from staff when they raise a concern. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and the school's relationships education programme are helpful in supporting pupils' personal development. Children in the early years willingly use 'colour monsters' to express their feelings.
31. Effective mechanisms are in place for pupils to share concerns via easily accessed reporting systems which pupils willingly use to share their worries. Once a concern has been raised, pupils receive timely, effective responses from staff, many of whom have received mental health first aid training. Pupils benefit from effective interventions by staff aimed at helping them to regulate their emotions, which includes the effective use of calm spaces located in different parts of the school.
32. Pupils learn about the importance of remaining physically healthy in PSHE lessons. Pupils maintain their physical health through participating in an appropriate range of sports in timetabled lessons, in after-school activities, matches and competitions up to national level.
33. Pupils are taught about the benefits of making appropriate food choices and they understand leaders' decision to promote vegetarian food choices. Children in the early years are taught about the importance of oral hygiene and about nutritious food and its importance to physical health.
34. Pupils behave well both in lessons and during breaktimes. Self-regulation, orderliness and politeness is promoted consistently by staff. Pupils are polite and courteous in their interactions with adults. The school's behaviour policy is effectively and consistently implemented which supports pupils' personal development by enabling them to recognise the consequences of the choices they make. Bullying is rare and it is dealt with effectively and appropriately when it occurs.
35. Pupils feel safe and secure at school. They are appropriately supervised, both when on the premises and when undertaking activities away from the school site. The premises are well maintained and risks are identified and addressed in a timely, effective manner.
36. Admission and attendance arrangements are thorough and effective. All health and safety and fire precaution measures are implemented rigorously. Appropriate medical facilities and first aid arrangements are effective in meeting pupils' needs when they are injured or unwell.

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

**37. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

38. Pupils learn how to be an effective member of a community, both at school and in their later lives. Pupils learn about the experience of a range of people living in communities within the UK and in different parts of the world and develop high levels of understanding of, and respect towards, those within and beyond their school community.
39. Pupils exhibit a strong moral code and are clear about right and wrong choices in the way they behave. This is due to the high expectations of staff and the culture of respect that permeates the school. Pupils demonstrate high levels of self-regulation, taking responsibility for their actions and the way they behave.
40. Pupils gain an appropriate understanding of institutions that underpin British society. Visits by members of the police force support pupils in the early years to understand how the emergency services protect people and keep them safe. Pupils' forums, such as the school council and the effective eco-committee, help pupils practise firsthand the principles of democracy through being elected to represent their classmates and voting to adopt initiatives that have been discussed at meetings.
41. Pupils are encouraged to express their views and show appropriate respect and consideration towards others who hold opinions different from their own. Pupils show tolerance and understanding towards people from different cultures and engage with interest when discussing different religions and beliefs.
42. Pupils receive suitable guidance on economic education through the school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Pupils develop their understanding of economic education in the curriculum and apply their knowledge in real life. For example, pupils learn about how to use money through problem-solving activities in maths lessons and apply their knowledge when making financial choices on how to spend their pocket money.
43. Leaders promote the importance of service towards others. Pupils engage in a wide range of activities which support different communities. In gaining an Eco Schools' Green Flag award in 2023, pupils undertook a range of community focused activities that also promoted environmental awareness. Pupils gain a good understanding of the experience of pupils at schools in England and in Africa, which they support through fundraising projects.
44. Pupils receive helpful guidance on how to prepare for the next stage of their lives. Nursery children benefit from regular visits to the prep school through the course of the year. Older pupils benefit from the responsibility bestowed upon them when working with younger pupils. The oldest pupils are well prepared for their senior schools through the rigorous exam preparation they receive and the suitable guidance given in PSHE lessons.

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

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

## Safeguarding

46. Pupils' wellbeing lies at heart of the school community. Pupils feel safe at school. Leaders actively promote the wellbeing of pupils by ensuring robust safeguarding arrangements are in place. Governors provide effective oversight through regular discussions with leaders, staff and pupils, as well as the through the rigorous scrutiny of safeguarding policies and the impact of their implementation.
47. The safeguarding policy, which includes the regulatory standards and the most recent statutory guidance, is updated at least annually. It is available on the school's website and staff receive training in a timely manner when safeguarding guidance is updated.
48. Safeguarding leaders are appropriately trained and are given sufficient time and status to fulfil their roles effectively. Leaders carefully log, monitor and address safeguarding concerns.
49. Appropriate safeguarding training forms part of the induction of staff new to the school. Regular refresher training is undertaken by all staff which enables them to be up to date with current safeguarding policy and practice.
50. Safeguarding concerns, including those for online safety and the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism, are recorded, reported and addressed in an effective and timely manner. Any incidents that occur are managed with appropriate involvement by external agencies when required.
51. Pupils receive suitable guidance in ICT lessons about how to safe online. Filtering and monitoring systems employed by the school are effective in preventing access to inappropriate online content.
52. All staff, governors, volunteers and contractors undergo appropriate safeguarding recruitment checks and these checks are recorded accurately.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	St James Preparatory School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	205/6400
<b>Registered charity number</b>	270156
<b>Address</b>	St James Preparatory School Earsby Street Olympia London W14 8SH
<b>Phone number</b>	020 7348 1794
<b>Email address</b>	office@stjamesprep.org.uk
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stjamesschools.co.uk/prepschool">www.stjamesschools.co.uk/prepschool</a>
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Annabel Lubikowski
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Hilary Wyatt
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	186
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 January to 01 February 2024

## Information about the school

54. St James Preparatory School is a co-educational day school for pupils aged between two and 11 years. Founded in 1975, the school is located in Kensington Olympia. Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher, in September 2022.
55. There are 52 children in the early years, comprising 25 in two nursery classes and 27 in two reception classes.
56. The school has identified 24 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Four pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
57. English is an additional language for 32 pupils.
58. The school states its aims are to offer an education which magnifies the unique talents inherent in every child. It seeks to provide a loving and caring environment based on integrity, mutual trust, respect and understanding whilst aiming to enrich the intellectual, emotional and spiritual development of all its pupils. The school aspires to arm pupils with the talents, strength, wisdom and moral tenacity to offer themselves in a spirit of unselfish generosity for the benefit of humanity.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

30 January to 1 February 2024

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

60. 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
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

61. 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

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