ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

School inspection report

12 to 14 November 2024

St Augustine's Priory

Hillcrest Road

Ealing

London

W5 2JL

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 and leaders possess the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to fulfil their roles and promote the academic, physical and emotional wellbeing of the pupils effectively. They ensure that the school's particular ethos is central to the curriculum and day-to-day operations, while promoting an inclusive environment for pupils of all faiths. Pupils make good progress at the school.

2. Leaders provide a curriculum that challenges and engages pupils and enables them to learn well. The delivery of the curriculum reflects the school's aim to empower pupils with a love of learning. Leaders in the early years provide a well-planned curriculum, which results in children making good progress.

3. Effective teaching and well-planned lessons ensure that pupils' learning needs are met, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Pupils have a clear understanding of how to improve their work through the regular individualised feedback they receive.

4. Leaders monitor the impact of teaching on learning through comprehensive reviews, resulting in highly effective teaching. However, the use of academic data to inform planning and monitor progress of different groups of pupils in the prep school is not as effective as possible. While leaders are aware of this and have taken actions designed to address it, there has not been enough time to fully evaluate the effectiveness of changes that leaders have made to this process.

5. Leaders actively promote a school community of mutual respect through daily acts of worship and the school's informative personal, social, and health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. The suitable, engaging and well-taught relationships and sex education (RSE) lessons address age-appropriate topics.

6. Pupils benefit from a wide-ranging extra-curricular programme, which extends their knowledge and skills.

7. Pupils behave well due to the high expectations staff have of them and the effective implementation of the behaviour management policy.

8. Effective health and safety, risk assessment and fire safety procedures are in place.

9. The school enables pupils to develop their social awareness and understand the impact of their decisions on those around them. Pupils support groups and charities within the local community well.

10. Safeguarding procedures within the school are robust and effective. Leaders responsible for safeguarding utilise support and advice from external agencies effectively. The school encourages pupils and equips them with the skills to raise concerns when they arise.

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The extent to which the school meets the Standards

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

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that the use of assessment data to monitor different groups of pupils' progress in the prep school is as effective as possible.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Governors maintain an informed oversight to ensure that leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Governors engage in dialogue with leaders and staff that features appropriate challenge as well as support. Governors engage positively with leaders, staff and pupils to incorporate the views of the school in the creation of a comprehensive school development plan. Governors scrutinise policies and procedures and evaluate the impact these have on pupils through their regular visits. Governors oversee the appointment of senior leaders, ensuring they have the necessary skills and understanding for their roles.

12. Pupils have many opportunities to share their opinions and views. Leaders effectively consider the views of the pupils to improve provision and routine. For example, following feedback from pupils, leaders updated the number of GCSE subjects offered, resulting in additional curriculum time for English and increased progress.

13. Leaders have a clear vision for the school's future development, which incorporates input from pupils, parents and staff. For example, recent surveys and pastoral reviews have led to the appointment of a mental health lead, which has positively impacted on the mental health provision within the school through the implementation of informal drop-in clinics, counselling sessions and support within PSHE lessons.

14. Leaders responsible for safeguarding have the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their safeguarding roles. They liaise regularly with external agencies to seek advice and make referrals where necessary. They ensure staff have up-to-date training to carry out their roles.

15. Leaders regularly review the quality of the curriculum through comprehensive subject reviews that incorporate the views of pupils, parents and staff, informing the school development plan. Leaders monitor teaching and the curriculum well to ensure that they promote learning effectively. Leaders work closely with teaching staff to monitor and track the school's use of academic data to inform planning. Through the school's annual curriculum review, leaders have changed the way they make use of academic data to inform planning and monitor the progress made by different groups of pupils in the prep school. However, there has not been enough time yet to establish how effective this use of data is.

16. Senior leaders promote and communicate the school's aims and Catholic ethos effectively and provide parents with all required information, much of which is on the school website. Leaders oversee the provision of informative reports to parents and carers to inform them of the progress of their children. Reports to parents contain clear advice about how to achieve further progress. Leaders provide the local authority with the required information relating to funded pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

17. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. For example, leaders take effective actions to make the curriculum accessible for any pupils who have a disability through the school's accessibility plan. They ensure that no groups of pupils are discriminated against by the teaching or any other aspect of the school's provision.

18. Leaders in the early years ensure that staff within the setting deliver a well-balanced curriculum. They provide staff in the early years with appropriate support for their professional development.

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19. Leaders strive to reach informal resolutions to concerns and complaints when they arise, following the school's complaints procedure effectively. On the few occasions when complaints are received, leaders reflect on how the situation can be remedied to reduce similar concerns arising in the future. Governors maintain an effective overview of complaints.

20. Leaders ensure that risks are effectively minimised through a robust risk-management process, including the use of external expertise when necessary. Staff training and clear expectations from leaders result in a suitable system of risk management for educational visits and for areas of the school where potential hazards have been considered.

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

21. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. Leaders provide a broad and balanced curriculum that develops pupils' academic, linguistic, creative and aesthetic skills well. The curriculum includes an appropriate range of subjects, including choices at A level. Subject schemes of work are well planned to cover key aspects of the subjects.

23. Most teaching is highly effective and results from well-planned lessons that carefully consider the different aptitudes of pupils. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and use this to facilitate high levels of challenge that develop the pupils' learning effectively. Teachers use different methods of teaching, including effective use of suitable resources, to excite and engage pupils in their learning. For example, in the early years, teachers' effective use of questioning builds on previous learning to strengthen the children's understanding of musical concepts. Older students in the sixth form benefit from individualised support in lessons from teachers that enables them to make good progress in the particular subjects that they study.

24. Pupils are enabled to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills through the different extended project qualifications and challenges they are given. These projects involve open-ended questions of their own choosing, encouraging the pupils to explore topics in depth, think for themselves and apply their subject knowledge effectively to the themes at hand.

25. The school's comprehensive reading strategy helps pupils to develop extensive vocabulary, which they apply effectively in both written and spoken works. In the early years, children develop their reading skills through daily lessons about the sounds that letters make, regular reading sessions and listening to stories. As they progress, older pupils benefit from various book clubs and opportunities for extended writing, further enhancing their vocabulary and its application in their work.

26. Mathematics subject leaders utilise problem-solving to enable pupils to verbally articulate and explain their mathematical understanding when approaching numeracy problems. As a result, pupils gain confidence in their mathematical abilities, improve their communication skills and enhance their critical thinking.

27. Leaders' emphasis on developing the feedback to pupils during lessons has resulted in pupils having a clear understanding of their current attainment and what they need to do to improve their work further. Regular and detailed feedback from teachers is highly effective in enabling pupils to progress well. This feedback helps pupils reflect on their strengths and areas for development, enabling them to identify their next steps in learning by reviewing previous work each lesson.

28. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in relation to their starting points. In the few instances where pupils do not make expected progress, carefully targeted and effective support plans are put in place. GCSE and A-level results indicate that pupils usually achieve above the grades initially expected from their assessed starting points.

29. The leader of provision for pupils who have SEND oversees the implementation of the individualised support strategies for pupils with SEND that are incorporated into teachers' planning. As a result of these strategies, pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points.

30. Leaders implement suitable support strategies for pupils who speak EAL when required. Teachers' planning carefully considers their individual needs. For example, additional support for and

explanation of vocabulary is provided when this is needed. As a result, pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in their English.

31. Pupils' education is enhanced by a wide range of educational visits locally, nationally and internationally. Music teachers' subject knowledge and well-planned lessons for individuals and groups result in high levels of achievement in music, including in external examinations. Pupils regularly participate in the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) performance examinations with success, and they enjoy performing in the school's regular drama productions. Art teachers use assessment targets to help pupils focus on what they need to do to improve. This targeted feedback is supported by various clubs and support clinics, resulting in well-developed artistic skills.

32. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities. For example, pupils represent their school at many external sports fixtures and achieve success at local and regional levels. Pupils develop their understanding and care for animals and nature through hands-on experiences in the school's farm.

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

33. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

34. The school provides pupils with effective opportunities to learn about different faiths, religions and spiritual perspectives through a comprehensive religious studies programme. This programme includes the study of various world religions, spiritual principles and values, fostering respect and understanding among pupils of different faiths. The school also celebrates different cultural and religious festivals, promoting inclusivity and mutual respect. Additionally, pupils engage in discussions and activities that develop their ability to reflect on their own and others' beliefs and values.

35. Pastoral leaders effectively implement the school's PSHE curriculum. PSHE is given prominence within the timetable. It is taught by knowledgeable staff through well-planned lessons that raise pupils' awareness of age-appropriate issues, such as children in the early years describing what respect looks like to them, and older pupils considering the impact that pornography has on society. The PSHE curriculum includes effective teaching of RSE that reflects current statutory guidance. Pupils become knowledgeable about the importance of consent, and typical signs and symptoms of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

36. Pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem are developed through the performance opportunities they have. In the early years, children engage in weekly show-and-tell presentations. Older pupils regularly read aloud or present to others during weekly assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to take risks in their learning, so that they feel comfortable to do so with the support they receive, even if they encounter difficulties or make mistakes.

37. Leaders have supported pupils' emotional wellbeing through the creation of a mental health lead and counsellor role. Pupils have access to regular drop-in clinics, and they can attend the school's wellbeing club. In PSHE, pupils are equipped with skills to tackle issues linked to mental health such as how to develop strategies around examination stress. Senior leaders regularly monitor pupils' wellbeing through detailed reporting from staff across the school.

38. The school's physical education (PE) programme promotes pupils' understanding of how to stay healthy. Pupils participate in many physical activities that keep them active. In early years, children develop key physical skills through guidance from specialist PE teachers and begin to learn about the importance of maintaining a healthy diet. Older pupils also learn about diet and the importance of exercise for their mental health.

39. Leaders implement an effective behaviour policy. Staff have high expectations of pupils and their behaviour, and from an early age children and pupils learn about what respect means and what makes a good friend. On the few occasions when negative behaviour is experienced, staff deal with it promptly and effectively. Behaviour is promoted through positive reinforcement and reward, which pupils respond well to. Leaders maintain clear records of any instances of negative behaviour, and implement appropriate rewards and sanctions.

40. The school implements an effective anti-bullying strategy. Pupils are equipped to deal with negative situations through the school's 'respect toolkit', which gives them a range of strategies they can use when they face difficult situations, including methods for promoting respect, such as skills around active listening. On the few occasions when bullying incidents take place, pastoral leaders

investigate and support pupils affected effectively. Where necessary, appropriate sanctions are given, with a focus on re-education.

41. The supervision of pupils is effective. Leaders ensure that pupils are supervised throughout the day, including through effective deployment of sufficient staff during breaktimes. Appropriate staff-to-child ratios are maintained in the early years at all times.

42. The school premises and teaching accommodation are well maintained. Leaders implement an effective maintenance schedule, covering areas such as water testing, fire prevention and firefighting equipment. Pupils know what to do if the fire alarm sounds through regular drills each term.

43. There is a suitably resourced medical room overseen by appropriately trained medical personnel. Effective arrangements are in place for pupils who become unwell or who require medical attention. The school caters for dietary requirements and allergies that any pupils might have.

44. Attendance of pupils is well managed. Appropriate attendance and admission registers are maintained in line with current statutory guidance. The school has clear guidelines and high expectations around pupil attendance. Support plans are implemented for pupils when pastoral issues impact on their school attendance levels. Leaders inform the local authority whenever pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times of transition.

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

45. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

46. The curriculum fosters pupils' social awareness throughout their lessons. Pupils possess a high level of social awareness and understand the impact their decisions have on those around them through the school's teaching about social responsibility and community engagement. Pupils' engagement with frequent events, such as 'change the world day' and assemblies discussing ethical issues such as those relating to science research, raises their awareness of the importance of contributing to others in a responsible manner.

47. Pupils regularly engage in a variety of local, national and international charitable activities. The selection of charities and events to raise awareness are pupil-led, reflecting the school's ethos of supporting and helping others. For instance, older pupils have led a school initiative to support a local charity which provides toys to families at Christmas, with visits to the charity to understand the impact of their contributions.

48. Leaders encourage pupils to take responsibility through many opportunities for leadership such as leading in acts of worship, leading assemblies, or taking on roles within the school council. School council decisions have influenced changes to school uniform, and additional resources in the multi-faith prayer room. Pupils of all ages have opportunities to support the running of the school and take on roles of responsibility on different committees, such as the equality, diversity and inclusion committee, which has influenced the extent to which different cultures are represented in class reading books. Senior pupils take on roles as school prefects. With regular guidance from teaching staff, the school prefects act as positive role models for the younger members of the school. The prefects oversee the school's buddy system where older pupils pair up with younger pupils to create an additional layer of pastoral support.

49. Pupils becomes knowledgeable about democratic processes through their studies and through the election process for school council positions or the selection of school prefects. For example, in history lessons, pupils consider ways in which democracy works in practice, such as through the referendum about whether Britain should leave the European Union. Pupils apply their understanding of democracy through a mock political election. In the early years, children regularly vote on end-of-day activities and stories. The school's educational visits programme supports pupils' understanding of British institutions, such as by visits to establishments such as the Houses of Parliament.

50. The school's aim to welcome different faiths and cultures fosters a high level of mutual respect throughout the diverse school community. While the Catholic ethos remains central to the school, pupils learn about the values, principles and practices of diverse faiths and religions in a positive and appreciative manner. In the early years, regular talks from parents educate children about their different cultures, resulting in mutual respect between children and staff. The school celebrates different cultural events such as Diwali and Chinese New Year.

51. The school celebrates culture days and has created a whole-school cookbook promoting the cuisines and backgrounds of the school community, with proceeds supporting local foodbank charities.

52. The school develops pupils' understanding of right and wrong effectively. The curriculum highlights different historical and social considerations where society has learned from choices and events that

have taken place. For example, in science, pupils discuss the moral issues around the testing of animals and how perspectives on this issue have changed over time. Pupils benefit from talks from local police officers about issues within the community.

53. Leaders have established an informative 'futures' careers guidance programme. Pupils learn about how to write curriculum vitae and how to prepare for interview through mock interviews and applications for different positions of responsibility. Careers events include visits to universities, presentations by alumni and volunteers, and talks on the benefits of apprenticeships. Older pupils receive informative guidance on university and apprenticeship applications that allows them to plan life after school. The majority of students go on to study at their chosen universities.

54. The mathematics curriculum includes an introduction and development of financial understanding which contributes towards pupils' preparation for life in British society. Pupils' economic education is promoted further through PSHE lessons and other parts of the school curriculum in well-planned lessons. For example, children in the early years learn about different coins and their value. Older pupils discuss the impact of inflation rates on mortgages and how tax works, and learn how to budget.

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

55. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

56. Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Governors stay well informed about current trends and monitor safeguarding procedures effectively through regular contact with school leaders and scrutiny of their reports. Leaders with safeguarding responsibilities are trained to be able to carry out their roles effectively. Staff receive regular appropriate training, starting at induction, that equips them to address safeguarding concerns effectively.

57. The safeguarding team ensure that any safeguarding concerns are promptly and effectively addressed. They maintain collaborative relationships with local safeguarding partners and refer concerns to them when appropriate. Leaders have a clear understanding of contextual safeguarding issues within the local community and incorporate guidance about these into the training of staff. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) keeps comprehensive records of all safeguarding concerns, actions taken and the decisions that have informed these.

58. Within the early years, appropriately trained staff oversee the safeguarding of children within the setting. The school enforces an appropriate policy regarding the use of mobile phones and other devices within the setting.

59. Senior leaders oversee an effective safer recruitment process. They ensure that all required safer recruitment checks are carried out before staff commence working at the school. These checks are recorded accurately in a single central record of appointments (SCR).

60. Leaders and staff encourage pupils to share any concerns. Pupils have access to trusted adults, including the safeguarding team, mental health lead and school counsellor, to whom they can talk if they have an issue. In the prep school, pupils can share worries through worry boxes, while older pupils can email safeguarding leads or speak directly with pastoral staff. The school's online weekly 'feelings' check-in provides pupils with a secure way to share pastoral worries.

61. From an early age, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including through discussions about trusted adults and road safety. Pupils are well informed about online safety through the school's comprehensive PSHE curriculum and computing lessons. A robust filtering and monitoring system is in place.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

62. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	St Augustine's Priory
Department for Education number	307/6005
Registered charity number	1097781
Address	St Augustine's Priory Hillcrest Road Ealing London W5 2JL
Phone number	02089 972022
Email address	office@sapriory.com
Website	www.sapriory.com
Proprietor	St Augustine's Priory School Ltd
Chair	Mr Patrick D'Arcy
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Macallister
Age range	3 to 18
Number of pupils	361
Date of previous inspection	2 to 5 November 2021

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Information about the school

63. St Augustine's Priory is an independent Catholic day school for female pupils, also catering for male children in the Nursery. It is located in Ealing, West London, and is overseen by a board of governors. The current headteacher took up her position in April 2023.

64. There are 14 children in the early years comprising one Nursery and one Reception class.

65. The school has identified 79 pupils as having SEND. Two pupils in the school have an EHC plan.

66. English is an additional language for 42 pupils.

67. The school states its aims are to enable pupils to achieve outstanding results, to inspire a love of learning and an alternative way of thinking. It seeks to enable pupils to learn how to change their world.

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Inspection details

Inspection dates	12 to 14 November 2024

68. A team of five inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

69. 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.

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

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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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