

School inspection report

26 to 28 November 2024

Wetherby Preparatory School

48 Bryanston Square

London

W1H 2EA

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. Pupils' wellbeing is at the heart of leaders' practice. They genuinely care about the pupils and their happiness. Leaders establish warm and nurturing relationships with pupils and are readily available to them when pastoral or academic support is needed. As a result, pupils are happy and feel safe at school.
2. Changes to the leadership team have enabled leaders to take a fresh approach to considering the school's strengths and how they could improve further. Leaders and governors take feedback from the school community into account when making decisions, such as changing food options at lunch, introducing face-to-face parents' meetings and providing additional school reports for parents.
3. Pupils are usually kind and considerate in their interactions with others. They understand the difference between right and wrong. They behave well in lessons and during outdoor breaktimes. Behaviour is generally good. However, at times, a small number of pupils do not follow the school's rules as they move from lesson to lesson and there is some minor misbehaviour.
4. Pupils experience a suitable breadth of subjects within the curriculum and a wealth of extra-curricular opportunities. They thrive on these experiences and benefit from being able to develop their knowledge and skills in a variety of different and interesting ways. Pupils make good progress during their time at the school.
5. Teaching is ambitious so that pupils are suitably challenged in their learning. Most teaching is adapted well to cater for pupils' needs. However, some teaching is less effective because pupils' prior attainment is not taken into account well enough. Where this is the case, pupils make less progress than they are capable of.
6. The development of pupils' confidence and self-esteem is supported effectively, including through having their achievements recognised and praised. Certificates and awards are used well to help pupils feel proud of their achievements and to motivate them to try hard and improve further.
7. The school premises are well maintained. Health and safety procedures are carried out effectively by the maintenance team.
8. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their lives. They receive tailored support that helps them to be successful in their applications to academically selective senior schools.
9. Leaders and teachers actively promote the safeguarding of pupils. They have the necessary training and skills and undertake their responsibilities effectively.
10. Some required policies were not available on the school's website at the beginning of the inspection. A small number of policies did not refer to the most recent guidance. These errors were rectified before the end of the on-site inspection.

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:

- review policies carefully to ensure that they reference the latest statutory guidance and ensure that all required policies are available on the school's website at all times
- develop the quality of teaching so that there is greater consistency in how well pupils' needs are met, particularly in terms of their prior attainment, so that all pupils make the progress that they are capable of
- ensure that the behaviour policy is implemented as effectively during transitions between lessons as it is at other parts of the day in order that all pupils behave appropriately at these times.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Governors and leaders have a clear vision for the school that is implemented well. Pupils' wellbeing is important to leaders and governors and guides all aspects of their work. Leaders develop warm and caring relationships with pupils that support their wellbeing. They are accessible to pupils and always take the time to speak to them individually. This fosters a sense of belonging and connection that helps pupils to enjoy school and feel safe there.
12. Governors ensure that leaders have the skills and knowledge they need and fulfil their roles effectively so that the Standards are met consistently. Governors work collaboratively with leaders to evaluate the school's performance and ensure that its aim of providing a broad and balanced education is promoted effectively. They agree the school's strategic direction and development plan. Leaders identify the school's strengths accurately and place suitable attention on the areas to enhance. Leaders listen to and act on pupils' views about what could be improved, such as changes to the school's catering. Pupils appreciate that their views help shape decision making at school.
13. Governors and leaders consider and mitigate, as far as possible, any potential risks. They have a clear understanding of risk management which they use effectively to implement risk assessments that protect pupils' physical and emotional wellbeing. There is a robust approach to planning educational trips, ensuring that risks are identified and minimised. The wide range of risk assessments are carefully monitored and scrutinised to ensure that the process is effective.
14. Policies are implemented effectively. Leaders review and revise policies routinely, and as and when required. Leaders work with staff to ensure that policies are understood and implemented consistently and that the most recent statutory guidance is put into practice. Some of the policies that are required to be available online were missing at the start of inspection, following a recent update of the school's website. This was corrected during the course of inspection. In addition, some policies needed minor amendments to ensure that they reference the most up-to-date statutory guidance. This was also corrected before the end of the inspection.
15. Parents are provided with detailed information about the school and about how their child is progressing with their learning. Leaders have recently implemented an additional written report each year, as well as re-introducing face-to-face parents' meetings, to further enhance the partnership between school and home. Teachers are readily available to meet with parents about any aspect of their child's academic or personal development.
16. Leaders have an appropriate complaints policy that they implement well. It enables them to listen to and resolve parental concerns. Leaders reflect on how they could improve, and take action where appropriate, as a result of working with parents.
17. Leaders work collaboratively with external agencies, when required, in pupils' best interests. This includes working with the local authority on matters relating to safeguarding and when supporting pupils who have an educational and health care (EHC) plan. Leaders provide local authorities with information about pupils with an EHC plan, as required.
18. Leaders fulfil their duties in relation to the Equality Act 2010. They carefully consider and successfully implement an accessibility plan focused on removing barriers to accessing the premises and curriculum. The plan is reviewed regularly to evaluate its progress and to ensure that actions remain appropriate.

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. The curriculum includes a wide range of subjects and enables pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in many different areas. The varied curriculum is appropriate to pupils' ages and aptitudes and challenges their thinking and learning. The curriculum is enhanced by subject specialists who use their knowledge effectively to help pupils extend their learning. This results in pupils making good progress throughout the school.
21. Teaching is mostly well planned and delivered. It enables pupils to engage well in lessons and to build on their prior learning. Most teachers are proficient at adapting their teaching to provide for pupils' different needs and abilities. They provide appropriate challenge to extend pupils further, where appropriate. However, some teaching is less effective. At times, pupils' needs are met less well, particularly in terms of their different levels of attainment. Where this is the case, some pupils do not make as much progress as they are capable of.
22. Teachers ensure that pupils' behaviour is managed well during lessons, resulting in efficient use of lesson time. Teachers use stimulating resources that encourage pupils to concentrate on their learning and enable them to develop a deeper understanding of concepts being taught. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and are motivated to work hard and make good progress.
23. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively. They receive tailored sessions to meet their individual needs and ensure that they make good progress. The support is monitored, and adapted if necessary, so that pupils receive the most relevant support. Staff in the SEND department have appropriate skills and knowledge. They identify pupils' needs and suggest suitable strategies for teachers to support them in the classroom. They liaise effectively with external agencies, such as when conducting annual reviews for pupils who have an EHC plan, and act on the advice they are given.
24. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are supported effectively to ensure that they make good progress. Support is provided through individualised, targeted lessons matched to pupils' needs. This includes working with pupils to acquire early language skills so that they can access learning with their peers. Further support is offered to ensure that pupils who speak EAL develop their vocabulary and comprehension skills by engaging with more challenging reading texts.
25. Leaders and teachers make effective use of assessment to ensure that pupils make good progress. They use assessment information to identify any individuals who might require additional support. Teachers regularly assess how well pupils understand what they have been taught and identify any gaps in their knowledge. They make changes to their teaching, and provide additional support, so that pupils quickly catch up.
26. Teachers provide effective feedback to pupils to help them to make good progress. Pupils use this to develop their understanding of their strengths and how to improve. Pupils learn to identify their own targets based on detailed criteria provided by teachers. They are active in evaluating their own work, such as analysing their performance in assessments. This enables them to identify how they have improved and what action they need to take to make further progress.
27. Pupils enjoy the varied programme of clubs the school offers, and attend enthusiastically. This enables them to acquire new skills in areas such as chess, cookery and ceramics. Clubs also provide opportunities for pupils to extend and challenge their thinking, such as researching and writing a

textbook about twentieth century China in the modern history club. The curriculum is enriched by an extensive programme of visits to London attractions such as museums and the theatre. This helps to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects including science, art, drama and English.

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' self-esteem and self-confidence are developed well during their time at the school. Teachers give positive feedback about what pupils are doing well, with notable achievements recognised by special certificates in assembly and through the headteacher's 'good show' awards. The warm relationships they have with staff, and the regular praise and recognition they receive, help pupils to be confident in their own abilities and feel proud of their achievements.
30. The comprehensive personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum helps pupils learn how to manage their physical and mental health. The well-structured programme teaches pupils about a wide range of important areas including healthy eating and what a balanced diet entails. Pupils learn how to identify and manage their emotions. Younger pupils have 'worry monsters' in their classrooms which help them articulate any negative feelings they experience. Many staff have gained mental health first aid qualifications to enhance their understanding of how to support pupils' emotional wellbeing.
31. Well-planned physical education (PE) lessons enable pupils to develop their physical fitness well. Specialist coaches with relevant training are utilised effectively so that pupils gain skills in team sports, physical co-ordination and agility. Tailored PE sessions mean that pupils are supported at their level to make good progress according to their starting points.
32. Pupils have a well-developed moral understanding. They show respect for other people regardless of their race, religion or other personal characteristics. They display a kind and considerate attitude towards others. They are encouraged to nominate their peers for any 'random acts of kindness' that they notice.
33. Pupils are well supervised and the behaviour policy is usually implemented well. Pupils behave well in lessons and at breaktimes. They respond well to receiving praise and house points for showing positive behaviour. However, from time to time, the behaviour policy is not followed as well when pupils move from one lesson to another. This results in a small amount of minor misbehaviour.
34. Relationships and sex education (RSE) provides age-appropriate opportunities for pupils to consider how to be a good friend and what constitutes a healthy relationship. They learn how to manage their friendships and relationships, and to seek help if they are concerned. Pupils are taught about how their body changes as they get older. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 take part in sex education lessons, that follow statutory guidance, to develop their understanding of key issues such as consent.
35. Pupils know what bullying entails and why it is wrong. This understanding is reinforced by regular PSHE lessons and assemblies where bullying is discussed with the pupils. On the rare occasions that bullying does occur, leaders and teachers resolve matters swiftly and effectively with suitable support given to any pupils involved.
36. Weekly assemblies in the local church allow pupils to take part in quiet reflection times. The theology, philosophy and religion curriculum develops pupils' spiritual understanding further. Pupils learn about a wide range of themes including world religions, ethical issues, prejudice, morality and respect.

37. Members of the maintenance team manage the site well, ensuring that the premises are suitable for learning and pupils' needs and requirements. There are regular health and safety checks, including for fire safety.
38. Suitable arrangements are in place for first aid, with key members of staff having appropriate first aid training. Accurate records are kept about the administration of first aid and medication. Effective procedures are in place to look after pupils with allergies and other health needs.
39. Admission and attendance registers are maintained according to statutory guidance. Leaders carefully monitor attendance and take effective action in response to absence, when required. They liaise with families and external agencies if attendance is a concern. The school notifies the local authority about pupils who leave or join at non-standard transition times.

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

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

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

41. Through the PSHE programmes of study and the theology, philosophy and religion curriculum, pupils develop a strong understanding of inclusivity. They learn that people should be treated equally and fairly, no matter their differences. Pupils benefit from learning about the cultures of others and enjoy sharing aspects of their own in lessons and assemblies.
42. Economic education is taught effectively. Within the mathematics curriculum, pupils competently complete calculations involving money, including determining percentages of different amounts. In PSHE, pupils learn how to budget and consider how different career paths might influence their earning potential. In theology, philosophy and religion, pupils consider the issue of wealth versus poverty. They develop a mature understanding of the moral issues relating to this debate.
43. Pupils are suitably prepared for the move to senior schools. A carefully planned curriculum incrementally develops knowledge and skills appropriate for entrance requirements for senior schools. Pupils are prepared well for entrance examinations and interviews, as appropriate. Teachers help pupils to reflect on how they can make a successful transition to senior school. This involves considering the school's values, such as perseverance and teamwork, to help them think about the qualities that will enable them to be ready for the move to a new school.
44. Careers education is effective. Pupils are well prepared for life beyond school through sessions to develop their knowledge of careers and to consider the careers options that may be available to them. There is a programme of talks from parents with a variety of professions that broadens pupils' knowledge about different fields of work. Pupils' understanding is further developed through researching different careers and by attending a work experience day with a parent.
45. Pupils acquire knowledge about democracy in PSHE lessons and assemblies. They learn about national democracy when visiting the Houses of Parliament. Their understanding of democracy in their own lives is enhanced through elections at school, such as voting for representatives for the school council and when deciding which charities to support. Pupils learn about the importance of the rule of law through discussions in PSHE lessons and through 'law and order workshops' that enable them to deepen their knowledge of the justice system.
46. Pupils contribute positively to the local area and wider society through leaders' emphasis on encouraging them to take the lead in the school's charity work. Pupils show empathy when contributing to suggestions for charities to support, as a result of researching different ideas in year groups. In addition to fundraising for charities, pupils support the community in other practical ways, such as collecting toys for patients and making hampers for nurses at a children's hospital.
47. Teachers actively promote the principles of right from wrong. When there are issues between pupils, staff support them to understand and learn from their mistakes. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on and take responsibility for their actions, making amends, as appropriate.
48. Pupils in Year 8 apply for positions of responsibility, such as prefects, house captains and head pupil. The pupils selected take their responsibilities seriously by being role models for younger pupils. Pupils in all year groups apply to be a member of the school council or a charity representative. Pupils thrive on these opportunities and feel valued when making decisions about school life.

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

49. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

50. Leaders have established a suitable safeguarding culture that promotes pupils' welfare. The safeguarding team ensures that all staff and governors receive appropriate training with regular updates, when required. The safeguarding policy follows statutory guidance. It supports staff to understand their role in ensuring that safeguarding is at the forefront of their work. Staff are vigilant in looking out for potential signs of abuse or neglect. They report and record concerns promptly when they arise.
51. Leaders have effective knowledge of safeguarding procedures, including about risks that are specific to the school and local area. They take a proactive approach towards minimising risks. When safeguarding issues arise, the safeguarding team acts quickly and effectively. They liaise with external agencies, such as children's social care and the police, effectively to ensure that the right type and level of support is provided in a timely fashion.
52. Leaders implement robust procedures to ensure that the recruitment of staff meets regulatory requirements. Their thorough knowledge of safer recruitment approaches enables them to fulfil this role effectively. Governors check regularly that safer recruitment is effective when appointing new staff. All staff checks are suitably and accurately recorded in a single central record of appointments.
53. Teaching in information technology and PSHE lessons is effective in enabling pupils to understand how to identify risks and manage their own safety. Pupils learn about personal safety, such as when venturing outside of school and learning how to cross roads safely. They understand the risks of harmful substances to their physical and mental health. They learn about the importance of online safety and who they can talk to if they are worried. Leaders have implemented suitable filtering and monitoring processes to ensure that pupils cannot access inappropriate material when online.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Wetherby Preparatory School
Department for Education number	213/6395
Address	Wetherby Preparatory School 48 Bryanston Square London W1H 2EA
Phone number	020 7535 3520
Email address	admin@wetherbyprep.co.uk
Website	www.wetherbyprep.co.uk
Proprietor	Inspired Education Group
Chair	Mr Nicholas Wergan
Headteacher	Mrs Nina Kingsmill Moore
Age range	7 to 13
Number of pupils	349
Date of previous inspection	16 to 19 November 2021

Information about the school

55. Wetherby Preparatory School opened in 2004 and moved to its current location in 2009. It is a single-sex day school for male pupils located in Marylebone, London. The school is a member of the Inspired Education Group, which carries out corporate governance responsibility for the school.
56. The school has identified 102 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
57. English is an additional language for 76 pupils.
58. The school states its aims are to provide a holistic, child-centred approach, which aims to develop pupils' intellectual, physical, social and moral selves.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

26 to 28 November 2024

59. A team of four inspectors and one shadow inspector 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 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.

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**.

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