

School inspection report

14 to 16 January 2025

St Paul's School

Lonsdale Road

Barnes

London

SW13 9JT

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'.

Contents

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS	3
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....	4
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS	4
SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....	5
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE	6
SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	7
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	8
SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	9
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	10
SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....	11
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY	12
SAFEGUARDING	13
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING	13
SCHOOL DETAILS	14
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	15
INSPECTION DETAILS	16

Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders are supported effectively by a proactive and visible governing body who provide thorough oversight. Governors visit the school on a regular basis to help them understand the school well. They review the school's policies and procedures in a timely manner. As a result, the Standards are met consistently.
2. The wellbeing of pupils is compassionately supported by staff at the school. Pupils benefit from professionally warm interactions with their teachers who know them well. Pupils consistently show respect and humility towards others in line with the school's aims and ethos.
3. The school is ambitious academically and pupils respond well to high academic expectations. Teachers have considerable knowledge in their subjects which they use to generate intellectual curiosity in the pupils they teach. Pupils benefit from typically engaging lessons and achieve highly at the school in comparison to national averages. They are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
4. The school's extremely broad and extensive extra-curricular programme is a significant strength. Leaders consider and shape the programme very carefully so that pupils of all ages benefit from it equally. Teachers provide stimulating activities and share their passions and expertise so that pupils are inspired to develop new interests. The extra-curricular programme offers pupils many opportunities to stretch their thinking, develop skills in problem-solving, and collaborate and respond to challenge. The dynamic extra-curricular provision encourages pupils to establish new friendships and builds and supports their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils develop their academic, sporting and creative skills through regular participation in the extra-curricular programme and achieve extremely well, including in national competitions.
5. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme is suitable overall and includes an appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE) component. However, the PSHE curriculum and teaching in the senior school does not engage pupils consistently or meet their needs as well as possible.
6. Boarding leaders create a friendly, supportive and inclusive boarding community that supports boarders' wellbeing well. Communication between boarding and academic staff is effective.
7. Leaders maintain a school culture in which pupils are consistently mindful of others. Pupils are provided with well-planned opportunities to serve within the school community, both locally and further afield. Pupils demonstrate positive moral attitudes and leadership. They engage well as responsible citizens.
8. The school's safeguarding arrangements are thorough and managed carefully. Those with safeguarding responsibilities receive effective training, ensuring that they have secure knowledge and understanding to undertake their roles. Leaders provide regular safeguarding training for all staff, who know how to report any concerns. Staff are vigilant and take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. The school has a robust 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 steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that the PSHE curriculum and teaching in the senior school consistently engages pupils' interests so that the PSHE programme meets their needs as effectively as possible.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Leaders implement a clear and respectful ethos that actively supports and nurtures pupils' wellbeing. This is underpinned by the school's five core values of respect, kindness, humility, integrity and resilience, which leaders communicate effectively so that pupils, staff and parents know and understand them well. Pupils demonstrate integrity and kindness towards others consistently in their daily interactions.
10. Leaders are supported well by an engaged and effective governing body. Governors receive reports from leaders which they scrutinise meticulously. Governors visit lessons, attend school events and meet with pupils and staff. This means that they have a thorough understanding of the school. Governors provide support and challenge when checking school policies, which are reviewed and revised in a timely manner. Governors assure themselves that leaders have the knowledge and skills to carry out their responsibilities effectively so that the Standards are met consistently.
11. Leaders and staff meet regularly to reflect on and evaluate the school's performance. Staff consultations are constructive and lead to new actions and developments, such as improving the house system. This improvement has provided pupils with enhanced leadership opportunities, for example by presenting house assemblies and organising house competitions.
12. Boarding leaders receive appropriate training and have the experience and expertise to fulfil their boarding responsibilities effectively. Boarding documentation is maintained in line with statutory requirements. Boarding and academic staff meet regularly to discuss how to support boarders' progress. The boarding accommodation is managed well and provides a friendly and hospitable environment for boarders.
13. Leaders have established and maintain thorough systems to manage and reduce risk. Staff are trained to write risk assessments and to identify and mitigate potential risks effectively. Governors provide appropriate oversight of risk assessments prepared for national and international trips. Risk assessments carefully consider the individual needs of pupils. Leaders regularly review risk assessments and revise them as necessary so that they remain suitable.
14. The complaints policy is written clearly and includes an appropriate three-stage process. The school provides a separate complaints procedure for boarders. Leaders keep careful records of any informal concerns, which they closely analyse to identify any trends. When formal complaints are raised, leaders investigate and manage them in accordance with the published timescales. Detailed records of any subsequent actions and resolutions are maintained.
15. Leaders engage constructively with local agencies and attend specialist training. For example, safeguarding leaders attend training about countering the risk of radicalisation and extremism, which is led by the London 'Prevent' duty coordinator. This provides expertise which informs and shapes school policies and practices.
16. Parents are provided with useful information, mainly through the school's website. This includes an appropriate statement of boarding principles. Parents are regularly informed of their child's pastoral welfare, attainment, progress and effort in a well-developed system of parents' evenings and reports, which are spread across the academic year. If a pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan, the school provides the local authority with the required information to inform the annual review.

17. Leaders ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. The school observes a disability awareness month during which external visitors speak to pupils about a variety of topics such as disability, gender equality and inclusion. Leaders have appointed an equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) leader who works with staff and pupils to promote a culture of respect and tolerance. The school maintains a suitable accessibility plan and makes reasonable adjustments so that pupils with disabilities can access the curriculum and wider educational provision.

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

18. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

19. The school maintains a broad and ambitious curriculum. For example, junior pupils benefit from a diverse curriculum ranging from Greek to engineering. Older pupils choose from a wide range of GCSE and A-level subjects so that they develop and pursue their academic individual interests to a high level. The curriculum provides extension and enrichment beyond the national curriculum. For example, the school offers pupils the opportunity to study further maths or to undertake the extended project qualification (EPQ). Leaders review the curriculum annually and monitor its effectiveness through measures such as visiting lessons and consulting with pupils. Leaders plan carefully and ensure that continuity between the curriculum in the junior and senior sections of the school is effective. The curriculum supports British values such as the promotion of mutual respect and meets the aptitudes and needs of all pupils.
20. Teaching fosters a spirit of enquiry and encourages pupils to develop their own passion for learning and think independently about their studies. Pupils demonstrate academic responsibility, excitement and diligence towards their learning. They consistently practise and develop their literacy and mathematical skills in other areas of their learning. Pupils analyse historical sources and consider alternative perspectives about historical events carefully. In geography, pupils calculate the capacity of the atmosphere to sustain more water and use sophisticated geographical vocabulary in their explanations. Teaching enables pupils to learn well and to make good progress. Pupils achieve highly in GCSE and A-level examinations. They are successful in gaining places at subsequent educational establishments which set ambitious entry levels.
21. Academic leaders use assessment effectively to monitor the progress of pupils and to make any appropriate adjustments to teaching to support further progress. Staff support pupils by facilitating subject clinics and adapting teaching strategies to consolidate or accelerate pupils' learning, as necessary. Leaders carefully analyse assessment data to inform curriculum reviews. For example, leaders meet with each department to evaluate their academic outcomes and to set challenging development targets for the next academic year. Leaders share individual pupils' academic data and performance with parents every term so that they are kept informed about the progress their child is making.
22. Pupils' good progress is supported well by their teachers. Pupils receive precise and useful feedback about their work which explains what they have done well and identifies clearly how they can improve their work further. Teachers demonstrate expertise in their subjects which they use well to inspire and engage pupils in their lessons. Lessons are stimulating and include probing questions, challenging tasks and effective use of varied resources.
23. Leaders implement an extremely wide and stimulating extra-curricular programme. Staff and leaders carefully monitor pupils' involvement in the extra-curricular activities to ensure that it complements their academic aspirations and commitments. Leaders provide pupils with highly effective opportunities to nurture existing talents and skills, or to experience and explore new interests through the extra-curricular choices available to them. The richness and variety of the extra-curricular programme ensures that pupils extend their knowledge and develop their skills well, whether they wish to simply try something new or strive for high levels of achievement in academic, sporting, creative or recreational endeavours. Pupils develop a range of skills from clubs and societies including engineering, music, sport, logic and debating. Pupils' active participation in the

extra-curricular programme enhances their confidence and self-esteem and builds their collaboration and teamwork skills highly effectively.

24. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive appropriate support so that they make good progress. Experienced leaders meet with pupils who have SEND to write learning support plans which are shared effectively with teachers. Staff from different departments, such as mathematics and history, meet to share strategies that have worked well when teaching pupils who have SEND. This means that pupils who have SEND benefit from a consistently supportive teaching approach.
25. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are well supported. When required, they are provided with additional resources such as word lists in science and writing frames to support their development of writing skills. Pupils who speak EAL are assessed regularly so that teachers recognise their language needs and support these effectively.

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

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

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

27. The school consistently supports pupils' emotional wellbeing and mental health. Relationships between teachers and pupils are respectful. Pupils have frequent opportunities to discuss their progress with tutors who act as caring and supportive role models. Pupils learn in an environment where negative peer pressure and unkindness are not accepted.
28. Pupils learn about tolerance and humility in moral philosophy lessons and explore how ethics relate to the values of kindness and inclusivity. The junior and senior schools have separate pupil councils which convene regularly to share and discuss pupils' views. House captains lead their house assemblies and deliver weekly messages about the importance of demonstrating respect, kindness and humility within the school community. As a result, pupils demonstrate mutual respect well. This effectively promotes their self-confidence and esteem.
29. The PSHE curriculum and teaching for pupils in the junior school are effective. Pupils learn about gender stereotyping and explore how this can affect self-esteem and become a barrier to fulfilling ambitions. Pupils in the senior school are taught appropriate topics in PSHE, such as establishing lasting friendships and sensible sleeping habits. However, whilst most PSHE teaching is successful, there are times when topics are repeated and lessons lack interest, so that pupils in the senior school are not always fully engaged. Consequently, the PSHE curriculum does not engage or meet the needs of senior pupils as effectively as possible.
30. Pupils are taught an appropriate RSE curriculum. Junior school pupils explore the dangers of peer pressure and the importance of consent and sensible decision-making. Pupils in the senior school learn about body image and masculinity, which helps them to maintain positive mental health. The RSE curriculum is enhanced by visiting speakers who relate important issues to pupils' experiences, such as a presentation by a Paralympian on how to approach and navigate challenges. Parents are appropriately advised about the content of the RSE curriculum.
31. The school develops pupils' understanding of spiritual perspectives effectively. The extra-curricular programme includes societies that celebrate different religions, such as the Christian Union and Hindu societies. Pupils are taught about world religions in their theology and philosophy lessons. Leaders provide a prayer room for pupils who seek spiritual reflection.
32. The broad physical education (PE) programme supports pupils' physical health effectively. The school emphasises the value of enjoyment and participation and provides a range of sporting activities that engage pupils well. Pupils play team sports such as football, rugby and cricket, and experience other sports such as paddleball, fives and squash. PE lessons develop specific skills such as how to support agility and muscular development and learn how exercise positively benefits physical and mental health.
33. Pupils follow an effective code of conduct which reinforces positive behaviour. Pupils receive commendations and house points in acknowledgement of responsible and inclusive behaviour. They accept responsibility for their own behaviour and model the school's values in their actions around school. Leaders provide time for reflection and guidance when pupils' behaviour breaks the behaviour code. The school maintains a productive anti-bullying strategy. For example, leaders regularly remind pupils about the harmful effects of bullying in assemblies and tutor period.

Behaviour and bullying records are detailed, monitored and thorough. Pupils typically behave well at the school.

34. The premises and accommodation provide a secure educational environment. The well-managed boarding accommodation is suitable and hospitable. The health and safety committee meet regularly and provide thorough oversight of procedures so that the school environment remains suitable. Staff are provided with effective training in health and safety procedures, including fire safety, and how to report any safety issues. Leaders deal swiftly with any health and safety issues raised. Supervision of pupils is well managed and includes a 24-hour site security team and an efficient electronic entry system on all external doors. Staff are vigilant and alert when supervising pupils during breaktimes. An appropriate number of staff supervise boarders effectively during boarding time.
35. Boarders rehearse emergency fire evacuations every term. They understand how to seek support, such as from the independent person. Boarding prefects demonstrate responsibility when organising house trips and promoting an inclusive boarding culture. Leaders regularly consult boarders through meetings. Relationships within the boarding community are friendly and respectful. Boarders report that they feel safe and well supported.
36. Medical and first aid procedures are overseen diligently. The medical centre is effectively managed by well-qualified nurses who are also trained in mental health first aid. Leaders regularly review first aid provision so that pupils are provided with appropriate care, when needed. The school provides suitable facilities within the medical centre and in the boarding houses.
37. The admission and attendance registers are maintained in line with the requirements of current statutory guidance. Attendance champions analyse data carefully. Leaders discuss pupils' attendance at regular welfare meetings. Leaders quickly implement strategies to support and improve pupils' attendance, when necessary. The school notifies the local authority when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.

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

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

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

39. The school is a welcoming and respectful community. Leaders consistently promote a culture of inclusivity and the importance of mutual respect effectively, so that pupils are supportive towards each other and collaborate well. The curriculum develops pupils' understanding of the negative consequences of discriminatory behaviour and prejudice. For example, in mathematics, pupils examine gender bias when learning about data analysis. In history, pupils study the harmful result of antisemitic attitudes. Leaders utilise assemblies, lessons and presentations effectively to develop pupils' learning about different cultures and faiths, and issues relating to equality. As a result, pupils widen their understanding of diverse traditions and beliefs and of the importance of respecting them.
40. Pupils develop a competent understanding of finance. In the junior school, pupils start to learn about taxation, budgetary control and disposable income through the PSHE curriculum. Pupils have further opportunities to learn about monetary matters through the economics society, the 'young enterprise' scheme and 'entrepreneurship week'. Senior pupils write business plans and applications for funding for their business proposals. Pupils are prepared effectively to make responsible financial decisions in the future.
41. Pupils receive thorough and balanced information about careers which is based on particular national benchmarks. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 attend regular assemblies where speakers present information about a diverse range of careers. Senior pupils receive frequent and up-to-date careers bulletins and individual guidance about possible pathways relating to pupils' interests and aptitudes. They can seek advice from the school's careers and university staff, tutors, subject teachers and senior leaders. Pupils are advised well about future choices such as the pathway to university, medical school, entrepreneurialism, taking a gap year and entering employment. This advice includes guidance about applying for and managing student loans and how to prepare for entering the workplace. The careful approach to careers guidance means that pupils are thoroughly prepared to make informed choices about their futures.
42. Pupils are taught effectively about British and international society and the importance of democracy. They learn about the rule of law and understand the positive consequences of abiding by rules. Pupils study British constitutional arrangements in history. They explore old and current legal practices and theories through attending the law society. In moral philosophy, pupils demonstrate moral sensitivity, for example when learning about the law relating to abortion. Pupils participate in hustings and mock elections and cast votes for those who apply for school positions of responsibility. They study regimes where democracy breaks down and consider the damaging effect of this on personal liberty and freedom of speech. Pupils consider the function of institutions such as the United Nations and explore its role in promoting human rights, security and peace. Teachers present pupils with political information in a balanced and unbiased manner, for example, when studying political sources and ideas drawn from opposing perspectives.
43. Pupils develop a social conscience and sense of responsibility towards others, both locally and further afield. They promote the school's core values of humility and respect through engagement with opportunities to contribute positively to others in the community. For example, pupils engage with a local community centre and share meals with elderly residents. They offer entertainment to elderly people by performing music and staging conjuring tricks. Pupils participate in the national

citizenship programme and the Wings of Hope Achievement Awards, and raise funds to help improve education in India and Malawi. Pupils develop a spirit of altruism and an awareness of social justice through their charitable endeavours.

44. Pupils contribute positively to the school community. Leaders provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to serve as house captains, as senior prefects and on committees such as the 'values committee', which actively promotes the school's aims and ethos. Senior pupils are reflective about the positive opportunities the school has provided for them, and they share their experiences with other pupils. Year 7 pupils provide peer mentorship to pupils in Years 3 and 4 and support them by helping with their organisation and through social collaboration and interaction. The opportunities to demonstrate leadership help pupils to develop self-confidence and empathy towards others.

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. The school's safeguarding culture is robust and reflects suitable policies and thorough and systematic procedures. Governors provide regular, challenging and supportive oversight of safeguarding practices at the school. This helps ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective and reflect current statutory guidance.
47. Induction and ongoing safeguarding training is effective, including with regard to the 'Prevent' duty relating to measures that guard against radicalisation and extremism, child-on-child abuse and safeguarding considerations relating specifically to boarding. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities check staff's understanding about a different aspect of safeguarding each week. Those who work at the school have a secure knowledge of safeguarding procedures and confidently understand how to respond to any concerns.
48. The safeguarding team are trained appropriately for their role. They consult with local safeguarding partners in a constructive and timely manner when concerns arise and make referrals to them when appropriate. Safeguarding records are clear, detailed and kept in line with the requirements of current statutory guidance.
49. Leaders implement different ways for pupils to seek support if they have a concern or worry. Leaders and staff are available for pupils to go to. In addition, junior pupils can use a 'commenting concern box', whilst senior pupils can seek help by scanning a QR code or by sending an online request for support. Older pupils volunteer to provide mentoring support to younger pupils and are specifically trained for this role so that they know how to respond to concerns appropriately. Boarders have recourse to an independent person who is available to offer advice and support.
50. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, at an age-appropriate level, pupils learn about the dangers of extremism and explore the harmful consequences of drugs and alcohol misuse. Pupils learn how to use the internet safely in lessons, tutor periods and assemblies. The school operates appropriate filtering and monitoring of internet usage. When online alerts are raised, they are quickly identified and investigated by senior staff. Leaders keep detailed records of any improper online activity and actions subsequently taken, and closely analyse these for any trends.
51. Leaders meet every week to discuss vulnerable pupils. They identify potential safeguarding risks and take effective actions to mitigate these. Leaders create additional welfare plans for pupils, when necessary, to help enable all staff to provide consistent and appropriate support.
52. All required safer recruitment checks are carried out systematically before staff, supply staff or governors commence working at the school. These checks are accurately recorded on a suitable single central record (SCR) of appointments. Leaders are trained in safer recruitment and ensure that anyone who wishes to work at the school undertakes a rigorous safeguarding interview. The school's safer recruitment procedures are robust and thorough.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

53. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	St Paul's School
Department for Education number	318/6066
Registered charity number	1119619
Address	St Paul's School Lonsdale Road Barnes London SW13 9JT
Phone number	020 8748 9162
Email address	reception@stpaulsschool.org.uk
Website	https://www.stpaulsschool.org.uk
Proprietor	St Paul's School
Chair	Mr Richard Cassell
High Master	Mrs Sally-Anne Huang
Age range	7 to 18
Number of pupils	1516
Number of boarding pupils	41
Date of previous inspection	3 to 5 November 2021

Information about the school

54. St Paul's School is a selective independent day and boarding school for male pupils. The school is divided into two sections: the junior section for pupils in Years 3 to 8, and the senior section for pupils in Years 9 to 13. The school is a charitable trust which is administered by a board of governors.
55. Pupils may board from Year 9. The boarders are accommodated in two boarding houses situated on the main school site.
56. The school has identified 232 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
57. The school has identified English as an additional language for 62 pupils.
58. The school states its aims are to nurture pupils who will make a positive contribution to the world. It endeavours to develop a sense of opportunity, scholarship and character in all pupils. The school seeks to provide a broad and stimulating education which promotes respect, kindness, humility, integrity and resilience.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

14 to 16 January 2025

59. A team of nine 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 high master, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- 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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