

School inspection report

2 to 4 December 2025

Queen Elizabeth's Hospital

Berkeley Place

Clifton

Bristol

BS8 1JX

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders consistently prioritise the wellbeing of pupils in all aspects of their provision planning and decision-making. Leaders implement well-balanced development plans for continuous improvement which are informed by a comprehensive approach to self-evaluation.
2. Leaders listen to the views of pupils who value the importance placed on their opinions and ideas. The consideration of pupils' views plays an important part in the ongoing process of reviewing all aspects of school life.
3. Governors maintain effective oversight of the work of school leaders, ensuring that pupils' wellbeing is actively promoted in all aspects of school life. They closely monitor the implementation of school policies. This takes place through visits to the school and the work of a well-structured group of governors' sub-committees that report termly to the board.
4. Leaders provide a wide-ranging and ambitious curriculum that enables pupils to enjoy their learning and develop their curiosity. The curriculum reflects the school's values. It facilitates pupils of all ages to build on their prior knowledge and extend their intellectual understanding and skills.
5. Pupils achieve well at all stages of their education, including in national assessments at GCSE and A level and at key points in the junior school. Pupils make good progress.
6. Teaching enables pupils to develop a positive attitude to their learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and in general use a range of well-chosen strategies to enable pupils to make good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills. However, some teaching does not challenge pupils sufficiently to enable them to develop their thinking as much as possible.
7. Leaders are successful in embedding a comprehensive system of pastoral care that is effective in developing the emotional wellbeing of pupils. They use their considerable knowledge and expertise to ensure that the school's provision is effective in combining the work of staff and senior pupil leaders to facilitate pupils' learning about how to enhance their wellbeing. Leaders effectively implement and co-ordinate a range of wellbeing programmes, as well as training for teachers and pupil leaders, that have a clear and demonstrable impact on pupils' growth in self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. This is a significant strength of the school.
8. The school ensures that pupils are well prepared for their lives beyond school. The 'futures programme' prepares pupils for making decisions about their careers and study beyond school. During their time at school, pupils develop a clear understanding of the importance of being responsible for their actions. Pupils also develop their financial awareness, which prepares them for living independently.
9. Safeguarding procedures are implemented effectively. A comprehensive training programme is in place for staff. Leaders ensure that staff fully understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Leaders take prompt action when needed and liaise appropriately with local safeguarding partners. Safer recruitment procedures are followed to ensure the suitability of all staff and governors.

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 all teaching consistently challenges pupils to extend their thinking and deepen their understanding.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders prioritise the wellbeing of pupils in all aspects of their planning and decision-making. Leaders embed the school's values by ensuring that they are cross-referenced in all sections of educational planning. Leaders have put in place effective measures to support the integration of female pupils into the sixth form.
11. Leaders have established a culture of continuous improvement which is informed by a detailed approach to self-evaluation. They seek and listen to the views of pupils. This enables them to fully understand the possible impact, including any unintended consequences, of their decisions. In addition, leaders conduct regular surveys and discussions with staff and parents to ascertain their views. This process informs the school's annual operational plans. These are regularly reviewed, with clear targets and success criteria, such as the growth in the breadth of pupils' reading as a consequence of the whole-school literacy programme.
12. Governors maintain rigorous oversight of the work of school leaders and the effectiveness of the school's provision and procedures. They visit the school to scrutinise records, meet with staff and listen to the views of pupils. This enables them to understand the impact of leaders' decisions on the lives of pupils. Governors ensure that leaders have the relevant skills and knowledge to carry out their roles effectively, so that the Standards are consistently met, and pupils' wellbeing is actively promoted.
13. Leaders are effective in maintaining a school community that promotes equality and respect. Staff and pupils demonstrate inclusivity in their actions. Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of treating others equally in the wider world. The school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and has a detailed accessibility plan in place.
14. Leaders maintain close oversight of the development of pupils in all aspects of their learning. Through a planned schedule of lesson observations, departmental reviews and listening to the views of pupils, leaders identify areas of teaching and the curriculum that need development. This detailed overview informs annual departmental development plans as well as professional development opportunities for teachers.
15. Leaders adopt a rigorous approach to the mitigation of risk and ensure that the school's risk assessment policy is implemented effectively. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained to identify and manage potential risks to pupils. They produce suitable risk assessments including for school trips, the school site and activities, and individual pupils' welfare. Leaders and governors regularly review the school's risk register, which identifies current and potential contextual risks.
16. Leaders communicate effectively with a range of external agencies, such as children's services and other safeguarding partners. Leaders work appropriately with local authorities regarding any pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
17. Leaders and staff work closely with parents to follow up and resolve any concerns they may have. The complaints policy is available on the school's website and outlines the stages and timescales of actions implemented by leaders in the case of any complaint. The school maintains a record of complaints and any actions taken as a result.

18. The school regularly provides parents with reports on the progress of their child throughout the school year. Other required information, such as policies and required contact details, are provided on the school's website or otherwise made available to parents and other agencies.

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. Leaders' aspirations for pupils' learning have led them to develop a wide-ranging and ambitious curriculum. Schemes of work are planned effectively to enable clear progression in the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils are provided with opportunities to apply their skills across different subject areas, such as the use of technology to enhance learning. The school's literacy programme is embedded into the curriculum effectively, as typified by pupils in geography reading the challenging full text of *Prisoners of Geography* to increase their understanding. The junior school curriculum incorporates dedicated time for pupils to reflect on the school's values and how they affect their daily lives. Younger pupils are also challenged by the weekly 'Horizon' programme in which they develop a range of hands-on skills in real-life situations, such as filmmaking. The views of pupils are sought by school leaders, resulting in a curriculum that is constantly evolving to meet pupils' needs.
21. Leaders implement an effective framework for assessment across the school. Leaders use the data to monitor pupils' progress. Leaders identify patterns and put appropriate support in place for groups or individual pupils as needed. Leaders also use the data to identify pupils who would benefit from additional enrichment opportunities, such as participating in the 'Catalyst' programme, which enhances pupils' thinking and problem-solving. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well in public examinations.
22. Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified, and their progress is effectively monitored. Subject teachers and learning support specialists work together to put in place appropriate support in the classroom. Teachers ensure that their lesson planning incorporates suitable strategies to support the learning of pupils who have different needs. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress.
23. When needed, pupils who speak EAL are supported well in lessons. Their progress is monitored carefully by teachers and results show that pupils who speak EAL make rapid progress.
24. Teachers have good subject knowledge, use resources effectively and manage lesson time efficiently. They use their detailed knowledge of pupils' needs and prior attainment to plan lessons that enable pupils to develop their understanding, skills and knowledge. Teachers typically use a range of strategies to enable pupils to increase their depth of understanding. They use extended questioning to prompt pupils to think critically and challenge pupils to apply their prior understanding to new situations. However, in some lessons, teachers do not enable pupils to extend their thinking further.
25. Teachers help pupils to develop consistently positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils are motivated to succeed. They benefit from the feedback they receive from their teachers and have a clear understanding of the progress that they are making. Pupils work well with their peers by discussing ideas, reviewing each other's work and producing collaborative work, as typically seen in drama and music.
26. Leaders provide a wide ranging co-curricular programme which extends pupils' skills and achievements. These activities are complemented by opportunities for music, sport, drama and outdoor education. Older pupils take part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE), and the school's 'QE award' provides a similar opportunity for younger pupils. Well-planned academic and

intellectual enrichment activities and societies enable pupils to develop new interests and challenge themselves, including through taking part in national science competitions. The co-curricular programme is reviewed by leaders, taking into account pupils' views.

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

27. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

28. Leaders promote a well-planned and highly effective system of pastoral care which ensures that pupils' emotional wellbeing is prioritised across all areas of school life. Tutors have a deep knowledge of their pupils' needs. They are trained to help pupils develop their resilience and self-awareness, which enables pupils to make their own decisions and deal positively with difficult situations. Pupils gain confidence, knowing that individual support and guidance is available when needed. The wellbeing centre is well staffed with specialists, such as counsellors and nurses, who work effectively alongside school leaders and staff to enhance pupils' mental health.
29. Leaders have effectively embedded a range of curricular strategies to enable pupils to know how to promote their emotional wellbeing and develop self-knowledge. In the junior school, values-based education lessons help pupils to build tools for their wellbeing, such as self-reflection and self-regulation. In the senior school, weekly enrichment sessions enable pupils to learn about enhancing their mental health through activities such as resilience training and mindfulness.
30. There are a range of leadership opportunities for pupils, including prefects, house captains, peer supporters, leaders of clubs and societies and sports captains. Staff support pupils by providing leadership training. Pupil leaders recognise the importance of being role models, as illustrated by sixth-form peer supporters leading a discussion with younger pupils on how to apply the school values to their daily lives.
31. The school has an age-appropriate programme for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), which further supports pupils' emotional wellbeing. PSHE is taught effectively, with regular opportunities to assess pupils' understanding. Feedback from pupils enables leaders to adapt the PSHE course content to meet pupils' changing needs. In the sixth form, PSHE prepares pupils for their increasingly independent lives by considering practical aspects of living independently.
32. The PSHE programme incorporates an age-appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum, which is in line with the requirements of current statutory guidance. Pupils learn about themes such as the nature of different types of healthy relationships, conflicts with friends, the importance of respecting consent and the harm caused by coercive relationships.
33. Pupils learn about respect for different faiths and develop their moral understanding through the tutorial programme, PSHE, religious education (RE) and assemblies. As well as learning about world religions in RE, pupils have regular opportunities to listen to their peers talking about their faith in assemblies and in special school events, such as the recent whole-school focus on Ramadan. Pupils in the sixth form demonstrate their moral understanding by debating fast fashion and younger pupils discuss issues such as the role that Bristol played in the slave trade.
34. The physical education (PE) and games programme facilitates pupils' understanding of the role that physical fitness plays in healthy living. A range of team sports, such as hockey, football and rugby, allow pupils to develop team skills. Leaders provide older pupils with the opportunity to select their own sporting pathways from a variety of individual sports, such as hiking and climbing. As a result, pupils make good progress in developing a range of physical skills as well as their mental resilience and self-confidence.

35. The school's behaviour policy is well understood and implemented consistently. Suitable records of sanctions and rewards are in place. Staff encourage pupils to behave positively by providing regular praise for positive actions such as kindness to others. This has a beneficial effect on pupils' self-esteem.
36. Leaders implement an effective anti-bullying strategy. Detailed records are maintained which are monitored regularly. Leaders respond swiftly to the rare instances of bullying that do occur. Staff are trained to support all pupils involved. The school's focus on ensuring that pupils take responsibility for their actions is implemented by allowing time for reflection and for lessons to be learnt if bullying takes place.
37. Health and safety procedures are suitable and implemented effectively. Leaders ensure that the school's health and safety practices, including those related to minimising any risk from fire, are regularly monitored. Staff regularly receive health and safety and fire safety training. The site is well maintained and provides a suitable environment in which pupils can learn, play and socialise.
38. First aid and medical provision is appropriate and effective. There is always a qualified member of staff on duty to attend to any illness. The school maintains a suitable record of any treatment given to pupils. Staff are appropriately trained in first aid.
39. Pupils are supervised effectively, both inside and outside the school buildings. Detailed staff supervision rotas are implemented well, so that staff are always on hand to provide pupils with support if required.
40. The school's attendance and admission registers are accurately maintained in line with current statutory guidance. Leaders inform the local authority of any pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard transition points or where there are concerns about pupils' attendance.

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

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

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

42. The importance of mutual respect and inclusivity is embedded in the school community. Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of treating others equally in the wider world. They work collaboratively with their peers and recognise the value of listening to different views that challenge their thinking. The school's vertical house system further enhances opportunities for pupils to work with and learn from each other. The school's approach to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is interwoven across different age groups and subject areas, such as when pupils in Year 7 gain an understanding of race discrimination from their study of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This is supported by a structured programme of assemblies, external speakers and societies. Equality ambassadors from the sixth form lead discussions with younger pupils on issues such as racial and gender equality. Pupils are taught about the importance of 'bystander intervention' and are proactive in standing against prejudice and discrimination.
43. As a result of the school's approach to EDI, pupils gain insight into cultural and social perspectives of people from different parts of the world. During the school's annual 'culture week', pupils learn about one another's culture and background, further promoting mutual respect in the school.
44. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern British society through their learning in PSHE, the tutorial programme and the academic curriculum. Pupils learn about the rule of law through their understanding of how to behave appropriately and abide by their own code of conduct. Pupils quickly gain an understanding of the principles of democracy and the importance of representing the views of others fairly. This is seen in the effective work of the school councils, which represent pupils of all ages. In senior school lessons in history, pupils learn about parliamentary democracy and the monarchy, as well as connections between Bristol and the suffragettes' fight for the vote for women. Pupils' participation in activities such as the Model United Nations further enhances their understanding of democratic values.
45. The school develops pupils' economic understanding effectively. Pupils are regularly given opportunities to apply their numeracy skills to develop their financial literacy in PSHE as well as mathematics lessons. Pupils in the junior school learn how to manage a weekly budget while older pupils are taught about issues such as the difference between credit and debit cards, income tax, national insurance and the dangers of pay-day loans. In their general studies course, pupils in the sixth form are prepared for living independently, such as by learning how to apply for student loans. Pupils are also able to develop their business acumen through, for example, trying to persuade a panel of school leaders to invest in their own design products.
46. The principle of serving others is embedded into the school culture. Leaders ensure that there are opportunities for pupils to volunteer in the local community, such as working in a local day centre and supporting a local charity which assists young people to get back into work. Some sixth-form pupils are trained to work as literacy mentors for children from local primary schools. Partnerships with other local schools allow pupils to collaborate on projects such as establishing a local wildflower meadow. As a result of these opportunities, pupils' social awareness, leadership skills and sense of responsibility develop well.
47. The school's 'futures programme' provides age-appropriate careers education which is regularly assessed against national benchmarks. Using PSHE lessons, enrichment time, external talks and

workshops, pupils gain an understanding of the consequences of their subject choices at GCSE and A level. Younger pupils are challenged to think about what they are good at, what the world needs and how they can contribute through paid work. Pupils complete work experience placements that are in line with their aptitudes, interests and aspirations. Older pupils benefit from bespoke guidance in making decisions about their futures. Consequently, pupils gain places at universities and on professional apprenticeship schemes, such as in chartered accountancy. The effective careers guidance prepares pupils well for the next stages of their education or employment.

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

48. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

49. Leaders have established an effective safeguarding culture in which staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. This is informed by the clear and appropriate safeguarding policy and procedures which are in line with current statutory guidance. Leaders ensure that the policy and procedures are implemented consistently and effectively.
50. The school's safeguarding team is appropriately trained for its role in line with local procedures. The team ensures that staff are trained effectively and regularly in safeguarding procedures, including through the setting of scenario-based problems and online quizzes to review understanding. Leaders implement a well-planned induction programme for new staff, so that they are clear about the school's safeguarding arrangements.
51. Staff are confident in knowing how to report and record safeguarding concerns about pupils. Staff understand the procedures for ensuring online safety. In the context of the school, staff also understand the potential risks to pupils from radicalisation and extremism.
52. Leaders have established clear procedures, in line with the protocols of their local safeguarding partner, to manage any allegations against adults in the school. They ensure that staff understand the code of conduct and the importance of reporting allegations, including low-level concerns, about adults working in the school.
53. Governors are appropriately trained and have a thorough oversight of safeguarding in the school. They conduct an annual review of the safeguarding policy and monitor its implementation. This takes place through termly reports from safeguarding leaders and visits to the school to scrutinise records, as well as meetings with the safeguarding team.
54. The safeguarding team responds to safeguarding concerns promptly and effectively, ensuring that pupils receive appropriate support and that concerns are referred to external safeguarding agencies when required. Safeguarding concerns and incidents are suitably recorded along with information about actions taken, decisions made and subsequent reviews. Child protection records are maintained in line with statutory requirements.
55. The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Suitable internet filtering and monitoring systems are in place, and the system is thoroughly tested on a regular basis. The safeguarding team receives daily reports on any inappropriate internet activity and responds quickly to any online behaviour that causes concern.
56. Staff know the pupils well and can identify changes of behaviour or signs that could possibly indicate a concern. Pupils confide in trusted adults when they need to share any concerns or worries, and they also know how to do so anonymously. Consequently, pupils are well looked after and feel safe in the school community.
57. Leaders undertake safer recruitment checks for all staff, supply staff, governors and contractors before they begin work in the school. A suitable single central record of appointments (SCR) records these checks accurately, and staff files contain the information required by current statutory guidance.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

58. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Queen Elizabeth's Hospital
Department for Education number	801/6014
Registered charity number	1104871
Address	Queen Elizabeth's Hospital Berkeley Place Clifton Bristol BS8 1JX
Phone number	0117 930 3040
Email address	office@qehbristol.co.uk
Website	https://qehbristol.co.uk
Proprietor	Queen Elizabeth's Hospital Ltd
Chair	Mr Kevin Riley
Headteacher	Mr Rupert Heathcote
Age range	7 to 18
Number of pupils	762
Date of previous inspection	29 November to 1 December 2022

Information about the school

59. Queen Elizabeth's Hospital is an independent day school situated in Bristol. The school is organised into a junior school, for male pupils aged 7 to 11, a senior school, for male pupils aged 11 to 16, and a co-educational sixth form. The school is a charitable trust overseen by trustees who also take on roles as governors. The current chair of governors took up their post in July 2023.
60. The school has identified 147 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Four pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
61. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for 77 pupils.
62. The school states its aims are to enable each pupil to achieve their potential, discover their passions and develop a keen sense of purpose. It seeks to connect its values – of curiosity, positivity, collaboration and kindness – to real-world outcomes. The intention is to ensure that pupils' academic achievement takes place alongside a well-developed sense of responsibility and service to the communities in which they live and work. The school aspires to be accessible to more young people in Bristol and is committed to being a diverse, inclusive and happy community.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

2 to 4 December 2025

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

64. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the 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.

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

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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For more information, please visit isi.net