

School inspection report

1 to 3 October 2024

St George's School Edgbaston

31 Calthorpe Road

Edgbaston

Birmingham

West Midlands

B15 1RX

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. Trustees and leaders have a clear vision for the school and make strategic decisions designed to deliver the school's aims and support its ethos. Through implementing these decisions successfully, they have created an inclusive, caring environment in which pupils' wellbeing is actively promoted.
2. Trustees have a deep knowledge of the school, formed through regular visits and discussions. This enables them to monitor the impact of leaders' decisions and their implementation of policies effectively.
3. The broad and engaging curriculum is thoughtfully adapted to the needs of pupils and matched to their prior attainment, throughout the school. In the early years, children learn using a themed approach, allowing them to make links between different areas of learning. Further up the school, the curriculum is planned to enable pupils to study towards the GCSE, BTEC and A-level qualifications appropriate to them.
4. Teachers deliver lessons using a range of well-chosen resources in a stimulating environment to promote learning. Teachers give pupils individual attention and effective guidance so that they make good progress. Teachers monitor pupils' attainment through a range of assessments in order to identify those who need additional support and put plans in place effectively.
5. The support for pupils who have special educational need and/or disabilities (SEND), including those with education, health and care (EHC) plans, is effective. Teachers are proactive in referring pupils who may need support to the specialist support available within the school, and work with external agencies as appropriate. A group of staff mentors support pupils who have SEND in all aspects of their school life, ensuring they are able to access the range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.
6. Leaders have successfully created a highly respectful culture by educating pupils about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in a very successful and comprehensive manner. This results in pupils, including those who have SEND or an EHC plan, developing sophisticated understanding of their own and others' values as individuals who have their own identities and opinions, leading to high levels of self-worth and self-understanding. It also results in pupils' strong ability to discuss issues relating to equality and diversity in an advanced and highly respectful manner. Pupils' understanding of the concept of rights strengthens their awareness of how their behaviour impacts on others, leading to their informed adoption of positive behaviours. This is a significant strength of the school.
7. Pupils study an extensive programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, which is adapted to the needs of pupils, including through consideration of pupils' feedback. The appropriate content of the PSHE programme is effective in educating pupils about how to keep themselves safe and support their own physical and emotional wellbeing.
8. Senior pupils have access to appropriate and up-to-date careers guidance in the senior school. However, the careers guidance does not prepare pupils for their future options as effectively as possible.
9. Robust policies and procedures are implemented effectively to safeguard pupils. Leaders react promptly to any concerns and liaise with external agencies as required. Teachers are well trained in

safeguarding and familiar with school procedures. They report any safeguarding concerns promptly so that suitable action can be taken.

10. Procedures to ensure the suitability of staff working in the school are typically effective. However, some information about the pre-employment checks and the dates that they had been made were recorded inaccurately in the single central record of appointments. Leaders corrected the information recorded during the inspection.
11. At the start of the inspection, the attendance policy on the school website did not reflect recent changes to current statutory guidance. This was rectified during the 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

Trustees and leaders should:

- ensure that the single central record of appointments consistently records all pre-employment checks and the dates that they were made accurately
- ensure that the attendance policy on the school website always reflects current statutory guidance
- strengthen careers guidance so that it prepares pupils for their next steps in education or employment more effectively.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. Leaders have a well-developed understanding of their responsibilities towards the school and needs of the pupils. This enables them to make effective strategic decisions about provision and other areas of school life, all grounded in the clear and well-communicated ethos of the school to support individuals within a caring community. By doing so, leaders actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils.
13. Trustees monitor the effectiveness of the school well, through regular visits to the school and discussions with pupils and staff. Trustees have regular training to keep up to date, including extensive training on safeguarding. They hold leaders to account, challenging them where necessary to ensure that school leaders fulfil their responsibilities.
14. Leaders are highly successful in supporting pupils in developing respect and responsibility in their relationships. They have done this through implementing throughout the school a framework for learning and pastoral support based on respect for individuals' rights, giving pupils, including those who have SEND, clear principles to use to form positive relationships with others, including those from backgrounds different to their own.
15. Leaders have created an inclusive school through embedding considerations of equality at the heart of decision-making. For example, consideration of the needs of different groups has led to the school bringing extra-curricular activities into the main school day so that all may benefit from these opportunities. Leaders have drawn up a detailed accessibility plan, drawing on a deep understanding of potential barriers that pupils may face. In this way the needs of all pupils are fed into decision-making. Through thoughtful decision-making and regular reflection on the extent to which the school meets pupils' needs, leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
16. Leaders have drawn up effective procedures and policies which staff implement across the school to support pupils' wellbeing successfully. Leaders provide and make available all required information to parents. They provide the local authority with appropriate information related to any funded pupils with an EHC plan.
17. Leaders liaise closely with local authorities on contextual risks in the local area and provide training to all staff to build the knowledge and skills to respond to them. Leaders have a sophisticated awareness of risks presenting outside of school which may be harder to spot and are able to anticipate these risks and mitigate them effectively. Thorough risk assessments are in place for school premises and activities and include robust measures to mitigate identified risks. These risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated, and external expertise is drawn upon to inform such review.
18. Leaders maintain a detailed oversight of the quality of teaching and learning and pastoral support, identifying pupils and groups of pupils who require additional support promptly. Where additional needs are identified, leaders in both the senior and prep school liaise with external agencies as necessary to put in place comprehensive plans of support for individuals or groups.
19. Leaders in the early years demonstrate a detailed awareness of the statutory framework for the early years. They monitor the early years provision to ensure that all learning and development, safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.

20. A clear and effective complaints procedure is in place. The number of formal complaints is low, but the policy is followed closely when needed and records are kept appropriately.

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. The curriculum is thoughtfully planned and adapted to meet the needs of the pupils in the school. In early years, teachers use a thematic approach which enhances engagement and helps children make connections across different areas of learning. Higher up the school pupils apply their learning to real life situations which enhances their understanding within the context of the topics being taught and successfully encourages use of appropriate terminology. The range of subjects taught enable pupils to gain knowledge and develop skills across a wide variety of areas.
23. This curriculum is flexible and adaptable to individual pupils' needs by allowing pupils to take different numbers and types of qualifications as necessary to achieve the best outcomes. Where necessary to meet an individual pupil's needs, in consultation with parents and teachers, the number of qualifications can be reduced to allow for extra support for the individual. The timing of external examinations is adapted when helpful to support pupils' learning needs. For example, most pupils sit GCSE English language and mathematics examinations at the end of Year 10. This gives them useful experience and ensures that, if required, they can resit those examinations without disrupting their subsequent sixth-form study. This is effective in developing the pupils' academic confidence.
24. Teachers use their high levels of subject knowledge to design and deliver effective lessons. They combine this knowledge with a detailed understanding of the aptitudes and needs of the pupils to develop lesson plans which allow pupils of all abilities and needs to learn and make good progress. Well-judged use of group work and discussion, when appropriate, helps to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and develops their independence. The teaching does not discriminate but responds effectively to the individual needs of each pupil.
25. Pupils are given distinct learning goals and are encouraged to reflect on their work in comparison to these goals. This leads to them being assured and reflective learners. Teachers link learning goals clearly to forthcoming examination specifications where appropriate, meaning that pupils become clear and confident about how they can earn marks in examinations. This has led to a long-term trend of improvement in examination outcomes.
26. Teachers adapt their lessons to meet the needs of their pupils, including those who have SEND. Leaders of provision for pupils who have SEND set individualised, agreed targets and provide targeted strategies to teachers to support these pupils. Teachers implement these strategies in lessons to ensure that their teaching is as effective as possible including by providing additional support when required and making effective use of classroom assistants to clarify learning points being made. As a result, many of these pupils go on to exceed their targets.
27. Leaders utilise an assessment framework which allows pupils' attainment and progress to be monitored consistently across classes and departments. In the prep school, regular assessments in mathematics and English enable pupils' progress to be compared to standardised norms, allowing additional support to be put in place for pupils who may benefit from it. In the senior school, leaders closely monitor pupils' progress against internal targets.
28. In the early years, interactive activities such as storytelling and role-play encourage the development of children's communication, language, and numeracy skills. Teachers support the children in exploring their learning actively and collaboratively. Staff regularly receive training in current

thinking about effective teaching approaches, with a particular focus on developing greater progress in communication and language skills. This approach is effective at fostering independence and critical thinking.

29. The school provides effective support when needed for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Teachers conduct robust assessments on entry and put in place tailored support for pupils' English when required that helps pupils to access the curriculum and make good progress.
30. There is a broad and varied extra-curricular programme of recreational activities. Pupils, including children in the early years, experience a range of activities from board games and drama to competitive sport. Through these activities, pupils develop their creative and physical skills and self-confidence. Staff mentors for pupils who have SEND ensure that pupils who may struggle to access these activities are supported effectively, leading to high levels of participation.

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

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

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

32. Leaders' focus on educating pupils about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its implications for respectful behaviour is highly successful in enabling pupils to understand why mutual respect is important and desirable. As a consequence, pupils demonstrate respect for others' individuality, including their protected characteristics, such as race, sex, faith or any disability. Leaders and staff refer to the existence of rights to enable pupils to build bridges of understanding. As a result, pupils relate positively to each other and have a common framework to discuss their diverse identities and opinions.
33. Staff around the school are vigilant in their supervision of pupils. As pupils arrive at the school, they are welcomed by familiar staff in the communal areas. At break and lunchtime, teachers supervise both organised and self-chosen activities and recreation efficiently. This also means that in those times pupils can easily find a trusted member of staff to talk with should they need to. Effective supervision extends to the early years where appropriate staff to child ratios are in place, including before and after school.
34. Throughout the school, including in the early years, the consistent approach to behaviour management mean that pupils understand expectations and play their part in maintaining a positive learning environment. In the prep school, leaders support pupils in forming agreements through the 'class charter', which strengthens their understanding and ownership of expected behaviours. Through teaching about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in the senior school, teachers develop pupils' self-knowledge and readiness to take responsibility for their actions. Where pupils do fall short of expected standards of behaviour, teachers lead them in supportive and effective conversations based around their impact on others' right to learn, which lead to improvements in behaviour. Leaders review records of behavioural issues and take prompt action to address any trends identified. Where rare incidents of bullying do occur, school leaders respond rapidly and achieve positive outcomes.
35. The PSHE programme ensures that pupils gain a broad understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. This curriculum also includes a programme of relationships education in the prep school, and relationships and sex education in the senior school which, alongside visiting speakers and focus days, is effective at preparing the pupils to make informed decisions about their relationships and to understand issues such as the importance of respecting privacy and consent. Pupils and parents are able to access the details of this provision and are consulted regularly.
36. All pupils take part in a variety of sports as part of the core physical education (PE) programme and extra-curricular activities, developing physical skills and confidence. In the early years, a newly created secure outdoor space allows child-led, creative play outdoors, developing the physical and emotional understanding.
37. Clear and systematic procedures ensure that health and safety arrangements are effective. Regular checks are made of the premises by appropriately trained staff who act promptly to resolve any issues. Fire risk is suitably managed and regular evacuation drills are conducted throughout the school. The premises and accommodation contain suitable facilities for all pupils, including in the early years.

38. The school has a sufficient number of trained first aiders, including those trained in paediatric first aid, to meet the needs of the pupils. Pupils' medical and dietary needs are catered for effectively. Staff in the early years are suitably trained in food hygiene.
39. The admissions and attendance registers are accurately completed and suitably maintained. Leaders inform the local authority swiftly whenever pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times. Leaders monitor attendance carefully and take appropriate steps to follow up any non-attendance. However, when the inspection began, the attendance policy on the school website did not reflect recent changes to relevant statutory guidance. This was rectified during the inspection.

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. Leaders and staff provide pupils throughout the school with a curriculum in which pupils' learning about respect for diverse cultures is cemented through the constant reference to the concept and importance of individual people's rights. By fully embedding this approach to thinking about culture and society, teachers are able to guide pupils in sophisticated discussions about situations where different rights may come into conflict. As a result, pupils become able to consider viewpoints other than their own in depth and with subtlety. For example, senior school pupils debate different religious perspectives sensitively, while sixth-form pupils articulate ideas about how moral judgements are arrived at in different cultures respectfully.
42. In PSHE lessons, pupils learn about human rights and equalities legislation which leads on to discussions of different democratic systems. Through these lessons, pupils develop an understanding of how laws and institutions such as courts and Parliament protect and balance individual rights in different contexts. Pupils become able to take different points of view in discussions, and staff ensure that any discussion with political elements is managed fairly and impartially. PSHE lessons and whole school assemblies respond to national and international events, supporting pupils' understanding of issues and themes affecting modern Britain.
43. Senior pupils learn about handling finances in PSHE lessons that help prepare them for life after school. Themes studied include using bank accounts and managing debt. For younger pupils, scenarios relating to money are woven into the mathematics curriculum. Older pupils develop knowledge about the global economy and its impact on national interests, for example through currency fluctuations.
44. Leaders' and staff's teaching about the concept of rights and use of language relating to individual rights support pupils' development of a confident sense of individual liberty alongside an understanding of personal responsibility and moral principles and values. Pupils in the prep school refer to school rules as 'agreements' and understand the importance of behaving well towards each other as the foundation for a fair society. Children in the early years learn about the importance of sharing resources during activities. Senior pupils understand and articulate the meaning of respect in terms of reciprocal appreciation of people's values and experiences.
45. Careers guidance provides pupils in the senior school with up-to-date information about possible careers and includes helpful content such as mock interviews, how to produce CVs and information about UCAS. However, the careers guidance does not enable pupils to prepare for their next steps in education or employment as effectively as possible.
46. Pupils actively engage in decision-making processes in the school through the school council, where their voices are heard, and their ideas are shared and discussed. This involves pupils from early years through to Year 13, who participate in discussions on various topics such as extra-curricular clubs, food choices, and charity work. These opportunities help pupils develop leadership skills, enhance their social understanding, and contribute positively to the community.

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

47. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

48. There is an effective safeguarding culture at all levels of the school. Leaders ensure that the safeguarding policy and procedures are in line with current statutory guidance and implemented effectively. Staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously and are aware of the importance of being vigilant for any signs of possible safeguarding concerns.
49. Trustees actively monitor the arrangements for safeguarding on their regular visits to the school, including meeting with senior leaders and scrutinising records. These visits include discussions with staff and pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of training and the implementation of policies. Trustees review the results of external safeguarding audits with leaders, who ensure that the board is kept fully informed of the nature of any safeguarding issues that have arisen.
50. The safeguarding team undertake regular training to keep their skills and understanding up to date and equip them for their role. When any safeguarding concerns are raised, they respond effectively and promptly, including by liaising with and, when appropriate, referring concerns to relevant external safeguarding partners. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) maintains detailed logs of safeguarding concerns and actions that the school has taken to respond to these.
51. All staff receive regular online and in-person training, as well as frequent updates from the safeguarding team which reflect current statutory guidance, as well as any advice received from the local authority about the nature of local safeguarding issues. Staff understand and implement the school's safeguarding procedures, including those relating to any allegations against staff or concerns about them that might arise.
52. Leaders encourage pupils to raise any worries they might have with trusted adults. They respond effectively whenever pupils do raise any concerns. The school teaches pupils how to support their own safety, including when online. A suitable filtering and monitoring system is in place.
53. The procedures in place for ensuring the suitability of adults working in the school are typically effective. However, at the start of the inspection, the single central record of appointments did not always record pre-employment checks and the dates that they were made accurately. This was rectified during the inspection.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	St George's School Edgbaston
Department for Education number	330/6000
Registered charity number	1079647
Address	St George's School Edgbaston 31 Calthorpe Road Edgbaston Birmingham West Midlands B15 1RX
Phone number	0121 625 0398
Email address	reception@sgse.co.uk
Website	www.sgse.co.uk
Proprietor	The Board of Trustees of St George's School
Chair	Sir Robert Dowling
Executive Headteacher	Mr Gary Neal
Headteacher	Mr Luke Nicholls
Age range	3 to 19
Number of pupils	377
Date of previous inspection	21 to 24 September 2021

Information about the school

55. St George's School Edgbaston is an independent co-educational day school situated in Birmingham. It was founded in 1999 from the merger of two schools, Edgbaston Church of England College for Girls and Edgbaston College. The school is run by a charitable trust overseen by a board of trustees.
56. There are 11 children in the early years, comprising one Nursery and one Reception class.
57. The school has identified 97 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Thirty-two pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
58. English is an additional language for 32 pupils.
59. The school states its aims are to maximise individual achievement within a caring community, to develop respect and responsibility in relationships, to promote friendship, fair play and equality and to create opportunities for personal development in a changing and challenging world.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

1 to 3 October 2024

60. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

61. 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.

62. 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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