

School inspection report

6 to 8 February 2024

Fulham School

200 Greyhound Road

London

W14 9SD

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. Proprietors, governance team and leaders work together to fulfil the school's aims. They prioritise pupil wellbeing and governors ensure that leaders have the necessary skills to carry out their role. Leaders also draw on the wider skills and knowledge of the Inspired Education group in shaping its provision.
2. The school has recently gone through a period of substantial change, with a new leadership team and structural change. The three schools were incorporated into Fulham School in its present structure in 2018. This process of change is ongoing. Leaders have the necessary skills in change management. They plan and respond effectively when issues are identified and understand risk management well.
3. School policies have been reviewed to ensure consistency of approach; this includes new policies such as one to manage behaviour. This policy is still in its infancy. It has made a positive change but needs to be further embedded so it is fully understood by all pupils.
4. Pre-prep pupils experience a broad and rich curriculum that is well delivered. Teachers have clear expectations and follow the marking scheme diligently. There is a focus from leaders on developing pupils' independence and responsibility from an early age. Pupils undertake peer and self-assessment and are fully involved in selecting topics. This fosters high levels of engagement in their learning.
5. Teaching across the school is generally well planned and takes place in a calm environment which promotes good behaviour for learning. Leaders and managers oversee teaching, providing effective quality assurance which promotes good progress from pupils. This oversight has identified that some new teaching policies are not fully embedded.
6. Pupils at Fulham School are fluent communicators. They work well with each other and form constructive relationships with their teachers. They interact with adults in a mature fashion because the school's culture values their opinions, and staff show care for and interest in their pupils.
7. Pupils in the pre-prep and prep and senior schools choose from an appropriate range of co-curricular activities, participating with enthusiasm in both artistic and physical endeavours. The take-up of activities among the older pupils is less widespread. Leaders are aware that this aspect of its provision requires further development to ensure all pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills in a range of recreational contexts.
8. Pupils from a range of backgrounds, nationalities and cultures mix together very naturally. They show respect for each other and support each other in their achievements. This was encapsulated on inspection by one pupil's comment that "There is no 'different' here".
9. From Nursery upwards, pupils are given opportunities to express their ideas about the school's provision in a school which values pupils' voice. The pupils are proud of having influenced change in several areas of school life, from extra-curricular activities to food.
10. Fulham School's sixth form was launched in 2021 and its provision continues to develop. An adequate careers programme is in place to support the pupils' preparation for the next stages of life but this is not fully developed for the oldest pupils.

11. Safeguarding is prioritised in the school. Governors and leaders have the knowledge and skills to ensure effective oversight of safeguarding. Staff receive appropriate training; the school works closely with external agencies. Pupils confirm that they feel safe in school.

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 follows the revised school policies so that pupils make consistently good progress.
- Develop the programme of activities for older pupils, including those beyond compulsory school age, so that they are able to develop a broader range of recreational skills.
- Embed the recently introduced behaviour policy, ensuring it is fully understood by pupils of all ages.
- Extend careers provision for older pupils to support fully pupils' preparation for life beyond school.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. Leaders, managers and those with a governance role are highly committed to the wellbeing of pupils. Leaders have the skills and knowledge to carry out their duties effectively. They prioritise all aspects of pupil wellbeing in their decision making during a time of significant change at the school.
13. The governing body know the school well and are in receipt of regular updates from staff about all aspects of school life. They are accessible to parents and take pains to listen to pupils' views to better understand the pupil experience. They challenge and support school leaders in appropriate ways and ensure that changes to support pupil wellbeing - from staffing structure to improving the learning environment - are appropriately resourced.
14. The majority of members of the governing body are appointed by the Inspired Education group, of which the school is a member, and draw upon the wider experience this brings to support the effective governance of Fulham School. Leaders ensure that the school's four guiding values are actively promoted and understood by pupils.
15. A searching self-evaluation allows leaders and governors to respond effectively as areas for development are identified. A comprehensive school development plan is in place, which clearly outlines the steps required to improve provision. Whilst some parents and pupils have expressed concerns about governance and leadership of the school, it is evident that leaders are knowledgeable, responsive to new ideas and take appropriate action to promote pupil wellbeing.
16. Safeguarding is prioritised and well understood by staff who have the necessary skills to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. The leadership of safeguarding is effective and subject to well informed and regular governance oversight. Liaison with local agencies is regular and effective in supporting the safeguarding of pupils.
17. Leaders and managers assess risk effectively and respond swiftly and efficiently where necessary. Leaders in the early years and pre-prep consider risks well, with ongoing checks to ensure that the indoor and outdoor environments are well maintained and safe. Comprehensive risk assessments are produced for educational visits.
18. The early years setting is led by highly knowledgeable staff. Their understanding of the statutory framework is secure. Leaders work closely with the governing body to ensure that the approach to learning is of a high quality and follows best practice. Leaders in the pre-prep ensure that policies and procedures are consistently applied where, for example, marking policies are embedded across the early years and in Years 1 and 2.
19. The school communicates regularly with parents, providing them with all needed information via mailings such as the weekly newsletter, alongside the portal and the website, and encouraging their involvement in school matters through surveys and workshops.
20. A suitably detailed complaints register is kept. Complaints are handled well, in line with the policy and in a timely manner. Record keeping is thorough and secure. Data on complaints are robust and used by the school to identify trends.
21. The school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act. An effective accessibility plan is in place and reviewed regularly.

22. Leaders operate clear oversight of school provision and have appropriate procedures in place to ensure a consistency of approach. They undertake regular and ongoing quality assurance to improve the pupil experience across the schools, monitoring provision including teaching and the application of sanctions. This has accurately identified that some new policies are not fully embedded or followed by staff.

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

23. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

24. Lessons are well planned, taking into account the needs of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), so that all pupils make good progress overall. Pupils are proud of their achievements, recognising the progress they have made at all ages and across subjects. Teachers have high levels of subject knowledge. Information and communication technology resources are employed effectively by teachers to support the school's aim of providing bespoke support to pupils. The quality of teaching is not fully consistent and school leadership has recognised the need to embed some of the new policies, so that all pupils make consistently good progress.
25. A clear framework is in place to evaluate pupils' performance regularly and thoroughly and feedback has a direct positive impact on their progress. The provision of consistently high levels of feedback is one area leaders are seeking to address, so that pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.
26. The school's analysis of pupil admission data shows that most pupils are of average or above average ability when compared with nationally standardised tests. Most make expected levels of progress to GCSE. However, further consistency in teaching and higher expectations of pupils would allow some pupils to progress more rapidly. The initial A-level results are due in summer 2025.
27. Recently developed tracking systems ensure that pupil progress is monitored closely. This data is used by managers at all levels. Interventions are in place to respond to needs for further support. Pupils with SEND receive effective personalised support from specialist teachers. Good progress was seen for pupils with a range of needs including dyslexia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The use of prompts and sentence starters helps pupils increase the depth of their work. Specialist guidance outside full class teaching and individualised support from teaching assistants within lessons foster engagement. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress with their fluency in English, benefiting from a range of strategies including targeted questioning and specialist resources.
28. Pupils show well developed creative and aesthetic skills and are supportive of each other's achievements in these areas. They value the positive impact that art displays bring to their learning spaces and respond with discernment at school performances such as the recital competition.
29. School culture fosters independence in its pupils at all stages. Pupils in the pre-prep show an ability to develop their own understanding; they respond well to high level questioning on abstract topics and respond with insight and enthusiasm to opportunities to devise the "philosophical question of the week."
30. Children in the early years experience a rich and interesting curriculum across all their areas of learning. Leaders and managers know the children very well. In the early years the progress of pupils who have EAL is rapid. This is owing to the targeted support from teachers and a tailored curriculum that meets children's needs. Similarly, children who have SEND make considerable progress, with managers working closely with parents and external agencies. Assessment is regular and used effectively to target intervention and shape planning. Tracking data show pupils in the early years making good levels of progress and almost all achieve the early learning goals.

31. Leaders in the early years and pre-prep have taken great care in producing indoor and outdoor environments that are conducive to learning. Specialist teaching such as for PE, music and computing enriches children's experiences. The programme of activities provided in the prep school is appreciated by pupils who engage in a wide variety of recreational experiences. In the senior school, activities such as volunteering and mentoring, alongside a programme of visits beyond school, are in place and valued by pupils. However, the choice and subsequent take-up of activities by older pupils is an area for development as the recently opened sixth form establishes itself, which school leadership recognises.

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

32. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

33. Children in the early years thrive in the supportive and nurturing environment. Staff act as positive role models, fostering supportive relationships with the children. As a result, children are happy and behave well. The environment is carefully set up to encourage independence from the earliest age. Children are able to select activities and undertake their own routines, such as self-registration. They are self-confident, keen to share their learning and invite others into their games.
34. Fulham pupils develop self-esteem as a result of a school culture which values engagement and achievements of all kinds. School leaders are committed to ensuring the development of pupils' spiritual and moral knowledge and understanding through opportunities within and beyond the curriculum, such as pauses for self-reflection which provide pupils opportunities to appreciate the non-material aspects of their lives.
35. Leaders in the prep and pre-prep support physical health and wellbeing with the provision of attractive and functional outdoor space which pupils enjoy using. Activities such as the before school fitness club in the Prep school are valued by pupils. Pupils at all stages understand the importance of being both physically and emotionally healthy.
36. Pastoral support is well structured and effective across the school. Pupils know to who they can speak if further support is needed. This is reinforced by the comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme which strengthens pupils' understanding of self-care in age-appropriate ways.
37. The relationships and sex education (RSE) programme is carefully planned. The policy provides an age-appropriate framework for relationships and sex education which successfully fosters high levels of engagement from pupils. Arrangements for consulting with parents and the potential withdrawal of a pupil are clearly laid out. Staff have relevant training and involve parents to ensure they understand what is being taught.
38. Behaviour in the school, both in lessons and during less structured times is predominantly good. Where less satisfactory behaviour occurs, the recently established policy is employed successfully to manage the incident. The introduction of 'values cards' has positive results and has fostered constructive changes to behaviour. However, the new policy is not fully embedded or fully understood by older pupils.
39. Any incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed swiftly and effectively in line with the school's zero tolerance approach. Logs record each incident clearly. There is a focus on transparency and consistency in the management of sanctions.
40. Pupils are supervised appropriately and effective protocols are in place to support their wellbeing at break and lunchtimes and when moving between campuses.
41. Attendance and admission registers are accurate and organised and stored as is appropriate. Reports for pupils who leave the school are shared with the future school as required.

42. Health and safety are well managed across all three school sites. All appropriate checks are undertaken. Fire safety procedures are implemented effectively. Recent changes have strengthened the school's management of health and safety. Staff have been well trained in health and safety, including fire safety and risk assessment.
43. School premises are well maintained. The environment is orderly and conducive to learning. Medical facilities are well designed and managed. Staff training in first aid including paediatric first aid is in place and regularly updated. Pupils value the care shown to them by the school's medical staff.

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

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

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

45. A careers programme supports pupils to make informed choices about the routes open to them beyond school. Pupils have access to a variety of platforms and benefit from staff expertise. Younger pupils describe how they value their careers lessons. Online courses support older pupils' exploration of future careers, alongside individual interviews with staff and a structured series of self-reflective tasks. However, the school's careers provision is in the early stages of development for the oldest pupils and has been identified by the school as an area for further focus.
46. Themed lessons strengthen pupils' understanding of social structures across a range of subjects and ages. Teaching in Nursery uses opportunities to make real world connections for the youngest pupils and helps them make good progress because they understand why they are learning each topic or skill and how to anticipate its usefulness.
47. Leaders emphasise the celebration of diversity and the importance of respect through assemblies and in tutorial lessons. Pupils of all nationalities get on well with each other within and outside the classroom. They show respect and appreciation for different cultures from the youngest pupils upwards. Effective PSHE education means that they are aware and respectful of characteristics such as gender identity and sexual orientation.
48. Pupils across the schools are supportive of each other. They debate with each other respectfully and understand the rights of their peers to hold opposing views. They show well-developed skills in collaborative learning. Pupils of all ages develop in self-knowledge owing to the opportunities provided by the school to think through their views and to test them against those of others.
49. Through their involvement in the school council, children begin to learn about democracy from Nursery upwards. They have a secure understanding of the democratic process. Pupils can distinguish right from wrong. Leaders in the pre-prep ensure that British values including the rule of law and the role of public institutions are regularly discussed and understood. Through assemblies and lessons pupils are encouraged to respect all members of the community.
50. Leaders value pupils' voices and provide opportunities for pupils to express their thoughts and ideas from the youngest pupils upwards. All year groups in the early years and pre-prep have representatives on age-targeted school councils. Pupils are proud of the difference their suggestions have made in the school.
51. In the prep school pupils select a local charity as the main school target for charitable activity. Pupils contribute positively to the lives of others through fund raising and local charitable works such as volunteering to wrap Christmas presents for the local homeless community. Pupils in Year 8 have presented to the parents' association in an initiative which brought sections of the school community together in support of young carers.
52. Older pupils engage in volunteering as part of The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme programme, understanding how they might contribute positively to the lives of those living in the locality and society more widely. Pupils across the school mentor younger pupils, with this process beginning in the pre-prep school where pupils in Year 2 are allocated a buddy in Year 3.

53. Older pupils enjoy choosing projects that relate to a range of global issues and speak of these with engagement. A programme of visits – including to a doctor and a dentist - fosters the understanding of pupils in the pre-prep of life outside school. For older pupils, the Fulham Traders programme supports their economic education, teaching them about entrepreneurship involving skills such as marketing and understanding profit margins through running a programme of events.
54. Pupils and parents describe the school as welcoming and inclusive; pupils demonstrate trust and respect for others, and school leaders are proactive in ensuring this by celebrating Black History Month, marking Holocaust Memorial Day and International Women’s Day, for example. Pupils work naturally with peers from a range of nationalities and cultures in their diverse school community.

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

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

Safeguarding

56. Governors, leaders and managers prioritise measures to safeguard pupils, and robust procedures are in place. Leaders work effectively with external agencies for safeguarding, taking a proactive approach. The school is aware of the contextual factors in safeguarding and assesses and manages risk appropriately, delivering workshops for parents and pupils on a range of topics, including how to stay safe online. The school's safeguarding team recognises the importance of the recording of low-level concerns.
57. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and their team are knowledgeable and well known to pupils; there are deputy DSLs in every section of the school. Regular meetings and effective use of electronic record systems ensure that members of the safeguarding team are informed about any concerns in a timely fashion.
58. The governing body exercise effective oversight of safeguarding. They are well informed about safeguarding matters in school. The designated governor for safeguarding is in weekly communication with the school's safeguarding team.
59. Staff training in safeguarding is secure: it is regular, detailed and assessed. Teaching and support staff are aware of the procedures for reporting and recording different types of concern. Record keeping is strong. The safeguarding policy is clear and wide-ranging, taking into account the most recent developments in external guidance; it is implemented effectively. High levels of vigilance are promoted in the pre-prep, such as in the protocols for a visitor.
60. Online safety is taught effectively; pupils are clear in how to keep themselves safe when using devices. The school has effective filtering and monitoring systems in place.
61. The suitability of staff is well managed. A single central register effectively records all necessary checks. A robust risk assessment procedure is implemented as required. Oversight of the single central register of appointments is regular and effective.
62. Across the age range, safeguarding leaders regularly remind pupils who to turn to should they have a concern. Pupils know whom to contact when they need support. Posters are displayed around the school, with pre-prep pupils told that DSL stands for 'Do Share, I'll Listen'.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Fulham School
Department for Education number	205/6390
Address	Fulham School 200 Greyhound Road London W14 9RG
Phone number	0207 3862444
Email address	admin@fulham.school
Website	www.fulham.school
Proprietor	Fulham Prep School Holdings Limited
Chair	Mr Nicholas Wergan
Headteacher	Mrs Rebecca Tear
Age range	3 to 18
Number of pupils	585
Date of previous inspection	21 April 2022

Information about the school

64. Fulham School was founded in 1996 as Fulham Prep School. It joined the Inspired Education group in 2014. It became Fulham School in 2018, incorporating, Fulham Pre-Preparatory School, Fulham Preparatory and Fulham Senior School.
65. A new senior school campus was opened in 2021. Fulham Nursery opened in 2022. There are 16 children in the Nursery, and 15 pupils in the sixth form.
66. The prep school is the school's largest and most populous campus. It is about one mile away from each of the other campuses.
67. The school has identified 156 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
68. English is an additional language for 62 pupils.
69. The school states its aims are to encourage the development of creative, problem-solving individuals by fostering tenacity, kindness and self-worth; and to provide a distinctive, forward-looking and outward looking environment where diverse abilities are recognised, celebrated and fully expressed.
70. Fulham School has four core values: universal wellbeing, positive engagement, global responsibility and innovation & enquiry.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

6 to 8 February 2024

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

72. Inspection activities included:

- Observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- Observation of registration periods
- 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

73. 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.
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