

HIGHGATE



ISI Inspection Report

2024



Who are ISI?

ISI is an organisation responsible for the inspection of Independent schools in England. It is a government-approved, independent body that provides objective evaluations of schools, focusing on educational quality and pupil wellbeing. The ISI is validated by OFSTED and accredited by the Government to conduct inspections.

What is an ISI inspection?

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is responsible for the inspection of independent schools and reports its findings to the Secretary of State for Education. The inspection process involves a detailed assessment of various aspects of a school's operation. A team of inspectors visit the school to observe staff and pupils, review school documentation and pupil work, and conduct surveys and interviews with parents and pupils, ensuring a holistic understanding of the school.

ISI inspections are important for several reasons:

- **Quality Assurance:** They provide an assurance of quality to parents, giving them confidence in the school's ability to offer excellent education and care.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** ISI inspections ensure that schools comply with educational and safety regulations, which is crucial for the overall well-being of the student community.
- **Continuous Improvement:** The feedback provided by ISI helps to guide schools when enhancing their educational offerings and practices.
- **Benchmarking:** Inspections serve as a benchmark for schools to measure themselves against the best practices in education and student care.

What should I expect to read in the ISI report?

ISI no longer use final gradings of 'excellent', 'good', etc' and we no longer enjoy the extended prose of previous years. Under the new ISI framework, the reports award schools "met or "not met" against five key standards and offer a concise summary of their findings. Inspectors are permitted to identify "significant strengths" in a school, however it has been rare for areas of strength to be identified in schools as the bar is set very high.

Message from the Head

It gives me great pride and no little pleasure to introduce our 2024 inspection report.

Inspection is not something we build our lives around. We are, and will remain, a school committed to our aims and ethos: being a place for learning and scholarship, a reflective community, and an exemplar for healthy life.

Nevertheless, it is always affirming to have your practice recognised by those whose job it is to assess it.

The quotations scattered throughout this booklet will give you a sense of how impressed the inspectors were in a wide range of areas across all parts of the school.

In particular, the report notes a “significant strength”: that “highly knowledgeable teachers with strong pedagogical skills have a profound impact on the learning of pupils of all ages... As a result, pupils develop a deep connection to their work.”

The term “significant strength” is applied to something that provides “clear, demonstrable and highly beneficial impact for pupils.” Just as teaching should – but it is good to know we do it particularly well.

I hope this document and the full report give you a flavour of Highgate School. The way in which reports have to be written means that flavour may be rather bland. I hope you will visit and see for yourself how exciting life at Highgate can be.



Adam Pettitt, Head

The full Inspection Report can be viewed on the ISI website



All inspection standards were met

Leadership and management,
and governance



Quality of education, training
and recreation



Pupils’ physical and mental health
and emotional wellbeing



Pupils’ social and economic education
and contribution to society



Safeguarding



Quality Teaching Ensures Scholarship For All

Highly knowledgeable teachers with strong pedagogical skills have a profound impact on the learning of pupils at all ages. Teaching instils an appetite for intellectual effort and fosters in the pupils an ability to think and learn for themselves. Teachers pursue their own subject-knowledge research, exemplifying the scholarship which they advocate for their pupils. As a result, pupils develop a deep connection to their work and make good progress. **This is a significant strength of the school.**

"Throughout the school, a comprehensive curriculum covers all required areas and fosters high levels of scholarship and pupils' individual talents."

"The curriculum is ambitiously designed to enable pupils to study subject beyond age-related expectations."

"Teachers use a highly effective variety of teaching methods and well-chosen resources to engage pupils deeply."

"Leaders provide teaching staff with thorough induction training and encourage them to pursue their own subject research, thus deepening their subject knowledge to the benefit of pupils' learning."

"Additional learning activities across the range of subjects are pitched at a high academic level, contributing to pupils' academic success."

"Teaching across the school is inclusive and promotes academic development without discrimination."



A Culture of Care and Reflection

“There is regular communication between teaching and pastoral staff, so that academic and pastoral support for pupils are well coordinated.”

“Leaders strike a deliberate balance, enabling pupils to reach high academic standards whilst paying close regard to their personal wellbeing.”

“Pupils’ self-esteem and self-confidence are enhanced both through classroom learning and the extensive activities programmes.”

“Leaders and staff encourage pupils to use and understand words like struggle, resilience, and reflection, building a useful vocabulary to promote self-knowledge.”



“Effective behaviour management, featuring the encouragement of positive behaviour, a focus on reflection on the consequences of action and consistent use of sanctions, ensures that standards of behaviour are high.”

“[Leaders] are successful in communicating the school’s aims of fostering scholarship, being a reflective community and promoting a life of physical and mental health.”



“A robust safeguarding culture is in place.”



Pupils' Personal Development

"Through PSHE and assemblies, cultural trips and a wide variety of visiting speakers, pupils are introduced to key aspects of civic life, including knowledge of public institutions and the law. As a consequence, pupils appreciate the importance of balanced arguments and that the opinions of people with different views from their own should be respected."

"Clubs are often pupil-initiated and led, encouraging independence and leadership."



"Compulsory weekly activity sessions cater to all tastes and help foster pupils' physical, intellectual, and social development."

"Pupils learn about responsibility, collaboration, financial literacy, the risks on the internet and social media risk, and personal health."



"Pupils take on leadership roles and responsibilities that contribute to both the school and the wider community."

"Leaders encourage pupils to contribute positively by supporting a range of causes by fund raising and volunteering for causes, such as a local food bank and several other pupil-selected charities."



"Involvement in assemblies, music and drama performances, such as after-school concerts in the Junior School, encourages pupils to express themselves and so fosters self-belief."



Pre-Prep and Junior School



“Pre-Prep and Junior School leaders create a nurturing and effective learning environment within which pupils develop key communication and social skills.”

“Children make good progress, particularly in the prime areas of communication and language, physical, and personal, social and emotional development.”

“The well-designed curriculum stimulates learning, helping children and young pupils to achieve well and be prepared for the next stage of their education.”

“In the Junior School, praise for effort and reinforcement of the value of achievement through, what the school terms, the ‘Curiosity, Respect, Empathy and Determination’ (CRED) strategy, promotes responsibility and positive attitudes to learning.”

“In the Pre-Prep and early years class, social development is achieved through general classroom behaviour expectations such as waiting their turn and sharing when playing games, and additional initiatives such as teaching and using sign-language.”

“Older Junior School pupils visit other schools in the community to listen to younger readers. Junior classes visit the charities they raise money for to better understand the work that they do.”



Our Community



“Leaders across the school promote respect and understanding of people’s differences through assemblies, visits, the PSHE and RSE programmes, and day to day classroom practice which models such respect.”

“Pupils learn to respect diversity, challenge discrimination, and engage democratically through pupil councils.”

“Engagement in the eco-councils in the Pre-Prep and Junior Schools and the Environment Committee in the Senior School develops their sense of responsibility towards the environment. Pupils are active in promoting sustainable consumption practices within the school.”

“Leaders and the governing body are mindful of, and committed to, the aims and ethos of the school. Robust self-evaluation, informed by deep engagement with the school community, ensures informed decision-making.”

“Pupils who have SEND are supported through tailored teaching strategies and specialist support, ensuring they make good progress from their starting points.”

“Children are encouraged to be sensitive to each other’s needs and behaviours, promoting a culture of respect from an early age.”



“Bullying is rare and dealt with quickly and effectively when it occurs.”



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