

School inspection report

17 to 19 October 2023

The Faculty of Queen Ethelburga's

Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate
Thorpe Underwood Estate
Ouseburn
York
North Yorkshire
YO26 9SS

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. The proprietor ensures that leaders and managers throughout the school plan and provide an education that is both wide-ranging and appropriate to pupils' aspirations and abilities. The curriculum is well matched to the needs of pupils and it is supported by an extensive co-curricular programme. The breadth of opportunities available contributes positively to pupils' wellbeing by enabling them to pursue new interests and develop their existing talents.
2. Effective self-evaluation, with a clear focus on listening to the views of pupils, is integral to leaders' approach to strategic development. Their planning is accurately informed by the current context of the school and the needs of the pupils. Leaders closely monitor the implementation of the school's strategic plan. The directors of the collegiate board maintain a systematic oversight of the work of the leadership team, evaluating how leaders are fulfilling their responsibilities and assuring that the Standards are met. Appropriate measures are taken to manage all aspects of risk.
3. Pupils achieve well at all stages of their education and make good progress in relation to their assessed starting points. Most pupils attain GCSE, BTEC and A-level grades in line with or above those predicted by their assessed starting points. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) often exceed their predictions due to the effective support provided for them. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) typically make rapid progress with their English as a result of specialist teaching which meets their needs, allowing them to access the full range of the curriculum.
4. Teachers have good subject knowledge and usually plan their lessons effectively, so that pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils typically show high levels of engagement and make good progress. In a few cases, the tasks set by teachers do not take full account of pupils' prior learning. On occasion, this leads to some pupils engaging less positively with their learning which in turn impacts on the quality of their learning.
5. Leaders ensure that pupils have a wide range of opportunities for physical exercise. Pupils recognise how regular exercise, coupled with creative pastimes and relaxation activities, have a positive impact on their physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing.
6. There are positive relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff. These are a consequence of leaders' strong promotion of respect for others, which is a key component of the school's ethos. Leaders' clear expectations promote high standards of behaviour, both in lessons and around the school.
7. There is a wide programme of activities which develop pupils' social and cultural knowledge and understanding. Pupils show respect for the range of cultures and faiths within their diverse community. Leaders provide an extensive range of opportunities for pupils to contribute to both the school and the local community and ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

8. Leaders recognise and meet the needs of boarding pupils, some of whom may be living far from their families and in a different cultural context. The boarding provision incorporates effective support for boarders' pastoral and academic needs.
9. Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, including boarders, are effective. Leaders work with external agencies to safeguard pupils and protect them from harm.

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 step

- Leaders should ensure that all teaching is planned to take into account the prior learning and abilities of the pupils.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders ensure that the school provides a supportive and mutually respectful environment. They encourage pupils to respect diversity and to engage fully with all aspects of school life. Leaders and managers meet their responsibilities to promote the wellbeing of pupils effectively across all aspects of school life through appropriate policies that are implemented effectively.
11. The collegiate board of directors ensures that the Queen Ethelburga's Hill Standard, 'to be the best that I can with the gifts that I have', is at the centre of their decision-making. Board members provide appropriate levels of challenge to leaders and require them to audit and report on their areas of responsibility. Board members monitor the pupils' experience and assure the school's provision through their regular visits to the school and meetings with senior leaders.
12. Leaders at all levels have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They work together systematically to ensure that the school continues to build on its current successes. Leaders ensure the successful implementation and close monitoring of the school's strategic plan are effective in promoting pupils' wellbeing. Leaders' decision-making is focused on promoting pupils' wellbeing. This is evident in leaders' decision to introduce a wider range of pupil leadership roles. This has enabled pupils to have more extensive opportunities to develop their leadership skills, whilst helping to support other members of the school community.
13. Leaders have a clear vision for the school's future development based on comprehensive self-evaluation. Leaders ensure feedback from pupils and detailed reviews of existing provision are considered when making future plans. This enables leaders to be responsive to pupils' emerging needs.
14. Leaders and managers take a strategic, broad and inclusive approach to identifying and managing the risk of harm to pupils' wellbeing. Appropriate policies cover a wide range of potential risks related both to pupils' welfare and safety. These give staff clear direction about how to minimise risks and are followed in practice. Thorough risk assessments are carried out for aspects such as the safety of the premises, educational trips, recruitment and potentially hazardous activities.
15. Staff and leaders, including boarding staff, are readily accessible to parents and deal with any concerns promptly. Complaints are recorded and responded to appropriately and within the published timeframes. The school's written record of complaints did not fully identify those complaints which relate to boarding provision. This issue was rectified during the inspection.
16. Reports to parents on pupils' progress and attainment are regular, detailed and informative. Other information is made available to parents as required.
17. Leaders understand their responsibilities under the Equality Act. The education provided by the school does not discriminate, and reasonable adjustments are made for those pupils who have SEND. A suitable accessibility plan is in place, which is regularly reviewed.

18. Leaders ensure that boarding staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge to fulfil their role. Staff have undertaken regular and relevant training. Leaders have recently strengthened the links between academic and residential staff to ensure effective communication regarding all aspects of boarders' wellbeing.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

19. Leaders plan the curriculum effectively, regularly reviewing and adapting it to ensure the blend of academic and vocational qualifications is tailored to the individual aptitudes and needs of pupils. The breadth of subjects taught ensures pupils have many opportunities to gain knowledge and develop skills across an appropriate range of curriculum areas.
20. Teachers model answering techniques and encourage pupils to practice their oral and written communication skills. As a result, pupils are self-motivated and develop these skills well. Pupils' mathematical skills are also well developed, through a well-planned curriculum. Pupils are proficient in applying their mathematical knowledge in context. For example, in physics, pupils confidently used their knowledge and understanding of angles when investigating the refraction of light.
21. Leaders' systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning ensures that pupils make good progress in their learning. Most pupils attain GCSE, BTEC and A-level grades in line with or above those predicted by their assessed starting points. Pupils who have SEND often exceed expectations. This is as a result of the effective support provided and individual educational plans which outline strategies to enhance their learning. Pupils with EAL typically make rapid progress with their English skills due to an intensive support programme.
22. Well-planned and knowledgeable teaching generally enables pupils to develop their skills and knowledge and make good progress across the curriculum. As a result, pupils engage positively in their learning. Some teaching, however, does not sufficiently take into account the prior learning of the pupils. As a result, progress is slower in these lessons, and pupils do not engage as positively.
23. An appropriate assessment framework is in place to evaluate pupils' work regularly. Leaders use a detailed tracking system to monitor pupils' attainment and provide support as necessary. Teachers give pupils effective feedback, both in lessons and on written work, and this enables pupils to understand how to improve their answers.
24. Leaders have developed extensive enrichment and co-curricular programmes which enable pupils to develop their skills in areas such as critical thinking and creative problem solving through activities such as debating and philosophy clubs. A wide variety of creative and physical activities include the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications, for example, young leader awards and the national pool lifeguard qualification.
25. Boarders participate enthusiastically in a range of planned activities both in the evenings and at weekends. Pupils understand that engagement in activities promotes their wellbeing, whilst they are mindful of the need to balance keeping busy with having quality free time to relax and socialise with friends. Teamwork activities, such as the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) or The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, develop pupils' leadership and life skills.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

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

26. Leaders have developed a wide-ranging personal development programme which encompasses personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and relationships and sex education (RSE). The programme is effective in creating a supportive and mutually respectful environment which has a positive impact on pupils' self-esteem and wellbeing.
27. Pupils undertake a wide range of physical education and personal development activities. They learn about health and fitness through both competitive sport and wider participatory activities, for example, trampolining and health-related fitness. Leaders ensure that opportunities for physical education are available to all. As a result, pupils' participation levels in activities are high. Pupils understand how regular exercise, relaxation and creative pastimes have a positive impact on their mental health and emotional wellbeing.
28. Leaders have established a listening culture where pupils' views and ideas for improvements are sought, and any concerns acted upon. This helps to develop pupils' self-esteem, as they feel their ideas are valued. Personal development activities and regular reviews of progress enable pupils to develop high levels of self-awareness. Enrichment opportunities enable pupils to challenge themselves and learn new skills in a wide variety of areas, and this leads to growth in their self-confidence. Personal development lessons, assemblies and spiritual awareness activities allow pupils to develop their own sense of spirituality.
29. Clear expectations of behaviour and the positive relationships between staff and pupils ensure pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are appropriately supervised during the school day and in boarding hours. There is an effective anti-bullying policy in place and it is followed consistently so that any incidents of bullying are addressed promptly and appropriately.
30. Boarding staff prioritise boarders' health and welfare needs and ensure that they are fully met. The boarding houses provide a welcoming and comfortable environment. Boarders have suitable privacy, and security for their personal possessions. All boarders are provided with good-quality meals and have access to facilities for preparing their own food and snacks. Boarders' views are sought and acted upon through a variety of means including through the prefect system. Boarders can always contact a member of staff, including at night.
31. Leaders ensure that the school premises and accommodation, including the boarding houses, are well maintained. Health and safety practices are implemented effectively. Appropriate precautions are taken to reduce the risk from fire. Personal evacuation plans are drawn up in consultation with pupils who have individual needs, and all staff receive regular fire-safety training.
32. There are suitable arrangements and accommodation to care for pupils who become unwell or who have specific medical needs. First aid is administered in a timely manner, and staff receive regular training in first aid. The attendance and admission registers are properly maintained and stored. Staff follow up the destinations of pupils who leave and are removed from the admission register.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

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

33. Leaders ensure pupils are prepared for their futures through a programme of activities which promotes a respect for others and develops pupils' social and cultural knowledge and understanding. Mutual respect is central to the school's ethos and underpins the positive relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff. Pupils appreciate and welcome the diversity of the school community, and the opportunities it provides to learn about other faiths and cultures.
34. The school's community values, which mirror fundamental British values, are promoted through assemblies, tutor time, personal development lessons and the wider curriculum. These activities ensure pupils are knowledgeable about different institutions and their role in British society, and the democratic process. There are opportunities for discussion and debate which require pupils to reflect on the importance of following the rule of law and making ethical choices. They also consider the impact of such choices on the wider community.
35. Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to make contributions to both the school and the local community. There are roles for prefects, members of the student council and for academic, enrichment, wellbeing and welfare ambassadors. These enable pupils to develop their leadership and organisational skills whilst helping and supporting other pupils. Pupils elect their peers for some of these positions, helping them to understand the importance of democratic choice.
36. Opportunities for volunteering enable pupils to understand the importance of making a positive difference to the lives of others. They visit residents in a local care home, contribute to outreach workshops for sports and the arts and take part in a beach clean. Pupils are aware of their social responsibilities and each year plan and implement fundraising initiatives for a variety of charities, in which all pupils enthusiastically participate.
37. Leaders ensure pupils' life-skills, including their financial and economic understanding, are developed through the personal development and general studies programme. Leaders have developed effective transition processes to support the next steps for pupils at each stage of their education so that pupils feel well prepared for the next stage of their lives.
38. All pupils have a programme tailored to their interests, ambitions and ability. An effective careers guidance programme includes personal development lessons on specific aspects, insight talks from visiting guest speakers and individual advice sessions. This equips pupils to explore a wide range of future options. Sixth-form pupils move on to a variety of degree and training courses. Many go on to study at universities with demanding entry requirements in the UK and abroad and some gain competitive sports scholarships.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

39. Suitable arrangements are made by leaders to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, including boarders. Leaders promote a culture of openness and the concept that 'it could happen here'. Designated safeguarding leaders (DSLs) work effectively with external agencies when concerns arise. Any referrals to children's services, the local authority designated officer and the police are made in a timely manner.
40. The school's written safeguarding policy is in line with the most recent guidance and accurately reflects the school's safeguarding practice. Effective measures are taken to manage identified risks associated with pupils' safeguarding needs. If incidents occur they are managed well. Detailed safeguarding records are kept, in line with statutory requirements. Any reported safeguarding concerns are acted upon promptly.
41. Leaders ensure that all staff and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training as they join the school, and this is updated at regular intervals. Reviews of safeguarding are used effectively to identify training priorities. Those with designated safeguarding lead responsibilities receive appropriate training. Members of the collegiate board also receive safeguarding training and understand their statutory responsibilities for oversight.
42. Staff understand child protection procedures, including those for online safety and the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism. They understand how to recognise and report a safeguarding concern, including potential child-on-child abuse. Leaders ensure that the school has effective arrangements to make certain that pupils know how to stay safe while online. There are suitable monitoring and filtering processes in place.
43. Appropriate safer recruitment checks are completed for all staff, volunteers and members of the collegiate board and a suitable central record of appointments is kept.

The extent to which the school meets standards relating to safeguarding:

All the relevant standards are met.

School details

School	The Faculty of Queen Ethelburga's
Department for Education number	815/6037
Address	Thorpe Underwood Estate Ouseburn York YO26 9SS
Website	qe.org
Proprietor	The Collegiate Formation Limited
Principal	Mr Daniel Machin
Chair	Mrs Amy Martin
Headteacher	Miss Lauren Blakeley
Age range	14 to 19
Number of pupils	444
Number of boarding pupils	336
Date of previous inspection	19 to 21 February 2019

Information about the school

44. Queen Ethelburga's Collegiate is a co-educational day and boarding school educating pupils aged from 0 to 19 years old. Originally founded as Queen Ethelburga's School, it moved to its present site on the Thorpe Underwood Estate near York, North Yorkshire in 1991.
45. The Collegiate comprises Chapter House, which caters for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Years 1 to 5; King's Magna, for pupils in Years 6 to 9; College, for pupils in Years 10 to 13 and the Faculty of Queen Ethelburga's.
46. The Faculty of Queen Ethelburga's is a separately registered school within the Collegiate, with its own headteacher and leadership team, educating pupils from Years 10 to 13.
47. All four schools in the Collegiate are based on the same campus and share some academic and boarding facilities, in addition to their own premises. The principal has overall responsibility for the four schools, and the collegiate board comprising six directors is responsible for the governance of the schools. Since the previous inspection, a new principal took up post in 2021 and a new headteacher for the Faculty was appointed in 2022.
48. Boarders share accommodation with other pupils from the College. There are eight boarding houses for pupils aged 11 to 19 years. All of the houses are located on the school campus.
49. The school has identified 47 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
50. English is an additional language for 159 pupils.
51. The school states that its mission is to enable pupils to aspire to the Queen Ethelburga's Hill Standard: 'To be the best that I can with the gifts that I have'. Its ethos is to ensure a supportive and mutually respectful environment, encouraging diversity, pro-activity and innovation, whilst empowering all members of Team QE to thrive. Its aims are to build the skills for lifelong learning and future success and to foster a spirit of adventure and discovery; seeking to promote happiness, positive health and community safety, and to encourage respect, equity, integrity and collective responsibility.

Inspection details

Inspection dates 17 to 19 October 2023

52. A team of five inspectors visited the school for two and half days.

53. Inspection activities included:

- Interviews with teaching and support staff, the school's leadership and management, and directors of the collegiate board.
- Discussions with pupils about their academic education, wellbeing and their experiences of boarding and of school life.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work in collaboration with pupils and staff.
- Observation of lessons and a sample of co-curricular activities.
- Collaborative lesson walks with senior leaders and heads of department.
- Tours of the school site, including the boarding accommodation.

54. 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**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

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