

School inspection report

29 April to 1 May 2025

Queen Elizabeth Grammar School

154 Northgate

Wakefield

West Yorkshire

WF1 3QX

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'.

Contents

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS	3
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....	4
AREAS FOR ACTION.....	4
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS	4
SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....	5
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE	6
SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	7
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	8
SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	9
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	10
SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....	11
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY	12
SAFEGUARDING	13
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING	13
SCHEDULE OF UNMET STANDARDS	14
<i>Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Safeguarding</i>	<i>14</i>
SCHOOL DETAILS	15
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	16
INSPECTION DETAILS	17

Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders and governors are highly committed to the school and its future development as part of a wider foundation. Leaders promote the successful implementation of the school's aims and ethos throughout the school. This supports the academic and personal development of pupils so that they gain the qualifications and personal skills required to proceed successfully to further education and employment.
2. Leaders do not ensure that the Standards relating to safeguarding are met in that prolonged pupil absence has not been reported to the local authority in line with procedures outlined in statutory attendance guidance.
3. Leaders have effective oversight of many aspects of risk management and mitigate risk within areas of health and safety with care. Leaders ensure that the provision and maintenance of the premises meet the Standards. A systematic approach to safety is in place, with policies effectively implemented to address identified improvements.
4. The school's website provides comprehensive information to prospective and current parents about examination results, policies and procedures. At the start of the inspection, not all required inspection reports were made available, but this was rectified during the inspection.
5. Leaders have implemented an effective curriculum that enables pupils to make good progress, with thoughtful consideration given to their varied needs and interests. The range of subjects offered is suitably varied, providing opportunities for pupils to gain a broad range of knowledge and skills. Consequently, pupils exhibit fluent communication skills and are successful in national examinations.
6. Teaching is well planned and uses technology effectively to enhance pupils' learning. The needs of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those with higher prior attainment, are successfully identified by the school. However, pupils' needs are not addressed consistently in all lessons.
7. The curriculum is enhanced by the 'QEGS Enrichment and Development' (QED) programme, which enables pupils to further cultivate their knowledge, skills and understanding. This programme, alongside other extra-curricular activities, provides opportunities for pupils to participate in, and excel at, sports, music and many other different activities.
8. The school's ethos is articulated as 'care, contribute, aspire', and this is reflected throughout the whole school community. Respect for all pupils is promoted and encouraged through a variety of pastoral activities. Promoting the mental and physical health of pupils is a priority for staff, which helps pupils to feel safe, nurtured and self-confident.
9. Throughout the school there are a number of initiatives to capture pupils' opinions, suggestions and concerns, which can lead to areas of school improvement. The amount of feedback to pupils regarding their suggestions for school improvement is not comprehensive and there are no opportunities for anonymous reporting of concerns.
10. Pupils know how to access support when needed. Staff receive appropriate training in safeguarding. Staff have a secure understanding of low-level concerns and how to report these.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are not 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 not met.

Areas for action

The proprietor must ensure that:

- the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge
- fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and
- they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils

so that:

- prolonged pupil absences are reported to the local authority in line with statutory guidance in order to safeguard pupils effectively.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that all inspection reports are published on the school's website to give a full picture of the school
- ensure that teaching is always adapted to meet the needs of pupils who have SEND so that they make consistently good progress
- extend the opportunities for all pupils to raise concerns and suggestions.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Leaders ensure that the aims of the school are clear to pupils and staff. Middle leaders incorporate the ethos of the school to good effect in their areas of responsibility and ensure that classroom practice has pupils' wellbeing at its core. Leaders ensure that staff create a welcoming and inclusive environment.
12. Governors do not fulfil their responsibility to ensure that leaders are implementing all statutory guidance and that all the Standards are met. In not ensuring that prolonged pupil absence is reported in line with statutory guidance, leaders do not show appropriate knowledge and skills to ensure that all the Standards are met, and that pupils' wellbeing is actively promoted.
13. Leaders evaluate the school's successes and areas for development. Senior leaders have focused on a vision for the future development of the school and how that development could lead to school improvement. Experienced middle leaders take a leading role in improving practice in both teaching and pastoral care. They involve all staff in consultation which informs practice, such as the introduction of 'working walls' in mathematics.
14. Governors hold leaders to account through scrutiny of policy implementation across a range of committees. Governors with specific areas of focus provide appropriate support and challenge.
15. Leaders ensure that pupils respect others and that teaching promotes fundamental British values whilst presenting political issues with a balanced perspective.
16. The school's website provides comprehensive information to prospective and current parents about policies and procedures. At the start of the inspection not all of the required inspection reports were present on the website, but this was rectified during the inspection.
17. Leaders have implemented a system for identifying pupils who have SEND and ensure that the requirements for any pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan are met.
18. Leaders have effective oversight of risk management and mitigate risk with care. Risk assessments are detailed and up to date, and include steps to reduce risk which are implemented in practice. Training for staff in risk management and safeguarding is frequently updated and links with external agencies are often used effectively to help ensure that pupils receive the right support.
19. Leaders ensure that the provision and maintenance of premises and accommodation meet the Standards. A systematic approach to health and safety is in place, with policies effectively implemented alongside regular monitoring and auditing to address identified improvements.
20. The written complaints policy is in line with statutory requirements. A comprehensive complaints log is kept, including details of resolution dates and stages. Leaders ensure that they listen to feedback in order to respond to complaints promptly and effectively.
21. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, which is reflected in all policies and procedures. Pupils have a clear understanding of the differences between people and the importance of tolerance and respect. There is a wide-ranging accessibility plan in place which explores methods to improve the accessibility of the school site, the education provided to pupils and the information provided to parents and prospective parents.

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

22. Standards are not met consistently in following statutory guidance to actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

23. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

24. The curriculum contains all the required areas of learning and has been designed with the ages and aptitudes of the pupils in mind. Leaders organise the curriculum effectively. They thoughtfully consider the diverse needs and interests of pupils within the school's community and modify the curriculum to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to explore their interests and extend their success. This includes implementing changes that enable pupils to follow specific pathways such as studying three separate sciences at GCSE or replacing certain optional subjects with an extra language in Year 9. In the junior school, reading has been given increased curriculum time to improve progress in this area and to support other subjects.
25. The range of subjects offered is appropriately varied, providing many opportunities for pupils to acquire a broad spectrum of knowledge and skills. Teachers ensure that they build in regular opportunities for pupils to review their knowledge and understanding during lessons and as part of their independent study. Teachers are knowledgeable in their subject areas and use their expertise effectively to develop pupils' learning. Pupils exhibit articulate communication skills and are successful in national examinations.
26. Programmes of study are planned and taught to enable pupils to make good progress. There is effective use of curriculums that revisit material with appropriate increasing levels of difficulty such as the introduction and development of pencil drawing in art, which starts in Year 7 with basic skills and progresses through shading and texture in later years. This enables pupils to use the skills and knowledge they have gained in more complex situations in later years.
27. Teachers use resources, particularly individual electronic devices, to assist pupils' learning. Technology, including the use of artificial intelligence, is purposefully integrated to enhance learning and foster self-directed study throughout many subjects. In Year 9 music lessons, pupils are able to use technology to positively review and further develop their own songs, such as by adding items like beat drops and extended chords, or playing completed adaptations on the piano in front of their peers.
28. Pupils are regularly encouraged to reflect on and evaluate their learning, which helps to deepen their understanding. Throughout the school, pupils display confidence in their understanding of how to act on their teachers' feedback, and this leads to increased progress as pupils act on this to improve their knowledge or understanding. Pupils develop a pride in their work.
29. Leaders ensure that pupils' educational needs are identified and appropriate adaptations are agreed, and that staff receive training to meet learners' needs. Teachers do not always adapt teaching to meet the needs of pupils who have SEND in all lessons. In lessons where teaching is less well matched to pupils' needs, pupils are not always given the opportunity to make the progress of which they are capable.
30. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are provided with effective language support. Pupils who speak EAL are supported with adaptations such as word banks and vocabulary explanation lists across subjects.

31. There is a comprehensive system of assessment in place and staff use both external and internal measures to assess pupils' progress. Progress and learning are supported by effective assessment and the revisiting of prior knowledge. Pupils' attainment is shared with parents in a timely manner.
32. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of clubs, clinics and extra-curricular activities. The QED programme is embedded into the timetable and includes an eclectic mix of activities across sport, music and academic enrichment, alongside practical skills, such as darts, baking and origami. Leaders have devised the QED programme to reflect the NHS pillars of wellbeing: connect with others; be active; learn new skills; pay attention to the present moment; give to others. This approach helps pupils to understand the benefits to their wellbeing of developing their skills and interests in a range of areas. A number of the QED activities are linked to curriculum subjects and enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding, for example in music technology and geographical map work.
33. Leaders promote opportunities for extra-curricular sports and pupils achieve high levels of success at national level. Sport and music are integral parts of the school, with high levels of participation across all year groups being substantially valued alongside elite performance.

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

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

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

35. Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from a culture of care that supports their physical and emotional wellbeing. Access to a school counsellor, structured form time and responsive pastoral systems mean that pupils receive early identification when problems arise, followed by ongoing support. Leaders promote pupils' resilience and ability to work effectively with their peers through sports, assemblies and activities designed to build these skills. The QED programme enables pupils to develop confidence and independence. This was evident from pupils in Year 13 who prepared, rehearsed and self-directed a musical performance with little staff input.
36. Leaders promote pupils' understanding and respect for other cultures. This is embedded through the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum and the assembly programme. Leaders have introduced a faith room, creating a space for pupils to practise their faith. There are talks on various religious festivals and trips to places of worship around the city which help to broaden pupils' horizons and develop tolerance and mutual respect. Many subject leaders adapt their schemes of work to further enhance knowledge and understanding of other cultures, such as the choice of subject matter in religious education and in geography.
37. Leaders prioritise support for pupils' mental health through visible initiatives, staff training and opportunities to gather pupils' opinions and concerns. The junior school approach of comparing mental health to dental health, encouraging twice-daily check-ins, promotes a normalised approach to emotional self-care.
38. Leaders provide tranquil spaces in many areas of the school, enabling pupils to benefit from a quiet space during the school day. Leaders ensure that site security is well considered within the school grounds. Staff maintain a consistent and approachable presence around the school, including during breaktimes. Pupils are aware that they can readily seek assistance when uncertain.
39. Leaders have successfully embedded a well-structured PSHE scheme of work throughout the school. The content of PSHE is appropriately shared with parents and overseen by the governing body. This encompasses the required content in the teaching of relationships and sex education (RSE) which is delivered by experts and school staff through well-prepared lesson plans. Leaders create opportunities for older pupils to share their experience with younger pupils on a range of topics including body image and gender-specific respect in the workplace. Pupils have a high level of knowledge and understanding in a number of aspects of PSHE and RSE and can articulate its positive impact on their wellbeing.
40. Teachers set high expectations for behaviour both inside the classroom and around the school site. The school has a behaviour policy that contains a stepped sanctions process, but this is not always implemented consistently. Generally, when interpersonal issues arise, they are managed with sensitivity to promote understanding and encourage improved behaviour.
41. The school has a robust anti-bullying strategy. Levels of reported bullying are low, and all suspected incidents are investigated thoroughly in line with other pastoral systems that support the wellbeing of pupils. Effective records of alleged bullying incidents are kept, and leaders regularly review these records to identify any emerging patterns.

42. Pupils take on positions of responsibility within both the junior and senior schools. They recognise the importance of being good role models for other pupils and that older pupils should be looked to as setting the standard for others in the community.
43. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils who speak EAL to teach a lesson to their peers in their native language. This is an integral part of the school's language week, during which pupils are encouraged to lead 'heritage language tasters', further encouraging other pupils' cultural understanding.
44. Leaders pay close attention to delivering health and safety requirements effectively. Staff are knowledgeable and conscientious, and have a good awareness of potential risks. Documentation, records and risk assessments are detailed, appropriate and specific to the school site and to activities conducted by pupils and staff.
45. Fire safety precautions and the implementation of first aid requirements are effective. This includes the implementation of regular fire drills, appropriate maintenance of fire and first aid equipment and the regular training of staff in matters of fire safety and effective first aid.
46. Admission and attendance registers are kept in line with statutory guidance. Pupils' attendance is tracked effectively and pupils with lower levels of attendance are identified and supported. The attendance champion meets regularly with other leaders to discuss pupil attendance and implement strategies to improve attendance. Pupils joining or leaving the school at non-standard transition times are reported to the local authority.

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

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

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

48. Pupils are introduced to the core principles of democracy and fundamental British values in the junior school, thereby nurturing an understanding of morality and fairness. This is revisited throughout the school in PSHE and assemblies, and through positive interpersonal interactions.
49. The school's ethos of 'care, contribute, aspire' is reflected throughout the whole school community. Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from exposure to a diverse range of cultural and religious experiences, including visits to religious buildings, and these are woven into the curriculum alongside celebratory events. Parents and alumni visit the school to talk to younger pupils about their faith and festivals such as Eid al-Fitr and Diwali. This exposure serves to broaden pupils' perspectives on the wider world, effectively enhancing their social and cultural understanding.
50. The QED programme is integral to social cohesion throughout the school as many of the activities are aimed at pupils across multiple year groups. This enables younger pupils to learn from others whilst older pupils gain a heightened sense of responsibility.
51. Pupils fulfil a number of roles in contributing to wider society and the development of social responsibility. Pupils in the senior school are encouraged to volunteer in the community, as well as to organise charitable activities. Pupils throughout the school support charities through one-off events alongside longer-term projects such as the 'young Savilian award', which recognises continued engagement within the school community and encourages responsibility and service to others.
52. Pupils are introduced to real-world economic and social challenges within the curriculum, such as discussions on taxation in Year 10 business studies lessons, and in a number of QED activities such as law. Leaders provide activities to improve pupils' understanding of economics, such as the 'tenner challenge' in the junior school and business enterprise schemes in the senior school, which allow pupils to gain a greater understanding of business whilst also giving them an insight into the potential careers they could pursue when they leave the school.
53. Pupils are well supported in making informed choices about their futures through careers education, PSHE, and targeted support during the GCSE option selection processes. Leaders have successfully implemented a careers programme within the sixth form which is supported by an informed and experienced team. The use of the expertise of alumni and the wider school community to support choices is welcomed by pupils and enables them to have a wider perspective on the availability and demands of particular careers.
54. In the junior school, leaders have created systems for capturing pupils' opinions and suggestions. Throughout the school, various platforms, including the PSHE curriculum and the QED programme, actively encourage all individuals to appreciate the significance of their opinions and to engage in participatory processes. This is practically demonstrated through activities such as pupil votes for the school council. In the senior school, forums are used for feeding back to pupils on the outcome of their suggestions. These feedback mechanisms are not fully developed, which leads to uncertainty amongst pupils as to whether their suggestions are being considered.

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. Leaders do not ensure that statutory guidance is followed with regard to reporting prolonged pupil absence to the local authority. This does not facilitate timely collaborative working and has the potential to affect the safety of pupils.
57. The governor with specific responsibility for safeguarding meets frequently with the safeguarding team. Governors are suitably trained and ensure that the safeguarding policy is in line with statutory guidance, but they do not ensure that statutory guidance on the reporting of attendance is followed.
58. Leaders provide comprehensive staff training in safeguarding on induction. Staff training is consistently updated to ensure that local and national contextual risks are understood by all. Staff know and understand reporting procedures and effectively use the school systems to promptly inform the safeguarding team of concerns.
59. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) ensures that safeguarding records are detailed, accurate and securely stored. These records are monitored for links with behaviour, and patterns are identified. These identified patterns are used to amend the school's PSHE and RSE curriculums to further enhance pupils' understanding of personal safety.
60. Pupils feel safe and well supported at the school, reflecting a safeguarding culture where risks are identified and addressed swiftly. Pupils have a number of ways in which they can access support or report concerns. However, there is no system in place for pupils to report concerns anonymously.
61. Leaders and governors are trained in safer recruitment and meet regularly to oversee recruitment processes. Leaders ensure that appropriate checks on all adults are carried out before they begin to work or volunteer at the school and by maintaining a suitable single central record of appointments (SCR).
62. Robust filtering and monitoring of the internet is in place. Leaders ensure that filtering arrangements are evaluated frequently. The internal digital monitoring system allows for immediate alerts regarding harmful or concerning activity, triggering timely pastoral or parental responses. This helps mitigate risks such as exposure to harmful content or online bullying. Digital safety is regularly addressed through presentations to parents, pupil workshops and newsletters.
63. Leaders access external support through local agencies and charities to support their work in assisting pupils. This includes regular meetings with local authority representatives.
64. Suitable measures are in place to reduce the risk of radicalisation to pupils. Staff are made aware of their responsibilities in relation to the 'Prevent' duty.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

65. Standards are not met consistently in relation to the reporting of prolonged absence in line with statutory guidance.
- 66. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.**

Schedule of unmet Standards

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR ¹ Part 8, paragraph 34(1)	The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school –
34(1)(a)	demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
34(1)(b)	fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
34(1)(c)	actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

Safeguarding

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –
7(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
7(b)	such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

¹ The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('ISSR')

School details

School	Queen Elizabeth Grammar School
Department for Education number	384/6115
Registered charity number	1088415
Address	Queen Elizabeth Grammar School 154 Northgate Wakefield West Yorkshire WF1 3QX
Phone number	01924 373943
Email address	qsoffice@wgsf.net
Website	https://wgsf.org.uk/qegs/
Proprietor	Wakefield Grammar School Foundation
Chair	Mr Martin Shevill
Headteacher	Dr Richard Brookes
Age range	7 to 18
Number of pupils	753
Date of previous inspection	15 to 18 February 2022

Information about the school

67. Queen Elizabeth Grammar School is an independent day school registered as a single-sex school for male pupils. The school is part of Wakefield Grammar School Foundation, which also comprises Wakefield Girls' High School and Wakefield Grammar Pre-Preparatory School. Some teaching in the sixth form is shared with Wakefield Girls' High School. The Foundation provides a central administration centre, with a single governing body having oversight. The chair of governors was appointed in December 2023.
68. The school has identified 184 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small number of pupils in the school have an unfunded education, health and care (EHC) plan.
69. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for 121 pupils.
70. The school states its aims are to combine the values of 'care, contribute, aspire' with a forward-thinking approach in a down-to-earth school which prepares its pupils to take their place in the modern world, by fostering a sense of intellectual curiosity and providing opportunities for self-expression and the development of self-confidence to ensure that each pupil achieves his full potential, whether his strengths lie in academic, music, drama, sports or any other arena.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

29 April to 1 May 2025

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 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.

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.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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