

School inspection report

8 to 10 October 2024

David Game College

31 Jewry Street

London

EC3N 2ET

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. School leaders achieve an effective balance between offering an education which encompasses personal development along with a focus on pupils gaining the knowledge required for examination success. Leaders have appropriate skills and knowledge to promote pupils' wellbeing and to enable pupils to make good academic progress.
2. On behalf of the proprietor, a Governance Advisory Council has suitable oversight of key areas such as safeguarding, health and safety, the curriculum, teaching and the residential accommodation. The school consistently meets the Standards, including those for boarding.
3. Pupils have access to individualised learning and tutorial support, as well as teaching which is well planned, and which uses suitable methods and resources. Consequently, different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), make good progress.
4. Pupils are well motivated, and their positive behaviour is supportive of learning. Pupils are often in the school for a relatively short time and recognise that there is little time to waste. They are keen to do well. Staff encourage pupils to be focused and ambitious about their work.
5. Pupils' social and emotional wellbeing is supported by a range of staff who offer counselling and advice when needed. Staff also enhance support through a programme of activities, assembly planning, tutorial sessions and the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme.
6. Leaders ensure that the school offers a harmonious environment in which differences are celebrated and where pupils treat one another with kindness and respect. Posters and displays around the school promote tolerance and respect. Leaders reinforce the messages in PSHE lessons and assemblies about acceptance of classmates with different backgrounds.
7. The boarding facility is comfortable. Boarders are well cared for, their food is varied and of high quality, and they have an appropriate programme of recreational and educational activities available to them.
8. Staff give pupils additional support and guidance in their academic work and their personal development. This support addresses weaknesses and gaps in pupils' knowledge, encouraging them to become self-confident and to develop their self-esteem. Advice about pupils' future pathways is largely effective, although it is inconsistent when it depends on the varying quality of individual tutorial support.
9. Leaders, including at board level, are rigorous about ensuring that all members of the community work in a setting which is safe and has regard to their physical health. Staff identify any risks associated with the buildings, activities or individual pupils, and take steps to minimise them.
10. The school's safeguarding arrangements are effective. Staff training ensures that the adults in the community recognise their shared responsibilities. Leaders implement the school's policy appropriately, keeping accurate records and liaising as required with external agencies. Pupils feel safe in the school, and they know how to find support and guidance if they need it.

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 consistency in the way pupils receive advice about their future pathways.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Those with governance responsibility have a clear understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the school. They challenge school leaders about their implementation of policy and record-keeping and write reports on their findings. This is a key factor in ensuring the pupils feel happy and safe, and enabling them to make good progress. The leadership team ensures that all staff are suitably trained to discharge their responsibilities effectively.
12. Leaders aim for pupils to become the best they can be as people and have a sharp focus on examination success for pupils who have often had difficult school experiences previously. It promotes these ambitions in part through a range of innovative approaches to the curriculum. Recent examples include additional lessons for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) where need is identified. Leaders are overseeing a progression from the school's origins as a tutorial college to a school with the features characteristic of a boarding school.
13. Leaders have effectively assessed and mitigated the risks associated with the introduction of boarding three years ago. They have also enhanced the arrangements for pastoral care and increased the range and quality of co-curricular activity, to the benefit of the whole community. Leaders effectively assess risk and implement policies and protocols to mitigate it, whether through trip supervision, in buildings, or in boarding provision. The school's leadership has allocated responsibility for pupils on different academic programmes, for boarding, for safeguarding and for activities to individual members of staff who have skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles.
14. The complaints procedure is comprehensive, and parental concerns are dealt with promptly and appropriately in accordance with published policy.
15. Leadership and management review academic progress regularly and ensure this information is disseminated to parents, pupils, middle leaders, and teachers. All the required policies and other information is available on the school's website. The school has effective links with external agencies including those for safeguarding and with the local community, playing a full part, for example, in sharing ideas to enhance safeguarding with other schools in the City of London.
16. Those with governance responsibility ensure that Standards are met, including those within the requirements of the Equality Act. The accessibility plan, for instance, aims to increase access for pupils who have disabilities.

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

17. **All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Leaders plan the curriculum effectively to support pupils' learning. A small proportion of pupils opt for a GCSE programme or the University Foundation Programme (UFP). The majority follow A-level courses. Teachers ensure that schemes of work take full account of the school's active promotion of numeracy and literacy skills, PSHE, fundamental British values and protected characteristics.
19. The curriculum is supported by appropriate plans, schemes of work, and programmes of activities. These meet pupils' needs, in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, or aesthetic and creative fields. Sufficient flexibility is built into the curriculum to enable each pupil to have a personalised programme of learning appropriate to their age, aptitude and needs. It may, for example, span different qualifications if that is what is in the best interests of pupils. Similarly, leaders have recently introduced film studies and global citizenship.
20. Leaders have developed a suitable programme of activities to enrich the taught curriculum. Leaders regularly seek the views of pupils about activities, and respond to their requests, for example by offering more team sports. The range of clubs enables pupils to develop a variety of practical skills, for example, public speaking, debating, coding, and specific subject support for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Where clashes occur the leaders of the enrichment programme are able to resolve them. Boarders have access to a range of high-quality weekend visits which are recreational and educational.
21. Appropriate provision is in place to support the individual needs of pupils who have SEND, either in lessons or in additional support sessions. Teachers identify and respond to obstacles for learners and help them to overcome them. This is effective in enabling pupils to make good progress from their individual starting points. The leader of provision for pupils who have SEND ensures that teachers have access to relevant information about strategies to support their learning.
22. A large majority of pupils speak English as an additional language, and on entry about a third need specific support with their English. An appropriate assessment process is in place for new pupils. Staff who oversee the different strands of provision (GCSE, A level and the UFP) also oversee this area. Specialist teachers deliver EAL provision, and they enable pupils to become self-sufficient as quickly as possible. Almost all have sufficient knowledge and skills in English to access the curriculum without undue difficulty, but individual or group support is used, where appropriate. The curriculum offers GCSE English as a second language and IELTS for university entrance, and, as a result, almost all pupils achieve entry to the university of their choice. In addition, teachers are adept at providing subject-specific glossaries, and they routinely check comprehension of difficult terms in their lessons.
23. Externally verified data indicate that the average ability of the pupils covers a wide range, and that there is considerable variation from year to year. Pupils make progress that is broadly in line with the national average, with no significant differences between female and male pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make progress that is at least in line with expectations. At GCSE, pupils overall achieve results above the national average. At A level they achieve results broadly in line with national averages.
24. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, and relationships between staff and pupils are positive and productive. Teachers use a range of effective methods and resources, which enable pupils to

make good progress. Most lessons are well planned, showing careful consideration for the needs of pupils and the demands of the curriculum.

25. Teachers have expert knowledge of the details of examination assessment schemes, and ensure the pupils are aware of them. This was seen across a range of curriculum subjects: teaching referred explicitly to assessment criteria in an A-level accounting lesson exploring financial statements, a University Foundation Programme art lesson where they were critically reflecting on a recent homework project, and an A-level politics lesson examining liberalism and economics. Pupils demonstrate the sophisticated ability to make links with prior learning and test out these in a supportive yet challenging environment.
26. Leaders use assessment data effectively to track pupils' progress and to support identified pupils as needed. This may be individual or small group support for a specific subject, academic skills development, or engagement with parents or boarding staff, to support pupils. There are assessment points several times each term linked explicitly to exam specifications. They find it easy to arrange extra sessions with their teachers if they need to.
27. Leaders carry out regular reviews of teaching and learning. They use a combination of pupil feedback on individual teachers, academic data and lesson observations. This ensures that teaching is generally of a high standard.

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

28. **All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

29. Leaders support the emotional wellbeing of pupils effectively in accordance with the stated aims and ethos of the school. The establishment of boarding has enhanced the high-quality pastoral care arrangements and the developing co-curricular programme of activities. Oversight of pupils' progress and wellbeing is now more detailed and frequent, so that staff identify difficulties quickly and address them promptly. The range and quality of trips and activities has also improved. Staff identify difficulties that pupils encounter with progress and wellbeing through detailed and frequent oversight. They can therefore address them promptly.
30. In addition, the personal tutor system ensures that oversight of each pupil's development is effective through regular and frequent meetings, monitored by senior leaders. Leaders foster mutual respect and a collaborative atmosphere which supports the individual's academic progress and wider personal growth. As a result, pupils develop self-esteem and self-confidence, as seen in lessons and in discussions
31. All children of compulsory school age have a weekly physical education PE lesson at a local leisure facility. In addition, pupils have opportunities to take exercise during activity time. PSHE and relationships and sex education (RSE) programmes for pupils are current, appropriate and thoughtfully planned to meet the needs of the diverse pupil cohort. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. They also learn about life in Britain, which equips them with knowledge they will need at university in the UK.
32. Records of sanctions, and observations of pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school confirm what day and boarding pupils say about good behaviour and tolerance. They are well established features of the school's culture. Leaders and managers have developed an appropriate behaviour policy. It is implemented effectively and fairly, including appropriate sanctions and rewards. Behaviour in the school is positive and is encouraged by the positive relationships between staff and pupils. The sanctions policy includes restorative justice as a means of encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour.
33. Leaders have developed a suitable anti-bullying strategy and policy. The PSHE programme promotes pupils' awareness effectively. Records of sanctions indicate that in practice there are very few instances of bullying; where it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly and appropriately.
34. The premises are well maintained and safe with all regulatory health and safety requirements met. This includes boarding accommodation which is well equipped and of a good standard. All pupils in the residential accommodation have access to good toilet facilities, can cook simple meals (after induction) and have access to clean drinking water.
35. First aid provision is appropriate with a list of qualified first responders and first aid kits displayed throughout the buildings. Outside lesson times, supervision of pupils is unobtrusive and effective, so that they feel as though they are valued as mature people and trusted to behave well.
36. Admission and attendance processes are robust. Registration arrangements for those not of compulsory school age are electronic and efficient, so that the school can follow up any unexplained

absence promptly. The school adheres to the most recent guidance. School leaders inform the local authority about pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.

37. Leaders manage health and safety robustly. The principal and site manager ensure that the policy works in practice. They conduct a weekly tour and visual check of all premises, including the residential accommodation. They ensure that they identify and address any shortcomings. Staff understand that they have a shared responsibility for ensuring a safe and healthy environment across the school. Records such as fire drill logs, staff training and accident reports are meticulous. Risk is assessed carefully, and action is taken to minimise any risks identified. This approach covers the buildings, and off-site activities, as well as specific considerations about individual pupils.

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

38. **All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

39. Curriculum areas such as politics, accounting and business studies enable pupils to develop strong economic understanding. The PSHE programme includes coverage of how mortgages, taxation and student finance operate. The programme also encourages pupils to take an active part in school life, and to build a caring community where they take an interest in the welfare of others. Pupils can share their own cultures in this diverse community by celebrating national or religious festivals, for example. They also say that, more importantly, the school is a safe space where discrimination is extremely rare.
40. The PSHE and RSE programme addresses the needs of all pupils, including those beyond compulsory school age to ensure that all pupils are prepared for their next steps.
41. Through effective assembly planning, tutor sessions, and encouraging activities like the LGBTQ+ club, leaders promote respect and acceptance of the differences between people.
42. Curriculum leaders map the coverage of fundamental British values, including those of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance. As a result, they ensure that these values are promoted systematically and reinforced frequently. GCSE global citizenship lessons enable pupils to discuss different models of direct and representative democracy, drawing on their experience in their own countries. Pupils are able to relate this to the context of a visit to Parliament.
43. The debating society plays an important part in facilitating a free exchange of ideas. A programme of visiting speakers, including the local member of parliament and the police, further enhances pupils' preparation for life in the UK. The school's leadership ensures that the presentation of political opinions is balanced by presenting visiting speakers with a range of views.
44. Pupils' social and cultural awareness is developed through a wide range of activities. Boarding pupils, who have often only recently arrived in the UK, have a programme of visits to museums, galleries and temples. The school takes full advantage of its location in central London. Pupils also show moral understanding in the way they relate to one another.
45. Staff offer guidance to pupils about their future pathways based on their needs and interests. In practice many pupils are in the school for a short period of time, and they arrive with a clear sense of what they are aiming for beyond school. The school uses a range of strategies to engage pupils with useful advice, including a careers fair, an apprenticeship fair, visits by representatives of universities, and talks by alumni and other visitors. Personal tutors have an important role in supporting pupils in choosing their future pathways, but this is not of a consistently high standard.
46. Boarding pupils have access to a good range of forums in which to air their thoughts. As a result, adjustments are made to the activity provision.
47. The pupils' council and the group of boarding ambassadors demonstrate their understanding of accepting responsibility within their community. They are also beginning to reach out beyond school, through community service in the framework of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, for example. The pupils have led on charity fundraising initiatives, including holding a bake sale.

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

48. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

49. The proprietor, through the Governors' Advisory Council, ensures that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place and that they are reviewed regularly. The school safeguarding policy reflects the current legislation and most recent guidance. The policy is implemented consistently to protect pupils from harm or neglect. Leaders attach the highest importance to maintaining a strong and well-embedded safeguarding culture. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive, which encourages pupils to share any concerns they may have.
50. Staff are trained at least annually in safeguarding. The safeguarding team updates staff as necessary on changes in official guidance. The effectiveness of training is supported through an online assessment to check for understanding. Staff have a good understanding of how to keep children safe. They know how to manage a disclosure made by a pupil. In addition, they are trained to be vigilant in matters of pupils' welfare. Staff make frequent and regular written checks on all boarders, for example. Staff who have any concerns about colleagues know that they would take them to the principal.
51. Leaders in safeguarding are appropriately trained for the level of responsibility that they have within the school. They make sure that any concerns raised about pupils' welfare are addressed promptly and effectively. They take action to reduce any risks if a pattern of reported concerns suggests wider concerns.
52. The designated safeguarding team assesses safeguarding concerns and, if appropriate, makes timely referrals to external agencies. Where appropriate, the school liaises effectively with outside agencies and communicates with parents on matters of safeguarding and pastoral care.
53. The appointment process of new employees is thorough. The registrar undertakes all the required pre-recruitment checks on new employees and records them systematically. Staff involved in recruitment have undergone safer recruitment training.
54. There is effective oversight by the governing body, with the designated safeguarding governor in regular communication with the school safeguarding team, who send termly reports to the governing body. Two members of the advisory council scrutinise safeguarding logs and the central register of appointments several times each term to ensure that the school's recruitment policy is implemented rigorously.
55. Leaders have a robust policy regarding online safety and actively promote this as part of their safeguarding provision. A suitable filtering system is in place. This forms part of the school's comprehensive induction programme for new pupils, and of the PSHE scheme of work. School leaders have appointed two persons who are independent of the school to offer a listening service for boarders, who know who they are and how to contact them.
56. The school has effective processes to safeguard the welfare of boarders. Leaders have a clear understanding of the specific risks to boarders and they take effective steps to reduce them. Boarders know how to report any concerns to external bodies if they need to.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

57. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	David Game College
Department for Education number	201/6000
Address	David Game College 31 Jewry Street London EC3N 2ET
Phone number	020 7221 6665
Email address	j.dalton@davidgamecollege.com
Website	www.davidgamecollege.com
Proprietor	Mr David Game
Chair	Mr David Game
Headteacher	Mr John Dalton
Age range	13-22
Number of pupils	257
Number of boarding pupils	95
Date of previous inspection	6 to 8 June 2023

Information about the school

58. The school opened in 1974 as a tutorial college in West London. It has been in its current location since 2019.
59. The school has admitted boarders since 2021 and there are now 95 pupils who board.
60. The school has identified 37 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
61. English is an additional language for 221 pupils.
62. The school states its aims are to offer a safe and tolerant environment, in which to deliver a progressive and modern curriculum that not only gives pupils the knowledge and techniques to excel in examinations, but also the critical thinking skills and broader education to navigate their place in the world.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

8 to 10 October 2024

44. A team of five inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The onsite inspection was quality assured by a monitor.

45. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons
- 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
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

46. 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

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For more information, please visit isi.net