

School inspection report

28 to 30 January 2025

New College School

Savile Road

Oxford

OX1 3UA

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. Governors know the school well and they work with school leaders to deliver the school's aims, which are to promote scholarship and the development of the whole person. The school's strategic planning is specifically focused on promoting pupils' wellbeing.
2. However, governors and leaders have not ensured that all Standards are consistently met. They do not ensure that statutory guidance is followed with regard to attendance. They also do not consistently demonstrate due regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE) in their documentation of decision-making relating to referrals to the local authority.
3. Leaders have developed a stimulating curriculum where pupils benefit from the detailed study of a broad range of subjects. Pupils regularly explore cross-curricular themes which help them to make connections in their knowledge across subjects. Pupils extend their knowledge, deepen their understanding and develop confidence as learners.
4. Leaders in the early years provide a safe and purposeful learning environment which supports children to thrive. The broad curriculum and effective teaching support children's development well.
5. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. They work collaboratively to develop interesting schemes of work. Leaders' approaches to supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) ensure that these pupils' needs are identified and supported appropriately.
6. Leaders promote a culture of kindness and respect across the school. Relationships are positive and pupils behave well. Behaviour issues are dealt with appropriately. However, records do not consistently show how incidents of behaviour are followed up and resolved.
7. The wellbeing programme for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education helps pupils to gain an understanding of themselves, their community and the wider world, including personal, social and societal matters. Pupils benefit from the many links with the local community that enable pupils to engage with others. Pupils are well prepared to make a positive contribution to society.
8. A wide range of musical and dramatic performances means that there are many opportunities for pupils to perform to a high standard. Choristers sing regularly in the college chapel, contributing to services during term, on celebratory occasions and on tour.
9. The school site is well maintained and meets relevant health and safety requirements. Risk assessment procedures are effective in promoting the welfare and safety of pupils when at school or on trips.
10. Leaders provide a variety of ways to make sure that pupils can express any concerns they have. Should pupils do so, staff respond promptly and appropriately. Leaders understand contextual risks, including those related to online learning.

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 not 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:

- current statutory guidance relating to the attendance and registration of pupils is followed
- decision-making relating to safeguarding matters is documented in line with statutory guidance.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that staff consistently record how incidents of behaviour are followed up and resolved.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Leaders establish a school environment and culture in which pupils are encouraged to enjoy learning, be confident and feel they are members of a school community in which they belong. Pupils develop self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence through the curriculum and wider school experience. The school's aims are rooted in the traditions of New College ('the College'). Leaders promote courtesy, mutual respect and tolerance as central to seeking to educate the whole person as well as promoting scholarship. In this way leaders promote pupils' wellbeing.
12. Governors ensure effective oversight of leaders' work in relation to the school's self-evaluation and the implementation of the school's strategic plan. Senior leaders involve middle leaders in the planning and development of new initiatives, drawing on evidence-based research carried out by middle leaders in their areas of responsibility. This has led to developments in the school's curriculum, particularly in extending pupils' digital literacy.
13. Leaders' review of the arrangements for safeguarding and pastoral support for all pupils, including choristers, ensures that pupils experience a consistent approach to safeguarding across all aspects of school life. Governors now take a more active role in the oversight of safeguarding. However, governors do not maintain effective oversight of leaders' work in relation to safeguarding and attendance. They do not ensure that leaders implement the most recent statutory guidance in relation to attendance. Nor do they ensure that leaders consistently record their decisions in relation to managing safeguarding concerns and how these are followed up, as leaders are required to do.
14. In other areas, leaders demonstrate a systematic approach to identifying and managing risk. These risk assessments are detailed, thorough and relevant. Leaders work closely with the College to ensure that appropriate mitigations are in place.
15. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. They have an appropriate accessibility plan which considers site access and accessibility to the curriculum. The plan, which is regularly reviewed and updated, is also informed through the school's work to develop the provision for pupils who have SEND.
16. Leaders provide parents with relevant information about their child's progress and attainment through formal written reports, parents meetings and individual discussions with staff. Key policies and documents are shared with parents via the school's website, handbook and newsletters.
17. Leaders maintain accurate records of any complaints they receive. Leaders ensure that complaints are dealt with promptly and followed up appropriately, in accordance with the procedures set out in the school's complaints policy.

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

18. Standards relating to attendance and safeguarding are not all met.
19. As a result, Standards relating to governance, leadership and management are not met.
- 20. 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

21. Leaders have developed a broad curriculum that provides pupils with relevant knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects. Schemes of work are detailed. Pupils benefit from courses of study that encourage creativity and are structured. For example, pupils work towards the record of achievement for the Pre-Senior Baccalaureate. Pupils develop intellectual curiosity and confidence. They are self-motivated and are interested in their work.
22. Lessons are well planned to help pupils deepen their understanding and extend their knowledge across the full range of subjects that they study. Staff have good subject knowledge. Teaching enables pupils to build on what they have previously learned and to make connections in their learning. Staff help pupils connect concepts in history, geography, religious studies (RS) and philosophy when exploring particular themes, such as conflict or civilisation. Pupils practise their writing skills using a consistent approach across subjects. This helps pupils develop fluency and confidence in writing for different subjects.
23. Staff make effective use of assessment information to inform their teaching. In lessons, staff check pupils' understanding before moving on to new learning. Careful questioning helps teachers identify and correct pupils' misconceptions which secures pupils' understanding of important concepts. Teachers adapt their lessons well to meet the individual needs of pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress.
24. Leaders and staff work with parents to identify pupils' needs at an early stage and leaders ensure that appropriate strategies are in place to support pupils who have SEND so that they make good progress. Provision is regularly reviewed to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of pupils who have SEND.
25. In lessons, staff focus on using subject-specific terminology to help pupils secure their knowledge of particular concepts. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are supported well to develop their confidence in spoken and written English.
26. Pupils are encouraged to explore topics and ideas from different points of view. The curriculum and wider school experiences also foster pupils' critical thinking, reflection and communication skills. Pupils practise skills in public speaking and debate so that they become confident communicators.
27. Pupils are confident learners. They act positively on feedback to improve their work. They are well motivated and keen to achieve well. Pupils have developed skills to evaluate their own work and identify targets for improvement. This helps motivate pupils and develops independence in their learning. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
28. In lessons, pupils work well together, developing teamwork and problem-solving skills. They listen to what one another have to say and willingly share their knowledge and ideas. Leaders ensure that teaching is supported through well chosen resources. This includes specialist provision such as science laboratories, design technology workshops and access to appropriate technology.
29. Pupils benefit from a well-planned music curriculum and wider opportunities to participate in various ensembles and orchestra to develop their singing and instrumental skills. Pupils learn about a range of musical and artistic traditions which extends their knowledge of different contexts for music making. Pupils explore musical elements and techniques to create their own compositions.

The chorister programme provides specialist training to choristers to develop their vocal technique and choral musicianship to a high standard. Planned links with local museums extend pupils knowledge and appreciation of the visual arts.

30. The curriculum for physical education (PE) is well considered from the early years across the school. Pupils develop their proficiency and skills in team sports, fitness and individual pursuits. Pupils participate positively in a wide range of extra-curricular physical and sporting activities which form part of the school's diverse enrichment programme.
31. Pupils practise and secure their knowledge and skills through extended inter-disciplinary projects such as the whole-school opera and 'SHTEAM' (science, humanities, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics) weeks. Pupils develop their awareness of the natural world through carefully planned outdoor learning experiences. Educational trips also broaden pupils' experience and enrich their understanding of the curriculum and the wider world.
32. Children in the early years make a positive start to their learning in the Reception class. The thoughtfully planned curriculum enables children to widen their knowledge and experience which deepens their understanding through purposeful play and activities. This supports their development well.
33. Children respond positively to staff's high expectations of their learning and behaviour in the early years. Children pay careful attention to instructions and understand routines. This helps build their independence and confidence. Skilful interactions from well-trained staff enable children to develop their language and communication and to extend both their thinking and their play. Children develop physical strength and control through regular physical education (PE) sessions that are taught by a specialist teacher. They learn how to adjust their speed, change direction safely and use different types of movement. They develop their sense of space and co-ordination.

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

- 34. All relevant Standards are met.**

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

35. Leaders and staff encourage pupils to develop a sense of moral responsibility and to have an ethical awareness of the difference between right and wrong. For example, staff in the early years use pictures to promote discussion of appropriate behaviour and responses. Positive behaviours are affirmed by staff when they are demonstrated by children. Through the support of staff in the early years, children learn to manage their emotions well and this allows them to build social skills and to develop friendships.
36. Leaders monitor attendance levels and inform the local authority of leavers and joiners at non-standard transition points. Leaders do not demonstrate sufficient understanding of the most recent statutory guidance. At the time of inspection, the attendance policy and registration procedures did not adhere to the latest statutory guidance. The documentation was updated at the request of inspectors during the inspection.
37. Pupils are supervised effectively when on breaks, as well as at the beginning and end of each day, and also when in transit to activities in the local area. As a result, pupils feel safe and are well cared for at school.
38. Pastoral staff provide effective support for pupils. Regular wellbeing check-in opportunities with staff enable pupils to engage in self-reflection and to learn about emotional resilience. From the early years, the school teaches children about fairness and respect for all groups of people. Leaders provide effective support for choristers which enables them to balance their time between choir commitments, academic study and recreational activities. Staff take additional care over choristers' welfare and encourage the choristers to explore any issues should the need arise.
39. Leaders provide a range of physical education opportunities for pupils in the prep school. Children in the early years and pupils in the pre-prep benefit from specialist teaching in physical education, with specialist sports coaching provided in the older years. Staff provide effective support for pupils and use praise appropriately to support those who find activities challenging. Pupils work collaboratively and also praise and encourage their peers. Pupils are aware of the progress they make in physical education through well-planned, inclusive and graduated tasks. As a result, pupils understand the benefits of exercise in keeping them healthy and the contribution to their wellbeing.
40. The well-structured PSHE programme includes topics such as peer pressure, resilience and health. Pupils consider these topics in relation to themselves, their family and friends, as well as the wider world. Pupils complete self-assessments in response to the programme and these help to inform staff for future planning. Staff provide guidance to pupils on how to recognise and manage their emotions in response to the needs of individual pupils or cohorts.
41. Leaders ensure that pupils across the school experience a suitable age-appropriate programme of relationships education and relationships and sex education (RSE). Parents are appropriately consulted in relation to the RSE curriculum. In the prep school, pupils explore topics on different types of relationships, consent and biological development. Staff gather the views of pupils from surveys and take this into account when planning lessons.

42. The weekly service in the chapel provides a structured, calm and contemplative space for pupils. Guest preachers speak on key themes such as kindness, empathy and social responsibility, which are followed up in teacher-led tutorial times.
43. Through effective modelling and the regular use of praise, leaders and staff foster good behaviour. The rewards system promotes self-esteem and positivity. The few incidents of unkindness and bullying are responded to promptly and appropriately. However, records do not consistently show how incidents of behaviour are followed up and resolved.
44. The school buildings and site are maintained well. Issues are noticed and addressed quickly. Leaders ensure that relevant health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire. Risk assessments for the site, as well as for trips and visits, are comprehensive. There is suitable accommodation for pupils' medical needs and first aid. Staff are appropriately trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid.

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

45. The Standard relating to attendance is not met.
46. As a result, Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are not met.
- 47. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.**

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

48. Leaders actively promote and support pupils' understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils explore and compare the different experiences of life in British society. They learn about different societies in religious studies and in philosophy lessons. The chapel and assemblies programme reinforces values of mutual respect, kindness and empathy.
49. Leaders plan opportunities for pupils to participate in school council, eco committee and fundraising initiatives, which foster social responsibility and civic awareness. Pupils are encouraged to take on leadership roles. A number of initiatives put forward by pupils have been adopted, such as new water fountains, changes to lunch menus, and the introduction of new clubs and societies.
50. Leaders encourage pupils to engage with a wide range of communities beyond their school. For example, the charity committee organises fund-raising events on a termly basis, with emphasis on international, educational and local charities. Leaders develop partnerships with local schools through music and sport, enabling pupils to join the choir outreach programme, organise concerts together and play in mixed sports teams with pupils from different schools. Pupils regularly perform in community venues.
51. The enrichment programme provides structured opportunities for leadership, social interaction and personal development, so that pupils contribute meaningfully to school life. For example, older pupils have opportunities to mentor and guide younger pupils in sport and music, enabling older pupils to develop their leadership skills.
52. Teachers encourage engagement with cultural and social learning experiences. They enable opportunities to discuss societal issues in debates and through art competitions. Curriculum plans include topics on environmental and sustainability education. This encourages pupils' sense of responsible citizenship and awareness of global issues. Teachers organise trips, including residential and overseas, which help pupils develop social confidence and an appreciation of other cultures.
53. The wellbeing programme promotes pupils' practical understanding of economic responsibility and includes financial literacy and decision-making skills. Thoughtful planning ensures that economic literacy starts in the prep school, with discussions about the difference between financial 'wants' and 'needs'. Older pupils learn from real-life case studies about financial risk and online gambling. Human geography lessons and visiting lecturers provide opportunities for pupils to explore ways in which economic crises and trade have an impact on society.
54. Leaders embed the Gatsby benchmarks of good career guidance into a well-structured career guidance programme. Effective use of visiting speakers from the parent body and university, speaking to pupils about their research and their careers in the arts, science and sport, exposes pupils to a range of ideas about possible careers and professions. Subject teachers incorporate career-related discussions effectively into lessons, making links between subject content and real-world applications. Careers interviews are integrated into the curriculum to support and guide pupils' aspirations.

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 provide some oversight and guidance to leaders by monitoring policies and reviewing reports relating to safeguarding. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding have the appropriate experience and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post in line with statutory requirements. All staff, volunteers and governors receive induction and ongoing training.
57. The safeguarding policy is written in line with statutory guidance. It is reviewed annually by the board of governors. The policy is detailed and gives due consideration to how leaders and staff work together to support the safety and wellbeing of all pupils. Leaders are alert to the contextual safeguarding risks to pupils both on site and in the wider community.
58. However, leaders do not consistently maintain as required detailed and accurate written records of all concerns, including the rationale for decisions where referrals to external agencies are made or are not made.
59. Staff understand how to raise low-level concerns in keeping with statutory requirements and in line with the school's child protection and safeguarding policy. School staff know when they should make a referral. Staff also understand the importance of safeguarding pupils and are alert to possible signs of abuse or neglect. Pupils know that they will be listened to and are confident to speak to trusted adults in school.
60. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online in the wellbeing programme, during computing lessons and during form time. There are restrictions on the use of digital devices by pupils during the day. Appropriate online filtering systems are in place which block access to harmful or inappropriate online content. Suitable monitoring systems are in place and staff regularly review the search logs so that leaders are able to intervene promptly when any potential issues are identified. The systems are regularly tested to ensure efficacy.
61. Managers of the school's arrangements for recruitment have the necessary training and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Leaders and governors provide regular oversight of the school's single central record of appointments which is well maintained and accurate. All required recruitment checks are carried out before a member of staff begins work in the school.

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

62. Standards are not met consistently with respect to the keeping of records of decision-making relating to referrals to external agencies.
63. As a result, Standards relating to safeguarding are not met.
- 64. 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	Standards
ISSR 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.

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

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

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 15	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

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 the pupils at the school; and
7(b)	such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
EYFS 3.5	Providers must have and implement policies and procedures to keep children safe and meet EYFS requirements. Schools are not required to have separate policies to cover EYFS requirements provided the requirements are already met through an existing policy. Where providers are required to have policies and procedures as specified below, these policies and procedures should be recorded in writing. Policies and procedures should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant LSP.
EYFS 3.7	If providers have concerns about children's safety or welfare, they

	<p>must immediately notify their local authority children's social care team, in line with local reporting procedures, and, in emergencies, the police. Providers must also take into account the government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales'. All schools are required to have regard to the government's statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', and other childcare providers may also find it helpful to read this guidance.</p>
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School details

School	New College School
Department for Education number	931/6065
Registered charity number	1142701
Address	New College School Savile Road Oxford Oxfordshire OX1 3UA
Phone number	01865 285560
Email address	office@newcollegeschool.org
Website	www.newcollegeschool.org
Proprietor	New College, Oxford
Chair	Mr Miles Young
Headteacher	Dr Matthew Jenkinson
Age range	4 to 13
Number of pupils	155
Date of previous inspection	22 to 25 March 2022

Information about the school

65. New College School is an independent day school, registered as a school for male pupils. It was founded in 1379, originally to provide the education for the choristers of New College, Oxford, and has increased its numbers over the centuries. The school moved to its present site in 1903. The school is owned by New College, which delegates responsibility for the oversight and administration of the school to a governing committee. This committee consists of fellows and external members of the college and is chaired by its Warden.
66. The school consists of a pre-prep department for pupils from age four to seven, which includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and a prep department for pupils aged seven to thirteen. The school educates the choristers for New College.
67. The school has identified 34 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are no pupils in the school who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
68. The school has identified nine pupils as speaking English as an additional language.
69. The school states that its aims are to uphold the founding principles of promoting 'godliness and the studies of good learning'; to continue the tradition of musical excellence; and promote spiritual and moral awareness together with the values of courtesy, mutual respect and tolerance. It seeks to foster intellectual curiosity and a life-long enjoyment of learning, and to extend pupils' understanding and commitment to the wider local, national and international community.

Inspection details

Inspection dates 28 to 30 January 2025

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

71. 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 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.

72. 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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For more information, please visit isi.net