

School inspection report

23 to 25 April 2024

Fine Arts College

Centre Studios

41–43 England's Lane

Hampstead

London

NW3 4YD

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
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	5
SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	6
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	6
SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	7
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	8
SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY	9
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY ..	9
SAFEGUARDING	10
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING	10
SCHOOL DETAILS	11
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	12
INSPECTION DETAILS	13

Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders and governors work effectively together to ensure the consistent and clear vision for the school creates an educational experience in which all subjects are treated equally. Governors are well informed and provide suitable support and challenge to leaders who demonstrate appropriate skills and knowledge to meet the standards.
2. The curriculum is planned to ensure that it has breadth and the quality of teaching meets pupils' needs and aspirations. The management of groups of subjects by middle leaders is not always effective because leaders have not ensured the skills, knowledge and understanding of middle leaders is consistent, and that they have the appropriate time available to carry out their curriculum oversight roles.
3. Suitable assessment arrangements are in place. Parents receive regular and useful reports about their child's progress and achievement. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are enabled to make good progress. This as a result of careful and thoughtful curriculum planning which helps pupils to build on their strengths.
4. The curriculum and wider opportunities support pupils to make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points.
5. The personal, social, health and economics (PSHE) programme, and the series of enrichment talks for older pupils, contribute effectively to ensuring pupils are ready for life in the adult world. Pupils' appreciation of the non-material aspects of life is highly developed.
6. Pupils develop strong moral awareness. They are conscious of the positive role they can play in their community. The behaviour policy is effectively implemented, and pupils feel confident to speak to adults when they require help and support.
7. Pupils develop respect and are tolerant of differing views. Pupils receive supportive careers advice from knowledgeable senior leaders and experienced subject specialists, which enables them to pursue their aspirations in and beyond school.
8. A suitable safeguarding policy, in line with statutory guidance, is in place and is effectively implemented.
9. Appropriate risk management and health and safety arrangements are in place to promote the wellbeing of pupils. The premises and accommodation are suitably maintained. Pupils are effectively supervised at all times.

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 steps

Leaders should:

- provide suitable training and time to ensure that the skills, knowledge and understanding of middle leaders is consistent across all areas of learning to enable the best outcomes for all pupils.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders have a clear and consistent vision for the school. Pupils experience an education in which all subjects sit equally alongside each other, which is in line with the school's original aims. Governors have a deep and thorough understanding of the school's performance and offer support and challenge to leaders.
11. Governors' presence in the school is both regular and purposeful. They understand the strategic progress of the school and ensure leaders have appropriate skills and knowledge to enable the school to meet the standards. Policies and procedure are regularly reviewed. An annual review of safeguarding helps leaders check that robust procedures are in place to promote the wellbeing of pupils.
12. Self-evaluation is used effectively to inform and review the school development plan. For example, there is a detailed objective to develop the use of assessment to further improve pupils' outcomes; and a plan to develop systems to evaluate and monitor pupils' wellbeing. Staff contribute to the creation of this plan.
13. The leadership of subject areas is managed by a team of directors of study, who each oversees a number of subjects. The effectiveness of this approach is inconsistent because leaders have not ensured that the skills, knowledge and understanding of middle leaders, and the time available to them to carry out their roles, is consistent. This has an impact on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' outcomes in some curriculum areas.
14. Risk is managed well across the school. Appropriate risk assessments are in place to ensure health, safety and safeguarding of pupils and staff. Risks for vulnerable pupils are also carefully assessed and reviewed so that appropriate support can be put in place.
15. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) ensures safeguarding procedures are implemented robustly. Staff and governors receive appropriate training. Staff understand their responsibilities in promoting the wellbeing of all pupils. Records are systematically and securely kept. Leaders liaise effectively with external agencies when appropriate.
16. School buildings and grounds are maintained to a suitable standard with due consideration to the requirements of health and safety, and the prevention of fire. A suitable accessibility plan is in place. Leaders ensure that no pupils or groups are discriminated against in line with the Equality Act 2010. Information about the school's support and provision for pupils who have SEND is available to parents. The school ensures an account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of pupils with an education and health care (EHC) plan is provided to the local authority, and that these plans are reviewed annually.
17. The school's website contains a wide range of useful information for parents who also receive helpful and timely reports about their children's progress. An appropriate complaints policy is in place. Concerns are handled effectively and recorded appropriately.

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

18. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

19. Leaders have created a curriculum that is broad and appropriate to meet pupils' needs. In the sixth form, the curriculum is designed to enable pupils to specialise in the arts, languages and the humanities. Pupils learn and make progress in all areas. This enriched curriculum is supported by effective planning and schemes of work.
20. Leaders are ambitious for pupils' learning and achievement in the creative arts. The curriculum and wider opportunities support pupils to make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points.
21. Teachers deploy a range of methods to ensure effective learning takes place. In particular, they use a discursive, conversational approach, which is effective in engaging pupils, and enabling them to make good progress. Teachers plan lessons well, drawing on their expert subject knowledge and wider professional experience. Pupils acquire new skills and relevant subject knowledge, deepen their understanding, and produce work of a high standard. Pupils behave well and teachers are sensitive to pupils' differing needs.
22. The school successfully supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) including complex learning and emotional requirements, particularly those who have found traditional approaches in previous schools challenging. Leaders take time upon entry to the school to carefully assess each pupil's needs. This leads to a range of interventions most suited to the individual. Teachers are highly flexible in their response to those pupils' needs and develop processes to identify the impact of the interventions put in place to enable pupils to make good progress.
23. A suitable assessment framework is in place to regularly evaluate pupils' learning and progress, and this informs the frequent reporting cycle. Pupil progress data and observations of pupils' learning and engagement inform discussions about pupils' achievements and next steps.
24. Pupils make the most of opportunities for rest and recreation at break and lunch times. An appropriate programme of extra-curricular activities is available at the end of each school day. A varied programme of in-school events and trips to museums and art galleries in the UK and abroad enriches pupils' knowledge and understanding.

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

25. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

26. A PSHE programme which includes age-appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE). The programme is delivered by a small number of suitably trained staff and effectively develops pupils' learning and awareness. Pupils in the lower school benefit from talks from visiting speakers, for example, local community health professionals. In addition to scheduled key areas, staff are responsive to relevant current affairs. Additionally, pupils are given the opportunity to choose topic areas to be included in the PSHE programme. They value the input they have to shape further discussion.
27. An enrichment programme in the sixth form aims to help the older pupils to be successful when they leave school through a range of events which offers them practical advice for their future lives.
28. Staff support pupils well to develop self-awareness and self-understanding which leads to increased levels of self-esteem. Leaders encourage mutual trust and respect for others. Pupils develop tolerance and appreciation of each other's differences. They are highly supportive of each other and demonstrate empathy and understanding.
29. Pupils regularly participate in a programme of physical education. Activities include a range of team and individual sports and skills development. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a number of competitive fixtures in football and basketball.
30. The behaviour policy is implemented consistently and rewards and sanctions are understood by pupils and staff. Staff are quick to recognise changes in pupils' behaviour or friendship dynamics as relationship across the school community are positive.
31. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual awareness through a broad range of activities and experiences. The appreciation of the works of others in subjects such as fine art, history of art, English, history and philosophy, require pupils to consider deeply, non-material aspects of life as well as the concept of self and the expression of feelings, beliefs and emotions. This contributes positively to the development of pupils' maturity and self-knowledge.
32. The management of health and safety, fire and first aid is effective. Premises and accommodation are suitably maintained. Checks are undertaken regularly and carefully recorded. All staff are trained in first aid and suitable arrangements are in place for the medical care of pupils.
33. Pupils are effectively supervised at all times. They respect the school rules which they understand are in place to keep themselves and others safe. This helps pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour.
34. The school keeps appropriate admission and attendance registers and has effective systems to follow up absences. Leaders share relevant information with the appropriate local authorities when pupils join or leave the school as required by statutory guidance.

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

35. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

36. There is a broad range of activities to support pupils' understanding of the wider world. The enrichment programme prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Local police and practising lawyers form part of the visiting speaker programme which supports pupils' understanding of the legal system. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of a wide range of creative themes is supported by talks provided by artists, fashion designers, public relations professionals, actors and musicians.
37. Pupils develop their understanding of issues such equality, diversity and inclusion and have the opportunity to question visiting speakers and debate issues in class. The PSHE programme contributes to pupils' development of respectful relationships. The programme is flexible. Sensitive issues are carefully handled by skilful teachers who promote mutual respect and tolerance.
38. Leaders value pupils' views and they consider them carefully when making decisions about the school. For example, through the school council, pupils contributed to the plans for a new school building, effected changes to how rubbish is recycled and ensured the removal of single use plastic cups from the school setting.
39. Pupils' economic awareness is developed throughout the curriculum. In the sixth form pupils focus on themes such as how to make a budget, opening a bank account, setting up direct debits, and managing personal finances. Teams of pupils in Year 12 demonstrate their business acumen in a young enterprise venture run by a local university.
40. Pupils receive helpful careers advice which is impartial and pertinent to their interests and aspirations. Pupils are well prepared for the application process to further and higher education. Pupils regularly gain places at a wide range of universities and colleges to study arts-based subjects. Some pupils gain entry to honours degree courses without the need for the completion of a foundation year.
41. Pupils contribute to charitable activities to support the community. This includes collecting for and delivering to a local foodbank and support the work of a local refugee action network.
42. Pupils develop strong moral awareness and a keen sense of right and wrong. Pupils consider moral dilemmas and complex issues in everyday life.

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

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

Safeguarding

44. Effective safeguarding arrangements are in place.
45. Staff receive suitable induction and regular safeguarding training throughout the year. The DSL and the senior safeguarding team receive appropriate higher-level training in line with local and national requirements. The designated safeguarding governor ensures effective oversight of procedures and offers relevant challenge and support.
46. An appropriate safeguarding policy, which is in line with statutory requirements, is in place and is implemented effectively. The DSL liaises well with local authorities and other agencies. Leaders follow advice and guidance promptly so that any concerns about pupils are dealt with in a timely manner.
47. Staff are clear in the action to take when dealing with a concern about a child. They are aware of contextual risks in the local area. They also understand the additional vulnerabilities for pupils who have SEND. Staff respond appropriately and know how to report these concerns to the DSL.
48. Staff who are responsible for the recruitment process have appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding to carry out the role effectively. A suitable single central record of appointments is in place and is well managed. This is appropriately monitored by governors.
49. Pupils know how to stay safe online and regular guidance is provided in an age-sensitive manner. The school has suitable systems in place to filter and monitor pupils' access to the internet.
50. Pupils feel safe in their school environment because they are confident they will be listened to and staff will follow up any concerns or worries they may have.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Fine Arts College			
Department for Education number	202/6387			
Address	Fine Arts College Centre Studios 41–43 England’s Lane Hampstead London NW3 4YD			
Phone number	0207 586 0312			
Email address	mail@hampsteadfinearts.com			
Website	www.fineartscollege.com			
Proprietor	Dukes Education			
Chair	Mr Tim Fish			
Principal	Mrs Candida Cave			
Age range	13 to 19			
Number of pupils	235			
	Lower School	65	Upper School	170
Date of previous inspection	11 to 13 February 2020			

Information about the school

52. Fine Arts College is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between 13 and 19 years. It is owned and governed by Dukes Education, supported by an advisory committee of governors. The school began as a sixth-form college for arts and humanities, and pupils in Years 10 and 11 were admitted in the 1990s. The school comprises the lower school, for ages 13 to 16, and the upper school, for ages 16 to 19. Most pupils join the school in Year 12. At the time of the inspection, a Year 9 class had recently been formed as a result of pupils joining the school mid-year.
53. The school has identified 142 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A significant proportion of these pupils have social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. Five pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
54. English is an additional language for 14 pupils.
55. The school states its aim is to inspire a passion for learning that will last a lifetime and continue to enrich beyond formal exams. It strives to instil a love of learning in students of all ages and to help them achieve entry into outstanding higher educational establishments. The school believes that with the right encouragement, students flourish academically and creatively. The school seeks to encourage self-discipline and self-motivation, as a bridge between school and university.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

23 to 25 April 2024

56. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

57. 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.

58. 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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