

School inspection report

28 to 30 April 2026

Bristol Grammar School

University Road

Bristol

BS8 1SR

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. Leaders and governors share information and work together systematically to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision. They use this information to inform their strategic planning and to ensure that the school continues to build on its current successes. Knowledgeable, skilled leaders and governors carry out their responsibilities effectively.
2. The broad, thoughtfully designed curriculum promotes intellectual curiosity and enables pupils to develop knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects. An enriching programme of co-curricular activities provides opportunities for pupils to further develop their skills and interests.
3. Teachers skilfully use their expert subject knowledge to engage pupils in thought-provoking teaching which furthers their progress and develops their skills and knowledge well. Teachers ensure that pupils connect their learning to broader and relevant social and cultural issues to deepen their understanding. Well-planned teaching supports pupils to make good progress.
4. Leaders implement an effective assessment framework across all subjects. Heads of department analyse data effectively and use their analysis to ensure that teaching provides pupils with efficient support and appropriate challenge. As a result, pupils attain above the national average at GCSE and A level.
5. Staff maintain positive and warm relationships with pupils. Most staff implement the school's behaviour policy appropriately and, as a result, pupils behave well, work hard and show real interest in their learning. However, a few members of staff do not implement the behaviour policy consistently, which leads to occasional low-level, off-task behaviour in lessons.
6. In the early years, leaders ensure that children develop in all the required areas of learning through well-planned activities, effective teaching and positive relationships. Leaders actively consider children's feedback to devise a curriculum that takes account of their interests as well as their needs. Children explore, investigate and develop communication and language skills as they play and learn in engaging environments.
7. The school teaches pupils to recognise the importance of respecting all people, regardless of their individual identity. Through the curriculum, assemblies and speaker programme, pupils learn about inclusion, cultural diversity and different faiths. As a result, they engage well with wider social, political and cultural issues. Pupils learn and understand that discrimination is unacceptable in any form.
8. Leaders support pupils' transition to their next stage in education, training and employment. The school provides comprehensive careers advice and economics education, as well as a range of opportunities for pupils to develop social responsibility and support the wider community. The well-designed programme ensures that pupils make smooth transitions from one part of the school to the next, as well as preparing them to go on to future careers or study.
9. The school maintains attendance and admission registers appropriately. However, at the start of the inspection, the attendance policy on the school's website did not reflect the current statutory guidance to provide contact details for the school's attendance champions. Leaders rectified this during the inspection.

10. Leaders implement health and safety procedures and related policies effectively. They meet pupils' welfare needs consistently and ensure that the premises are well maintained and secure. Leaders have a clear understanding of the school's contextual risks, including those linked to its city centre location.
11. Governors and leaders maintain vigilant oversight of safeguarding procedures. Leaders ensure that staff are suitably trained and consistently promote a positive culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders forge effective links with external agencies as sources of advice, guidance and support.

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:

- ensure consistent implementation of the behaviour policy by all staff to eliminate occasional low-level disruptive behaviour
- ensure that the attendance policy published on the school's website consistently reflects current statutory guidance.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. Leaders who are ambitious for the success of the school plan its development and implement effective self-evaluation. They ensure that the strategic plan aligns with and prioritises the school's values of kindness, integrity and rigour. Leaders devise, implement and review action plans to support the further development of the school and provision for pupils. As part of this process, leaders regularly take pupils' views into account and act on their suggestions where appropriate.
13. Governors scrutinise the impact of leaders' management of the school through committees and regular reports from school leaders. They actively engage in school life and make regular visits to school to speak to leaders and pupils and to check the implementation of policies. Consequently, governors provide effective oversight of the school's provision and its impact on pupils' wellbeing and academic and personal development. In these ways, they assure themselves that leaders have the skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
14. Knowledgeable and skilled early years leaders support children's learning and development successfully. They provide a structured environment that promotes children's progress. Leaders' understanding of children's needs informs all aspects of the provision. This thoughtful and caring ethos is understood and promoted well by staff.
15. Leaders understand the school's contextual risks, such as those associated with the nature of its city centre site. Appropriately trained staff identify potential hazards and provide comprehensive risk assessments to mitigate them. These risk assessments cover all aspects of pupils' educational experience, including overseas trips. Leaders review risk assessments regularly and amend them, as required.
16. Leaders provide appropriate information for the parents of current and prospective pupils on the school's website. They ensure that parents receive regular and helpful written reports about their child's attainment, progress and effort. Leaders also provide suitable opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress with staff.
17. Leaders respond promptly and appropriately to any parental complaints. They maintain detailed records, including of actions that they have taken to resolve any complaints. Leaders systematically review the causes of complaints to identify issues or trends and see complaints as an opportunity to improve practice.
18. Leaders engage proactively with external agencies, such as the local authority, so that they keep up to date with educational developments and promote pupils' wellbeing effectively. Leaders notify the local authority when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition times. They provide the local authority with information about any pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), including information related to finance and funding.
19. Leaders and governors ensure that the school complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The school implements a suitable, regularly reviewed and detailed accessibility plan. This sets out clear targets and the actions required to enhance pupils' access to the school site and the curriculum, including those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

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

20. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. Leaders provide a curriculum that is carefully designed to develop pupils' knowledge progressively from the early years to sixth form. They regularly review curriculum plans and schemes of work across an extensive range of subject areas so that they develop pupils' knowledge and skills methodically. The curriculum offers pupils a broad choice of GCSE options, including the opportunity to study a range of modern and classical languages, including Russian and Latin. The school offers a comprehensive range of A levels, as well as academic enrichment opportunities such as the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), which further develop pupils' research and evaluative skills.
22. The curriculum supports pupils to develop effective speaking, listening and literacy skills. This starts in the early years with a phonics and spelling programme that builds progressively to support children's early reading skills. Older pupils analyse language and intention when studying poetry and apply literary devices in their own writing. Pupils further develop their speaking and listening skills by participating in regular debates and through the opportunities provided by a comprehensive visiting speaker programme. Consequently, pupils listen attentively to others and become articulate and confident speakers.
23. Well-planned mathematics teaching helps pupils build on what they know and understand. In the early years, children initially learn to use correct mathematical language when counting and comparing numbers to 20. Teachers provide older pupils with regular opportunities to practise and become fluent in calculation and apply their knowledge in solving complex mathematical problems in areas such as trigonometry and differentiation. Pupils develop their mathematical skills in other subjects such as the sciences, geography and economics. As a result, pupils become confident mathematicians.
24. Leaders actively promote the development of pupils' creativity. Knowledgeable and engaging teaching in these areas targets pupils' interests and develops their skills successfully. As a result, pupils create thoughtful artwork and design pieces that are displayed throughout the school. Pupils learn about the key features of dramatic performance and develop their musical and dance abilities successfully across a diverse range of genres and performance opportunities.
25. Knowledgeable, enthusiastic and supportive teachers create purposeful lessons that use good-quality resources and combine clear explanations, targeted questioning and tasks that enable pupils to think for themselves. Pupils show eagerness to extend their knowledge and reflect on the feedback they receive from their teachers, which supports their progress. Teachers provide additional support to pupils, as required, during lunchtime and after-school clinics.
26. Leaders implement a suitable assessment framework that informs teachers about pupils' progress. They analyse and monitor data to improve provision for pupils. Pupils receive regular, detailed and clear feedback on their work to enable further progress. As a result of the positive academic culture, pupils attain results in public examinations that are above the national average.
27. The early identification of pupils who have SEND enables leaders to ensure that these pupils benefit from appropriate support, including access to study skills sessions and individual and group support delivered by suitably trained staff. Staff analyse assessment data carefully in order to monitor the impact of the provision for these pupils and make any required changes. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress.

28. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive support to develop their speaking, listening and reading skills. In lessons, teachers help them with reinforcement of key subject-specific vocabulary. Close collaboration between the English and languages departments further enhances the provision of targeted support and pastoral care given to pupils. Pupils who speak EAL demonstrate increasing accuracy and fluency and make good progress across the curriculum.
29. A rich and interesting co-curricular programme enables pupils to develop their interests and widen their learning experience. Pupils pursue a range of creative, cultural, intellectual and physical activities, which include participation in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE), a 'young voices' choir and a bee-keeping club. Leaders monitor pupils' participation and encourage them to found and lead new activities. As a result, pupils develop a wide range of skills, as well as an understanding of teamwork and leadership.

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

30. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

31. Through lessons, assemblies, talks from guest speakers and the use of online platforms, staff teach a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme effectively. Teachers regularly review feedback from pupil surveys to ensure that the content is relevant and useful. Leaders ensure that the carefully planned programme includes age-appropriate provision for relationships and sex education (RSE). Pupils learn about healthy relationships and consent and explore appropriate topics such as body image and personal safety. Staff create an atmosphere in which pupils feel comfortable learning about and discussing sensitive issues.
32. Leaders prioritise pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing. Close liaison between teaching and pastoral staff, as well as with the medical centre, ensures that pupils receive a high level of care. Pupils know that there is extensive support available to them, if needed.
33. Pupils develop their spiritual understanding through philosophy, religion and ethics lessons in which they learn about different religions as well as non-religious world views such as humanism. Visits to local places of worship, such as synagogues and mosques, as well as attendance at chapel services, talks and assemblies, deepen their understanding of different faiths and beliefs.
34. Staff promote pupils' physical health through a programme of physical education (PE) and co-curricular sporting activities. Leaders ensure that the provision is accessible to all, offering both team and individual sports alongside activities that build strength and stamina, such as climbing and fitness. Many pupils take part in regular sporting fixtures, including national tournaments. Staff support the development of pupils' skills and teach them the importance of regular exercise and healthy eating for positive personal wellbeing. Well-established opportunities for physical development, including outdoor learning, swimming and forest school, enable early years children to build confidence, co-ordination and independence. Children use chalks and paint to make marks and develop their fine-motor skills.
35. Leaders deploy staff appropriately, including in the early years, so that pupils across the school are effectively supervised. Adults in the early years ensure that safer eating arrangements are in place, in line with statutory guidance. They are alert to the dangers of choking. In the early years, leaders maintain the required adult-to-child ratios.
36. Staff usually deal with behavioural incidents effectively. However, in a small number of instances, teachers do not implement the behaviour policy consistently in lessons and, when this occurs, some pupils engage in off-task behaviour and low-level disruption of learning.
37. Staff implement an appropriate anti-bullying strategy effectively. Pupils learn about what constitutes bullying and the strategies that they can use to avoid or respond to it. Leaders deal with the rare cases of bullying promptly and sensitively, in line with school policy. Pupils can access appropriate support should they experience unkindness or bullying.
38. Qualified nurses manage an effective medical centre which meets pupils' needs. Together with staff qualified in first aid, including paediatric first aid, they administer appropriate care to any pupils who are injured or unwell. Staff ensure the safe storage of medicines and maintain accurate records of the administration of first aid and medication.

39. Regular fire evacuation drills ensure that pupils know how to respond to an emergency. Leaders implement regular checks and maintenance, including of fire safety equipment and gas, electrical and water systems.
40. Leaders ensure that the admission and attendance registers are maintained in line with statutory requirements. Leaders track attendance robustly and take effective measures in response to any concerns about absenteeism, including working with families to promote high attendance. However, when the inspection commenced, the attendance policy available on the school's website did not reflect current statutory guidance to list the contact details of the school's attendance champions. This was rectified by the end of the inspection.

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

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

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

42. Pupils appreciate the diversity of the school and the opportunities it provides to learn about one another and different cultures. The active equality, diversity and inclusion group runs regular initiatives such as Pride Week assemblies and cultural celebration events, where activities like Persian poetry and Chinese music are shared. The school teaches pupils the importance of treating everyone equally, regardless of their background. Pupils demonstrate a keen interest in exploring themes such as social justice and inequality in global politics. They learn how measures such as international aid and debt relief can play an important role in addressing these imbalances. As a result, there is a culture of mutual respect, tolerance and inclusivity in the school.
43. Pupils learn about democracy, the purpose of elections and the role of parliaments. This begins with the youngest children, who learn about women's suffrage, including the work of Emmeline Pankhurst, in an assembly on British values. Staff provide pupils with practical experience of democracy, such as electing representatives to the school council, participating in debating workshops, taking part in mock elections and applying to be youth members in the Bristol Youth Council. Pupils also learn to distinguish between right and wrong and understand the importance of making fair and responsible choices.
44. Pupils contribute positively to school life by taking an active role in helping others. Pupils take on leadership roles as prefects and house captains and participate in groups such as the charity and sustainability committees. In the early years, children become play leaders or class helpers and in doing so learn how to support one another. Pupils value the extensive range of leadership roles available to them and the opportunity this gives them to contribute to their school community.
45. The school ensures that pupils develop a secure understanding of personal finance so that they are well prepared to manage future financial responsibilities. Pupils learn about budgeting, taxation, the consequences of debt and identity theft. In the early years, children use coins in mathematics and participate in role play involving using money to buy flowers from a garden centre. This helps them to develop a real-world understanding of managing finances.
46. Pupils benefit from access to an online careers platform, a careers fair and regular relevant bulletins, as well as interview preparation. Talks from alumni and visiting speakers, and work experience placements enable pupils to gain further insight into different careers. The careful approach to careers guidance prepares pupils to make informed choices about their future.
47. The school develops pupils' sense of responsibility towards others effectively. The charities committee plans fundraising events to support charities in the United Kingdom and overseas. Pupils contribute to the local community by volunteering at local care homes and collecting provisions for the local foodbank. Pupils also engage with local primary schools, helping them with reading, mathematics activities, art and music, as part of a comprehensive outreach programme. This upholds the school's aim of extending its positive impact to the wider community.

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. Leaders establish clear and effective systems to safeguard pupils. They understand the range of safeguarding risks to pupils and put in place appropriate strategies to manage them. The school's safeguarding policy is implemented consistently and reflects the latest statutory requirements.
50. Governors receive appropriate training and place safeguarding at the heart of their decision-making. They scrutinise safeguarding arrangements at the school through regular visits, analysis of reports at governors' meetings and discussions with the safeguarding team. Governors maintain effective oversight, checking that leaders prioritise the wellbeing of pupils.
51. Staff work together to ensure a vigilant safeguarding culture. They understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Appropriately trained leaders with responsibility for safeguarding provide comprehensive training for all members of staff, including at induction. They support this training with regular updates. As a result, staff maintain vigilance regarding pupils' wellbeing. They respond promptly to any concerns about pupils or allegations against adults working at the school and record them in a timely and secure way.
52. Leaders work closely with external agencies, including the local authority and children's services, and refer concerns and seek advice when appropriate. The team holds regular meetings to review concerns, monitor trends and implement support if required. They take effective action to ensure that pupils are safeguarded and protected from harm.
53. Leaders provide pupils with a variety of different ways to share their concerns, including online and in-person, and through 'worry boxes' for younger pupils. Clear signage indicates to whom pupils can turn when they need advice. They know that adults, such as their form tutors, house leaders, peer mentors and school counsellors, will listen and take appropriate action.
54. Staff teach pupils how to stay safe online through the PSHE programme, computing lessons and assemblies. Leaders implement suitable systems to filter and monitor the school's internet and respond promptly to any concerns. They test these systems regularly.
55. Leaders conduct thorough recruitment practices on all adults before they work with pupils. They complete the necessary pre-appointment checks to ensure that new staff or governors are suitable to work with children. Governors and senior leaders regularly review the school's single central record of appointments (SCR), which is well maintained and accurate.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

56. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Bristol Grammar School
Department for Education number	801/6013
Registered charity number	1104425
Address	Bristol Grammar School University Road Bristol BS8 1SR
Phone number	0117 973 6006
Email address	website@bgs.bristol.sch.uk
Website	www.bristolgrammarschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Bristol Grammar School
Chair	Mr Mark Wilson
Headteacher	Mr Jaideep Barot
Age range	4 to 18
Number of pupils	1377
Date of previous inspection	10 to 12 May 2023

Information about the school

57. Bristol Grammar School is a co-educational day school, set in the heart of the city. It was founded in 1532 for the sons of Bristol merchants and tradesmen and moved to its current site in 1879. The preparatory school opened in 1900 and the whole school became fully co-educational in 1980. The school is divided into four sections: infants, juniors, seniors and sixth form. The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors was appointed in 2024.
58. There are 31 children in the early years comprising two Reception classes.
59. The school has identified 505 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
60. The school has identified English as an additional language for 122 pupils.

The school's aim is to provide an exceptional and rounded education to anyone who might benefit from it, regardless of background and financial means. The school's priorities include focusing on nurturing individual potential, promoting wellbeing and fostering excitement for learning, in the context of its pupil-chosen values of kindness, integrity and rigour.

Inspection dates

28 to 30 April 2026

61. A team of eight inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

62. 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.

63. 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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