



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION**

**QUEENSWOOD SCHOOL**

**MARCH 2017**



## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Queenswood School			
<b>DfE number</b>	919/6020			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	311060			
<b>Address</b>	Shepherd's Way Brookman's Park Hatfield Hertfordshire AL9 6NS			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01707 602500			
<b>Email address</b>	go@queenswood.org			
<b>Principal</b>	Mrs Jo Cameron			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Ed Sautter			
<b>Age range</b>	11 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	428			
	<b>Girls</b>	428	<b>Boys</b>	0
	<b>Day pupils</b>	256	<b>Boarders</b>	172
	<b>Seniors</b>	304	<b>Sixth Form</b>	124
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1 to 2 March 2017			

## PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any unmet standards identified at their previous inspection.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

**This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting on the quality of the school's work.** It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

**The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.**

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and chapel. Inspectors visited boarding houses and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mrs Gwen Caddock	Reporting inspector
Miss Jeanette Guppy	Team inspector (Deputy head, GSA school)
Mr Stephen Jefferson	Team inspector (Former director of Information and communication technology, GSA school)
Mr Richard Feldman	Team inspector for boarding (Director of data and reports, HMC school)
Dr Tracey Martin	Team inspector for boarding (Former senior teacher, HMC school)

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## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### About the school

- 1.1 Queenswood School is a boarding and day school for girls aged between 11 and 18 years. It was founded in Clapham Park in 1894 and moved to its present site in 1925. The school first accepted day pupils in 1991, and the current principal took up her post in September 2016. The school is a charitable trust and a member of the Methodist Foundation. The governors of the school are the trustees of the charity and directors of the company.
- 1.2 The school consists of two departments: senior school, for pupils aged 11 to 16 years, and sixth form, for pupils aged 17 to 18 years.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to offer an excellent education, through a broad curriculum, and a wide range of co-curricular opportunities. It seeks to promote the happiness and self-esteem of the pupils by valuing them as individuals. The school intends to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education and their future lives. It aims to encourage parents to support the life of the school and be fully involved in their children's education.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is above average in Years 7 to 11 and broadly average in the sixth form. The school has identified 116 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, dyspraxia, and dyscalculia, 42 of whom receive additional support. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 92 pupils, 48 of whom receive additional support.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

### Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was a standard inspection in November 2010. The recommendations from that inspection were:
- Extend the excellent features evident in current practice consistently across all teaching, including the use of assessment data.
  - Ensure that arrangements to monitor the implementation of academic policy keep pace with new developments in teaching and learning.
- 1.7 The recommendations of the intermediate boarding inspection in October 2014 were:
- Plan and implement a policy and suitable arrangements for the use of the medical centre during the evenings and at weekends.
  - Provide a consistent range of choices of food at all meals, including for those people who are last to be served, and provide a range of healthy choices for snacks.
- 1.8 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous inspections.

## **2. KEY FINDINGS**

2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- The attainment and progress of all groups of pupils are outstanding.
- Pupils demonstrate substantial knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum.
- Pupils' communication and numeracy skills are excellent.
- Pupils enjoy significant success in academic and non-academic activities.
- Pupils are competent users of information and communication technology (ICT) and make good use of ICT skills in a range of contexts. The technology and opportunities for the use of these skills are not yet provided in all areas of the curriculum, which limits pupils' independent learning in those areas.

2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils' self-confidence and resilience are excellent.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development are outstanding.
- Pupils demonstrate deep respect for different lifestyles, religions and cultures.
- Pupils have a strong awareness of how to stay safe and keep healthy.

### **Recommendations**

2.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:

- Develop the use of ICT across all areas of the curriculum, supported by technology providing online learning resources, to further support pupils' independent learning and research.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils' attainment is outstanding. Results at GCSE have been well above the national average for maintained schools, while results at IGCSE have been higher than worldwide norms. A-level results have been above, and, in 2013 and 2014, well above, the national average for maintained schools. Data provided by the school show that the results in 2016 maintained these standards. All groups of pupils, including the most able and those with SEND or EAL, make rapid progress. This was demonstrated through lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' books, and the school's own assessment data. Most pupils and almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires agreed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress.
- 3.3 Pupils' significant progress is advanced by the detailed marking in many subjects which indicates what needs to be done to improve. The half-termly progress check charts enable pupils to monitor the improvement in their performance. Using this check, pupils work with their teachers and tutors to prepare target grades, identify where they have made progress and determine what they need to do in order to improve their work further.
- 3.4 Pupils demonstrate substantial knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum. Pupils are highly competent linguistically. They listen well, write effectively and are articulate speakers. Pupils learning modern foreign languages speak confidently from an early stage and older pupils are able to debate in the target language fluently. Pupils apply their mathematical skills in a wide range of contexts. Older pupils understand how to use their scientific knowledge to form theories and solve problems. Artwork on display around the school and in progress in the art studios show individual creativity and skilful use of many media. Pupils' substantial skills and knowledge result from well-planned lessons that provide them with challenging learning opportunities and effective support when needed.
- 3.5 Pupils exhibit their excellent communication skills through their sophisticated discussions, debates and creative work across much of the curriculum. Year 7 pupils displayed confidence and skill in preparing a dramatic opening for a story in response to a play they had been reading, while Year 12 pupils expertly used the positioning of characters in a piece of drama to influence the messages communicated to their audience. Pupils with EAL make particularly strong progress in English as a result of the expert language support they receive. These pupils produce writing of an outstanding standard and succeed at demanding language-based courses at A-level. Pupils of all ages and abilities use vocabulary very well and enthusiastically express their views.
- 3.6 Pupils develop excellent mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding, which they are able to apply confidently across the curriculum. Pupils' responses to questions during a Year 11 mathematics class showed strong understanding of how to apply knowledge about percentages to solve compound interest problems. Work in Year 10 pupils' physics and chemistry books demonstrated excellent numeracy skills. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they found the additional 'mathematics for biologists' lessons helped them to apply relevant numeracy skills, such as statistical analysis and data handling, to their scientific studies.
- 3.7 Pupils are competent users of ICT and make good use of ICT skills in a range of contexts, with some excellent practice evident in computer science lessons and in other subjects, such as art and design technology, where opportunities to utilise ICT have been incorporated into lesson plans and the technology required is available. The technology and use of these skills is not yet embedded across the wider curriculum, which limits opportunities for pupils' independent



learning. Where the virtual learning environment is providing an accessible online classroom, pupils collaborate effectively online, adding comments to solutions or issues under debate, and exercising judgements on the quality of work submitted to the classroom forum, extending their understanding and ability to evaluate critically.

- 3.8 The pupils demonstrate excellent study skills. They make confident use of the resources available to further their learning and understanding. Pupils become highly competent at constructing and deconstructing lines of argument, creating hypotheses and analysing evidence, as seen in lesson observations and scrutiny of older pupils' work. Pupils' study skills develop well as a result of teachers' high expectations and particular provision, such as the extended project qualification, that leaders have introduced into the sixth form.
- 3.9 The achievement of pupils in competitions, sports and the expressive arts is outstanding. This is because leaders have fully embedded the school's ethos of focus on the individual into teaching and a wide range of opportunities for pupils to participate in sports, arts and other activities is provided. Individual pupils have a distinguished record in music, writing, journalism and essay competitions at local and national level. The majority of Year 10 pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme at bronze level and each year a number of older pupils achieve gold awards. A team of girls edit the school magazine, "The Queenswoodian". Teams have competed successfully in debating competitions, national hockey finals, and in Young Enterprise competitions. A number of pupils represent England or other countries in various sports. The Queenswood tennis team have won the national independent schools' trophy, the Aberdare Cup, for five successive years. The tennis team, who represented England, were runners-up in the World Schools Championship in Australia in 2013. The current team has won the opportunity to represent the England schools team at the championship in Brazil in 2017. The school makes careful arrangements to support these outstanding sportswomen, both in terms of their sporting and academic activities. The school fully meets its aim to offer an excellent education through a broad curriculum and a wide range of co-curricular opportunities.
- 3.10 Pupils are effective, mature and proactive learners who enjoy challenge. They approach learning with determination and commitment as a result of their teachers' passion and knowledge, which they find inspiring. Pupils work well individually and collaboratively as members of a cohesive, supportive community, and respond positively to constant praise and encouragement from their teachers. Pupils pay close attention in class and persevere when they find the task challenging. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils did not agree that lessons are interesting. However, pupils who spoke to the inspectors were much more positive about the quality and effectiveness of teaching.

#### **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils develop substantial levels of self-confidence, self-awareness and resilience. They reflect on their performance and the ways in which they can improve, and show strong insight about their own development. Pupils greatly appreciate the support and encouragement of their teachers and value the rewards and congratulations they receive, for example in Chapel, which encourages them to respond with perseverance when work is hard. Staff have high expectations of their pupils whilst giving them the tools with which to succeed, resulting in a culture where pupils can take a risk without the fear of failure. Pupils take responsibility for their own learning and value the strategies teachers use to ensure that they know how to improve and succeed at their work. Most pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teachers were supportive and helpful if they had any problems with their work. Similarly, most parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school promotes an environment which successfully supports their child's personal development. The school fully meets its aim to promote the happiness and self-esteem of the pupils by valuing them as individuals.
- 4.3 Pupils' decision-making abilities are excellent. They frequently make their own decisions and they understand that these decisions are important in determining their individual level of success. Opportunities for individual choices are frequently given both inside the classroom and as a wider part of school life. Younger pupils value the choices open to them, for example the range of games and clubs that they can take part in. They understand that as they grow older, the choices will become more significant and are confident that they will be able to handle these choices when the time comes. Pupils' outstanding decision-making skills are supported by their work in personal, social, health, citizenship, and economic education (PSHCEE) lessons and the careers programme and university advice that they receive. Pupils are involved in a democratic way in decisions in their houses. For example, pupils make presentations to their peers to rally support for particular charitable causes before a vote is taken. Pupil leaders contribute to the school decision-making process as well as organising events and activities. The school council consults pupils about ways in which the school could improve and the head girls' team are skilful at gauging pupils' opinions. A suggestions box placed in a prominent position allows pupils to make their feelings and ideas known and every contributor receives an individual reply. These experiences prepare pupils well for making decisions in later stages of their lives.
- 4.4 Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. They develop appreciation for non-material aspects of life through their experiences, such as attending Chapel and engaging in 'the Hub', which is a group of pupils of all faiths and no faith who meet to discuss and worship together. Their appreciation of the arts also plays a significant role in this. Older pupils enjoy the opportunities to reflect quietly in the grounds of the school. Pupils spoke of the insight religious education (RE) lessons had given them into moral values and ethics. Members of the Christian Union presented an insightful chapel service, in which they explored the meaning and values of the parables. Pupils' spiritual foundation and appreciation of the non-material aspects of life is reflected in their calm demeanour as they move around the school.
- 4.5 Pupils display an outstanding ability to distinguish right from wrong, and understand the need for rules and laws. Pupils subscribe to the Queenswood qualities, "Creative, Courageous, Curious, Resourceful, Resilient and Reflective", and accept responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. In discussions, pupils displayed a mature insight into the way rules and laws operate and an advanced understanding of what binds communities together and of the

need for commonly acknowledged rules and values. The daily life of the school and the boarding houses builds a notably strong sense of community as all pupils, including the day girls, are members of a house. Pupils behave extremely well towards each other and have a love of working together at all levels; they collaborate enthusiastically to organise events such as house drama competitions, inter-house swimming galas, and sports days. Older girls give much appreciated support to the younger girls, as demonstrated when they mentored a recent technology challenge for Year 8 pupils. Considerable fundraising and work for charity is organised by the pupils working as teams within the house structure. Their work for charity reflects the pupils' awareness of issues in the communities outside the school. Pupils have contributed to a local food bank, worked with other schools, sung at local events and initiated and carried out a working trip to Botswana.

- 4.6 The rapport between different social and cultural groups within the school community is excellent. The deep respect that pupils show for one another is a great strength of the school. Pupils from many different cultures work together easily. They co-operate and help each other to succeed, and delight in finding out about each other's feasts, festivals and other cultural and religious events. Pupils show great empathy towards each other. For example, during a tutorial on the use of telephones in school, pupils discussed issues such as possible problems for an international pupil contacting her family across time zones, and issues faced by overseas pupils who were unable to carry heavy text books home. Pupils run a club supporting human rights across the world and work to create an awareness of issues both in England and around the world. Pupils enjoy celebrating each other's feasts and festivals. Most pupils and almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promoted tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 4.7 Pupils have a strong awareness of how to stay safe, including when using the internet, as a result of learning about online risks in ICT and PSHCEE lessons. Pupils develop understanding of the importance to their own well-being of healthy choices about exercise, diet and ways of life, through discussions in PSHCEE lessons on topics such as the media and body image and the emphasis given by the staff to the importance of regular exercise to good health.