

School inspection report

3 to 5 March 2026

Clifton Lodge School

8 Mattock Lane

Ealing

London

W5 5BG

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 are successful in promoting the school's aims and values. They are supported effectively by governors who possess the necessary expertise and experience to provide challenge and support to leaders. They undertake rigorous oversight of school development planning and monitor the implementation of policies effectively through regular meetings and visits to the school, ensuring that the Standards are met.
2. Leaders engage regularly with pupils, staff and parents through surveys. These provide information that informs self-evaluation and planning for the future. Careful consideration of the impact that any changes have on pupils' success and wellbeing ensures that pupils enjoy purposeful learning.
3. Leaders provide pupils with an inclusive, supportive and stimulating education in line with the school's aims. Pupils are valued as individuals and their wellbeing is prioritised. They develop academically, personally and socially and are well prepared for the next stages of education. The well-planned curriculum provides pupils with appropriate learning opportunities tailored to their ages and prior attainment. As a result, pupils make good progress. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL) is well managed and effectively integrated into the life of the school.
4. Leaders in the early years have a secure understanding of child development and how young children learn. They ensure that children are supported to meet age-related expectations. Children learn to recognise and regulate their emotions, become confident communicators and develop mathematical understanding. They are well prepared for their transition into Year 1.
5. Leaders and staff promote pupils' physical and emotional wellbeing effectively through the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum, pastoral care and the physical education (PE) programme. They consistently place pupils' wellbeing at the centre of the school's culture. As a result, pupils feel safe, known and valued at school.
6. Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. This means that pupils, including the youngest children, behave and interact well. They are motivated to learn in a calm and positive school environment.
7. The school premises are maintained to a high standard. Health and safety procedures, including fire prevention measures, first aid and medical provision, are well organised and fulfil statutory requirements. Attendance and absence are monitored rigorously.
8. The curriculum, supported by a variety of guest speakers and trips, enables pupils to develop their social and economic understanding. Pupils become aware of the contribution they can make to their school community. However, opportunities for pupils to make meaningful links with their local community by, for instance, choosing local charitable projects and devising plans for activities to support them, are limited. Pupils' economic education supports their emerging understanding of life skills, such as money management. Staff organise opportunities for pupils to learn about future career options through visiting speakers, including parents.
9. The safeguarding culture of the school is vigilant and robust. Safeguarding procedures are applied consistently by leaders to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. Staff, including those with responsibility for safeguarding, are trained appropriately. They identify and respond swiftly to

safeguarding concerns. Risk assessments, supervision practices and safe recruitment contribute to a secure environment. Pupils are kept safe and know how to report any worries to trusted adults.

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:

- strengthen opportunities for pupils to show initiative in planning charitable events so that they can contribute more effectively to the lives of those in the local community.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders have the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to fulfil their responsibilities and ensure that the Standards are met consistently. Leaders place the physical and emotional wellbeing of pupils at the heart of this nurturing school. Leaders and staff invest time in getting to know pupils and listening to them so that they feel heard and valued. Regular surveys and audits of wellbeing enable leaders to respond to pupils' needs, for example, through the provision of wellbeing groups to support confidence, resilience and social interaction.
11. Governors and leaders work collaboratively to plan and deliver a development strategy for the school following the recent move to a new proprietorial group. Leaders use lesson visits, learning walks, departmental reviews, scrutiny of assessment information and engagement with pupils and families to shape priorities and inform their curriculum plans. Regular meetings with subject leaders feed into the school's development plan. Leaders ensure that they understand the strengths of the school and areas for improvement clearly.
12. Governors bring skills and expertise to their role, in areas such as safeguarding and health and safety. They undertake regular visits to the school, meet with pupils and staff and receive detailed reports which enable them to hold leaders to account. Leaders and governors take parental concerns seriously. They make sure that complaints are handled appropriately and dealt with in a timely manner. Leaders review the complaints log regularly to identify any patterns or trends. Their actions ensure that the school's complaints policy and procedures are followed consistently. Governors check that statutory guidance is implemented appropriately, including through external audits and reviews. This enables governors to assure themselves that arrangements are suitable and that leaders' actions are effective.
13. Leaders ensure that an appropriate risk assessment policy is in place and implemented effectively. Leaders understand the context of the school and are alert to any related risks posed to pupils. Suitably detailed risk assessments are in place which are regularly reviewed, including those related to premises checks, trips and vulnerable pupils. Governors receive regular risk reports and test effectiveness through visits and external audits.
14. Information for parents of current and prospective pupils is provided mainly through the school's website, including inspection reports and statutory documentation. Parents are given regular written reports about their child's progress and achievement. Leaders understand their responsibility to provide information to the local authority relating to any pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), including information related to finance and funding.
15. The school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 effectively. Leaders maintain an appropriate accessibility plan which sets out the actions taken to ensure that all pupils can fully access the curriculum, information and the school site. Pupils who have SEND are provided with an individual education plan (IEP) that highlights how they are to be supported regarding their developmental needs. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding work closely with external agencies such as children's services and mental health and wellbeing teams to ensure that specialist support is available for pupils when required.
16. In the early years, leaders effectively equip staff with the skills to make informed, child-focused decisions which consistently provide a variety of learning opportunities that reflect children's

interests. Leaders ensure that children are well supported and cared for. Children settle quickly, engage positively and are appropriately prepared for the next stage of their learning. Leaders provide early years staff with regular and effective supervision. Routines for managing the health and safety of children are well established and understood by staff.

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

17. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Leaders implement an aspirational and challenging curriculum designed to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding of pupils across a full range of subjects. The curriculum supports pupils, beginning with the youngest children, to develop firm foundational knowledge and skills. Pupils learn to read fluently, communicate confidently, develop fluency in calculation and apply understanding to problem-solving challenges. A suitable range of subjects, including science, humanities, French and philosophy, enables pupils to broaden their learning experience. Pupils successfully develop their creative skills in subjects such as art and music.
19. Skilled and knowledgeable teachers use high-quality resources to plan stimulating activities that challenge and support pupils as appropriate. They ensure that pupils remain engaged and motivated in lessons by encouraging them to be curious and learn from mistakes. Teachers structure lessons carefully and pose questions expertly so that pupils consolidate knowledge and develop understanding. Practical activities in science and mathematics, such as building bottle rockets and exploring mass with scales and marbles, help pupils to test hypotheses, make predictions and refine their understanding through direct experience.
20. Teachers know pupils well and have high expectations of what they can achieve. They support different levels of prior attainment to enable pupils to make good and sustained progress. Pupils' work shows clear progress, with skills, knowledge and understanding developed in line with their aptitudes and needs. Marking and feedback practices are consistent and effective. Teachers provide clear comments using colour coding, prompting responses from pupils and encouraging self-assessment. This gives pupils immediate guidance on how to develop their learning further, leading to improved reflection and progression over time.
21. Leaders and teachers gather assessment information about pupils' progress, including through the use of standardised testing. Teachers use this data effectively to adapt their teaching to meet pupils' learning needs. Leaders track pupils' progress rigorously to identify any common gaps in their knowledge and skills and revise the curriculum, accordingly, including by devising tailored plans for individual pupils to address specific areas for development.
22. Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils who have SEND are well supported. Ongoing training is provided for staff, including half-termly bulletins focusing on inclusion. This professional development ensures that staff are confident in identifying needs and implementing effective strategies. Individual plans and targeted support such as daily phonics groups and 'draw and talk' sessions are designed to meet academic, social and emotional needs and help pupils make good progress from their starting points. Teachers use accommodations such as visual timetables, fidget toys and movement breaks to enable access to learning for all pupils, resulting in improved confidence and engagement.
23. The needs of pupils who speak EAL are swiftly identified. Those who require it receive highly effective support for their English learning inside and outside the classroom, including through simultaneous translation in lessons. This ensures that these pupils rapidly improve their fluency and understanding of English. Younger pupils are immersed in the English language through play and social situations, while older pupils sharing the same first language support each other in lessons. Parents receive helpful information when their children join the school, as well as termly progress

updates and regular invitations to meet staff and each other. This collaboration between the school and families further supports pupils' progress.

24. Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from a range of enrichment opportunities, including workshops, educational visits and residential experiences that enhance curriculum learning. Recreational activities are well attended, and pupils enjoy a variety of clubs that develop their skills, such as art, inventors, multi-sports, mindfulness and fencing. Pupils also participate in competitions and in music and drama performances, which successfully build their confidence and self-esteem.
25. Staff in the early years provide a calm, inclusive and stimulating learning environment where children are motivated to learn as they explore and engage in purposeful activities, such as role play, construction, sand, painting and outdoor physical challenge. Staff help children to develop skills, for example, through the use of a variety of writing tools to support progression from early mark-making to writing simple sentences. Children develop their mathematical understanding of measuring by scooping and pouring water between containers and noticing the changes in water levels. Staff use questioning, modelling and sensitive guidance to extend vocabulary and build conversational and expressive language skills. This develops their oral language alongside their enjoyment of stories and early reading. Regular assessment informs responsive planning and early identification of additional needs, ensuring that children make sustained progress.

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

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

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

27. Leaders provide a well-planned curriculum for PSHE, including relationships and sex education (RSE), which is age-appropriate and supports the emotional needs of pupils successfully. For example, younger pupils learn about friendships and recognising privacy, while older pupils explore consent, discrimination and healthy relationships in greater depth. Staff plan lessons that help pupils to discuss potentially sensitive issues, such as appropriate physical contact, in a supportive environment. The PSHE curriculum supports pupils to develop strategies to recognise and manage their emotions, helping them to make a positive start to their day.
28. Pupils and staff share warm, respectful relationships and, as a result, pupils behave in a calm, considerate manner. The school's behaviour policy sets out rewards and sanctions that are clearly understood by pupils. Leaders and staff place emphasis on encouraging pupils to reflect on their behaviour and how it may affect others. Consequently, pupils behave well in lessons and show kindness and respect towards each other.
29. The school's anti-bullying strategy is well understood. Pupils distinguish confidently between unkindness and bullying and know how to approach adults if concerns arise. Bullying incidents are rare but are dealt with and recorded swiftly when they occur. Leaders track patterns of negative behaviour rigorously, ensuring that effective support is put in place when necessary.
30. Teachers foster spiritual awareness and an understanding of different faiths through well-planned religious studies (RS) lessons. Pupils' appreciation of different religions is further developed by opportunities for families to share their faith and traditions during the languages and cultures week event and through opportunities for individual pupils to do so in class. Pupils are supported to appreciate the wonder of the non-material aspects of life when studying music, art and literature.
31. The school works with an external provider to develop a PE curriculum that gives pupils of all ages opportunities to develop their physical skills and support their health and wellbeing. Structured lessons allow pupils of all abilities to make progress and join in with confidence and enjoyment. For example, in netball, coaches use well-chosen drills to build pupils' passing and movement skills progressively. Younger children develop their gross-motor skills by using the age-appropriate climbing wall and balancing on stepping stones. Fine-motor skills are developed as children roll dough, cut out shapes and use scissors.
32. Leaders follow current statutory guidance relating to admission and attendance. They maintain suitable admission and attendance registers and inform the local authority whenever pupils leave or join the school at non-standard times of transition. Leaders create a positive culture of attendance and work closely with families to ensure they understand the importance of supporting their child's high attendance. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance regularly and act effectively to address concerns.
33. Leadership, management and governance ensure that health and safety is well understood, consistently implemented and rigorously overseen across the school. Leaders promote a culture of collective responsibility, supported by comprehensive risk assessments, regular staff training and clear systems for reporting issues and scheduling all required checks. Suitable fire safety measures are in place, including fire risk assessments and drills, so that pupils and staff know what to do in

case of emergency. Governors carry out effective oversight of health and safety systems to make sure these remain fit for purpose.

34. The school provides suitable medical and first aid arrangements to support pupils who are injured or unwell. Accidents are recorded, reported appropriately and monitored to check for any trends.
35. Leaders ensure that inclusion is embedded across the school's provision. Teachers use PSHE to help pupils understand and respect others, including those protected under the Equality Act 2010. A suitable accessibility plan, which covers access to the curriculum and the school site, is in place and available on the website.
36. In the early years, collaboration between children in Nursery and Reception fosters social skills and communication, promoting positive peer relationships. Appropriate adult supervision ratios ensure safety while allowing children to interact independently, promoting self-confidence, self-esteem and resilience in their play. Consistent routines and a clear behaviour policy create a calm and harmonious environment, supporting engagement and readiness to learn. Secure attachments and positive relationships are nurtured with key adults, enhancing emotional wellbeing and supporting smooth transitions. Robust procedures, including daily risk assessments, paediatric first aid training and food hygiene qualifications, ensure that children can explore safely and that health needs are met promptly.

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

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

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

38. Leaders promote a culture of responsibility and service. Pupils contribute to the smooth running of the school by taking on roles of responsibility and serving on committees and the school council. They meet with staff to represent the views of pupils. Leaders respond positively, such as by providing a bird feeder, additional playground equipment and planters to grow flowers and vegetables. Pupils take part in national charitable initiatives such as Children in Need. However, their understanding of the impact of local charitable work is still developing, and opportunities for pupils to initiate and lead projects to benefit the local community are less evident.
39. Pupils learn the difference between right and wrong in an age-appropriate way. For example, in the early years, adults establish clear expectations for behaviour that promote children's learning about the importance of kindness, turn-taking and listening to others. Leaders and staff encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour and develop respect for the law and democracy. Older pupils understand why rules are an important part of school life and how laws support peaceful and democratic societies. They learn to be morally responsible and tolerant of others.
40. Leaders provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to learn about British institutions and the work they do to support society. For example, visits by the police to the school and an outing to the fire station enable pupils to understand their work to keep local communities safe. Visits from parents representing medical and legal professions further support pupils' understanding.
41. Teachers ensure that topical issues are presented impartially and without bias. Pupils participate enthusiastically in debates, understanding the agreed rules and showing respect for each other's views. For example, in philosophy lessons pupils consider the question of whether some people in society are more important than others, demonstrating the ability to reflect thoughtfully and explain their thinking. This supports pupils in developing their speaking and reasoning skills effectively.
42. Leaders and staff support pupils' economic education through events such as the annual market day, during which pupils take responsibility for organising and running stalls to sell toys and books donated by their peers. Older pupils learn how to sell items, handle money and interact with customers. This supports their developing understanding of finance and enterprise. Leaders arrange a visit from a banker to speak to pupils about financial matters, enhancing their awareness of money management and its relevance in the wider world.
43. The school's inclusive ethos helps pupils to be well prepared for life in British society. Pupils readily demonstrate kindness, empathy and understanding, in line with the school's values. Leaders and staff use assemblies and teaching opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of cultural diversity, for example through the celebration of Black History Month. Discussions explore themes such as additional needs and disabilities, which help pupils to develop their appreciation of diversity and the importance of mutual respect.
44. Leaders ensure that pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education so that they are ready for the transition between year groups or to their next school. Children in the early years develop the confidence required to enable a smooth transition to Year 1. Year 6 pupils receive structured support for their move to a wide range of senior schools, enabling them to typically achieve success in their entrance examinations. Preparation for pupils' future lives is further

enhanced by visits from parents and others to talk about their jobs and careers, for example, a doctor, lawyer, musician, author and police officer.

45. In the early years, carefully planned role-play areas, including a space station, dentist, doctor, shop and home corner, provide children with opportunities to explore imaginative scenarios, develop social skills and practise collaborative play. Engagement with practical mathematics through activities such as handling coins and using tills enables children to apply early numeracy in meaningful, real-world contexts, fostering both confidence and independence. Participation in cultural and seasonal learning, including Diwali, harvest and bonfire night, broadens children's understanding of diversity and tradition, encouraging respect, curiosity and meaningful connections across the curriculum.

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

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

Safeguarding

47. Leaders have developed a robust safeguarding culture throughout the school. Policies and procedures take full account of relevant guidance. Leaders liaise effectively with the local authority to ensure that pupils and families receive the help they need. Governors, who are suitably trained, oversee safeguarding through visits, reviews of documentation and regular audits, including a formal annual review of the school's safeguarding policy. Governors provide effective support and challenge to leaders with responsibility for safeguarding.
48. Safeguarding leaders are suitably trained and knowledgeable. They ensure that staff members receive all required training, including at induction, and regular updates on safeguarding issues. Staff are alert to pupils' needs and behaviours. They know how to manage pupil disclosures and report concerns appropriately and swiftly, including those related to adults. They have a robust understanding of the school's staff code of conduct and whistleblowing policy. Leaders are knowledgeable regarding the potential risks to pupils outside school, including extremism and radicalisation. They take appropriate steps to mitigate these risks through staff training and the delivery of the PSHE curriculum. This effective promotion of openness, information sharing and early reporting helps to keep pupils safe.
49. The school follows comprehensive procedures for staff recruitment, including training for staff involved in recruitment and the systematic recording of outcomes. All required checks are undertaken and recorded on the single central record of appointments (SCR). This document is scrutinised by governors to make sure it remains accurate and up to date. Staff files are complete and stored securely. These measures give assurance that adults working in the school are suitable to work with children, thereby supporting pupils' safety and wellbeing.
50. Pupils are well informed about how to keep themselves safe, including online, through PSHE teaching, other lessons and assemblies. Secure filtering and monitoring systems are in place on all school devices. These systems are tested regularly and monitored by governors to ensure their effectiveness and reliability in mitigating risks of access to inappropriate online content. The safeguarding team responds promptly to any alerts they receive.
51. Pupils are clear about how to share concerns through 'talk time' sessions, class worry boxes and speaking to trusted adults. They are confident that staff will respond in a way that helps to support them and address their concerns effectively. Leaders also provide a regular safeguarding newsletter to parents so that they can work in collaboration with the school to support their child's safety.
52. In the early years, leaders and staff prioritise children's safety. Leaders follow the safeguarding requirements for working with young children. They ensure that appropriate adult-to-child ratios are maintained at all times and that staff hold relevant qualifications for their roles. Mobile phones are not permitted in the setting. Daily safety checks are completed, and children are supervised closely, including during snack and mealtimes.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Clifton Lodge School
Department for Education number	307/6066
Address	Clifton Lodge School 8 Mattock Lane Ealing London W5 5BG
Phone number	020 8579 3662
Email address	info@cliftonlodeschool.co.uk
Website	www.cliftonlodeschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Blenheim Schools Group Limited
Chair	Mr Richard Power
Headteacher	Mr Michael Belsito
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	96
Date of previous inspection	28 to 30 March 2023

Information about the school

54. Clifton Lodge School is a co-educational day school located in Ealing, West London. Founded in 1979 as a school for male pupils, it became co-educational in 2012. In December 2025 the school became part of the Blenheim Schools group, which oversees the school. The school consists of three sections: the early years, for children aged 3 to 5 years; pre-prep, for children aged 5 to 7 years; and prep, for children aged 7 to 11 years.
55. There are 29 children in the early years comprising one Nursery and one Reception class.
56. The school has identified 18 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
57. The school has identified 23 pupils as speaking English as an additional language.
58. The school states that its aims are to provide a small, family environment which fosters a sense of belonging and allows children to feel happy, confident and secure. It aims to encourage a growth mindset which will develop children's resilience and curiosity and cultivate skills for the future. The school aims to offer a personalised learning journey for children, building on their individual strengths from their different starting points, and aspires to excellence in all that it does.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

3 to 5 March 2026

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

60. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussion with the chair of 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.

61. 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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