



BISHOPSGATE

NIL NISI OPTIMUM

ISI School Inspection Report

SYNOPSIS

March 2025



ISI SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORT

25th to 27th March 2025

Over the course of nearly a week, five Independent School Inspectorate (ISI) inspectors visited Bishopsgate as part of the regular inspection cycle for independent schools. The inspection process is rigorous and far-reaching, involving confidential surveys of pupils, parents, and staff; interviews with hundreds of pupils and dozens of staff members; and open-door observations of lessons, activities, and daily life across the school.

As you may be aware, ISI reports no longer use single-word judgements such as 'excellent' or 'good.' Instead, they provide a series of evidence-based statements that offer a more nuanced and informative overview of a school's provision.

We are delighted to report that Bishopsgate met all the required standards across every area inspected. These include:

- Leadership, management, and governance
- Quality of education, training, and recreation
- Pupils' physical and mental health, and emotional well-being
- Pupils' social and economic education and their contribution to society
- Safeguarding

Inspectors spoke warmly about every aspect of school life, and the report is rich with generous praise for the quality of our education, the strength of our pastoral care, and the inclusive, nurturing community that lies at the heart of Bishopsgate.

None of this would have been possible without the unwavering dedication, professionalism, and warmth of our staff. From the quality of teaching and pastoral care to the vibrancy of our extra-curricular programme and the calm, purposeful atmosphere that visitors so often remark upon, every member of the Bishopsgate team plays a vital role in shaping the experience of our pupils. This report is, above all, a testament to their tireless commitment to the children in our care and to the values we hold dear as a school.

A summary of key findings - including some of the most encouraging comments from the inspectors - is available in this synopsis. The full report can be accessed via our school website.

PETER THACKER
HEADMASTER



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT




“The broad curriculum has been carefully planned to make effective use of cross-curricular links at every opportunity. Through this, together with regular opportunities for outdoor learning, pupils gain a deep understanding of how their learning fits into the wider world, including the natural environment.”

“Pupils are enthusiastic learners who are keen to try their best, in line with the school motto ‘nil nisi optimum’ (nothing but the best). They make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.”

“Pupils’ experiences are enriched through opportunities to engage in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, often delivered by specialist teachers. They achieve highly in competitions, such as in sporting activities, and demonstrate considerable skill in their chosen field.”

“Pupils are well prepared for their future lives.”

A young girl with dark hair and a pink hair tie, wearing a red and white striped shirt under a grey cardigan, is smiling. A hand is resting on her shoulder. The background is blurred, showing other children in a classroom setting.

“Leaders’ drive for continual improvement is evident in the introduction of several recent initiatives, such as the ‘Harmony Project’ to develop pupils’ relationship with the natural world, and enhancements to the provision for pastoral care.”

“Pupils enjoy taking part in residential weeks and camps, recognising the value of being able to work collaboratively, and build resilience during these visits.”

“Early years children experience a stimulating learning environment that promotes curiosity, exploration and collaboration. Staff expertly plan activities that help children acquire a secure understanding of subjects across the areas of learning.”

“Safeguarding leaders are experienced and knowledgeable.”

LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE


“Early years leaders have a comprehensive knowledge of the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (EYFS).”

“Leaders and governors are fully committed to the school’s aims and ethos and provide a nurturing learning environment which supports pupils’ wellbeing.”

“Leaders demonstrate a clear commitment to pupils’ individual growth, as reflected in the school motto.”

“Pupils show a keen desire to give their best in all elements of school life.”





“Leaders are continually seeking to enhance pupils’ experiences, such as by introducing the ‘harmony project’, which helps pupils to acquire a deep understanding of, and connection with, the natural world, and develop skills to help them respect the Earth’s resources and use them responsibly in their future lives.”

“Pupils show a keen desire to give their best in all elements of school life.”

“Leaders consider the views of all members of the school community when planning for future developments, seeking the views of parents, pupils and staff, including through surveys and opportunities for discussion.”

QUALITY OF EDUCATION TRAINING AND RECREATION




“With regular opportunities for outdoor learning, pupils gain a deep understanding of how their learning fits into the wider world, including the natural environment.”

“Pupils are enthusiastic learners who are keen to try their best, in line with the school motto ‘nil nisi optimum’ (nothing but the best).”

“The breadth of the curriculum, early exposure to abstract reasoning, enriched vocabulary and cross disciplinary thinking all have a positive impact on pupils’ academic results.”

“Leaders have created a learning culture that values creativity, independence and challenge.”

“Leaders ensure that the school’s ethos of sustainability and environmental stewardship is woven through the curriculum, including through the subjects of science, music and computer science.”



“Pupils are highly articulate and confident when speaking and listening. They apply these skills effectively while debating in subjects such as geography, history and philosophy.”

“The prep school baccalaureate curriculum successfully provides upper-prep pupils with opportunities to study and research a wide range of topics of personal interest.”

“Pupils and teachers have high levels of respect for one another, most notably when listening to others. As a result, pupils readily engage in their lessons, learn well and are proud of their achievements.”

“Pupils make considerable progress over time. They are enthusiastic and articulate learners and demonstrate good recall of prior learning.”

“Teachers provide meaningful opportunities for challenge, extension and independent learning both in and out of the classroom.”

“Outdoor learning is fully embraced and integral to the curriculum.”

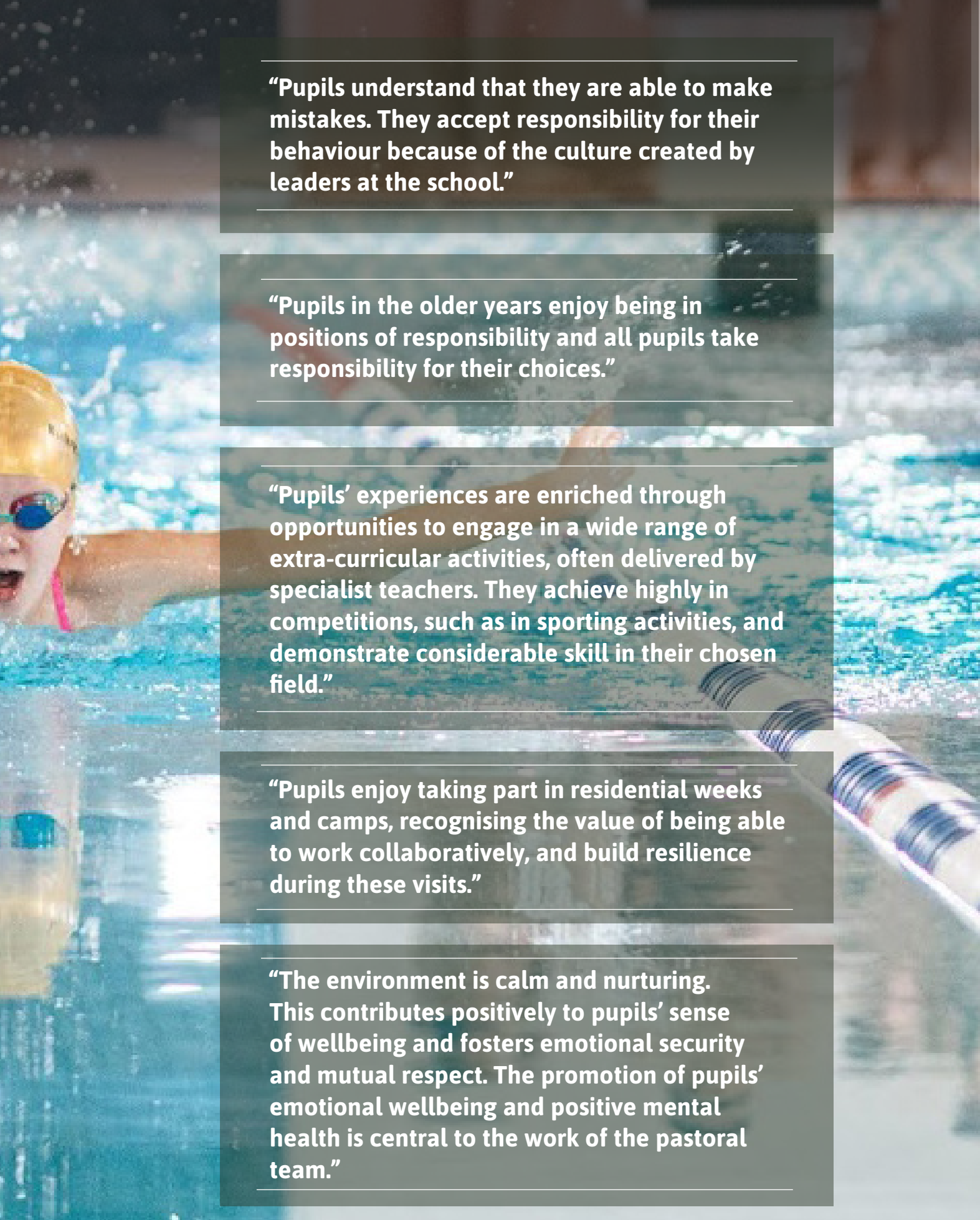
PUPILS' PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

A young swimmer with blonde hair, wearing a yellow swim cap and blue goggles, is captured mid-stroke in a swimming pool. The water is a vibrant blue, and the swimmer's arm is extended forward. The background is slightly blurred, showing other swimmers and pool lane lines.

“Pupils participate in a range of team and individual sports. Most pupils are involved in matches each week and teams and individuals achieve highly in many sports, most notably swimming. Pupils’ successes are underpinned by community engagement, sustained coaching, and a culture of perseverance and inclusion.”

“Children in the early years develop independence by undertaking tasks by themselves. They play extremely well with others, involving them in their games and activities, such as by helping each other in the outdoor learning environment to safely climb down trees. Children show high levels of engagement and enthusiasm in activities.”

“Governors and leaders maintain the premises to a high standard, and there is a clear plan for the ongoing development of facilities.”

A background image of a swimmer in a pool. The swimmer is wearing a yellow swim cap and blue goggles, and is captured in a dynamic pose, possibly during a race or a vigorous swim. The water is a vibrant blue with white foam from the swimmer's movement. The swimmer's arm is extended forward, and their head is above water. The overall scene conveys a sense of energy and physical activity.

“Pupils understand that they are able to make mistakes. They accept responsibility for their behaviour because of the culture created by leaders at the school.”

“Pupils in the older years enjoy being in positions of responsibility and all pupils take responsibility for their choices.”

“Pupils’ experiences are enriched through opportunities to engage in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, often delivered by specialist teachers. They achieve highly in competitions, such as in sporting activities, and demonstrate considerable skill in their chosen field.”

“Pupils enjoy taking part in residential weeks and camps, recognising the value of being able to work collaboratively, and build resilience during these visits.”

“The environment is calm and nurturing. This contributes positively to pupils’ sense of wellbeing and fosters emotional security and mutual respect. The promotion of pupils’ emotional wellbeing and positive mental health is central to the work of the pastoral team.”

PUPILS' SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY

"Pupils are well prepared for their future lives."

"The school enables older pupils to develop a mature understanding of the ethical issues in the wider world."

"Early years children experience a stimulating learning environment that promotes curiosity, exploration and collaboration."

"Leaders arrange opportunities for pupils to engage with the local community through events such as carol services for local care homes and a fun run in the Great Park, raising money for a local hospice. Through these initiatives, pupils develop a connection to the local community and see the impact of their charity work."



SAFEGUARDING



“Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities are knowledgeable and confident in their roles.”

“Record-keeping is comprehensive.”

“Thorough systems are in place for safe recruitment of staff.”

“Pupils are provided with comprehensive information about online safety, and parents are also taught about issues they need to be aware of to help keep their children safe when online at home.”





BISHOPSGATE

Everyday, magic.





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