

# Thomas's Kensington

17–19 Cottesmore Gardens, London W8 5PR

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Inspection dates: 4–6 February 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Early years provision

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Thomas's Kensington receive an excellent quality of education. The proprietors, headteacher and senior leaders are highly ambitious in what they want pupils to learn. Teachers deliver these very high expectations effectively. As a result, pupils achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils live and breathe the school's value of 'Be Kind'. This permeates throughout school life. Pupils show the highest levels of respect and kindness towards adults and each other.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. They demonstrate and talk clearly about how to manage their own behaviour and emotions. They are highly considerate of others.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They love the wide range of opportunities they are given to enrich their learning. Pupils said that adults listen to and resolve anything that may worry them. Leaders address any signs of bullying effectively and promptly.

Pupils told us they feel safe at school. They shared many ways that they are taught about how to keep safe. Pupils are knowledgeable about the school's procedures, including fire drills.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The proprietors, headteacher and senior leaders have ensured that pupils learn a wide range of subjects. The school's curriculum is highly ambitious.

Pupils excel in a range of subjects. Leaders know exactly what they want pupils to learn and when. For example, in music, all pupils learn to play a musical instrument. Younger pupils learn to play the violin first. They build their fine motor skills to help them play the recorder later on.

Teachers are exceptionally well trained to teach a range of subjects. They are knowledgeable and confident about teaching their subject areas. Specialist teachers teach some subjects, such as music, art, French, drama, ballet and physical education (PE). Children in the early years also benefit from this specialist teaching. Adults in the early years provide a rich learning environment to support children's language development. Expert teaching contributes to pupils achieving very well.

Leaders' work with parents and carers whose children have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is highly effective. Teachers use their knowledge of what these pupils can do. They adapt activities so that these pupils can access their learning. As a result, these pupils also achieve very well.

Reading is the school's top priority. From Reception through to Year 6, staff provide pupils with rich and varied opportunities to develop their love of reading. This starts

early on. For example, Reception class children enjoyed their time in the library. This helps them to read a wide range of books. Adults read with expression during story time. They hold pupils' interest and excitement in listening to stories.

Younger pupils are given books to take home. They learn to practise the sounds they have learned in school. The very few pupils who need help to catch up with their phonics and reading are identified quickly, and given extra support.

Pupils value the importance of reading. They said that reading helped them to expand their vocabulary and writing. Pupils learn to read across different subjects. For example, in geography they used their reading skills to find out more about different countries.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. They are highly motivated to succeed. During lesson time, pupils have high levels of concentration. They engage fully with activities.

Leaders have crafted an excellent personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme. Pupils' preparation for their future lives in a diverse British society is superb. The PSHE programme supports pupils' emotional development very well. For example, older pupils talked to us knowledgeably about emotional intelligence.

Pupils have many exciting activities that they are involved in beyond the classroom. This ranges from attending clubs to trips, including to other countries. For example, pupils go to Nepal to see first-hand how the funds they have raised are spent. This range of opportunities offered to pupils encourages them to think deeply, and to find 'the brave' in themselves.

The proprietors and senior leaders ensure that all of the independent school standards are met consistently. They draw on the expertise of professionals from different backgrounds, where necessary. This includes the school's duty to meet the requirements outlined in schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Additionally, the school meets the statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage.

The proprietors have established clear lines of accountability. This ensures that they and the headteacher are held to account for the quality of education.

Staff say that leaders are caring, supportive and considerate of their well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular training and updates on safeguarding matters, such as peer-on-peer abuse, upskirting and cybersecurity. For example, leaders use questionnaires to check the staff's knowledge about safeguarding. Staff know how to identify changes in pupils' behaviour and raise concerns, should they need to.

Parents are supported in helping to keep their children safe when they are using the internet.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe from harm through the school's PSHE programme. They are taught about how to keep themselves safe, including online.

### **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100534
<b>DfE registration number</b>	207/6317
<b>Local authority</b>	Kensington and Chelsea
<b>Inspection number</b>	10123105
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	389
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Thomas's London Day Schools
<b>Chairs</b>	Tobyn and Ben Thomas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanna Ebner
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£21,429–£22,746
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7361 6500
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thomas-s.co.uk">www.thomas-s.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:kensington@thomas-s.co.uk">kensington@thomas-s.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 October–2 November 2017

## Information about this school

- Thomas's Kensington is an independent day school in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. This is a Christian school that is open to pupils of all faiths.
- The school is registered to admit up to 390 pupils aged five to 11. Currently, there are 389 pupils on roll. There are 196 boys and 192 girls between the ages of five and 11.
- The school's last standard inspection was in November 2017, when it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school operates from three different sites. Pupils in Reception to Year 2 are taught at the Thomas's Kensington Lower School, which is located on 39–41 Victoria Road, London W8 5RJ. Pupils from Years 3 to 6 are based at Thomas's Kensington Preparatory School, at 17–19 Cottessmore Gardens, London W8 5PR. There is an annex based at 21 St Albans Grove, W8 5BP which provides facilities for music, PE and theatre productions, and dining facilities.
- PE is also offered off site. In addition, outdoor play is offered at the tennis courts and local park near the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's safeguarding policy is made available to parents via the school's website. It is in line with the government's latest legislation.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We did deep dives in early reading, mathematics, music and PSHE. We held discussions with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. We also talked to pupils about their learning and scrutinised their work.
- In addition, we considered other subjects as part of this inspection. We held discussions with the subject leaders, sampled work and talked to pupils.
- We met with senior leaders and reviewed documentation related to safeguarding. We talked to staff and pupils.
- We met with: the proprietor and curriculum director for Thomas's London Day Schools; the special educational needs coordinators; and leaders responsible for behaviour, attendance and the early years foundation stage. We reviewed a wide

range of documentation, including that related to the school's self-evaluation and records related to behaviour and attendance.

- We analysed the 117 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 67 free-texts from parents. In addition, we talked to parents informally during the start of the school day and when they attended assembly.
- We also considered the 70 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 165 responses to the pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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