

School inspection report

14 to 16 May 2024

Sussex House School

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Chelsea

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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. The trustees are supported by advisory governors in monitoring the school's provision and in making sure that leaders fulfil their roles well. They visit the school, scrutinise records and policies and challenge leaders about the provision to be sure that pupils' wellbeing is promoted.
2. The school pursues its aims to encourage a sense of striving for learning, creativity and sporting achievement through the carefully planned and broad curriculum, extra-curricular activities and skilful teaching. These result in pupils' high quality music performances, success in national fencing championships and in successful applications to selective senior schools. Leaders provide an extensive extra-curricular programme so that pupils develop skills and knowledge in fields such as architecture, knotting and table tennis.
3. Leaders actively encourage an inclusive ethos and promote an environment in which pupils respect each other by raising awareness of the importance of mutual respect in the PSHE programme and assemblies. Leaders and staff model such respect in their teaching and interactions with pupils.
4. Opportunities for pupils to take part in events such as the annual large-scale model exhibition, theatre productions and sports teams encourage pupils to work together well. Coupled with the positive relationship pupils have with their teachers, this helps them feel a sense of belonging and personal involvement.
5. Trustees and leaders promote a culture of openness by ensuring that staff know pupils well and are readily available to talk if pupils have concerns. Pupils are confident that they will receive support and advice when needed and are typically happy at school.
6. Pupils are encouraged by their teachers' specialist knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject. Teaching provides a range of activities, such as discussion, investigations and creative tasks, that motivate and interest pupils effectively. Effective questioning encourages intellectual effort so that pupils analyse and synthesise information and think independently.
7. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well planned and effective in enabling good progress. The language skills of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are monitored to check that these pupils can fully access the curriculum. For the few whose English is not fluent, specialist support is arranged.
8. Leaders have established a cycle of assessments to help teachers to plan pupils' next steps in learning. The recently introduced system to track progress and achievement is not yet fully utilised to track and compare the rate of progress between different groups of pupils. This means that leaders cannot be sure that the needs of different groups of pupils are consistently met.
9. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are effective. Staff training is regular and thorough so that staff know how to report concerns. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL are knowledgeable about their roles and seek advice from relevant external agencies, including children's services, when concerns arise. Online safety is maintained through effective monitoring and filtering.
10. Leaders ensure that effective health and safety and risk management procedures are in place.

11. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme includes relationships and sex education (RSE) and develops pupils' understanding of what constitute positive friendships and relationships well. Appropriate policies to promote positive behaviour are in place and effectively implemented, meaning that incidents of poor behaviour are rare.
12. Leaders enable pupils to support fundraising for an international and a local charity to help develop their awareness of the importance of helping others. However, pupils' active contribution to the wider community is not as developed as strongly as possible.

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 the use made of the assessment and achievement data to make sure that the needs of different groups of pupils are met
- strengthen pupils' active contribution to the lives of others in the local and wider communities.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

13. The trustees maintain close oversight of all aspects of the school. They are supported by a body of advisory governors in fulfilling their governance responsibilities, including the review of policies. Trustees and governors spend time in the school. They observe lessons, check documentation such as health and safety records and observe the impact on pupils of what leaders do. They meet with leaders to discuss and challenge their decisions and actions. In addition, the governor with designated responsibility for safeguarding confirms that staff recruitment checks have been completed and accurately recorded. Leaders provide trustees with termly reports on the areas they are responsible for, including safeguarding concerns and health and safety matters. In these ways trustees and governors assure themselves that leaders fulfil their roles well, policies are successfully implemented and the Standards are met.
14. Leaders regularly evaluate areas of the school's provision against the school's aims, ethos and the extent to which it promotes pupils' wellbeing. They identify where improvements to systems, procedures and resources are required and take action to ensure that they continue to be relevant and effective. For example, leaders recently upgraded the system for filtering and monitoring internet access. Leaders make sure that staff and pupils understand policies through meetings and assemblies and reminders about procedures. They review policies regularly and monitor practice to ensure their effective implementation.
15. Leaders ensure that suitable procedures are in place to manage risk. Staff are trained to complete risk assessments for on-site and off-site activities, including educational visits and trips. Risk assessments identify risks to pupils' wellbeing when on- and off-site and put forward appropriate measures to mitigate against these. Leaders recognise the stress pupils can feel in their desire to achieve highly and mitigate this by providing them with time to talk and recreational activities that they find enjoyable.
16. A clear procedure for parents to make complaints is in place. Leaders manage complaints appropriately, investigate the issue and respond within the stated timeframes. Appropriate records are maintained which include the outcome of the complaint and any actions taken as a result.
17. Leaders provide and make available all information required to parents and external agencies. Parents have access to information about the school's aims and ethos, and key policies and procedures either on the website or from the school. They receive regular and informative reports on their child's progress. Leaders provide the required information relating to pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan to the local authority.
18. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. A suitable and clear accessibility plan is in place. It identifies how the school can improve access to the curriculum, the physical environment and communication for pupils who have SEND. For example, leaders identified the need to purchase specialist equipment designed to support pupils who have SEND and to provide relevant therapy and staff training. As a result, the school recently purchased slanted writing boards and wobble cushions, employed a speech and language therapist and provided staff with training in specific teaching strategies.
19. Trustees, governors, leaders and staff are trained in safeguarding and fulfil their roles well. Leaders and staff know pupils well and are readily available to listen if pupils need support or advice. Leaders

liaise effectively with external agencies when required, both in terms of seeking advice and making referrals when appropriate.

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. Pupils access a broad curriculum which is suitable for their needs and interests. The curriculum enables pupils to acquire a wide range of skills and knowledge, including in team and individual sports such as football, cricket and athletics, French, Latin, theology, philosophy and religion (TPR), creative and expressive arts.
22. The carefully planned English curriculum and knowledgeable teaching enable pupils to acquire mature speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Pupils are taught to employ advanced literary devices for their age, such as symbolism, hyperbole and irony, to engage the reader. As a result, some pupils are successful in national creative writing competitions. The curriculum encourages pupils to read widely, including poetry by Chaucer and Yeats, plays and sonnets by Shakespeare and fiction by Steinbeck and Greene. This enables pupils to develop skills in technical and critical analysis.
23. Teachers' subject expertise and high expectations enable pupils to develop as confident mathematicians. Pupils enjoy the challenge to successfully apply secure mathematical knowledge to problem-solving and investigations. For example, pupils in Year 5 calculate averages from a range of data using various strategies to find the most effective methods.
24. Knowledgeable and skilled classroom and instrumental staff teach the well-planned music curriculum and musical activities. As a result, some pupils are successful in passing the top grades in Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) examinations and a few pupils achieve music diplomas before they leave the school. Public performances encourage pupils to play for a purpose. They play alongside professional musicians in orchestral performances which encourages them to aspire to high standards. Instrumental ensembles and choirs are well trained so that pupils can play and sing in several parts and show well-developed levels of musicianship. Opportunities to perform as concert soloists are provided to those with particular talent.
25. Teachers with specialist knowledge communicate about their subjects effectively so that pupils achieve high levels of skills and understanding. As a result, most pupils are successful in applying to selective senior schools and some are awarded scholarships. Lessons are well planned. They include a variety of activities to engage pupils' interest, such as discussions, role play, practical and creative tasks. Teachers utilise effective questioning to guide pupils in their learning so that they think deeply and in detail about the subject at hand. Teaching consistently supports and reflects the positive values of the school.
26. Leaders have recently revised the programme of assessment and tracking of achievement data. They use this to analyse individual pupils' progress and identify when further support or challenge may be required. This enables teachers to plan for individual pupils' needs. Plans are in place for leaders to utilise this data to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils in order to check that the needs of specific groups of pupils are met. However, such monitoring has not yet been implemented sufficiently so that its impact is evident. The needs of pupils who have SEND are identified quickly and appropriately assessed. They make good progress due to the effective additional and tailored support provided by those with responsibility for overseeing their learning. Records of their needs and progress are efficiently maintained and systematically reviewed and communicated so that teachers are well informed about pupils' needs and can apply appropriate teaching strategies.

27. Pupils who speak EAL are monitored by their teachers to ensure that they make good progress. Effective language support by external specialists is arranged for those few who require it.
28. The diverse programme of activities develops a wide range of skills. These include learning to paint in oils, playing chess, skills in sports such as football and golf, understanding heraldry and creating imaginary worlds in digital gaming.

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

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

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

30. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive, both pastorally and academically. This helps to establish an environment in which pupils develop a sense of belonging and personal involvement. As a result, pupils feel comfortable at school. They are respectful and accepting of each other's differences.
31. The religious studies (RS) curriculum and assemblies teach pupils about the beliefs, values and spiritual perspectives of different world religions. As a result, pupils are happy to share and discuss their own and others' religions and beliefs.
32. The behaviour policy reflects leaders' high expectations and promotes positive behaviour through a suitable range of rewards and sanctions such as stars and detentions. Leaders ensure that staff and pupils understand the policy well through assemblies, staff meetings and reminders so that it is consistently and effectively implemented. Leaders maintain records of the few instances of poor behaviour that occur. They analyse records regularly to identify any emerging patterns or trends.
33. An effective anti-bullying policy means that incidents of bullying are rare. Leaders make clear that bullying is unacceptable and ensure that pupils and staff know what action to take if they see or experience it. The PSHE programme, assemblies and talks to pupils and parents ensure that the effects of bullying and what to do if bullying occurs are understood. When issues arise, leaders respond quickly and appropriately so that pupils are confident that such instances are dealt with well.
34. Leaders make sure that pupils gain an understanding of how to establish positive and respectful friendships and relationships through the RSE programme. Topics such as caring friendships, puberty, different types of families and consent are included. Leaders regularly review the programme and in doing so consider opinions and suggestions expressed by parents and pupils.
35. The PSHE programme teaches pupils the importance of a balanced lifestyle to support mental and physical health and strategies to maintain a healthy lifestyle. For example, pupils learn about healthy eating, the beneficial impact of physical activity and limiting screen time. Teaching strategies that balance praise and advice and opportunities to perform and lead help pupils develop independence and resilience.
36. Opportunities to contribute to discussions and explain their thinking, lead assemblies and perform in dramatic productions enable pupils to develop self-confidence and become eloquent communicators. Staff's positive interactions with pupils, as well as their encouraging feedback, support pupils' development of self-knowledge, self-esteem and a positive outlook. Staff know pupils well and pupils are confident to talk about concerns and ask for help when it is needed. This means that they feel supported. Leaders help pupils to access support from appropriate external services, such as therapy or counselling, if it is required.
37. The carefully planned physical education (PE) programme provides opportunity for pupils to acquire a range of sporting skills, develop physical fitness and work as a team. Well-planned and skilled teaching of sports supports pupils' team and individual successes in inter-school matches and national competitions. The fencing team are current national fencing champions.

38. First aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by staff who are regularly trained in paediatric first aid. Clear records are kept. There are suitable arrangements in place for pupils who become unwell. Leaders record and analyse the cause of any accidents and make changes in light of any evident trends.
39. Staff supervise pupils effectively throughout the school day. They oversee pupils during breaks and accompany pupils between buildings for music and PE lessons and church services.
40. Leaders ensure that the school premises are well maintained and health and safety checks and procedures are documented and implemented well. Effective precautions to reduce the risk of fire are in place, understood by staff and regularly reviewed. Staff receive regular fire training and evacuation drills are practised termly. Leaders utilise external specialists to undertake fire risk assessments and carry out checks and maintenance on services such as gas, electricity and water.
41. Attendance and admission registers are maintained correctly and absences are followed up swiftly. Leaders ensure that information about pupils joining or leaving the school is accurately recorded and the local authority is informed, as required. This mitigates against the risk of pupils missing education.

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

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

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

43. The carefully planned PSHE, RS programmes help pupils to develop understanding of mutual respect and appreciation for their own and other faiths. Exploration of themes such as prejudice, discrimination, extremism and sharia law increase pupils' understanding of the importance of tolerance between different cultural traditions. Church services further develop pupils' understanding of Christianity. In assemblies, pupils give talks to increase awareness about their own and others' religious beliefs, such as Islam and Sikhism. Pupils are also taught about different cultures through the PSHE, French and geography programmes and talks by visiting speakers, for example on life in Ethiopia. As a result, pupils show respect for other people, regardless of background, and understand the importance of respect for individual characteristics such as faith or race.
44. Leaders and staff focus pupils on understanding the harm that any negative behaviour causes and their ability to take responsibility for it. This approach is used effectively to help pupils to resolve disputes and poor behaviour choices. Along with the clear school code of conduct, this approach helps pupils develop an understanding of how the rule of law is there to maintain a coherent and peaceful society. Pupils are taught how laws are made and explore ethical issues such as domestic conflict and teenage pregnancy in PSHE and RSE lessons. Teaching remains impartial whenever political issues are raised.
45. Visiting speakers, including Members of Parliament, and trips to the Palace of Westminster promote pupils' knowledge of British institutions. Pupils are taught how government works at national and local levels through the PSHE curriculum and the visiting speakers' talks. The PSHE curriculum promotes pupils' understanding of rights and responsibilities in British society and the personal freedom and influence they can have. These topics are further explored in assembly themes. Pupils vote for house captains and, through the pupil council, put forward ideas how they could support the local community. These measures develop pupils' understanding of democratic processes and how to exercise their right to express their views.
46. Leaders make sure that a suitable programme of careers guidance is in place. This includes a programme of visiting speakers from different professions such as doctors, conservationists, entrepreneurs and pilots. These help pupils to consider a broad range of possible career routes.
47. Pupils are taught economic topics such as different financial transactions, managing personal finance, crypto currency and tax in the UK through the PSHE programme. As a result, pupils at the top of the school are able to produce and explain business plans for enterprise projects such as designing and creating 'eco houses' and have learnt the principles of budgeting and saving. This economic understanding helps prepare pupils for their future life.
48. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their thoughts and opinions in lessons which helps them to understand and respect that people hold different views to each other. The RSE programme promotes pupils' understanding of positive social skills through topics such as the characteristics of healthy friendships and conflict resolution. Leaders and managers have created a wide programme of additional activities which help to promote pupils' social development. Extra-curricular activities enable pupils to work or play with older and younger pupils which help them to settle in quickly when they join the school. Residential experiences and sporting trips, such as the cricket tour, help

pupils to establish new friendships. Participation in instrumental ensembles, sports teams and collaborative projects such as the annual model exhibition encourage pupils to work well together.

49. Pupils are encouraged to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of others in the school and the international and local community. Positions of responsibility such as monitors, prefects and heads of school develop pupils' sense of responsibility towards others and enable them to practise leadership skills. Pupils contribute to society beyond the school through the annual Christmas fair which raises funds for a school in Addis Ababa and annual donations to a charity that supports homeless people. However, pupils have limited opportunities to show initiative and actively contribute to the lives of others in the local and wider communities. A plan is in place, at the request of pupils, to enable them to contribute further, but this is not yet implemented sufficiently to demonstrate its impact.

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

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

Safeguarding

51. Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities respond to safeguarding concerns quickly and appropriately. They liaise in a timely manner with external agencies, including the local safeguarding partners and if necessary, the police, when concerns arise. The safeguarding team regularly seek advice to be sure that appropriate action is taken. Suitable safeguarding records are maintained. Appropriate arrangements are in place to respond to any allegations against staff or concerns about child-on-child abuse.
52. Safeguarding forms part of induction training for staff and volunteers, as well as trustees and governors. Regular updates and training, including that related to the 'Prevent' duty, ensure that the safeguarding policy and latest guidance is understood. As a result, trustees, governors, leaders and staff have a secure knowledge of how to report concerns and understand the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism.
53. Governors and trustees maintain close oversight of safeguarding practice to ensure the safeguarding policy is effectively implemented and the relevant Standards are met. The designated governor for safeguarding spends time in school, meets with the safeguarding team and checks documentation. Termly safeguarding reports keep trustees and governors informed, as does an annual review of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures. In these ways, trustees and governors are assured that safeguarding practice reflects current statutory guidance and meet the Standards.
54. There are suitable procedures to monitor and filter the school's information and communication technology (ICT) systems, including access to the internet. When potential issues are detected, the safeguarding team is notified and swift action is taken to make sure pupils are not at risk of harm. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online through the ICT curriculum.
55. The required safer recruitment checks are completed for all staff and volunteers before they join the school. These checks are accurately recorded in a well-maintained single central record of appointments. The suitability of visiting speakers and any materials that they use is checked by leaders and they are escorted by staff when on site.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Sussex House School
Department for Education number	207/6096
Registered charity number	1035806
Address	Sussex House School 68 Cadogan Square Chelsea London SW1X 0EA
Phone number	020 7584 1741
Email address	registrar@sussexhouseschool.co.uk
Website	www.sussexhouseschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Sussex House School
Chair	Mr John Crewe
Headmaster	Mr Nicholas Kaye
Age range	8 to 13
Number of pupils	187
Date of previous inspection	1 to 3 October 2019

Information about the school

57. Sussex House School is an independent day school for male pupils. The school was founded in 1952 and has been an independent charitable trust since 1994. A board of six trustees of the charitable trust includes the headmaster. They are ultimately responsible for all aspects of the running of the school. A team of advisory governors supports the trustees. Most teaching takes place in the main five-storey building, while an adjacent hall provides facilities for music and a gymnasium. The school has no outdoor space but uses local facilities for games and recreation.
58. The school has identified 42 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
59. English is an additional language for 39 pupils.
60. The school states its aims are to create an inspirational environment in which there is a sense of striving for learning, creativity and sporting achievement and in which pupils can feel a strong sense of belonging and personal involvement. It seeks to discern ability and talent and provide opportunities for unhindered development. The school has a Christian ethos.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

14 to 16 May 2024

61. A team of three 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 governors and trustees
- discussions with the head, 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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