



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Material Change Inspection Report

Pembridge Hall School

June 2023

School's details

School	Pembridge Hall School			
DfE number	207/6303			
Address	Pembridge Hall School 18 Pembridge Square London W2 4EH			
Telephone number	0207 2290121			
Email address	contact@pembridgehall.co.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Sophie Banks			
Chair of proprietors	Sir John Ritblat			
Proprietor	Alpha Plus Group Ltd			
Age range	4 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	444			
	Reception	65	Preparatory	379
Date of inspection	30 June 2023			

1. Introduction

Characteristics of the school

- 1.1 Pembridge Hall School is an independent preparatory day school. It is registered as a single sex school for female pupils. The school was founded in 1979 as Our Lady of Sion in Notting Hill, moving subsequently to its current site in Pembridge Square. The school is owned and governed by the Alpha Plus Group. The headmistress was appointed in 2022. The school has identified 34 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are 145 pupils for whom English is an additional language, who are guided by class teachers. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school's previous inspection was a focused compliance and educational quality inspection in May 2019.

Purpose of the inspection

- 1.2 This was an announced material change inspection at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the school's proposal to increase pupil numbers from 450 to 500. This involves the addition of a further class for Reception pupils. The inspection focused on the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs) and the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Regulations which were the focus of the inspection	Team judgements
Part 3, paragraph 7 (safeguarding)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 11 (health and safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 12 (fire safety)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision of pupils)	Met
Part 3, paragraph 16 (risk assessment)	Met
Part 4, paragraphs 18 to 21 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)	Met
Part 5, paragraph 23 (toilets and changing accommodation)	Met
Part 5, paragraph 24 (medical accommodation)	Met
Part 5, paragraph 25 (maintenance)	Met
Part 5, paragraph 26 (acoustics)	Met
Part 5, paragraph 27 (lighting)	Met
Part 5, paragraph 28 (water supply)	Met
Part 5, paragraph 29 (outdoor space)	Met

Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c) (provision of information)	Met
Part 8, paragraph 34 (leadership and management)	Met

2. Inspection findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – safeguarding [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7]

Safeguarding policy

- 2.1 The school meets the requirements.
- 2.2 The school has an appropriate policy for safeguarding which provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding implementation

- 2.3 The school meets the standard.
- 2.4 The school's policy is implemented effectively by ensuring safeguarding procedures pay due regard to current statutory guidance. As a result, there is a positive safeguarding culture within the school whereby pupils feel safe and secure. They know that their voice is important and that they can always find a trusted adult to talk to should they have any worries or concerns. They are confident that trusted adults will always act in the pupils' best interests. That this happens is confirmed by records of safeguarding. Staff are knowledgeable in their safeguarding roles and are effectively supported by those with designated safeguarding responsibilities. Staff training, including the induction of new staff, is appropriately planned and timely. It ensures that the school's safeguarding arrangements follow locally agreed protocols. All staff are suitably qualified including those who have specific safeguarding roles. Suitable catch-up arrangements are in place for anyone who misses the scheduled training. In discussions, staff spoke confidently about how to report any concerns and were appreciative of the support and guidance they are given by the school leads in this area. Staff understand up-to-date definitions of abuse, recognising the particular vulnerabilities of those with SEND including to child-on-child abuse. The school makes appropriate arrangements for teaching pupils how to keep safe online, including in the use of mobile technologies. In discussions, pupils stated that they feel well supported in this area.
- 2.5 School safeguarding leads liaise effectively with the local safeguarding partners and use this support network to seek advice should the need arise. The school's whistleblowing policy and low-level concerns policy are understood by staff and promote a culture where any concerns can be reported quickly. The raft of school policies also includes a suitable staff code of conduct. The school has an appropriate Prevent strategy to minimise the potential risk of radicalisation and extremist behaviours. The school has suitable arrangements in place for handling allegations of abuse against members of staff, volunteers and the head, including reporting to the disclosure and barring service (DBS) and the teaching regulation agency (TRA), if required. There are suitable procedures in place for the use of mobile telephones and cameras in the EYFS.
- 2.6 Oversight and management of the school's safeguarding arrangements is effective, including in the EYFS. The designated lead from the proprietary body, which is appropriately trained in safeguarding, liaises regularly with the school leads. All benefit from the cross-group safeguarding forum organised by the proprietor, where information and experiences can be shared to further strengthen procedures. The proprietor undertakes an annual review of safeguarding which includes aspects such as safer recruitment, training requirements and an analysis of concerns held by the school.
- 2.7 The school's safeguarding arrangements are suitable for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – health and safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11]

- 2.8 The school meets the standard.

- 2.9 The school has a suitable health and safety policy that is implemented effectively. The proprietor provides clear oversight of the school's arrangements and representatives make regular visits to check on procedures. Staff are given suitable training in health and safety. Health and safety checks on aspects such as electrical safety and the control of any hazardous substances are suitably detailed, showing a systematic approach to ensuring pupils, staff and visitors are kept safe whilst on the school site.
- 2.10 The school's health and safety arrangements support the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – fire safety [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12]

- 2.11 The school meets the standard.
- 2.12 The proprietary body's group policy on fire prevention is implemented effectively. The school undertakes a regular fire risk assessment on the buildings which is monitored effectively by those with administrative leads in this area. Any necessary actions are completed effectively. There is a systematic approach to the maintenance and testing of all fire equipment and electrical installations. Staff have particular responsibilities as fire wardens ensuring that each area of the school is evacuated should the need arise. Pupils are confident that they know what to do should the fire alarm sound. Appropriate records are kept of all fire drills.
- 2.13 The school's fire safety arrangements are suitable for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – supervision of pupils [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14]

- 2.14 The school meets the standard.
- 2.15 The school ensures that pupils are properly supervised at all times. This includes times when the pupils move between the two main buildings, which involves walking along the pavement of the local square. There is also appropriate supervision when pupils move around the local area to make use of some outdoor facilities such as parks and gardens. Appropriate supervision is provided before and after school and during breaks and lunchtimes. Children in Reception classes are always in sight or sound of the staff members.
- 2.16 The school's supervision arrangements support the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils – risk assessment [ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16]

- 2.17 The school meets the standard.
- 2.18 The school has a suitable risk assessment policy that is implemented effectively, including with regard to specific requirements in the EYFS. The school approaches all aspects of risk systematically demonstrating a depth of understanding of how risk impacts on all areas of school life. Staff are confident in filling out risk assessments, receiving support from school leads when required. The governance of the school has effective oversight of all aspects associated with risk management.
- 2.19 The school's risk assessment arrangements support the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors [ISSR Part 4, paragraphs 18–21]

- 2.20 The school meets the standards.

- 2.21 The school ensures that all members of staff and those working for the proprietor are checked in accordance with the standards. All checks are accurately recorded on the school's central register of appointments and supporting documentary evidence is stored appropriately in staff files.
- 2.22 The school's safer recruitment arrangements support the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

Premises and accommodation – toilet and washing facilities [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 23]

- 2.23 The school meets the standard.
- 2.24 There are adequate toilets and washing facilities strategically located around each of the main school buildings. They are easily accessible for pupils of all ages. Each area has its own washbasins which are suitable in number. The facilities support the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

Premises and accommodation – medical facilities [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 24]

- 2.25 The school meets the standard.
- 2.26 There is a suitable medical room in each of the two school buildings. Each has running water and is close to a toilet. There is space in each for pupils to rest and lie down should the need arise. Both rooms have lockable facilities for the safe storage and dispensing of any medication, which is effectively managed in the EYFS. The school's medical rooms are suitable for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

Premises and accommodation – maintenance [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 25]

- 2.27 The school meets the standard.
- 2.28 School buildings are suitably maintained and are secure. Due regard is paid to paintwork and on the furnishings within each room. The school has a rolling programme of maintenance to ensure appropriate standards are upheld. The school's maintenance is suitable for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

Premises and accommodation – acoustics [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 26]

- 2.29 The school meets the standard.
- 2.30 The acoustics in each room are suitable for the activities that take place within them. The acoustics within the school support the school's proposal for an increase in pupil numbers.

Premises and accommodation – lighting [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 27]

- 2.31 The school meets the standard.
- 2.32 Interior lighting in each room is suitable for the range of activities that take place. Exterior lighting, including street lighting, ensures that everyone can approach and leave the properties safely during the hours of darkness. The lighting is suitable for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

Premises and accommodation – water supply [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 28]

- 2.33 The school meets the standard.

- 2.34 The school has adequate water supplying hand washing areas and toilets. The hot water poses no risks of scalding. The school's water supply is suitable for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

Premises and accommodation – outdoor space [ISSR Part 5, paragraph 29]

- 2.35 The school meets the standard.
- 2.36 Outdoor space around the two main buildings is limited due to their central London location. However, the school makes appropriate use of nearby parks and gardens at breaks and lunchtimes for the pupils to play and relax. There are also suitable outdoor sports areas that the pupils use regularly. There are suitable arrangements for freedom of movement between indoor and outdoor learning areas in the EYFS. The use of outdoor space is suitable for the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

Provision of information [ISSR Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)]

- 2.37 The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.

Quality of leadership and management [ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34]

- 2.38 The school meets the standard.
- 2.39 School leaders and managers have appropriate knowledge and skills, which they implement effectively to ensure that the standards are met consistently and that they actively promote the wellbeing of pupils. Planning for the proposed increase in pupil numbers is effective.
- 2.40 The quality of leadership and management supports the proposed increase in pupil numbers.

3. Recommendation with regard to material change inspection

Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that the material change application to increase pupil numbers from 450 to 500 be granted. There are currently two partly used rooms which will be used to accommodate additional pupils.

4. Summary of evidence

- 4.1 The inspector held discussions with the head, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with the designated safeguarding lead for The Alpha Plus Group. He visited different areas of the school and talked with a group of pupils. He scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.

Inspectors

Mr Graham Gorton

Reporting inspector