

# School inspection report

11 to 13 June 2024

## **Beeston Hall**

West Runton

Cromer

Norfolk

NR27 9NQ

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 local advisory group (LAG) and trustees use their diverse skills effectively to support and challenge the school's senior leaders to ensure that the standards are met. They visit regularly to check that policies are implemented as intended. However, some aspects of approaches to evaluating policy implementation are inconsistent, for example, in checking the administration of information held. Leaders engage actively in school life. They communicate well with the school community to promote pupils' wellbeing.
2. Pupils live out the school's values, such as to aim high and to be adventurous. These values contribute well to their success. Trustees and the LAG collaborate with school leaders in development plans, offering support and strategic guidance. Robust academic assessments and effective teaching support pupils' good progress, including for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
3. Leaders ensure that the comprehensive curriculum remains current and relevant to pupils' needs. The curriculum model builds on pupils' prior knowledge and provides for the development of their analytical skills. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils' achievement. They plan lessons which challenge and support pupils to succeed. Pupils' cultural understanding is enriched across subjects, for example, learning about Islamic decorative designs in art.
4. Effective curriculum planning and the school's supportive environment help pupils to meet leaders' ambitious aims for their success. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme promotes a culture of harmony and inclusion. The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum contributes to pupils' understanding of the value of positive relationships. Pupils who have SEND are well supported. The school community reflects the values of respect, acceptance, and tolerance. Physical education promotes balanced, healthy lifestyles. The inclusive ethos encourages positive behaviour. Anti-bullying measures are effective.
5. Leaders integrate assemblies and external talks into the curriculum to provide relevant, up to date information. These contributions reinforce the school's ethos of respect and appreciation of different customs and traditions. Collaboration and mutual respect are emphasised both in and out of the classroom. Pupils are quick and happy to help others.
6. Pupils lead community activities, voice their ideas, and take pride in their roles. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to learn about the beliefs of other cultures. The careers education programme offers an insight into different opportunities and future professions. However, it is not as well developed as other aspects of the curriculum.
7. Pupils develop economic skills through budgeting activities. They understand right from wrong, how to develop good relationships and how to resolve conflicts effectively. Boarders value discussion and get on well together. Democratic principles are taught and practised. Pupils, for example, participate in decision-making, such as in voting for pupil leaders.
8. The LAG and other leaders are mindful of health and safety requirements. The school's premises are well maintained. Carefully managed risk assessments ensure user safety. Effective safeguarding and health and safety procedures ensure the wellbeing of day and boarding pupils in all activities. Trained governors, including a safeguarding governor, oversee these processes, including monitoring

recruitment checks and records. Staff receive regular training and updates. They report concerns as appropriate to the safeguarding team.

## 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:

- ensure that all aspects of monitoring and oversight of record-keeping, including the administration of the admission register and boarding documentation, is thorough and systematic
- further develop the effectiveness of the careers education offer for secondary-aged pupils so that they are as well prepared as they can be to move on to the next stage of their education.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. The LAG works collaboratively with school leaders to ensure that the standards are met. The trust provides additional expertise in areas which support the operational management of the school. Leaders are involved routinely in school daily life. This allows them to understand and address any concerns raised. The wellbeing of pupils and staff is effectively promoted. The LAG visits the school regularly to experience the implementation of policies and procedures first hand.
10. While the implementation of the school's policies and procedures is checked, including those related to boarding, aspects of monitoring, such as checks on some administrative processes, are inconsistent. For example, while all relevant information is held, it is not always transferred as promptly as it should be to the admission register and to some boarding records. Strategic development planning is systematic and takes appropriate account of the views of the school community.
11. Trustees and the LAG work with senior leaders to evaluate development plans and to assess the scope of proposed improvement strategies. They understand the challenges that leaders face and provide both support and challenge to guide them.
12. Suitable adjustments are made for pupils who have SEND so that they can access the curriculum. The school's accessibility plan is reviewed annually so that pupils with physical disabilities can attend the school. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities under The Equality Act 2010.
13. Leaders ensure that the school's values and aims are known to the school community. Staff often refer to them in lessons. Pupils understand these values and make every effort to fulfil them. This contributes well to their success in gaining entry to their preferred choice of senior school, often with awards. Pupils have high expectations of what they can achieve.
14. The programme of robust academic assessment is embedding successfully. Middle leaders ensure that information to support pupils who have SEND is used effectively in planning learning so that pupils make the progress that they should. Staff are encouraged to share good practice and to work collaboratively to continue to improve their teaching.
15. Leaders' approach to risk management is strategic and effective. The LAG monitors risk assessments, which are reviewed regularly. As necessary, appropriate changes are made. For example, the risk assessment for hockey was amended in an ongoing focus on improving safety for participants. Leaders use external independent consultants to sample risk assessments and to provide further guidance.
16. A range of representative pupil councils suggests improvements to benefit the school community. Recent changes in the curriculum, such as additional time for drama, demonstrate leaders' willingness to act on pupils' suggestions.
17. Leaders' commitment to safeguarding and the associated training ensures that staff prioritise pupils' wellbeing. Effective links with outside agencies support access to resources, which not only helps to educate pupils in how to stay safe, but also provides support to parents on how to manage their children's safe use of digital devices.

18. The school's website provides important information for current and prospective parents, including information about boarding arrangements. Leaders ensure that parents receive regular updates on their children's academic and pastoral progress.
19. The school's complaints policy and procedures are clear and effective. Parents are encouraged to contact teaching staff if they have a concern. Consequently, a resolution is often found at an informal stage. All concerns are recorded centrally. Senior leaders review these regularly to identify and act on any recurring themes. The LAG also monitor complaints records to ensure that concerns are resolved.

### **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. Leaders provide a comprehensive curriculum that includes literacy, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and creative subjects. Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 build early literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum then broadens, allowing them to explore a diverse range of subjects. Senior leaders review the curriculum regularly to integrate current social and economic information. Teachers know the pupils well and so plan lessons carefully to meet different needs.
22. Assemblies, the PSHE programme, and extracurricular activities enhance pupils' understanding of different cultures locally, nationally and globally. The curriculum builds on pupils' previous knowledge, linking topics across year groups. Pupils show a well-developed awareness of British values. They are prepared effectively to contribute to society.
23. Teachers have good subject expertise and high expectations of their pupils. They provide consistently effective support so that pupils thrive academically and personally. Pupils build their analytical skills through teachers thought-provoking questions. They are willing and highly motivated learners. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils were keen to solve equations on the interactive whiteboard. They readily accepted advice from their peers. Pupils display resilience, perseverance, and a collaborative spirit. They engage enthusiastically in learning, often staying at the end of lessons to ask further questions.
24. Pupils make good progress because of high-quality teaching across the curriculum. They practise oracy confidently through interactions and role play. In science, pupils handle laboratory equipment safely. They are encouraged appropriately to predict outcomes during experiments. Careful practise for exams ensures academic readiness. PSHE lessons develop life skills, as well as promoting independence and the responsible use of digital platforms.
25. The SENCo ensures that information about pupils who have SEND is disseminated to all teachers, and that they use this well to meet pupils' needs. Effective strategies help pupils who have SEND to access their learning and to achieve well. For example, some pupils use specialist resources to improve concentration. Pupils with dyslexia use handouts printed on coloured backgrounds to help them to access the information provided. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are carefully assessed. Appropriate support ensures that they can fully engage with the curriculum and access appropriate qualifications.
26. Regular formal and informal checks on learning guide curriculum planning. Information about pupils' progress is discussed by teachers, with changes made to schemes of work to address gaps in knowledge and skills as required. As a result, pupils make the progress that they should because their needs are met. Pupils know how well they are doing because of the high-quality feedback that they receive from teachers. This means that they understand what they must do next to improve their work. Success in regional and national competitions, for example, in debating and mathematics, illustrate pupils' academic ability. This is also reflected in pupils' success in applying for places at the next stage of their education.
27. The recreation programme offers pupils exciting opportunities to challenge themselves through intellectual, physical, and practical activities. Pupils and parents value the programme's diversity. In participating, pupils develop their confidence and self-esteem further through the new skills that



they gain. They enjoy working together in choirs, theatrical performances, music bands and sports teams, performing at a high level.

28. Boarders have additional opportunities for recreational activities in the early evening, ranging, for example, from metal detecting to surfing. They also have access to a suitable programme of weekend activities.

### **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. Effective curricular plans, which are regularly reviewed, together with the supportive school environment mean that pupils' wellbeing is effectively catered for. Pupils' awareness of the importance of respectful relationships is well-developed through, for example, assemblies and PSHE. A culture of harmony and inclusivity is promoted appropriately. Pupils who have SEND and who might experience vulnerability are well supported. The school community embraces individual differences. The values of respect, acceptance and tolerance are fully embedded in its culture.
31. The plentiful open spaces in the school grounds, and the nearby coastline, offer pupils a chance to be spiritually reflective and to find quiet and peacefulness in their busy, everyday educational experiences. Pupils also attend a local church where they can appreciate and consider how spirituality contributes to a positive mindset. Pupils accept responsibility. They understand right from wrong. This guides them in their behaviour around school and in their interactions with each other. Pupils are happy and feel safe at school. They build self-confidence in an atmosphere of mutual support and collaboration.
32. The comprehensive PSHE programme provides age-appropriate opportunities for pupils to engage in discussions in a range of topics including, for example, about racism, human rights and modern slavery. Pupils also explore the social and moral dilemmas about the use of money. Outside speakers contribute expert views which enhance pupils' knowledge. The effective RSE curriculum also builds pupils' capacity to establish positive and warm friendships, as well as good behaviour. Parents are made aware of the content of PSHE and RSE programmes. Leaders respond to their reasonable requests, for example, to include additional life-skills elements.
33. Leaders have developed a comprehensive physical education and games curriculum. Pupils learn how to lead balanced and healthy lives. The frequent opportunities for physical activities support pupils' positive physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing.
34. The local community comment regularly on pupils' politeness. Pupils understand what bullying is and the harm it can cause. Effective measures, such as the anti-bullying week help to reinforce this. Behaviour and bullying records are suitably detailed and clear. Leaders communicate regularly with teachers through a daily email so that current behavioural patterns and trends are understood and addressed. The school adopts a unified approach in supporting and educating pupils to improve when they misbehave.
35. The school's premises and accommodation are maintained effectively. Health and safety procedures are appropriate to users' needs. Any concerns are identified. Improvement actions are prioritised and implemented. Risk assessments for trips are checked by a trained educational visits coordinator. Menus are nutritious. Leaders listen to and act on pupils' views on their preferences.
36. Boarding accommodation is well maintained. Boarders' views are sought, and their suggestions often acted on. For example, more swimming pool inflatables were provided following a request made through the boarding council. International boarders are well supported so that they become part of the school community quickly. Pupils value learning about each other's different cultures. Boarders have access to a games room which enhances their recreational opportunities including through access to a pool table and table football.

37. Pupils are supervised effectively across all parts of the school. They feel safe and are well supported. Supervision of boarders is carefully planned and managed. Boarding staff understand and implement their pastoral roles and responsibilities appropriately.
38. The school holds a record of the information required by the admission register but it is not always transferred to the register promptly and precisely. The local authority is notified when pupils join or leave the school. Attendance is accurately logged.
39. First aid and medical provision is well managed. First aid staff have effective procedures when administering medicine. The relevant records are thorough. Many staff are first aid trained, including through paediatric training for those who work in the early years. Boarders have access to an appropriate isolation room should they feel unwell.
40. Children below school age receive a varied programme of activities so that their physical and social development is promoted effectively. Pupils approaching Year 8 are aspirational towards the prefect positions available. They know that these positions offer exciting and beneficial opportunities to serve the school community and to accept responsibility.

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

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

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

42. The curriculum contributes significantly to the development of pupils' human, social, and economic education. A range of assemblies and external talks is helpful in providing contemporary information to pupils. Pupils know and understand the school's aim that 'children will have a respect and appreciation of themselves, others, their environment, and the wider world'. Respect for others is at the core of the school's culture and ethos. Pupils' positive behaviour towards one another and to adults at the school underlines this.
43. The Classroom Champions Charter, especially the principle, 'We support others', is deeply embedded across all year groups. Pupils recognise when someone needs help. They offer this help subtly, without being asked and without drawing attention to their acts of kindness. The school prepares pupils to be good citizens through various initiatives and a wide range of curriculum content. This fosters a sense of responsibility and community involvement. In discussions, pupils express readiness to make good life decisions and to contribute positively to society as they grow.
44. Pupils' collaborative skills are well developed and rooted in the school's culture. They work with peers, engaging in discussions and completing tasks without hesitation. This nurturing of a positive, affirming culture extends beyond the classroom into extracurricular activities, reinforcing a sense of community and mutual respect.
45. Pupils contribute positively to the school and the local community. This strengthens the collaborative spirit further while promoting learning about service to others. For example, pupils take a leading role in organising the summer fair. Many pupils are members of various committees. They take proposals from their peers to share in meetings. Pupils take great pride in their roles. They know that leaders hear their views because suggestions made by pupils are often actioned. Other pupils are given individual roles. They take their responsibilities seriously. Library monitors, for example, ensure that books are returned, filed correctly and that the area is clean. In Reception and in Years 1 and 2, children's views are valued. Informal conversations in the playground and opportunities to contribute ideas in assemblies and lessons encourage children to voice their opinions.
46. Pupils show a genuine interest in exploring other cultures through the curriculum. Leaders promote an emphasis on understanding and appreciating diversity. Exchange pupils from different countries share their cultures and enhance social learning. PSHE lessons cover important social topics, including stereotyping and equality, contributing to pupils' social awareness and empathy. This multicultural engagement reflects pupils' curiosity and appreciation for global diversity.
47. Arrangements for careers education are in place for Year 7 and Year 8, including talks from external speakers. However, the programme is not as comprehensive as it could be.
48. Pupils develop valuable economic skills through structured activities. For example, in a group challenge, pupils have to budget for a new product, learn about energy costs and manage resources.
49. The school promotes positive relationships. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. They understand how to resolve minor conflicts and when to seek adult help. Boarders understand

the importance of discussion when there are disputes, as well as the important role that tolerance plays when living together.

50. Pupils have a good awareness of the principles of democracy. They have opportunities in school to participate in democratic processes and decision-making. For example, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils vote for their favourite book for story time. Pupils in Years 6 to 8 offer the names of three boys and three girls to be considered as head girl and head boy and then participate in a vote. Pupils are educated on the political system and learn the importance of seeing more than one point of view.

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

**51. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

52. Safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented effectively so that the wellbeing of day and boarding pupils is at the forefront of any teaching and non-teaching activity.
53. Governors are trained appropriately in safeguarding practices. They provide oversight to ensure that pupils are safeguarded. The safeguarding governor is trained to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding processes. Reviews include the monitoring of new staff recruitment checks and other safeguarding records, including those associated with boarders.
54. Staff receive regular training from the local safeguarding board. The school's safeguarding team provide frequent updates. Staff know what is expected of them if they are aware of a safeguarding incident. They use software to report concerns directly to the safeguarding team. Concerns are followed up quickly. Appropriate notes are kept together, with actions taken and outcomes recorded. The safeguarding team meet frequently to discuss concerns. They report any patterns to senior leaders. Daily communication alerts staff to vulnerable pupils, allowing supportive measures to be put in place.
55. Safeguarding leaders are supported by local safeguarding agencies and maintain ongoing contact with them as required. The resources supplied by these agencies are used effectively to educate pupils on how to keep safe. Advice to parents helps them to understand how they can keep their children safe online.
56. Pupils are aware of the channels through which they can report concerns. For example, boarders know who the independent person is, and they are aware of other agencies they can contact if they are worried.
57. Appropriate recruitment checks are undertaken for governors, staff and volunteers. All relevant information is recorded in a single central record, which accurately reflects the personnel files. Any contractors and visiting speakers are accompanied while on the school site.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

## School details

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>School</b>                          | Beeston Hall School   |
| <b>Department for Education number</b> | 926/6058  |
| <b>Registered charity number</b>       | 311274  |
| <b>Address</b>                         | Beeston Hall School<br>West Runton<br>Cromer<br>Norfolk<br>NR27 9NQ |
| <b>Phone number</b>                    | 01263 837324  |
| <b>Email address</b>                   | office@beestonhall.co.uk  |
| <b>Website</b>                         | www.beestonhall.co.uk   |
| <b>Proprietor</b>                      | Prep Schools Trust  |
| <b>CEO</b>                             | Mr Tom Beardmore-Gray   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                     | Mr Fred de Falbe  |
| <b>Age range</b>                       | 4 to 13   |
| <b>Number of pupils</b>                | 175   |
| <b>Number of boarding pupils</b>       | 82  |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>     | 16 January 2020   |

## Information about the school

59. Beeston Hall School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between 4 and 13 years. Founded in 1948, it occupies a 30-acre site on the north Norfolk coast near Cromer. The school became part of the Prep Schools Trust on 1 January 2024 but retains a local advisory group of governors.
60. The school has one boarding house and offers full, weekly and flexible boarding for pupils in Years 3 to 8.
61. The school has seven early years pupils in one Reception class.
62. The school has identified 46 pupils who have SEND. Six pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
63. There are eight pupils who speak English as an additional language.
64. The school states its aims are for pupils to have a respect and appreciation of themselves, others, their environment and the wider world, to undertake their learning with energy, independence and without fear of failure and to be given the confidence to aim high, be adventurous and open-minded.



## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

11 to 13 June 2024

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

66. 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 the chair and other governors
- 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
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

67. 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

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