

# School inspection report

5 to 7 March 2024

## **Cheadle Hulme School**

Claremont Road

Cheadle Hulme

Cheshire

SK8 6EF

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'.

## Contents

<b>SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS.....	4
<b>SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....</b>	<b>5</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....	6
<b>SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....	8
<b>SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....</b>	<b>9</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....	10
<b>SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....</b>	<b>11</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY .....	12
<b>SAFEGUARDING .....</b>	<b>13</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING .....	13
<b>SCHOOL DETAILS .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>INSPECTION DETAILS .....</b>	<b>16</b>

## Summary of inspection findings

1. The school's 'Waconian values' of resilience, integrity, endeavour, contribution and compassion are central to how the school operates. Pupils know and understand the values well. They try hard to always follow them. Pupils develop self-confidence, with strong moral foundations, during their time at the school.
2. Governors robustly check that the way the school operates day-to-day is safe and effective. Leaders identify potential risks and ensure they are mitigated thoroughly. Strategic plans are focused well on continual improvement, pursuing the school's aims and ensuring the school is accessible to all.
3. The curriculum enables pupils to experience a wide range of subjects and activities. Pupils make good progress, and GCSE and A-level results are consistently high because of effective teaching.
4. The co-curricular programme enables pupils to achieve well at a national level, remain healthy and provide support for local and international communities. School leaders have developed a programme which enables pupils to acquire knowledge and skills that help to prepare them for life beyond school. This is a significant strength.
5. Leaders have developed an inclusive atmosphere which fosters a positive and inclusive ethos, prioritising mutual respect, care, tolerance and celebration of differences. Pupils' self-confidence is actively nurtured through strong relationships with peers and staff. Anti-bullying measures are effective and bullying is rare. Occasionally, low level disruption in some senior classes in Years 9 to 11 adversely affects pupils' learning.
6. Pupils are respectful of each other and collaborate easily. Pupils support each other and help other people, both in and out of school. They understand the importance of democracy and are open-minded in discussions. Leaders are supported in providing careers guidance by a network of alumni and parents.
7. Safeguarding is effective. Pupils are supervised appropriately and feel safe at school.

## 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 any low-level disruptive behaviour is managed and reduced so that pupils can always benefit from their lessons.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. School leaders are knowledgeable and have a dynamic approach to education provision. They actively promote pupils' wellbeing, both academically and pastorally. Helpful systems are used by staff to register concerns and leaders follow these up assiduously. The school's aims and the leaders' vision for achieving them are communicated to pupils and parents who understand and support them. Leaders are thorough in their self-evaluation and provide regular updates detailing changes and improvements. Policies are underpinned by procedures which are easily accessible to staff. Policies, and procedures are reviewed systematically and regularly.
9. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed by school leaders and checked by governors. Surveys and discussion are used to verify that implementation of the policies is secure. Updates are given to staff when required. Leaders work supportively with pupils and staff to create a caring culture within the school community.
10. Governors support, check and challenge leaders' work effectively through a range of committees. They visit the school routinely and ensure that the site is well maintained and that security is effective. They regularly review the work of academic and pastoral leaders to ensure that outcomes for pupils are high. Leaders identify potential risks to pupils thoroughly, including those that are less obvious, ensuring a safe and secure environment for pupils, staff and parents. They put appropriate measures in place that reduce or eliminate the risks identified both in school and on educational visits.
11. School leaders meet with the school's health professionals and consult with external health agencies when reviewing policies and procedures to promote pupils' good health.
12. Classrooms are well resourced and leaders have created an effective maintenance and repair programme, which is followed thoroughly. Leaders have put in place a robust educational visits procedure, which requires teachers to complete appropriate risk assessments.
13. School leaders have forged effective links with a number of outside agencies, which allow pupils to explore their interests more deeply. For example, the school's 'high potential programme' is supported by a university with the provision of learning materials for pupils in Years 7 to 11.
14. The school's accessibility plan demonstrates a deep commitment to inclusivity and individualised education provision and supports leaders' commitment to meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders regularly review the accessibility plan to ensure that, where possible, pupils, staff and visitors have equal access to the site and facilities.
15. A wide range of information is made available on the school's website and parents benefit from regular newsletters and blog articles. Leaders provide the necessary information on pupils with an educational, health and care plan (EHCP) to the local authority.
16. Leaders regularly survey pupils' views and opinions and analyse results with governors, looking for any trends and concerns. They use the results of these surveys, in addition to feedback from various pupil councils, to adapt their plans and make changes to the day-to-day organisation of the school. For example, a change in lunchtime arrangements was reversed after pupils raised their concerns about it.

17. There is a clear and comprehensive complaints policy which is regularly reviewed and is easily available on the school's website. Concerns are dealt with appropriately and in a timely manner.

**The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance**

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

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

19. The senior school's comprehensive curriculum offers diverse options and covers all the required elements. When pupils join the senior school, they study a range of subjects before choosing to specialise for GCSE. Subject choices are expanded further in the sixth form, allowing greater flexibility of choice. The 'pathway programme' adds vocational and altruistic elements, aligning with the school's aims and ensuring that pupils can discuss current local, national and global issues. In the 'STEM pathway', practical experiences of science, technology and mathematics lead pupils to gain external accreditation through the Crest Award and achieve national success.
20. In the early years and the junior school, leaders have developed a curriculum which allows pupils greater autonomy over their learning whilst ensuring the necessary linguistic, mathematical and scientific elements are taught well. The early years curriculum focuses well on children's communication and language, personal and physical skills development. Progress is monitored by teachers' evaluation and assessments. Children in the early years are happy and purposeful, helped by staff who understand each child's strengths and areas for development.
21. Teachers have secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. Appropriate schemes of work are used and reviewed by middle leaders. Teachers plan learning well, adjusting their approach to suit pupils' needs and interests. For example, in a psychology lesson, the teacher created a rap to help pupils remember the components of a research theory.
22. Most pupils are motivated, but behaviour management in some senior school classes is not as effective as it could be leading to occasional low-level disruption. This means that some pupils cannot participate as fully as they would like which adversely affects their learning.
23. Pupils are confident and articulate in lessons, contributing happily to discussions. They usually listen attentively to other pupils' views and are open minded about them. They realise that different points of view are helpful in acquiring new knowledge.
24. Pupils develop strong knowledge of the curriculum, responding adeptly to questions. Pupils use technology well to support their learning. Teachers provide pupils with immediate feedback on their work during lessons. Pupils find this particularly helpful and use the feedback to improve their work.
25. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress from their starting points. They are provided with bespoke programmes which support them well. Teachers receive regular updates about pupils who have SEND, allowing them to adapt the support required to ensure that pupils make good progress. Individual education plans (IEPs) are used effectively to better plan for pupils' individual needs and the plans are regularly reviewed to ensure that they take account of emerging needs as pupils develop. Pupils who have SEND value the assistance they receive from the SEND department and make good use of it.
26. A robust assessment framework ably monitors pupils' progress. GCSE and A level results show that pupils achieve results which are well above the national average. Pupils in the junior school make good progress.
27. Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching, through visits to lessons and scrutinising pupils' work. Leaders discuss curriculum planning with teachers and provide support and guidance where necessary. Leaders provide regular professional development opportunities for staff. For example,

teachers meet weekly to introduce and discuss pedagogical ideas which feed into their lesson planning.

28. Pupils enjoy taking part in the many recreational opportunities the rich and stimulating co-curricular programme provides. Rates of participation are very high, and all pupils take part in at least one activity. Some pupils play sports to represent the school at the highest national levels while others use it as an activity to remain healthy. Leaders, with the help of feedback from pupils, review the programme regularly and add new activities. The 'high potential programme' in sport supports not only senior elite athletes but also younger pupils who want to improve. There are similar programmes for the academic music and creative arts pathways. The programmes help pupils to develop skills which will be needed when they leave school.
29. Pupils are also given the opportunity, within the co-curricular programme, to work for the benefit of the local community. Pupils report that many additional skills are acquired which help prepare them for the challenges they will face beyond school. Their community work is wide ranging. For example, pupils working in care homes with dementia sufferers. This helps pupils to understand how people's lives differ.

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

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



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

31. The school has a positive and inclusive ethos. Key values such as mutual respect, care, tolerance and kindness are promoted well. Pupils feel nurtured and develop a strong moral compass.
32. Pupils usually behave well and follow the school's rules. Pupils' learning in the junior school is enhanced particularly well by the calm and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms. Senior pupils support their peers, actively praising each other's work and co-operating willingly with each other and with staff. In the early years, positive relationships are fostered, providing vital support as children learn to understand and manage their own behaviour.
33. Pupils' physical wellbeing is promoted by high-quality catering which promotes pupils' healthy eating. A variety of sporting activities, within and beyond the school day help pupils to maintain fitness. Provision for physical education and pupils' physical health meets the needs of pupils.
34. The school's relationships and sex education (RSE) policy aligns with statutory guidance, including annual consultations with parents and transparent sharing of resources. The RSE programmes are well planned and responsive to what pupils would like to learn. For example, the sixth-form scheme of work was changed after a pupil survey requested more information about same-sex relationships. Sensitive topics are handled with care and there is a feedback mechanism for follow-up pastoral conversations with any pupils who find RSE lessons on certain topics challenging. Staff share resources with parents to enable learning to continue at home so that parents are aware of the topics that pupils are learning about.
35. Pupils gain knowledge and skills about current affairs and a wide range of other issues through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum, known as 'the Waconian programme'. It is based on the school's core values. Pupils follow an age-appropriate curriculum that provides opportunities to discuss important themes such as risk-taking behaviours and online fraud. Pupils suggest topics which they want to cover and school leaders alter the programme if appropriate. Feedback from staff teaching PSHE and quality assurance information gathered by middle leaders are used to review and amend schemes of work.
36. Pupils' self-confidence is actively fostered through opportunities to challenge themselves as well as through the constructive feedback and praise teachers provide. Pupils are given a broad range of opportunities to take responsibility and develop leadership skills that influence school life positively. These opportunities support and help develop pupils' self-esteem. For example, Year 11 girls conducted an assembly on 'women in STEM' (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) for younger pupils which illustrated their collaborative and leadership skills whilst providing examples of positive role-models.
37. An effective anti-bullying strategy is in place which places the emphasis on prevention through topics covered in the 'Waconian programme'. Pupils discuss the effects which bullying may have on young people and help devise plans to minimise it. Pupils usually demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility for their behaviour, maintaining a positive attitude. Bullying is rare and, when it does occur, is managed effectively. Pupils value the anonymous system for reporting concerns and feel that their comments are taken seriously.

38. Appropriate first aid arrangements are implemented by the school's medical team. The team is well-qualified and provides knowledgeable support. Pupils know that their wellbeing is a priority and that the medical team will provide for their physical and mental health needs.
39. The school site is well maintained. Regular checks are made in areas of risk and records are kept and reviewed by school leaders. Pupils are taught about a wide range of safety issues and learn to take safety seriously. For example, when teaching a junior pupil how to use a piece of gym equipment, a senior pupil emphasised the importance of correct body posture to avoid injury. Pupils are never far from a member of staff during recreational times so that they are well supervised including during any off-site trips.
40. Attendance and admissions registers are maintained as required. Staff quickly follow up any daily absences and the destinations of pupils who leave and ensure removal from the admissions register.

### **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. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to engage in diverse and enriching educational experiences. In the early years, children find out about 'people who help us', with visitors such as paramedics and firefighters helping them to start to understand adult careers. Pupils cultivate a strong sense of responsibility and pride, earning house points for effort and positive behaviours.
43. Pupils actively participate in leadership roles such as house captain and school councillor. They develop their commitment to helping others through events like the 'Waconian charity day'. Pupils lead campaigns which have an impact on the school community. For example, junior pupils received a national award for their work on environmental awareness.
44. Pupils are taught about British values such as democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. Pupils are taught about the importance of tolerance and learn to celebrate the differences between people. Pupils actively support and welcome all children. They are encouraged to not judge other people. The sixth-form's equality committee empowers students to become ambassadors, sharing experiences and initiatives. For example, Ramadan awareness sheets were created by senior pupils to support students during this period of fasting.
45. Children in the early years learn social skills such as sharing and collaborative work through activities which staff design and implement. For example, children, working in pairs, helped each other to solve pictorial puzzles created by teachers.
46. Pupils learn about the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society. For example, junior pupils engage in a curriculum programme which encourages them to be curious about languages whilst learning about the cultures of different countries. Senior and sixth-form pupils benefit from listening to a range of external speakers. The content of these talks is then discussed within PSHE lessons, allowing pupils to better understand some of the issues that society faces. A recent talk on men's mental health, from the founder of a national charity, stimulated discussion on how best to support friends who are upset.
47. Pupils, particularly in the sixth form, develop strong links with the local community. Through the co-curricular curriculum, pupils have opportunities to help others outside the school, such as visiting care homes and other schools. Within school, senior pupils support junior pupils with their reading, help with clubs and societies and are active on a range of pupil councils. Pupils understand the importance of charity and the need to help others less fortunate than themselves. They willingly find ways to do this. Pupils and staff support a school abroad and have recently visited it to re-establish links following the pandemic.
48. Pupils are encouraged to think about their economic wellbeing through the PSHE curriculum. They learn about the impact of modern risks such as online frauds and how to recognise and avoid them.
49. Leaders provide pupils with thorough and well-considered careers guidance at regular intervals, through the curriculum and from visiting speakers. Pupils receive advice about subject choices for different career paths. Senior school pupils have individual guidance about higher education, apprenticeships and employment opportunities. A network of alumni and parents is available to mentor pupils and give specific advice.

**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 is effective. The safeguarding governor meets regularly with the designated safeguarding lead and safeguarding is a standing item at board meetings. The secure site, robust registration procedures and risk assessments contribute to the overall safety of pupils.
52. Staff are confident in following the school's safeguarding guidance and procedures. Clear procedures are in place for reporting concerns about pupils and low-level concerns about adults. Pupils feel safe and secure, with staff readily available to address any concerns.
53. Leaders ensure a safe environment for both staff and pupils. Pupils know about the school's safety measures and procedures. The safeguarding team receives appropriate training that enables them to provide staff with regular safeguarding updates and training.
54. The school uses a secure software programme to record any safeguarding concerns that arise. Safeguarding leaders collaborate effectively with external agencies when necessary.
55. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous including checks of visitors who come to the school. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They understand the school's procedures for verifying visitors to the school.
56. Staff understand the school's comprehensive IT filtering and monitoring systems and use them appropriately. Pupils demonstrate an awareness of IT filters and how they are used to help keep pupils safe online. Staff emphasise the importance of staying safe, particularly in online activities, including through the PSHE programme.
57. A robust system of safer recruitment procedures is in place and the appropriate safer recruitment checks are completed for staff, volunteers and governors. A central record of appointments is accurately maintained and leaders check the register regularly.

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

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	Cheadle Hulme School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	3566019
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1077017
<b>Address</b>	Cheadle Hulme School Claremont Road Cheadle Hulme Cheshire SK8 6EF
<b>Phone number</b>	0161 488 3330
<b>Email address</b>	head@chschool.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.cheadlehulmeschool.co.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Governors of Cheadle Hulme School
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Chris Roberts
<b>Headteacher (Acting)</b>	Mr Lee Richardson
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 18
<b>Number of pupils</b>	1477
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 August 2021

## Information about the school

59. Cheadle Hulme School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between three and 18 years. The school is a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors.
60. There are 52 children in the early years comprising one Nursery and two Reception classes.
61. The school has identified 246 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Five pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
62. English is an additional language (EAL) for 51 pupils.
63. The school states that its aims are to provide a dynamic, all-round education within an inclusive values-driven environment, consistent with the school's foundation. In addition, the school aims to develop in all members of the school community a desire to learn, question and persevere in all that they do, and to embody the 'Waconian values'. The school aims to enable young pupils to flourish in their lives whilst at school but also beyond, making a positive impact on the world around them.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

5 to 7 March 2024

64. A team of eight inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The onsite inspection was quality assured.

65. 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
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

66. 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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