

School inspection report.

19 to 21 March 2024

Dair House School

Bishop's Blake

Beaconsfield Road

Farnham Royal

Buckinghamshire

SL2 3BY

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 school is well led and managed. Leaders prioritise the wellbeing of pupils and share a common focus for the care and welfare of each individual. They are effective in evaluating the school's performance and are clear and ambitious in planning for its future development.
2. There is a thorough and effective system of managing risk. Leaders understand the contextual risks of the school and take appropriate action to mitigate them. Leaders review and implement policies effectively and provide parents with a suitable range of information.
3. Principles of kindness and equality are promoted throughout the school. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds consistently show mutual respect and enjoy sharing their cultural heritage with each other.
4. The broad and balance curriculum provides a holistic education and prepares pupils well for the future. Teaching is well planned, using an appropriate range of methods and resources, enabling pupils to make typically good progress. However, challenge in lessons for pupils with higher prior attainment is inconsistent. Leaders are aware of this and have initiated strategies to improve challenge in lessons for this group of pupils. These strategies are not yet fully established, so the full benefits of them are yet to be seen.
5. Pupils are well motivated and are fully engaged in lessons. They are aware of their progress and next steps in their learning because teachers provide clear and effective feedback. The extensive range of extra-curricular activities extends and enriches the curriculum, providing stretch and challenge for the pupils.
6. Staff set clear expectations, listen carefully to pupils' views and deal with any misbehaviour quickly and effectively. Standards of behaviour are high. As a result, pupils feel happy and safe at school and have high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence.
7. Premises and buildings are maintained to a satisfactory standard. There are effective systems in place for health and safety, and fire safety. First aid is delivered in a caring and timely manner. Pupils are well supervised in school and during off-site activities.
8. Tolerance and respect permeate the school. Pupils' understanding of social responsibility is well developed through the school's effective 'education for social responsibility' programme and links with the wider community.
9. The school's focus on caring for its pupils is reflected in its effective safeguarding arrangements, which promote the welfare of pupils and reflect current statutory guidance. All relevant recruitment checks are carried out and recorded appropriately. Staff have a thorough understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures.

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 consistently high levels of challenge in lessons for pupils with higher prior attainment so that they learn and make progress as effectively as possible.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Governors, leaders and staff are ambitious for the school and are committed to its ethos of care for each pupil. Initiatives such as the introduction of a 'wellbeing room', the placement of boxes around school for pupils to share their views and concerns, and the development of the extensive outdoor learning programme, 'Dair to go Wild', all contribute to pupils feeling happy and safe at school.
11. Governors are well informed about the school's work through regular reports and meetings with senior leaders. They know the school well and are supportive of leaders' plans. Governors monitor the school's policies and procedures closely to ensure that those in management roles carry out their roles effectively.
12. Leaders show a depth of knowledge about the school's effectiveness and are proactive and transparent about how the school can continue to develop in line with its aims of providing a safe and happy environment so that pupils are well prepared for the future. For example, the recent introduction of an 'education for social responsibility' curriculum has developed pupils' understanding of their relationship with and responsibilities to the wider world. The development of outdoor play areas, including a herb garden and a music zone, have promoted pupils' emotional wellbeing and happiness at school. Leaders identify with accuracy aspects of the school that could be developed further. Their self-critical approach ensures that there is an effective process of review and evaluation that underpins the school's ongoing development.
13. Staff assess and manage risk effectively and are well trained and supported by leaders in taking appropriate mitigating action, using external specialists where appropriate. Consequently, pupils feel safe and risk is minimised across a wide range of school and off-site activities. Leaders understand the contextual risks of the school and ensure that detailed and thorough appropriate risk assessments are in place across the wide range of activities.
14. Leaders regularly review the school's policies and ensure that they are implemented effectively throughout the school. Parents and staff are provided with the required information through regular communication and via the school's website. Leaders provide the relevant local authority with appropriate information relating to any pupils whom it funds. Any complaint submitted from parents is managed well and appropriate action taken, following the school policy and its published timescales.
15. The school meets its requirements under the Equality Act 2010 and does not discriminate against pupils. The accessibility plan supports the school in making the curriculum accessible to any pupils with a disability. Principles of respect and equality are promoted widely by leaders and staff across all aspects of school life. Pupils from a variety of backgrounds consistently show mutual respect and tolerance. Leaders of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) maintain effective links with external agencies, including the local authority when appropriate. The school regularly reviews its provision for pupils who have SEND and makes ongoing adjustments when required.
16. Leaders' personable approach and commitment to care for each pupil and their needs is valued by parents. They feel the school is very well led and managed.

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

17. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. The broad and balanced curriculum is effectively planned, covers all the required subjects, is appropriate to ages and aptitudes and prepares pupils well for the future. This includes the early years curriculum, which covers national requirements and contains additional subjects taught by specialists, such as music, French and the school's outdoor learning programme, 'Dair to go Wild'. As a result, children in the early years typically make good progress and successfully reach the early learning goals.
19. Linguistic attainment is high. Pupils are confident in performing and presenting. The choir sing with much enthusiasm and skill and the youngest pupils speak with confidence on stage. In a Reception class assembly on the theme of transport and travel, pupils spoke and sang with clarity and poise. In a Year 6 English lesson, pupils described in detail, different aspects of figurative speech. A broad curriculum with interactive lessons provides plenty of opportunities for pupils to speak in class and perform publicly and enables them to develop a typically high level of linguistic skills.
20. Pupils use technology well to facilitate learning. Coding is taught in the information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum, which enables older pupils to use a variety of programming languages. Year 6 pupils are able to design their own websites.
21. Teachers show passion and good subject knowledge. They deliver well-structured lessons using an appropriate range of methods and resources that enable pupils to learn new knowledge and skills and make typically good progress. Lessons are adapted to individual pupils' learning needs, including the provision of different levels of challenge in lessons, enabling those who have SEND to progress well.
22. Provision for pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) is effective, ensuring that the curriculum is accessible and that this group of pupils progress well. For example, key vocabulary cards in children's native language are used in the early years to help staff and children communicate effectively.
23. Teaching across the school provides an inconsistent level of challenge for pupils with higher prior attainment, particularly when lessons lack appropriate pace and the lesson objectives do not meet the learning needs of all the pupils. Leaders have initiated changes to the way challenge is presented in lessons, but these are not fully established, so their effect on pupils' progress has not yet been established.
24. Pupils are well motivated and are adept at working independently and collaboratively. They enjoy lessons and are active and reflective learners, demonstrating advanced editing skills using success criteria. In lessons where pupils are given a choice of activities, they show much self-awareness in selecting appropriate work for their current level of attainment. For example, Year 6 pupils selected the appropriate level of investigation in a mathematics lessons and Year 2 pupils were able to select a type of ball suitable for their current level of skill whilst learning to dribble at hockey.
25. A suitable system of evaluating pupils' progress is in place. Effective systems for tracking attainment and progress enable teachers to identify areas of need and adapt their teaching for each class.
26. Pupils are able to self-assess their work and show awareness of their next steps in learning. This is because teachers mark work with clarity, providing effective written and verbal feedback. As a

result, pupils understand the key features of their achievement and how to improve their work further.

27. An extensive range of recreational and extra-curricular activities promotes the holistic development of pupils. At breaktimes, pupils are fully engaged in sporting and creative activities outdoors, which contributes positively to their social and physical development. A full and broad extra-curricular programme includes clubs for science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), creative arts, philosophy, dance and chess. These clubs provide additional stretch and challenge for pupils.

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

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

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

29. Staff know pupils well and listen carefully to their views and concerns. They set clear expectations for behaviour which creates security and confidence for the pupils and helps them to develop high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils value the 'wellbeing room' because it provides a calm and safe place to reflect and share any concerns with an adult. They find staff approachable and willing to listen to their views and ideas, and feel empowered to express themselves in an appropriate manner. As a result of these measures, pupils feel happy and safe at school.
30. Leaders provide pupils with a suitable and effective personal, social, health education (PSHE), which includes relationship and sex education (RSE). Topics are wide ranging and include themes such as online safety, healthy diet and mutual respect for individual differences. Workshops for pupils and parents on mental health provided by external specialists supplement weekly lessons on wellbeing and resilience, and pupils enjoy and benefit from an extensive and well established outdoor learning programme, 'Dair to go Wild.' As a result, pupils develop high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem and learn strategies to protect their own physical and mental health. This is well supported by the opportunity to engage in a range of physical activities in lessons, extra-curricular activities, competitive sports and break times.
31. Outdoor spaces, including those for early years, provide a rich resource for pupils to play collaboratively and enhance their physical, emotional and social development. For example, at breaks, older pupils engage in helping younger ones build wooden brick structures whilst others enthusiastically and confidently engage in table tennis, basketball and badminton.
32. Standards of behaviour are consistently high because leaders set clear expectations of conduct and are effective in promoting a culture of kindness and respect throughout the school. Pupils show mutual respect for each other and their teachers. For example, at lunchtime, pupils line up calmly and happily and are patient whilst waiting to collect their food. Staff are proactive in helping to prevent bullying and present assemblies and workshops on anti-bullying themes. Pupils are knowledgeable about strategies they can use to guard against bullying and feel that the school deals with any incidents of unkindness in an effective manner.
33. In early years, pupils have a high level of emotional security and wellbeing because staff provide close attention to their developmental needs. They listen and respond to children attentively.
34. Pupils' spiritual understanding is promoted effectively through assemblies and religious education lessons, both of which cover world religions. Reflection and prayers at lunch and in assemblies allow pupils to consider their responsibilities towards the wider world, including about the importance of tolerance and mutual respect for the beliefs of others.
35. Across the school, premises and buildings are maintained appropriately, with regulatory checks and any remedial work being carried out effectively. Fire safety is managed well, including through staff training and regular evacuation drills. Where necessary, the school uses external specialists to audit health and safety and fire safety provision and acts swiftly on any recommendations made. Detailed and thorough records of checks and maintenance, including an up-to-date fire risk assessment, are maintained.

36. First aid is delivered in a caring and timely manner and staff are trained appropriately. There are a sufficient number of staff trained as paediatric first aiders in the early years.
37. A healthy choice of food is served for lunch. The school identifies and caters for the dietary needs of the pupils effectively.
38. Pupils are supervised appropriately in lessons and activities, and at break times, including in the early years. There are clear and effective protocols in place for supervising pupils in the playground and on the field and staff are diligent in overseeing the care and welfare of the pupils.
39. Attendance and admission registers are maintained as required. Leaders promote attendance effectively, with the result that rates of attendance are high. Those with responsibility for the admission and attendance registers inform the local authority whenever pupils join or leave the school and non-standard times.

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

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

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

41. The human, social and economic curriculum effectively links with the wider community and families from diverse backgrounds help pupils to develop respect for individual differences.
42. Through the well planned PSHE and assembly programme, the school actively promotes positive values, such as tolerance and respect, including towards those with characteristics protected by equality legislation, such as race, religion and belief. PSHE lessons are underpinned by a set of protocols known as 'respect, openness, confidentiality and kindness' (ROCK). These are used to help empower pupils to share their opinions and develop an appreciation of the differences in people. Pupils also develop an understanding of the differences of how our minds work through neurodiversity lessons, as part of the school's participation in children's mental health week.
43. Pupils enjoy sharing their rich cultural heritage. Displays around the school celebrate festivals such as Ramadan, Lent and the Lunar New Year. Different faiths are reflected in assemblies and the teaching of the major world religions in religious education lessons. At lunch time, the 'wellbeing room' is used by pupils to observe religious festivals. Pupils show much respect whilst saying a prayer of thankfulness at lunch. Kindness, tolerance and respect permeate the school, ensuring pupils develop an appreciation of individual differences, and different cultures and beliefs.
44. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their roles in Year 6. These include being prefects, music ambassadors and members of the school council and eco committee. Pupils' responsibilities help them to feel valued, learn about democracy and contribute to the development of the school.
45. Pupils understanding of their social responsibility is developed through the school's 'education for social responsibility' programme, which covers topics such as climate change, democracy and sustainability. This is effectively supplemented by the school's active charity work and links with the local community. For example, the choir sing in a nearby hospice, pupils collect and take food to a local foodbank and pupils host children from local schools in their outdoor learning area. Doctors, dentists and police have presented to the early years, helping them to understand the importance of services in the local community. These measures promote a sense of social responsibility and help prepare pupils well for life in British society.
46. Pupils' economic awareness is appropriately developed. Lessons on finances, value and worth help pupils to develop an appreciation of financial planning. Entrepreneurial skills are developed through financial projects such as the 'fiver challenge', in which year 6 pupils attempt to raise funds for charity starting with a £5 note.
47. Pupils learn about democracy through PSHE lessons, including topics on parliament and the election process, as well as their participation in the school council, whose members are elected by pupils. The council has been effective in listening to the views of pupils and enacting school improvement, such as the acquisition of additional playground equipment. The pupil-led eco committee has also canvassed pupil opinions and through its effective eco work has been awarded a Green Flag. As a result, pupils see themselves as a valued part of the school and are keen to be involved.
48. Children in the early years demonstrate high levels of social skills for their age whilst working together in the classroom and playground because teachers provide clear and effective rules in a

safe and secure environment. The school's high and consistent expectations help engage pupils across the school to differentiate right from wrong and appreciate the need for rewards, rules and sanctions and the rule of law. These measures help prepare pupils for life beyond the school.

49. Leaders actively promote respect for law and institutions, diverse cultures and democracy and are effective in presenting a balanced perspective on political issues. Staff and senior pupils act as role models in promoting the school's values – the 'three Cs', 'courageous, committed and caring'.

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. The school's embedded culture of care is reflected in its effective safeguarding arrangements, which reflect current statutory guidance. The school responds effectively to safeguarding concerns and liaises with relevant external agencies when appropriate.
52. Staff demonstrate a thorough understanding of the school's safeguarding processes and are confident about procedures to follow should a safeguarding concern arise. They receive regular and appropriate training, including about online safety and how to identify and deal effectively with safeguarding concerns. Pupils are also made aware of the importance of online safety and learn strategies to minimise the risks of online activity.
53. The school operates an effective system of recording and managing safeguarding concerns. Staff have a clear understanding of the school's code of conduct, whistleblowing policy and safeguarding processes and are confident and well equipped to use them. Suitable arrangements for the handling of allegations against staff, including any low-level concerns that may arise, are in place. There is a culture of openness and early reporting of any potential issues.
54. Leaders and staff understand the contextual safeguarding risks potentially facing pupils beyond the school and are effective in mitigating them. An appropriate internet filtering system contributes to keeping pupils safe online.
55. All required recruitment checks on those who work with pupils are carried out and recorded appropriately in a single central record of appointments.
56. The school listens carefully to the views of pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe and know there is always an adult they speak to about any concerns.
57. Governors monitor the school's safeguarding arrangements effectively, including through an appropriate annual review and regular meetings between the safeguarding governor and the designated safeguarding lead.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

58. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Dair House School
Department for Education number	825/6014
Registered charity number	270719
Address	Dair House School Bishop's Blake Beaconsfield Road Farnham Royal Buckinghamshire SL2 3BY
Phone number	01753 643964
Email address	schooloffice@dairhouse.co.uk
Website	www.dairhouseschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Dair House School Trust Ltd
Chair	Mrs Jane Masih
Headteacher	Mrs Janine Bull
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	123
Date of previous inspection	5 to 7 November 2019

Information about the school

59. Dair House School is an independent co-educational day school situated in Farnham Royal. Founded in 1932, the school is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors. The school is comprised of three sections: the early years, Year 1 to Year 2 and Year 3 to Year 6.
60. There are 30 children in the early years comprising one Nursery class and one Reception class, both situated on the main school site.
61. The school has identified 29 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
62. A very small proportion of pupils in the school speak English as an additional language.
63. The school states its aim is for every pupil to develop independence, respect for others and achieve their full potential by encouraging confident and curious learners within a safe and happy environment so that they are well prepared for the next steps in their journey.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

19 to 21 March 2024

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

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
- 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**.

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