

School inspection report

18 to 20 June 2024

Elmhurst School Ltd

44-48 South Park Hill Road

South Croydon

CR2 7DW

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 leaders' vision for the school is shared by all its stakeholders. Its values of determination, curiosity, bravery, respect and kindness are evident throughout the school. Leaders' commitment to knowing every pupil so that they are able to adapt to the 'brilliance in every child,' is evident in all interactions between pupils and staff.
2. The school delivers a broad and well-planned topic-based curriculum which enables all pupils to learn and make progress. The provision of opportunities for pupils to participate in a curriculum which develops all areas of learning is further enhanced by regular reviews so that themes reflect the pupils' interests.
3. Staff use assessment information effectively to track pupils and provide additional support so that pupils achieve to the best of their ability. Teachers are supported to identify and meet the needs of all pupils. The analysis of data, combined with leaders' deep knowledge of individual pupils, ensures lessons are well planned so that pupils make good progress.
4. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme for pupils is well led and managed so that pupils gain meaningful knowledge. Pupils speak positively about their lessons and understand the value of these. The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum is well communicated to parents through in-person meetings as well as emails to inform them when particular topics have been taught. This individualised approach means that pupils are confident to raise any questions which they may have.
5. The school's diverse community is celebrated so that pupils have a wide-ranging and well-developed understanding of different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs.
6. Leaders and managers promote good behaviour by pupils through an appropriate behaviour policy which is understood by staff and pupils. Whilst pupil behaviour is generally good, there is variation in the implementation of the positive behaviour approach so that some pupils are unable to consistently regulate their behaviour in lessons.
7. An effective anti-bullying strategy is in place which actively prevents bullying at school. Bullying is rare and if it occurs, there is appropriate support for both the perpetrator and the victim; an approach which is understood by pupils.
8. Pupils say that they are able to express their views through taking on a range of roles available to them, including a School Parliament.
9. The school promotes links with the local community and pupils are encouraged to understand the role they might play in it. The school has strong links with the local police and railway representatives.
10. Leaders ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements are secure. There is a positive safeguarding culture around the school. Staff are well trained in all safeguarding matters and safeguarding leads carry out their roles with real commitment, so pupils are confident to speak to them.

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 staff use the behaviour system consistently so that all pupils are better able to self-regulate their own behaviour.

Material change request

11. Inspectors considered the school's request for a change to the details of its registration to co-education from pre-reception to Year 6.

- ISS Part 1, paragraph 2 (all) paragraph 2A (all)
- ISS Part 2, paragraph 5 (b)(vi)
- ISS Part 3, paragraph 7(a) & (b)
- ISS Part 5, paragraph 23 (all), paragraph 30
- ISS Part 6, paragraph 32(1)(c)
- ISS Part 8

12. It is recommended that the requested material change be approved.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

13. The school's governance structure and leadership are effective in ensuring that all staff possess the required level of skills and knowledge to carry out their roles successfully. Leaders and managers develop their skills through links with associated schools in the group, external courses and specialists.
14. Leaders provide a broad curriculum which results in pupils who are well rounded and reflective in their learning. Leaders' commitment to know every pupil is evident in the way in which staff interact with pupils, consistently recognising pupils' achievements, however small. The pupils benefit from a highly individualised approach to learning where the choice of topic is often pupil-led so that pupils are fully invested in their learning and make good progress.
15. The wellbeing of pupils is a central commitment for school leaders and effective links with other agencies are in place to benefit the wellbeing of pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils are provided with a range of ways to express their views and feelings. The twice-daily wellbeing check-ins are highly effective; pupils' views are always carefully considered and acted upon. The stated aim to deliver 11+ preparation in a supportive environment is successfully met.
16. Leaders provide a wide-ranging curriculum to promote physical education, and new sports such as gymnastics are valued by pupils. There are opportunities for pupils to participate in national competitions where they perform very well. A well-appointed new room for the youngest pupils and an extensive outdoor area for early years ensures that the youngest pupils can play and explore safely, which they do with confidence.
17. Leaders have effective policies in place. These are created at group level and amended to fit the needs of the school effectively. Policies are provided to parents via the school's website. There is a complaints procedure in place which is effectively implemented and maintained. Any complaints are handled effectively within appropriate timescales, as laid out in the policy.
18. An effective reporting procedure is in place so that parents receive termly and bi-annual reports in addition to parents' evenings. There is opportunity for parents to speak to senior staff on a daily ad hoc basis which enables them to be fully informed of pupils' progress.
19. Leaders provide opportunity for pupils to express their views via a range of means, including the school parliament. Pupils' views are carefully considered and acted upon. There are worry boxes in some classes for younger pupils but the personalised approach to pupils' wellbeing means that pupils speak regularly to staff about any concerns or ideas they have so that they feel listened to and valued.
20. The school fulfils its duties under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. An accessibility plan is in place so that adjustments may be made for any pupils with a disability. Leaders promote an all-inclusive culture of positivity and welcome diversity in all its forms and pupils' backgrounds and cultures are valued equally.
21. Leaders have a robust and challenging approach to the identification and mitigation of risk which places the safety and welfare of the pupils at the heart of everything they do. An effective risk management policy is maintained. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly, and staff are fully aware of the requirement for risk assessing on a daily basis when pupils move from one site to another via

a public alleyway. Risk strategies are in place to identify and manage any risk to pupils' wellbeing and include effective systems for the management of risks associated with residential and other off-site visits.

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

22. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

23. Pupils benefit from a topic-based curriculum with cross-curricular links which engages pupils. A range of resources support the curriculum, including forest school and a new nursery room. Pupils demonstrate self-confidence and good speaking skills in lessons and assemblies. For example, in assemblies they are confident to share personal stories linked to the topics they cover in lessons, such as that of a grandfather's arrival on the Empire Windrush.
24. The reflective practice of the leadership team and regular curriculum reviews ensure that pupils' interests are considered. Pupils say this has a positive impact on their independence and self-esteem. A new writing scheme benefits pupils as the scheme has led to a rise in the standards of writing. Pupils are proud to discuss the progress which they have made.
25. Leaders make informed decisions about pupils' attainment and progress using data from informal and formal assessments. The analysis of data, combined with leaders' deep knowledge of individual pupils, ensures well-planned provision so that pupils make good progress.
26. Pupils use technology confidently in all subjects and for independent projects, such as making videos. Pupils' individual responses to subjects are encouraged and they respond by going beyond what has been asked of them. For example, a Year 6 pupil creating a model of the heart and the Year 4 curiosity project where the pupils identify a topic (Venus fly traps) they are keen to learn about. This trust in pupils' decision-making has a positive impact on their self-esteem and self-confidence; their creative and intellectual effort is evident in the work produced. Pupils with lower prior attainment are supported through adapted teaching which, in most cases, is effective.
27. Teachers plan lessons carefully in light of pupils' identified needs. In many lessons, the activities mean that pupils are inspired to make intellectual effort. High levels of challenge are seen in the best lessons and provide opportunities for pupils to work on tasks which deepen their thinking and enable them to make good progress. For example, in forest school, the youngest children use spades and trowels to explore and evaluate options for how to divert the flow of the water into a channel.
28. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They are self-motivated and clearly articulate how they learn and make progress. For example, pupils identify the positive impact of marking with pink and green pens and how feedback in PE enables the progress of all pupils.
29. The special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) works with staff to ensure that pupils' needs are identified in a timely manner and provision is put in place to enable their access to the curriculum.
30. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) do not require specialist input but are supported through well-planned teaching which meets their needs.
31. Children in the early years make good progress. There are numerous opportunities for children to develop their independence and they use language well to express their views, such as when creating their own labels for models which they have created. Children also explore and learn collaboratively; for example, when constructing an alien's house children collaborated and used trial and error to understand how to balance the structure so that it was not top heavy.

32. Pupils of all abilities attain well and the results of 11+ examinations to highly selective schools reflect the school's aim to deliver 11+ preparation in a supportive environment. Pupils are awarded a wide range of scholarships.

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

33. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

34. The school's commitment to its values of curiosity, bravery, respect and kindness are evident in its curriculum planning and throughout the school. The awarding of badges by senior leaders when they observe a value being demonstrated is one example of immediate feedback which promotes pupils' self-esteem.
35. The effective implementation of the PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education) curriculum, which is based on a scheme built around safety, caring, achievement, resilience and friendship, results in pupils positively valuing these lessons and remembering new knowledge; for example, in Year 3, pupils name tips on how to stay safe and what they should do if they feel that something is not right.
36. Pupils benefit from the physical education (PE) curriculum where inclusivity is promoted. Pupils from Reception swim throughout the year and the curriculum includes cricket, dance and gymnastics. The school achieves well in sporting events; in athletics, a pupil recently won a national 600 metres race. After school activities include a range of sports such as football, judo, Bollywood dancing and taekwondo.
37. The RSE curriculum is well communicated to parents through meetings in school, as well as emails to inform them when topics have been taught. This personalised approach, including parents being contacted directly if a pupil expresses a concern about discussing an issue at home, ensures a safe environment for the pupils to discuss topics in and out of school.
38. Leaders and managers promote good behaviour through an appropriate behaviour policy which is understood by staff and pupils. Pupils' behaviour is mostly good, though low-level misbehaviour is seen in some lessons. Some staff are less skilled than others at using positive behaviour reinforcement to enable pupils to self-regulate their behaviour.
39. Children in the early years are well supported in their personal, social, and physical development. For example, children's early writing is displayed on their whiteboards. Daily routines which promote independence are in place. The learning environments are well resourced, and children play collaboratively. Children develop physical dexterity, gross and fine motor skills and benefit from specialist teaching. Arrangements for a smooth transition from each stage to the next are effective. For example, pupils in the Nursery spend time in the Reception classroom and systems such as symbols used in marking are consistent between the two year groups.
40. Leaders ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is in place. Most pupils strongly agree that the school deals with any bullying incidents appropriately and are confident about talking to a trusted adult. Pupils know bullying requires attention to be paid to both the victim and the perpetrator. The school's aim that every pupil deserves to feel respected is supported by the highly personalised approach to pastoral care.
41. Pupils have opportunities to take on a wide range of positions of responsibility which they do with pride. The school parliament is composed of four councils as well as positions for all of Year 6 as ambassadors and heads of house. This results in pupils being able to make changes happen, such as splitting playground usage at lunchtime between ball games and other activities.

42. The premises provide for pupils' needs and are in reasonable order. Relevant health and safety laws, including the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, are complied with to ensure the welfare of pupils. Fire drills and evacuation procedures are practised frequently; sufficient records of these are kept securely.
43. The school's first aid accommodation is appropriate and accessible. Leaders have clear procedures in place for administering medicines, including for children in the early years.
44. Pupils are well supervised in school and off site. The playground is closely monitored and access across a public alleyway is always supervised by staff. The school's attendance register is maintained in accordance with requirements.

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

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

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

46. The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum reflects the school's aims and values of mutual respect and understanding. For example, pupils are encouraged to develop their tolerance and understanding of the needs of others through open discussion.
47. In the early years, independence is cultivated. For example, a Reception pupil was encouraged to tie his own laces and at forest school, children in pre-Reception were shown boundaries and then played independently. Children in the early years are confident to share work with visitors and to ask questions of them.
48. Pupils develop their spiritual and moral understanding through learning about different religions and cultures. They are confident to speak about their own experiences, usually listen to others' views and are respectful of different beliefs. Pupils can apply their learning; for example, in a Year 4 lesson about Buddhist teachings on caring for the natural world, pupils made connections to come up with their own thoughtful responses about actions they might take to care for the environment.
49. Leaders promote equality, diversity, and inclusion in the curriculum, and through wider activities such as the pupil harmony council. The school demonstrates a committed approach to teaching pupils about trust and respect for others. Pupils can explain the needs of different groups within society and the PSHE programme provides opportunities for issues to be discussed and explored. This means that pupils understand how different characteristics can be celebrated.
50. Pupils understand and respect the law and learn about public institutions. Teaching supports British values. Pupils understand the value of tolerance and respect which are evident in the school community.
51. Pupils demonstrate a well-developed awareness of different cultures. Parents come in to lead activities and to speak about Diwali celebrations; exploration of how cultures may not have always been treated with respect takes place in Year 5 English through the study of 'Ghost Boys'.
52. Pupils learn about the value of debate, the process of democracy and the importance of listening to others. Pupils in Year 6 have achieved recent success in a debating competition and democracy is practised in, for example, the selection of members of the school parliament.
53. Leaders provide well-considered opportunities in the curriculum to support pupils' economic education. For example, pupils in Year 6 participate in a project where they visit a local supermarket to prepare for the task of planning meals for a family of four for a week on a budget.
54. Well-planned trips and visits enhance pupils' learning. The school has strong links with the local police. Pupils are prepared for life outside of school and the urban environment in which they live. Pupils regularly use the railway for trips and recently gained a safety award from Network Rail. Pupils understand local issues and participate in an initiative which requires them to join in with filling a minibus with provisions for refugees living locally.
55. The school promotes links with the local community and pupils are encouraged to understand the role they can play in it now and in the future. For example, they visit a local care home to perform,

and they also write personalised cards for the residents. Some pupils are choristers at Croydon Minster and visits to other schools locally took place as part of a curiosity fortnight with a focus on sustainability.

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

56. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

57. Leaders ensure that there are secure safeguarding arrangements in place. The safeguarding culture at the school is embedded so that pupils feel safe and happy and are confident about having someone to talk to should the need arise. Pupils value the personal approach from staff and know that they will be listened to.
58. Staff are confident about the training they have received in all safeguarding matters, and they are clear about the school's reporting arrangements. All staff are aware that they have a key role to play in ensuring that pupils remain safe, both in and out of school.
59. The governance arrangements ensure regular visits to the school are carried out and all aspects of safeguarding are regularly checked at these times. This oversight is an additional safeguard which benefits pupils. The opportunity for leaders to visit other schools in the group ensure that systems for safeguarding are regularly reviewed.
60. Safeguarding leads are suitably trained and are aware of their responsibilities. They have developed good relationships with local safeguarding partners and carry out their roles with expertise and commitment. They teach children about local issues and pupils understand the specific concerns around keeping safe in the area where the school is situated.
61. Pupils understand how to stay safe online. They can explain the importance of, for example, ownership of passwords and 2-factor authentication, as well as being alert to issues such as viruses. Suitable filtering and monitoring systems are in place.
62. The school has put in place robust procedures for checking the suitability of staff to work with pupils in accordance with statutory regulations. Leaders ensure that relevant staff are trained appropriately in safer recruitment so that pupils are safeguarded. The single central register is appropriately maintained.
63. The registers of attendance and admission are suitably kept, and systems ensure that due attention is paid to children who may be missing from education. The school informs the local authority of pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard transition points.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Elmhurst School Ltd
Department for Education number	306/6005
Address	Elmhurst School Ltd 44-48 South Park Hill Road South Croydon Surrey CR2 7DW
Phone number	020 8688 0661
Email address	office@elmhurstschool.net
Website	www.elmhurstschool.net
Proprietor	Bellevue Education International Limited
Chair	David Williams
Headteacher	Mrs Sara Marriott
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	124
Date of previous inspection	25 to 27 February 2020

Information about the school

65. Elmhurst School Ltd is a non-selective, independent, single sex day school for boys aged 4-11 years in Croydon, Surrey. The school has two girls in its pre-Reception class for 3–4-year-olds. Founded in 1869 it is the oldest prep school in Croydon. It is owned and administered by Bellevue Education International Ltd. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2021.
66. There is a Nursery for 3 to 4 year olds with 12 pupils.
67. The school has identified 9 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
68. English is an additional language for 29 pupils.
69. The school aims are to provide 11+ preparation in a supportive environment which develops character and confidence; to nurture the brilliance in every child through a broad and engaging curriculum with literacy at its heart. Every pupil is known and staff use their knowledge to adapt their approach to develop, showcase and support talent and interest through sport, drama, enrichment activities and extracurricular clubs. The school aims to be a community driven by the values of kindness, respect, determination, curiosity and bravery. These values are taught through the brilliant behaviour checklist, reinforced through merit and distinction assemblies and the ad hoc recognition of such behaviours in school.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

18 to 20 June 2024

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

71. 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.

72. 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.
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