

School inspection report

6 to 8 February 2024

Harrow School

5 High Street

Harrow

Middlesex

HA1 3HP

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

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

Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders and governors have a clear vision for the school based on the four values of courage, honour, humility and fellowship. They understand and meet their responsibilities and consistently place pupil wellbeing at the heart of their decision-making. As a result, pupils flourish.
2. Governors and school leaders carry out clear and well-articulated self-evaluations on a regular basis. They have an accurate and well-informed view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors carefully consider any decisions made and, when changes are being implemented, they monitor effects on different aspects of the school community. They identify consequent risks and take appropriate action to mitigate them.
3. The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. It is suitably adapted to cater for those pupils who have learning needs and those with higher prior attainment. Leaders have created a programme known as the *Super-curriculum* which provides elective lessons and enrichment opportunities for all pupils across a wide range of subjects and interests. Consequently, pupils display high levels of intellectual curiosity and considerably broaden their knowledge and understanding. This provision is a significant strength of the school.
4. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, display confidence in their subject knowledge and manage behaviour in class effectively. Leaders monitor progress carefully and provide well-tailored support. Pupils, including those who have specific learning needs, make good progress in their learning and consistently gain high grades in their public examinations. Almost all proceed to higher education and gain entrance to institutions with very high entry requirements.
5. There is a very wide range of sporting and other activities for pupils. They achieve success in these both in teams and individually and have high levels of physical fitness.
6. Leaders have created a boarding environment in which pupils are well cared for and supported by housemasters, residential staff and their tutors. Because of the highly effective pastoral care, each pupil is well known by relevant staff. Although leaders ensure that any guardianship arrangements made by parents are suitable, records of these checks have not been routinely documented.
7. Leaders have created a culture within the school community in which respect for each other and high standards of behaviour are the norm. Typically, pupils behave responsibly and they understand that discrimination is unacceptable in any form. There is a suitable programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), which is successful in aiding pupils to understand more about themselves and the society in which they live. There is suitable careers guidance for all pupils.
8. School leaders, overseen by well-informed governors, ensure suitable upkeep of buildings and grounds and that practices to promote the health and welfare of pupils are robust and effective.
9. Leaders have a firm and longstanding commitment to service within the local community and beyond and as a result have provided a large range of opportunities for community service. Pupils embrace these with enthusiasm and dedication.
10. Leaders ensure that safeguarding procedures reflect current guidance and are robust. They are well understood by staff who actively care for the pupils and report any concerns promptly and effectively.

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 and managers should

- ensure that suitable records are kept of checks carried out on the suitability of guardianship arrangements made by parents.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Leaders have a clear and well-articulated vision for the school which is focused on pupil wellbeing. With effective and diligent governor oversight, leaders carry out strategic planning. This seeks to identify where developments are necessary and takes account of any impacts on pupils, both intended and unintentional. Whilst the school's dining hall undergoes a full renovation, the school has taken steps to manage the possibility of overcrowding in the dining hall through careful planning to ensure that pupils are well managed and safe.
12. Members of the governing body bring a wide range of experience to their roles and each has a specific area of responsibility, which they oversee diligently. They build close relationships with relevant staff such as heads of academic departments and housemasters, providing both support and challenge. Leadership is highly effective at all levels because the links between each level of decision-making work smoothly. Staff and pupils are listened to and communication from senior leaders is frequent and informative.
13. Leaders are well trained and knowledgeable. They skilfully and effectively use the detailed data they collect on year groups, houses and individual pupils to inform tailored decision-making. Senior leaders assess and manage risk dynamically; they prioritise the training and appraisal of staff so that they have the appropriate knowledge and skills to carry out their roles. Consequently, staff are well equipped to support pupils.
14. There is effective leadership of boarding. Handbooks, policies and other guidance for boarding leaders are comprehensive and detailed. They provide consistency across houses and contribute to a nurturing and safe boarding environment.
15. School leaders have identified areas for development to extend pupils' experiences and delivered them effectively. As a result, pupils gain high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in the elective lessons and activities of the *Super-curriculum* enrichment programme. In addition, they develop social skills, confidence and self-esteem in the community service and partnership programme known as *Shaftesbury Enterprise*.
16. Safeguarding procedures are well led by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and a team of experienced deputies. Leaders and governors are well trained and understand their responsibilities. As a result, there is a consistent and coherent approach to supporting pupils, records are effectively kept and action is promptly taken when necessary.
17. The school covers an extensive site with a wide range of facilities. Leaders ensure that these are maintained to a high standard with due consideration for safety and security. The school successfully meets the requirements of the Equality Act. Leaders and governors administer a suitable complaints procedure and keep an appropriate log of any formal complaints. All due information is provided to parents, including regular reports on the progress of their children.

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. Leaders have established a curriculum that covers a wide range of subjects. Several modern languages are included, including Japanese. Pupils may study astronomy at GCSE, and in the sixth form minority subjects such as ancient Greek are available even if only a few pupils choose them. Leaders also ensure that a broad programme of physical education and sport is included within the curriculum and this meets the needs of all pupils.
20. The curriculum encourages pupils to deepen their understanding and develop their skills in a range of areas. Pupils develop their creativity as evidenced in their individual and sophisticated artwork, their engagement in effective dramatic performance and their very high standards of music-making across a wide range of genres. They write creatively and effectively including, for example, for the weekly pupil-led newspaper. Pupils are highly numerate and pursue advanced mathematical problems with determination. They confidently use digital devices for completing and organising work and carrying out research.
21. Alongside the curriculum that results in external qualifications, leaders have established an enrichment programme known as the *Super-curriculum* in which all pupils participate. This includes elective lessons, delivered within the curriculum, in which pupils may study a large range of topics to extend and deepen their learning. An extensive programme of talks runs alongside this programme, many of which are delivered by pupils themselves. These are well attended by pupils across all year groups. Academic societies, many set up and run by pupils, demonstrate the pupils' drive to pursue their own academic interests and share them with others.
22. Senior pupils achieve high levels of attainment in public examinations and almost all of them go on to universities with high entrance requirements in the UK, Europe and the USA. Senior leaders and heads of department carry out rigorous tracking of every pupil's progress, using a system that collects data regularly and frequently. Pupils who are not meeting expectations are quickly followed up so that support can be provided. Close relationships between pastoral and academic staff contribute to targeted support for pupils, which supports their wellbeing as well as their academic progress.
23. Leaders focus on providing high-quality teaching that inspires intellectual curiosity and high aspirations in the pupils. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, and they use a wide variety of approaches in lessons to maintain pupils' focus and their interest. As a result, pupils acquire knowledge which is well beyond that required by the examination syllabus and a love of learning for its own sake. They ask pertinent and probing questions and relish complicated and detailed explanations from teaching staff.
24. Pupils who have specific learning needs are well supported by skilled staff who understand their needs and create bespoke plans for them. Teachers understand these needs and take account of them in their lesson planning and delivery so that pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) make good progress from their starting points and achieve attainment levels in line with or better than their predictions.
25. A small minority of pupils who speak English as an additional language require support, especially when they are new to the school. This support provides intensive sessions initially and is well

tailored to the needs of individual pupils. As a result, the progress made by these pupils means that their familiarity with English presents no barrier to their academic achievement.

26. The wide and varied programme of extra-curricular activities also supports pupils' educational experience. Games provision enables pupils to find a sporting activity that suits them, whether in a team or individually. As a result, pupils spend much recreational time taking part in physical activity which is beneficial to them.

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

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

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

28. Leaders prioritise the development of pupils' understanding of how to look after themselves physically and emotionally. There are strong and trusting relationships between pupils and staff in the boarding houses. These provide a secure environment in which pupils develop self-understanding and confidence. As a result of careful and effective planning and monitoring at all levels, pupils are well supported by staff and other pupils. They are resilient and appreciate that advice is always forthcoming from staff if, for instance, they need help to manage time effectively.
29. Recent initiatives to support pupils' mental health by senior leaders include the introduction of a wellbeing application in which pupils can register how they feel, request to talk to someone and express thanks to pupils and staff. Close liaison between the medical centre and house staff means that pupils know that professional support is available to them if they need it.
30. There is an effective PSHE programme in place across the school that includes Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). It is relevant, meaningful and covers a wide range of topics in which pupils explore issues of identity, relationships and the challenges which life in modern society may present. Recent initiatives have included a menopause education session for sixth-form pupils.
31. As a result of the presence of numerous positive role models across the whole school community and their strong guidance, pupils exhibit very high standards of behaviour. Their behaviour, as observed in lessons, in the dining room, moving around the local area and in chapel, is courteous and considered. On arrival, pupils take on the behaviours that they see modelled by older pupils and staff. Behavioural or bullying incidents are rare but, if they occur, they are promptly and effectively dealt with and support is given to any pupils involved.
32. The culture of the school created by school leaders draws on its Christian foundation and traditions. Regular weekly assemblies held in the school chapel and the adjoining parish church are often pupil-led and invite pupils to consider current issues and their own spirituality, shaped by the variety of faiths represented in the school. Pupils value the moments of quiet reflection provided by these and other opportunities for worship. They actively explore issues of morality, philosophy and spirituality and use these opportunities to develop their thinking about the non-material aspects of life.
33. Leaders within the boarding environment ensure that boarding practice is consistent across the houses and that pupils are well cared for. The houses provide secure and well-maintained accommodation. All boarding requirements are met. The school does not appoint guardians. Senior leaders in boarding check the suitability of guardianship arrangements made by parents but currently do not keep clear written records of these checks.
34. Leaders are diligent in their implementation of health and safety procedures in the school, including those related to fire. As a result, the school is a secure and well-maintained environment. Pupils are well supervised including in boarding. There are suitable arrangements for first aid and for the medical care of boarders. Admissions and attendance registers are kept properly.

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

35. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

36. The school is a highly diverse community and leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils respect each other and act with tolerance and understanding towards all, irrespective of any differences in their personal characteristics. Through PSHE classes, lessons in other curriculum areas and the positive behaviours that they witness, pupils understand the importance of tolerant and well-informed attitudes in British society. They demonstrate such attitudes and behaviours in their houses and in the wider school.
37. Pupils are well educated about British society and the rule of law. Through subjects such as history, politics and economics and the enrichment curriculum, pupils explore democracy, the British political system and other systems around the world. They engage in debates on issues of the day and through these develop high levels of understanding of current affairs and of economic and political issues. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and explore issues of morality that are central to many current issues.
38. Leaders regularly conduct reviews of departmental schemes of work to ensure that departments are diversifying their content. Pupil leaders in houses and those in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group have been instrumental in achieving cultural changes in the school. Pupils have worked with leaders on the provision of a rich array of speakers and cultural programmes that contribute to the acceptance by pupils of others of all backgrounds and characteristics.
39. School and house leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to develop socially. Pupils express their views in houses, through their councils and informally. They are able to achieve change when they do so, such as in recent amendments to the timetable. Through the extensive programme of service in the local community, pupils make meaningful contributions to people and institutions in the local area. For instance, they work with primary school pupils on their numeracy and literacy skills, spend time with pupils in special schools and support a local food bank. Pupils are highly positive about these experiences.
40. Across the school, leaders among the staff and the pupils demonstrate a strong commitment to charitable giving. Pupils engage wholeheartedly with whole-school initiatives and also create fundraising opportunities as individuals and small groups to raise money for causes about which they feel passionate.
41. In their PSHE lessons, pupils learn about finance, how to manage money in bank accounts and the problems that may arise when things go wrong. Older pupils develop their understanding of tax, of the importance of financial planning and of economic systems across the globe in PSHE and a variety of academic subjects. Pupils' engagement with charitable giving and their interactions with local community projects also increase their economic understanding.
42. Careers guidance is comprehensive and age appropriate. The youngest pupils receive a wide-ranging lecture programme about the world of work alongside guidance about possible subject choices. They reflect on their strengths and weaknesses by considering three literacies: cognitive, digital and social. The school promotes Green Careers week in November providing an emphasis on sustainability and green careers, and 'National Careers Week' each March. Older pupils are encouraged to carry out work experience and receive appropriate advice when choosing university

courses or other options such as apprenticeships. The advice provided is impartial and covers a wide choice of possible future pathways.

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

43. All the relevant standards are met

Safeguarding

44. Suitable arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and the safeguarding policy is effectively implemented.
45. Leaders ensure that staff are suitably trained on induction and that they receive regular updates throughout the year. Senior staff with safeguarding responsibilities are appropriately trained at the advanced level. Governors provide diligent and effective oversight, including an annual review of procedures. They have close relationships with the safeguarding team and support and challenge them effectively.
46. The DSL and headteacher maintain close and productive relationships with the local authority in which the school is located, seeking advice and following it, so that any concerns about children are referred promptly. They liaise effectively with the large number of local authorities from which pupils come and with the police when necessary.
47. Should incidents of child-on-child abuse occur, the school responds appropriately and promptly, seeks advice about any need to involve external agencies and follows the thresholds for referral.
48. Staff understand how to report any concerns they have about adults, and they do so promptly. There is a suitable log of low-level concerns. Staff are knowledgeable about the safeguarding procedures and the contextual risks in the local area for their pupils. They understand the risks associated with extremism through regular training.
49. Pupils are well educated about the risks of being online. Guidance is delivered in an age-appropriate way. Suitable and rigorous systems are in place to filter and monitor the internet.
50. Appropriate recruitment checks on all staff, governors and volunteers are carried out before appointment. A suitable single central record of appointments is maintained.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Harrow School
Department for Education number	310/6000
Registered charity number	310033
Address	The Bursary 5 High St Harrow Middlesex HA1 3HP
Phone number	0208 872 8000
Email address	hm@harrowschool.org.uk
Website	www.harrowschool.org.uk
Proprietor	Keepers and governors of Harrow School
Chair	Mr David Eyton CBE
Headteacher	Mr Alastair Land
Age range	12 to 19
Number of pupils	831
Number of boarding pupils	831
Date of previous inspection	20 September 2022

Information about the school

52. Harrow School is an independent school registered as a single sex school for male pupils. Founded by a royal charter granted by Elizabeth I in 1572 it occupies a site on either side of the High Street in Harrow-on-the-Hill. It is a full boarding school. The proprietor is the charitable trust of the Royal Charter Corporation whose trustees act as governors of the school.
53. All pupils are accommodated in one of twelve boarding houses close to the main school buildings. Each house has pupils across the full age range of the school.
54. The school has identified 216 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
55. English is an additional language for 167 pupils, almost all of whom are fluent in English.
56. The school aims to prepare pupils who have diverse backgrounds and abilities for a life of learning, leadership, service and personal fulfilment. It emphasizes its four values of courage, honour, humility and fellowship which are closely linked to the school's Christian foundation and the principles established by the school's founder, John Lyon.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

6 to 8 February 2024

57. A team of nine inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

58. 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 deputy 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 with pupils and staff
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

59. 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**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

For more information, please visit isi.net