

School inspection report

19 to 21 March 2024

More House School London

22–24 Pont Street

Chelsea

London

SW1X 0AA

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. Governors use their thorough understanding of the school's context to evaluate and plan strategically to make the best use of resources to benefit the overall wellbeing of the pupils. Having appointed knowledgeable and skilled leaders, they provide dedicated support and challenge to them as they develop and implement improvements.
2. Leaders plan to meet every pupil's needs so that they attain their academic and personal potential and leave the school as people of purpose. To that end, they maintain a warm and inclusive atmosphere where every individual is valued. They inspire positive relationships and communications that enhance pupils' wellbeing.
3. Leaders put measures in place to support pupils' needs including for the large proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). Pupils achieve well from their starting points.
4. Leaders use the available resources creatively to provide a broad curriculum and a wide range of activities to stimulate and satisfy a great variety of pupils' interests. Individual skills, talents and academic ability are also recognised and nurtured so that the needs of pupils are met. This is particularly apparent in the high quality of theatre productions, and the work of pupil musicians and artists.
5. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of their subjects. They plan lessons well, taking pupils' needs into account so that pupils make good progress. Teachers use a variety of appropriate teaching methods and resources to develop pupils' study skills. Pupils are responsive and resilient, viewing mistakes as learning opportunities.
6. Recent initiatives have been introduced to extend and vary the educational experience for most pupils. The arrangements are flexible to meet the needs and provide personal challenge for pupils. Thought provoking and challenging activities have resulted in developments in the promotion of pupils' independent thinking. Sixth-form pupils and those with high prior attainment are already responding well. However, this approach is less consistently effective for other pupils.
7. In recent years, improving feedback to pupils has been a focus for teachers. Constructive feedback to pupils is a feature of teaching and learning in the sixth form and smaller groups in younger years. This is not yet consistent for pupils in years 7 to 9 in some subjects.
8. Leaders, staff and older pupils are caring and encouraging role models. This and the sensitively taught relationships and sex education (RSE) and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) empower pupils to be empathic and purposeful young people. Mutual respect and supportive relationships are evident between pupils. As their physical and mental wellbeing needs are being met, pupils gain confidence and self-esteem.
9. In this diverse community, differences are openly discussed. Pupils are understanding and inclusive. They know right from wrong and seek justice and fairness. News articles are often used as prompts for discussion. This increases pupils' understanding of democracy and the rule of law and helps to prepare them for their future beyond school. Leaders take opportunities to expose pupils to a wide variety of career paths. Advice concerning careers and subject choices is individualised. These and focused sessions on life skills prepare pupils well for the next stage of their lives.

10. The effective safeguarding culture is well embedded. Staff are well trained and led in this area. Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils are effective. Staff are aware of what is required and implement the stated expectations accordingly so promoting the safety and welfare of pupils. Leaders with specific safeguarding responsibilities engage effectively with external agencies to support pupils.

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:

- embed quality assurance strategies for teaching and learning to ensure best practice is shared so that pupils' needs are met consistently and high-quality feedback is consistent for all pupils
- extend recent initiatives to provide consistent challenge for all pupils beyond the classroom.

Material change request

11. Inspectors considered the school's request for a change to the details of its registration to include change of age range to 9 to 18 from 11 to 18. The school are looking to change their point of entry to Year 5 from Year 7.
12. Leaders have plans to employ new staff with experience of teaching these younger age groups. The classes are planned to be taught the core academic subjects, PSHE and religious studies by these class teachers, and have subject specialist teachers in other subjects. Leaders plan to appoint a head of the prep/junior school who will have oversight of academic and pastoral matters for the age group.
13. The framework of the curriculum is already prepared, and the school is adding to, and amending the subject schemes of work to ensure that there is continuity and progression in teaching and pupils' learning. The school has budgeted for additional academic resources to ensure that subjects are appropriately resourced.
14. Leaders have planned for additional training for all staff on teaching younger pupils, as well as advice on appropriate pastoral support for the Year 5 and 6 girls.
15. There is sufficient and appropriate classroom space to accommodate the two year groups. In addition to the outdoor courtyard, the school has access to a local park space a short walk from the school. This additional outdoor space/play area will be available for these two year groups as well as older pupils on a rotational basis at morning and lunch break. Leaders have assessed any associated risks for this provision.
16. Leaders and governors have experience of working with the younger age groups.

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

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

18. Governors have thorough knowledge and understanding of the school. Leaders provide detailed reports to be discussed at board meetings. Regular visits and online communication keep the governors informed of issues, including those relating to safeguarding and complaints. Governors support and challenge appropriately so that they can ensure that leaders fulfil their responsibilities well.
19. Leaders are reflective and evaluate the impact of initiatives as they unfold. They have the skills and understanding to fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively. Leaders liaise with other agencies well and contribute to shared best practice with other schools.
20. Recent teaching and learning initiatives have been implemented and are proving to be successful. The timetable has been amended this academic year, to introduce a scheme to improve the way pupils develop their study skills and broaden their educational experience.
21. A further initiative is being successfully implemented to extend the educational experience of pupils with high prior attainment. In consultation with the pupils, a variety of challenging opportunities are provided. These include public speaking and debate, attending university lectures and conferences such as 'Thriving Minds', setting up and leading societies and classes such as 'Introduction to Arabic', and developing environmental projects. The pupils appreciate these opportunities and rise to meet their personal challenges.
22. Leaders and staff are risk aware. There is a systematic approach to risk assessment, including those for the physical environment. Mitigation and monitoring are routinely employed when issues are identified.
23. Complaints are managed promptly and within the timescales published in the complaints procedure which is available on the school website.
24. Forthcoming events, recent news, menus and this week's theme or topics being covered in PSHE and RSE are published on the website portal for parents. Information such as contact details, recent academic results, the behaviour and anti-bullying policies, and arrangements for pupils who have SEND are accessible on the school's website. Parents are also kept informed of their child's progress and development through timely and useful reports, including an annual report which summarises personal and academic progress throughout the year. Appropriate information is shared with local authorities in relation to details of expenditure and the annual review of the education, health and care (EHC) plan.
25. Leaders maintain pastoral arrangements for supporting pupils that are both comprehensive and effective in promoting pupil health and mental wellbeing. Suitable anti bullying and safeguarding training and oversight procedures are in place for staff to manage pupil behaviour effectively.
26. Leaders ensure that, the curriculum is fully accessible to pupils. Outdoor space is limited on the school's city centre site. Leaders and staff find creative ways to provide a variety of recreational and physical education activities, including using the local specialist facilities, green spaces and parks.

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

27. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

28. The curriculum provides pupils with a broad range of subjects that is accessible to pupils. There are well-structured schemes of work in place that help guide teachers to plan effective lessons. Pupils have effective digital skills. Aesthetic and creative education in music, drama, and art is successful for many pupils. They find relaxation as well as inspiration in these areas as well as the encouragement to express themselves in different ways.
29. Most teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subjects they teach. They plan lessons well. They provide activities that engage and inspire pupils. They take pupils' needs into account and pay particular attention to explaining vocabulary and giving instructions clearly. This makes their lessons accessible, including those who speak English as a second language. In a small proportion teaching lacks pace or challenge resulting in less consistently good progress for some pupils. In some cases, pupils find the work too easy. In others, pupils find the work too difficult and are not identified and supported in lessons.
30. There are positive teacher-pupil relationships. Pupils work hard, enjoy their lessons and learn effectively. Pupils respond thoughtfully and knowledgeably to teachers' verbal prompts using mature and sophisticated vocabulary. Pupils work well individually and collaborate productively in pairs or small groups. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is evident, particularly in the younger years for science.
31. In the examination years, regular assessments enable leaders and teachers to monitor and guide pupils towards aspirational results. Most pupils do well and achieve their target scores at GCSE and A level. The levels of attainment in some areas are high, particularly in the creative arts. Leavers go on to universities, conservatoires, art colleges and apprenticeships, achieving places at their first choice of institutions.
32. There is a thorough assessment and tracking framework in place that monitors how well pupils are faring in their learning. The resulting performance information is used to inform teachers' planning. Teachers provide the pupils with a variety of written and verbal feedback. In the sixth form and in GCSE groups, pupils act on personalised verbal feedback and as a result make good progress. This is less effective in the younger year groups. Written feedback is inconsistent. Since the written feedback is often received some time after the relevant lesson, it is less timely and deemed less useful by the pupils.
33. The learning support department identifies pupils' additional needs and provides appropriate additional support where it is needed. They share expertise and strategies with teachers, who consequently support pupils who have SEND effectively. These pupils access the full curriculum alongside their peers. However, this is less consistent in the lower part of the school where a few teachers are less skilled in supporting individual needs.
34. Leaders provide a range of clubs that enable pupils to have opportunities to experience and further develop their potential in wider interests, skills or talents. There are themed clubs and activities including the popular STEM (science, technology, economics, and mathematics) club, mindfulness, and visiting speakers on topics of interest. Pupils extend their interests and build their personal and academic confidence.

35. Recent initiatives have been introduced to extend a cross-curricular enrichment programme and vary the educational experience for most pupils. Arrangements are flexible to meet the needs and provide personal challenge for pupils. Pupils participate in a variety of visits to exhibitions, conferences and university departments. Debating opportunities, public speaking and critical thinking sessions featuring such topics as whether a snail is a sentient being or how different faiths can be celebrated in a school with a strong religious ethos.

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

36. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

37. Relationships across the school are convivial and help to create a calm and inclusive environment. Pupils are polite and thoughtful and display positive attitudes both to their studies and with each other. Relationships between younger and older pupils are respectful and supportive. Pupils promote the school's ethos in their behaviour towards each other and their staff. They exhibit integrity, compassion, and an appreciation of non-material aspects of life such as friendship and honesty.
38. Leaders review the PSHE and RSE curriculum routinely to ensure its relevance to young people in modern British society. Teachers are well trained and teach topics sensitively. This enables pupils to reflect and confidently express their feelings, which supports their emotional wellbeing and understanding. Pupils learn about healthy living through topics covered in PSHE and science. Whole school events, such as wellbeing week, also enable pupils to appreciate the benefits of being and feeling healthy, confident and happy in themselves.
39. Adults support the wellbeing and mental health of pupils effectively. Pupils are encouraged to raise any concerns they might have through the school council or through use of the worry boxes. Staff encourage pupils to talk through their concerns and help pupils to develop personal coping strategies. Pupils say that there is always somebody they can talk to if needed.
40. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their physical and mental health and wellbeing through the weekly physical education (PE) and games programme. Much of this curriculum is conducted at specialist off-site sports facilities and at appropriate local facilities. This curriculum is enhanced by well-attended sporting extra-curricular clubs, wellbeing walks, and dance and yoga classes.
41. Pupils are invited to look for role models who have exhibited resilience and tenacity to become successful in their chosen field. These pupils gain self-knowledge and confidence that they can succeed too. Older pupils act as positive role models for their younger peers, through taking on the various leadership positions on offer.
42. Staff know pupils well and have high expectations of behaviour both in and out of the classroom. Policies and procedures are appropriate and clear. Staff identify and manage poor behaviour or any isolated incidents of bullying or unkindness promptly so that they do not escalate. The management of any incidents is well supported by detailed records. Leaders monitor these closely, and act in a timely way to resolve any negative trends in behaviour.
43. Leaders have ensured that there are suitable admissions and attendance registers in place and maintained appropriately. In line with statutory requirements, leaders liaise with local authorities when pupils join or leave the school at times outside the normal transition points. Pupils are well supervised at all times. The premises are well maintained. Health and safety issues are well considered and documented. Some minor inattention to detail was identified but swiftly rectified during the inspection.
44. Emergency procedures are well considered as are medical risk assessments. First aid arrangements are appropriate, and first aid is available as necessary, including the administration of medication and care for pupils with known medical conditions. Staff are appropriately trained.

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. Pupils experience learning about many different cultures, languages and religions through the curriculum, assemblies, and a range of other activities. Pupils listen to one another and are tolerant and respectful of others and celebrate their diversity. Pupils show mutual respect for other people's backgrounds and cultures in the way they interact, with what they say and in how they act towards one another.
47. As a school, differences of any sort are readily acknowledged and accepted as a normal element of life in modern Britain. The recently established Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) working group is thriving. Mostly organised by the pupils themselves, this group allows pupils to share their individuality and experience.
48. Leaders and staff are role models and provide a supportive atmosphere within which pupils develop morally and appreciate what is right and what is wrong. As the result of established standards and expectations, pupils appreciate and understand the benefits and need for rules in school, as well as laws in society, to protect everyone's interests and help support a peaceful community.
49. Leaders have reviewed and improved the PSHE and RSE curriculum. Leaders have updated the curriculum material being studied to make it more relevant to pupils, including an increased focus on life skills to support pupils moving towards adulthood. They have also increased timetabled time to teach this curriculum in greater detail. Staff are well trained and deliver this curriculum effectively. They provide engaging activities to interest pupils in the content. These include a 'life preparation club' for older pupils.
50. Topics in the PSHE curriculum such as 'living in the wider world' include economic education. For example, a themed week covers financial wellbeing. Young pupils learn about managing money, banks, budgeting, spending and saving. Older pupils learn about consumer rights and how to analyse a payslip. Sixth-form pupils learn about taxes, rents and mortgages and managing student loans.
51. Leaders provide extensive careers guidance that considers the Gatsby benchmarks. Pupils are individually advised alongside their parents, who are involved at every stage, about potential further education or career options and suitable pathways to follow. Alumnae and parents are a rich resource of careers information and opportunities. Year 10 pupils write their curriculum vitae and letters as a prelude to taking a range of work experience opportunities.
52. Sixth-form pupils are positive role models and have a variety of leadership roles and responsibilities. This includes leading clubs, organising events and mentoring younger pupils. These pupil leaders are provided with guidelines and rise to the challenge, supported effectively in their roles by the staff.
53. Pupils throughout the school are engaged in a range of activities that enable them to develop an understanding of the world beyond the school. Pupils enthusiastically participate in projects, volunteering and charity work that helps others in their local community and further afield. Links with groups in the local community are forged, and pupils themselves suggest charities to support. Pupils lead the fundraising events, as individuals and in teams, supported by staff.

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

54. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

55. Leaders maintain the appropriate safeguarding culture in the school. Staff receive regular and effective training. They understand their roles and know what to do when they have concerns. Staff record and communicate appropriate information. Records are detailed and are monitored by safeguarding leaders.
56. Staff with safeguarding lead responsibilities receive appropriate training. They demonstrate effective skills, knowledge and understanding of their roles. Leaders work closely with the school staff and work effectively with external agencies, such as children's services or the local authority designated officer in a timely manner.
57. Leaders are alert and vigilant to how a range of issues such as bullying, unkindness and harmful behaviours link to safeguarding risks for pupils. Staff work closely and monitor the most vulnerable pupils. They liaise effectively with their families and external agencies to provide holistic and wide-ranging support for pupils.
58. Governors have an effective understanding of their safeguarding monitoring roles. They take their responsibilities seriously and undertake regular training and fulfil their roles proficiently. They review the safeguarding policy annually and then oversee senior leaders implementing it effectively. Governors maintain effective oversight of appropriate measures to safeguard pupils. They visit regularly and discuss current issues and trends as appropriate with the leaders of the school safeguarding team. They also check records and procedures including those for safer recruitment.
59. Leaders provide a range of opportunities for pupils to share their concerns. The pastoral team are sensitive to pupils who may still find it difficult to share their worries and are alert to helping them. Lines of communication and support have been recently enhanced by the appointment of a pastoral support officer. Pupils are confident that there are a range of staff who they can talk to with their concerns.
60. Age-appropriate teaching in PSHE and advice concerning digital skills equip pupils with the skills and knowledge to stay safe online. Pupils understand how to keep safe online and appreciate the effective filtering and monitoring systems. In PSHE, they also learn to consider the risks to their wellbeing of alcohol, drugs and ill-considered social behaviour.
61. Leaders follow appropriate recruitment procedures to ensure the suitability of adults working with pupils. The required pre-recruitment checks are made before new staff or volunteers begin their work. The central record of recruitment checks is well kept. Recruitment records are accurate, detailed and kept confidentially.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

62. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	More House School
Department for Education number	207/6202
Registered charity number	312737
Address	More House School 22–24 Pont Street Chelsea London SW1X 0AA
Phone number	020 7235 2855
Email address	office@morehousemail.org.uk
Website	www.morehouse.org.uk
Proprietor	More House Trust Ltd
Chair	Mr Ian Bogle
Headteacher	Ms Faith Hagerty
Age range	11–18
Number of pupils	129
Date of previous inspection	2 November 2020

Information about the school

63. More House School is a day school for female pupils located in Knightsbridge. The school is a charitable trust and a company limited by guarantee overseen by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection, the current headteacher was appointed in March 2021 and the current chair of governors was appointed in January 2023.
64. The school has identified 69 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Eight pupils in the school have an EHC plan.
65. English is an additional language for eight pupils.
66. The school states its aims are to create an environment in which all pupils are valued and supported. It seeks to foster commitment, integrity and compassion. It sets out to develop the spiritual, academic and cultural potential of the pupils, and encourage intellectual curiosity, and sensitivity to the rights and needs of others.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

19–21 March 2024

67. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

68. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods
- 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 drama, art, and music departments and dance studio
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school
- discussion with governors and the head concerning the planning and provision for potential pupils aged 9 to 11 in consideration of the material change.

69. 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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