

School inspection report

23 to 25 April 2024

The Hall School

23 Crossfield Road

Hampstead

London

NW3 4NU

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. Leaders and governors work well together. They implement suitable policies and procedures that help the school to provide a happy and secure environment where children thrive. Leaders are knowledgeable in their roles, and they promptly address any issues that arise.
2. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning by regularly reviewing the curriculum and observing lessons. Teaching is effective and much is of a high quality, resulting in pupils making good progress during their time at the school.
3. Leaders know pupils' individual learning needs well. All pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have an extensive individual education plan (IEP). However, these plans are used inconsistently, which results in some pupils making less progress.
4. Highly positive relationships between staff and pupils create a safe environment where pupils feel comfortable to take risks with their learning. Teachers are very knowledgeable about their subjects and have high expectations of pupils.
5. Children in the early years make good progress across the seven areas of learning. The early years classrooms and outdoor areas are well resourced and stimulating. Staff quickly notice any additional learning needs children have and put the right support in place to address them.
6. Pupils make positive contributions within the local community, such as giving support to different charities and local community groups. This helps them to develop a deep understanding of the impact of their actions on those around them.
7. The school has an extensive programme of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, particularly around music. These broaden pupils' experiences and help them to become more independent as well as working effectively as part of a team.
8. Suitable health and safety arrangements are in place throughout the school. Senior leaders oversee a comprehensive programme of risk management to consider and mitigate potential hazards.
9. The school's safeguarding procedures are robust, overseen by a knowledgeable safeguarding team. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, particularly online. Staff raise any concerns they might have about pupils' wellbeing promptly and these are acted on swiftly by safeguarding leaders, as appropriate.

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 the information provided in individual education plans (IEP) is routinely used by teachers in their planning and delivery of the curriculum so that pupils who have SEND always get the support they need to make good progress.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders possess a diverse range of knowledge, skills and understanding. They fulfil their roles and promote the wellbeing of pupils effectively. Leaders promote the school's aims well so that they are widely known and understood by pupils, parents and staff. As a result, the school is a happy, secure and energetic community, where pupils thrive.
11. Leaders oversee the implementation of suitable policies and procedures. Leaders check that they are followed closely by staff at all times. Leaders update policies, as necessary, so that they remain up to date and reflect current guidance.
12. Leaders and governors evaluate the school's effectiveness rigorously and regularly. They accurately identify key priorities for development and use these to inform the school's development plan. Leaders focus well on ensuring that the school continuously improves.
13. Governors have effective oversight of the school and challenge leaders appropriately to ensure that the school meets the Standards. Governors have a clear and accurate understanding of the school gained, for example, through the informative reports they receive regularly from leaders and through their visits to the school.
14. Leaders have a clear understanding of risk management, which is developed through regular training and support from external agencies. A comprehensive risk management procedure is in place that reduces risk to pupils and staff from potential hazards. For example, there are suitable risk assessments in place for areas around the school and for all trips and activities. During a recent extensive building project to increase teaching accommodation, leaders' diligent risk assessment ensured that its impact on pupils was minimal.
15. Leaders implement a robust process of continuous staff development and appraisal, leading to effective teaching throughout the school. They meet regularly with staff to support the development of teaching and the impact this has on pupils' learning.
16. The school provides a range of useful information for parents through its website. Leaders inform parents of their children's attainment, progress and next steps through regular parents' evenings and informative reports. Information for pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan is shared with the relevant external agencies.
17. Leaders and governors fulfil their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 well. For example, the carefully planned curriculum is reviewed regularly so that it meets the needs of pupils throughout the school. The curriculum is also used to ensure pupils understand the importance of being respectful to others, regardless of their race, religion or other personal characteristics. Leaders oversee an effective accessibility plan so that all pupils have full access to learning, making improvements where necessary, such as to the acoustics in teaching areas.
18. The school has an appropriate complaints procedure. While there have been no formal complaints since the previous inspection, informal concerns raised by parents are promptly addressed, with comprehensive records kept. Through a review of informal concerns raised, leaders reflect on any learning points.

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

19. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. The ambitious and broad curriculum fosters a love of learning in pupils and prepares them well for their next steps. Leaders adapt the curriculum to take account of the views of pupils and staff. For example, they increased the time allocated for creative subjects, which resulted in pupils making better progress in art, design and technology, and drama.
21. Leaders consistently monitor teaching and learning across the school to uphold rigorous standards. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They plan and teach engaging lessons for pupils that interest and motivate them. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, who achieve well. Pupils make good progress, and their attainment is considerably above the national average. Leaders use assessment effectively to identify pupils who require additional support in their learning.
22. Pupils write with flair and creativity using well-developed literacy skills. These are enhanced through access to regular competitions and engaging enrichment activities. Pupils develop secure numeracy skills which they apply effectively to challenging mathematical problems. All older pupils take part in an annual mathematics challenge competition with other schools, where they have notable success.
23. Pupils are highly articulate and have a wide-ranging vocabulary. Reading is given a high priority and pupils are encouraged to read regularly and often. Leaders have developed and improved the way the early stages of reading are taught. They have introduced an effective phonics programme which is having a positive impact on helping children to quickly learn the relationships between letters and the sounds they represent. Reading is well resourced throughout the school, including the libraries that pupils access during their free time and during lessons. Pupils become fluent, confident and enthusiastic readers during their time at the school.
24. The needs of pupils who have SEND are catered for well through the school's learning support department. Learning support staff create comprehensive individual education plans (IEP) that fully meet the different needs of pupils. Many teachers use the information in IEPs effectively when planning lessons, to ensure pupils receive the support they need. This helps pupils who have SEND to make good progress. However, the information from IEPs is not used consistently by all staff. Where this is the case, support for pupils who have SEND is less finely honed and some pupils make less progress.
25. Children in the Reception classes develop knowledge, skills and understanding across the seven areas of learning in the early years curriculum. Children make good progress with their literacy skills. They enjoy writing and are given lots of meaningful opportunities to practise. Through the carefully planned activities, children take risks in their learning, which develops their resilience. They work well together and develop their social skills through, for example, taking turns in the different activities they take part in.
26. Pupils spend time, after the completion of extended pieces of work, considering what they have learned and how they can improve. Teachers provide comprehensive feedback in lessons, empowering pupils to identify any gaps in their understanding and develop their own next steps.
27. The school provides an extensive music curriculum that leads to pupils developing high levels of musical knowledge, skill and understanding. As well as whole-class teaching, a wide range of individual and group instrumental lessons, including strings, brass and woodwind instruments, are made available for pupils. Many pupils take external music examinations, where they have high

levels of success. Pupils collaborate effectively in the different music groups and ensembles, where they regularly perform in front of others both within the school and at external music venues.

28. Pupils benefit from an extensive range of extra-curricular activities during and after the school day, which enrich their learning experiences. For example, pupils extend their subject knowledge in English with regular public speaking, poetry and debating activities. Pupils benefit from the additional sports activities which develop their individual skills further. Learning throughout the school is enriched by the school's broad educational visits programme. For example, older pupils take part in annual geography field trips, younger pupils enjoy visits to local historical landmarks, and there are a range of international residential trips.

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

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

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

30. Pupils develop self-confidence through a wide range of opportunities to perform in front of others, such as the drama productions, public speaking events, debating clubs, musical performances and pupil-led assemblies. In the early years, staff encourage children to share talks about their interests, to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem.
31. The engaging physical education curriculum promotes healthy eating and an understanding of the benefits of exercise. Children in the early years take part in regular exercise in the well-resourced playground area. They develop their physical skills during activity sessions with specialist sports staff. Pupils are given opportunities to represent the school across a range of sports. Pupils have notable success in regional and national competitions, in both team and individual sports. Talks from visiting nutritionists help pupils understand the importance of positive body image and of maintaining a balanced diet.
32. The school's well-planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is taught effectively by specialist teachers. It plays an integral part in helping pupils understand how to look after their mental health. For example, pupils undertake a resilience course prior to taking entrance examinations to learn strategies for dealing with stress. Pupils have access to the school counsellor, if they require it.
33. Pupils complete an annual survey which is used to inform a school action plan for wellbeing and pastoral care. The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum is taught through well-planned PSHE and science lessons. It helps pupils to learn how to be good friends and about the impact of positive relationships. As a result, pupils are polite and respectful, and behave appropriately towards each other. Informative presentations are given to parents on the content of the RSE curriculum so that they understand what is taught and can support their children's learning at home.
34. The school's behaviour policy successfully promotes positive behaviour among pupils. Pupils are self-disciplined and behave well. On occasions when pupils display negative behaviour, appropriate sanctions are used and pupils are given time to reflect on their actions. Pupils understand and apply the school's 'WITS' strategy: 'walk away, ignore, talk it through, seek help'. Pupils value the house points they receive for good behaviour that go towards the termly house competitions. Staff supervise pupils appropriately, monitoring their behaviour and supporting their needs.
35. Leaders implement an effective anti-bullying strategy. Kindness is promoted during weekly assemblies. Pupils value having their name being added to the 'kindness tree', which celebrates thoughtful and considerate acts. Pupils learn about dealing with difficult situations through anti-bullying workshops. An emotional literacy programme is used to give pupils the necessary vocabulary to resolve emotional situations. Pastoral leaders maintain effective records of bullying incidents, enabling them to track and monitor any trends. Bullying incidents are rare and dealt with effectively.
36. The school site is well maintained and robust health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment policies in place. Where there are any deficiencies with potential risks around the site, these are addressed promptly. Leaders hold regular fire drills and ensure staff with fire marshal responsibilities receive regular training for their roles. Pupils know what to do in the event of the alarm sounding.

There are suitable arrangements in place to provide first aid and medical treatment, which is carried out by appropriately trained staff.

37. The school has suitable attendance and admissions policies and procedures in place. Leaders monitor attendance and liaise with parents if there are any noticeable levels of absence.

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

38. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

39. Leaders have developed and implemented a rigorous curriculum that equips pupils for life in British society. Pupils learn to contribute fully at school and to wider society. The school's eco committee and charity groups give pupils a clear sense of social responsibility and an understanding of the positive impact their actions can have. Pupils in the eco committee regularly take part in litter picks and support garden maintenance for local community groups. Pupils visit care homes to help with simple tasks and to entertain people through playing music. Pupils' understanding of democratic processes is developed through voting for the different charities the school supports. Pupils' support for different charities both local and national is extensive.
40. Respect has a high focus throughout the curriculum and staff are positive role models. As a result, pupils show high levels of respect towards each other and the adults that work with them. Pupils also develop a clear sense of what is right and wrong through PSHE and other aspects of the curriculum. For example, the history curriculum helps pupils to understand injustice in society, such as when learning about the civil rights movement in America and the impact this had on people.
41. Economic education is effective and prepares pupils well for their adult lives. Throughout the school, economic understanding is developed through both mathematics lessons and application of numeracy skills across different subjects and activities. Teachers' well-planned lessons enable pupils to explore different uses of money and increase their understanding. For example, children in the early years are given practical experiences with money through visits to local food markets to purchase goods, while senior pupils apply their economic understanding to projects about 'fair trade'.
42. The values of endeavour, courage, community, humility and self-discipline permeate throughout the school. They empower pupils to appreciate the impact their decisions and actions can have. Pupils' cultural understanding is developed well. For example, the school uses an annual heritage week to celebrate cultural differences through presentations from pupils about their family backgrounds. Pupils are encouraged to research and share their heritage, fostering mutual respect and celebrating diversity. An extensive plan of local and international educational trips strengthens pupils' cultural understanding and experience of the world around them.
43. Staff and senior pupils form part of a school diversity and inclusion group which reflects on the school's provision and helps pupils' views to be heard. Pupils' understanding of diversity and inclusion is strengthened further through the study and celebration of events such as international women's day and Black history month.
44. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education, with a focus on transition to senior schools, through interview practice, arranged visits and preparation for entrance examinations. An informative visiting speaker programme broadens older pupils' understanding of careers education and begins to prepare them for adult life. Pupils' understanding of career choices is strengthened through the school's annual careers week. As part of the PSHE curriculum pupils learn about potential careers that are available, linked to each subject they study.
45. Older pupils understand the importance of being positive role models to younger members of the school through the many positions of responsibility they can apply for. They make valuable

contributions to the smooth running of the school. The school council provides an opportunity for pupils to represent their forms so that their views are shared about a wide range of issues. Changes are made in response to issues raised by the school council, such as a major update to the junior playground.

46. The broad religious education curriculum promotes pupils' understanding and respect for different faiths and beliefs. Pupils' understanding of different religions is developed further through engaging educational visits to places of worship and through talks from visiting speakers. Pupils talk about their own religious experiences and beliefs, and they enjoy celebrating religious festivals from around the world. This helps to enhance their respect for each other and for cultural differences.

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

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

Safeguarding

48. Leaders diligently oversee the implementation of robust safeguarding arrangements that promote the wellbeing of pupils well. The school maintains appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures, fostering a culture that prioritises safeguarding. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities receive regular training and have the knowledge and understanding needed to carry out their roles effectively. They know how to make referrals to other agencies and do so promptly when the need arises.
49. Leaders use the expertise of external agencies to inform their decision-making around safeguarding matters. Senior leaders adopt a reflective approach and audit practice regularly to identify areas to improve and develop. Governors are kept well informed about the quality of safeguarding through, for example, regular meetings between the safeguarding governor and the safeguarding team.
50. The safeguarding team maintain comprehensive records of all safeguarding and pastoral issues that arise. Staff receive regular training and updates so that they are equipped to identify and report any safeguarding concerns about pupils promptly. There are clear guidelines for staff around acceptable use of personal devices and mobile phones throughout the school.
51. The school has appropriate procedures in place to supervise visitors and contractors when they are on site. These are supported through the suitable risk assessments.
52. The school implements robust safer recruitment procedures. Staff overseeing recruitment have a suitable level of training and understanding to carry out their roles effectively. Recruitment records, including the single central record, are meticulously maintained.
53. Pupils learn how to stay safe online through the informative information and communication technology lessons and presentations given in assemblies. They understand the importance of protecting their own personal information when they are online. There are suitable monitoring and filtering procedures in place to protect pupils while using the internet at school.
54. Pupils have a range of adults they can turn to for help and guidance if they have any issues or worries. In addition to talking directly to members of staff for support, pupils make use of the worry boxes and email addresses provided, if they have a worry to share.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	The Hall School
Department for Education number	202/6017
Registered charity number	312722
Address	The Hall School 25 Crossfield Road Hampstead London NW3 4NU
Phone number	02077 221700
Email address	office@hallschool.co.uk
Website	www.hallschool.co.uk
Proprietor	The Hall School Charitable Trust
Chair	Mr Anthony Fobel
Headteacher	Mr Christopher Godwin
Age range	4 to 13
Number of pupils	464
Date of previous inspection	3 December 2019

Information about the school

56. The Hall School is a single-sex school for male pupils located in Hampstead, London. The school is a registered charitable trust overseen by a governing body whose members are the charity's trustees. The school consists of a junior school, a middle school and a senior school. The junior school (Reception to Year 3) is a short walk away from the middle (Year 4 and 5) and senior (Year 6 to 8) schools, which are opposite each other.
57. There are 50 children in the early years comprising of three Reception classes.
58. The school has identified 60 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
59. The school states its aims are to ensure a happy, secure and energetic community in which every individual, child and adult alike, can thrive, and to promote an exciting and stimulating academic environment which will foster a life-long love of learning for every pupil.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

23 to 25 April 2024

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

61. 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 headteacher, 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.

62. 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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