

School inspection report

19 to 21 March 2024

ACS Egham International School

Woodlee

London Road

Egham

TW20 0HS

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 provide appropriate challenge and oversight to leaders to ensure that the school has the required policies in place, and that systems are implemented effectively.
2. Leaders have the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles well. Leaders work closely with governors to establish a clear strategic direction for the school. The school's development plan includes actions to improve the quality of education, such as an expansion of the schools extra-curricular provision, and targeted training for teaching staff to strengthen their practice.
3. Leaders have designed a curriculum that meets the needs of pupils. The curriculum is broad and supports the aims of the school to help pupils develop a global perspective. Many pupils have lived or attended schools in other countries and pupils enjoy learning from one another's experiences.
4. Pupils readily work together in lessons to solve problems or deepen their understanding of a topic. Pupils are adept at using information technology (IT) to support their learning, often working independently on teacher-directed assignments. Behaviour in lessons is typically of a high standard, but some pupils disrupt the learning in some middle school lessons and activities.
5. Children in the early years make good progress, particularly in their communication and linguistic development.
6. Teaching is typically well-planned. Teachers in the middle and high schools know their pupils well and adapt their teaching to suit pupils' needs. Pupils make good progress from their different starting points. Specialist staff make appropriate adjustments to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to make good progress. For example, staff provide pupils with suitable tailored prompts in online presentations.
7. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress because of the individual support they receive. Pupils benefit from a combination of personalised in-class support, such as being given lists of subject-specific vocabulary to use, alongside individual lessons which help pupils to develop their vocabulary and understanding of grammar.
8. In the lower school, teaching is generally well planned but provision for pupils of higher prior attainment is inconsistent. Where tasks lack appropriate stretch and challenge, pupils do not always make sufficient progress.
9. Most pupils behave well towards each other. However, there are some incidents of unkind behaviour by pupils, particularly online. Staff do not consistently implement the behaviour policy and the system of rewards and sanctions is not embedded.
10. The school's programme of personal, social and health (PSHE) education is being reviewed by leaders in order to ensure that it is relevant and meets the needs of pupils. However, changes implemented by leaders are not fully embedded in the curriculum.
11. Safeguarding arrangements are appropriate. Governors and leaders understand their responsibilities and implement policies and procedures effectively. Leaders and staff are well trained to identify and report any safeguarding concerns. Pupils value the support for their mental health offered by the wellbeing centre and the school's counsellors.

12. Governors and leaders take appropriate action to identify and mitigate any risks to the welfare of pupils. Health and safety procedures, including those for fire and first aid, are appropriate and effective. The school site is secure and pupils are well supervised by staff.

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:

- the school's behaviour policy is understood by pupils, and is consistently implemented by staff so that any incidents of unkind or disruptive behaviour by pupils, including online, are addressed consistently and effectively
- the PSHE programme is fully embedded across the school so that the programme is more relevant to pupils' needs and prepares them well for the next stage of their education
- teaching across subjects in the lower school offers appropriate stretch and challenge for pupils with higher prior attainment so that pupils make good progress.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

13. The proprietor ensures effective oversight of the work of school leaders through the governing body. Governors check that the school's policies reflect the latest statutory guidance and are fit for purpose. Governors offer appropriate challenge to school leaders in meetings and when they visit the school, as part of the school's quality assurance process.
14. Governors know the school well. They visit often during the school year and receive termly reports from the head teacher about pupils' attainment, as well as operational matters. Governors work closely with leaders to develop a vision for the school's future based on a realistic and informed understanding of pupils' needs and the school's current strengths and weaknesses.
15. Safeguarding governors visit the school often to check the implementation of procedures and to make sure that leaders, staff and pupils know how to report concerns. Governors also understand the importance of managing risks to pupils' welfare, health and safety. Governors check risk assessments, monitor accident reports and ensure that procedures for fire safety and the medical care of pupils are in line with school policy.
16. In the early years, leaders plan a broad curriculum, including planned opportunities for creative play, which enables children to develop their knowledge and skills. Children are happy and confident in their learning because the activities are closely matched to their needs and interests. Regular and detailed reports on the children's development enable parents to support their children's learning.
17. The curriculum across all phases of the school is relevant, ambitious and meets the needs of pupils. For example, in the lower school, pupils learn important knowledge and skills across a broad range of subjects, as well as developing their creative and physical abilities. Similarly, in the middle and high schools, pupils enjoy a broad curriculum which offers a strong core of literacy and mathematics.
18. Leaders fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and an appropriate accessibility plan is in place. An annual report is sent to the local authority about the progress of pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
19. Leaders throughout the school work closely with parents and respond promptly to any concerns that may arise in line with the complaints policy which is published on the school's website. A log of concerns is also kept so that any trends or patterns can be identified. All other required information about the school is readily available to parents via the school's website or from the school's office.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. Leaders provide an effective curriculum which supports pupils to achieve across a wide range of subjects. Pupils have a firm grounding in all the required curriculum areas which are delivered through a variety of accredited international programmes.
22. In the high school, pupils attain results in public examinations in line or above national expectations. When teaching is effective, pupils across all phases of the school make good progress.
23. Pupils collaborate enthusiastically with one another in lessons. They discuss their learning and engage in mature discussions, listening to one another and working together to reach a shared understanding. In science, for example, pupils regularly work in groups to extend their understanding through deductive reasoning.
24. Leaders promote pupils' communication skills through the curriculum. In the early years, leaders encourage children to extend their vocabulary in drama and music, skilfully supporting children to discuss and recap what they have learned. Older pupils communicate clearly and fluently. Teachers support pupils to develop their confidence and skills to present their work clearly and persuasively. Pupils' written work is of a high standard showing their well-developed literacy skills.
25. Pupils value the school's 'voice and choice approach', where pupils choose their focus and medium for presentations in a given subject area. For example, pupils might choose to make a short film or design a poster to present their research. Pupils' work of all types reflects a high degree of self-organisation.
26. Pupils generally behave well in lessons. However, in the middle school, some pupils' behaviour disrupts the learning in some lessons and in these cases, pupils do not make the progress that they should.
27. Most teachers have a high level of subject knowledge and are passionate about their subjects. Teachers adapt their teaching appropriately to meet the needs of pupils. For example, teachers provide visual materials or design interactive activities to support learning.
28. However, in some mathematics and music lessons in the lower school, pupils with higher prior attainment find the work undemanding. In these lessons, pupils with higher prior attainment can become distracted and as a result, make less progress.
29. In the early years, teaching is effective. Teaching staff carefully match activities to suit the interests and developmental stage of individual children. Children make good progress across all the key areas of learning. Their linguistic development is notable as a result of focused activities, such as interactive storytelling, which helps children to develop and extend their vocabulary.
30. An effective framework is in place across the school to assess pupils' progress. Teachers check pupils' progress carefully and intervene promptly to support any pupil whose progress falls below expectations. Pupils understand their academic strengths and weaknesses and know how well they are doing in respect to their individual targets. Pupils are proud of their work and reflect maturely on completion of an assignment on what worked well and on improvements to their work.

31. The cross-curricular programme offers suitable opportunities for pupils to participate in sport and other activities. In response to pupil voice, leaders are exploring ways to expand the programme to include a wider range of activities.

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

32. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

33. Leaders actively encourage pupils' participation in physical education activities using the facilities on site and in competitions out of school. Through their lessons in physical and health education, pupils understand how exercise helps them to relax and how to establish healthy routines, particularly as they approach examinations. Pupils of all ages enjoy using the school grounds to exercise and play games during breaks in the school day.
34. The programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education covers all the required content and includes appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE). Leaders actively seek ways to ensure that the teaching of PSHE in the middle and high schools more closely matches the changing needs and concerns of pupils. In the lower school, pupils understand the importance of forming positive relationships and they readily learn and play together. Similarly in the early years, pupils are taught to work together and to share resources through carefully designed activities and games.
35. Pupils generally behave courteously as they move around the school campus. Whilst cases of serious misbehaviour or bullying are infrequent, some pupils are unkind or disrespectful to others, particularly when online. Leaders are aware of some of these concerns and seek to address them through assemblies and discussion. Leaders do not make sure that staff consistently have high expectations of pupil behaviour, and as a result, some staff do not deal with poor behaviour in the lower and middle schools effectively.
36. Most pupils enjoy good relationships with one another and with staff. Pupils are open in their conversations and value the support and encouragement offered by their peers. In preparation for examinations, staff offer informal workshops on study skills and revision techniques, and provide online tutorials in mathematics. Pupils appreciate the additional support of pastoral staff, who support pupils' mental health needs in the wellbeing centre.
37. Pupils enjoy opportunities to act as representatives to the school council, where issues of school life are discussed openly and lead to improvements. For example, pupils on the high school council successfully reorganised lunch arrangements to reduce the amount of disposable packaging and cutlery used. These roles and responsibilities allow pupils to develop leadership skills and boost their self-confidence.
38. Leaders emphasise the importance of self-reflection. They encourage pupils to take time to consider their wellbeing, and their unique place in the school community. Some pupils use the multi-faith prayer room and others find that the wellbeing centre offers a suitable place for quiet reflection.
39. Pupils' high-quality artwork shows a mature appreciation of qualities such as beauty and light, as well as revealing a sophisticated level of self-reflection as pupils seek to refine their work. Younger pupils learn to appreciate the beauty of nature through their lessons in the woodland area on the school site. Older pupils enjoy the peacefulness of the school grounds which afford them space to relax.

40. The school's premises and accommodation are well maintained and provide a modern and well-resourced learning environment. Health and safety and fire risk are managed effectively; drills are carried out regularly and pupils know what to do if the fire alarm sounds.
41. Suitable arrangements are in place for the care of pupils when they are unwell or for those who require first aid. An appropriate number of staff are trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid. Attendance and admissions registers are maintained effectively. The school reports to the local authority any pupil who leaves or joins at a non-standard time.

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

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

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

43. Many pupils have lived overseas, often in more than one country. They enjoy speaking and hearing about their own and others' experiences of different nations, faiths and cultural groups. Pupils draw on their backgrounds to inform their discussions in geography and business lessons, comparing and contrasting international examples to deepen their understanding. Pupils who speak other languages, offer weekly lessons to their peers in which they share and celebrate their customs and culture.
44. In history and PSHE lessons, pupils share their international perspective as they reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of British institutions and political systems, such as the workings of parliament. Pupils use democratic processes to choose representatives for the school councils and older pupils enjoy campaigning to be president of the council. Pupils respect the democratic principles embedded in the process.
45. Leaders create an open culture in school so that difference is understood and respected. The pupil-led group, 'Jags for Justice', promotes inclusion and understanding of difference through creating online and printed resources. Pupils feel confident to be themselves because they value the non-judgemental approach of staff and other pupils. Pupils of different genders and ages mix easily and enjoy each other's company around the campus.
46. Pupils work hard to engage with communities beyond school, through fundraising and direct action. Younger pupils enjoy entertaining elderly residents in local care homes and also collect items for a food bank. Older pupils are aware of the needs of others, through the school's humanitarian project focusing on schemes to support educational projects in Nepal. Pupils are also proud of their work with a local disability charity, where they coach wheelchair basketball. Pupils reflect on how these activities help them to gain a healthy perspective on issues such as local and global wealth and poverty.
47. Pupils are ambitious for their futures and feel well prepared for life after school. They are financially aware through lessons in business and economics and in PSHE where pupils learn how to manage their personal finances. Pupils receive appropriate guidance on careers from Year 7 upwards. High school pupils receive helpful advice on subject and university choices from well-informed staff. Pupils gain insights into the world of work and feel more certain about their next steps through visiting speakers who share information on a wide range of career-related topics.

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

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

Safeguarding

49. The school's safeguarding policy includes the most recent statutory guidance and offers clear information to help staff identify and report any safeguarding concerns, both within school and to external agencies.
50. Governors and leaders take a strategic view of safeguarding and are currently reviewing the arrangements to enable the designated safeguarding lead to have more direct contact with middle and high school pupils. Leaders are also reviewing ways to streamline and centralise the recording of pastoral data.
51. Leaders are knowledgeable and experienced in managing safeguarding concerns. Comprehensive and appropriate safeguarding training is provided annually for all staff and updated as required during the academic year. Detailed records of up-to-date staff training are kept. This training helps leaders and staff to understand the school's procedures, and to be confident about recognising and managing any safeguarding concerns. Staff are clear about how to report any concerns about a colleague, should the need arise.
52. The safeguarding governor regularly meets leaders, staff and pupils to discuss safeguarding systems, to check the procedures for the recruitment of staff, and the record of pre-appointment safeguarding checks. Governors receive termly updates on safeguarding concerns and complete an annual review to make sure that safeguarding systems are fit for purpose.
53. The appropriate safeguarding arrangements seen in the rest of the school are replicated in the early years. There is also a designated leader for safeguarding in the early years. The school has an appropriate policy for the use of staff mobile devices in the early years and this is rigorously enforced.
54. Pupils are taught how to stay safe on line through IT and PSHE lessons. The school has an effective system to filter and monitor internet use in school and is diligent in following up any concerns that arise from internet use. Pupils can use an online reporting system to register concerns or worries.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	ACS Egham International School
Department for Education number	936/6577
Registered charity number	1179820
Address	ACS Egham International School Woodlee London Road Egham Surrey TW20 0HS
Phone number	01784 430800
Email address	admissions@acs-schools.com
Website	www.acs-schools.com
Proprietor	ACS International Schools Ltd
Chair	Mr Robert MacNaughton
Headteacher	Mr Mark Wilson
Age range	4 to 18
Number of pupils	501
Date of previous inspection	28 January 2020

Information about the school

56. ACS International School Egham is a co-educational day school for pupils, located on the outskirts of Egham, Surrey. The school consists of the lower school for pupils aged 4 to 11, the middle school for pupils aged 11 to 14, and the high school for pupils aged 14 to 18, all on the same site. It is a member of a wider group of schools, owned by a limited company, whose directors act as governors of the school.
57. The school has identified 158 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
58. English is an additional language for 30 pupils.
59. The school states its aims are to encourage pupils to aim high, to explore new ideas, to act with kindness and compassion, to make a unique contribution to the world, and to adopt a global perspective.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

19 to 21 March 2024

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

61. 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

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