

School inspection report

26 to 28 March 2024

Kerem School

Norrice Lea

Hampstead Garden Suburb

London

N2 0RE

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. School leaders fulfil their statutory responsibilities and have the necessary skills and knowledge to ensure that all relevant Standards are met.
2. Governors play an active role in the school. A varied programme of termly scrutiny enables the board to maintain a robust oversight of the school and any emerging concerns. As such, governors support and challenge senior leaders to run the school effectively and mitigate any contextual risks to the pupils such as site security and the shared usage of the school premises.
3. Leaders have acted upon the recommendation from the previous inspection and improved the way pupils receive and respond to teacher feedback. They have an informed understanding of the school's current strengths and areas for improvement. In particular, leaders recognise that both teaching and learning and behaviour management during lessons could be more effective. Leaders have introduced a new behaviour policy and appraisal system to address these issues, but these procedures are not yet fully embedded.
4. Leaders listen to feedback from pupils and parents and communicate effectively with them through regular reporting and the provision of clear policies. Leaders are open to external advice and support and follow advice to help ensure a school community which supports equality and diversity.
5. Pupils benefit from a broad range of subjects and extra-curricular activities and trips. Individual tracking is in place to monitor progress and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are given the necessary support to allow them to make progress in line with their peers.
6. Pupils' physical, mental and emotional health are supported by a well-planned curriculum which is complemented by additional provision such as a 'wellbeing room' and both pupil and adult wellbeing leaders. The site is secure and risks are effectively identified and managed. Pupils feel safe and supported at school.
7. Leaders' make time for regular religious and cultural observance, developing pupils' sense of identity and spirituality. Leaders also ensure that pupils treat diverse faiths and cultures with equal reverence and respect. Leaders have created a clear remit for each of the school's pupil committees. As a result, pupils have a developed sense of responsibility towards their school, local and world community and are keen to support initiatives which require charity and service.
8. The early years setting sits within a secure and separate site to the rest of the school. It is an immersive and engaging environment which promotes all areas of learning. Adult to child ratios are generous and contribute to individual needs being supported and children making good progress towards the early learning goals.
9. Safeguarding has a high priority in the school. A suitably trained safeguarding leadership team and staff follow appropriate procedures to safeguard pupils and respond to any safeguarding concerns 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 should:

- strengthen behaviour management strategies used during lessons so that they are consistently effective
- ensure that teaching is consistently effective so that pupils remain engaged with their learning.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Governors ensure that leaders have the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities. The board scrutinise termly reports from the headteacher and senior leaders. Governors are directly involved in staff appraisal and in the monitoring of the school's health and safety and safeguarding procedures. As such, the governing body is able to influence and support the extent to which regulatory Standards are being met.
11. The board are divided into sub-committees and each committee is responsible for an aspect of pupils' wellbeing. Governors have a regular presence at the school and engage with the parent body through surveys and forums. As a result, governors have an accurate understanding of current outcomes for pupils and the next steps in improvement planning.
12. The previous inspection found marking and feedback to be an area for improvement. Since then, school leaders have rewritten the marking policy and pupils now receive more effective feedback which requires them to engage with and act upon individual targets. Leaders recognise their next steps are to ensure the quality of teaching and learning and classroom behaviour management is consistently high across the school. A team of middle leaders are beginning to support senior leaders through work scrutiny and lesson observations. In addition, new behaviour procedures have been introduced based on the principles of restorative practice, which centre around finding positive ways forward for those affected by behavioural incidents. However, these initiatives are still in development.
13. The school's improvement plan is structured to consider different aspects of pupils' wellbeing. Leaders use data as well as feedback from pupils and parents to inform their next steps effectively. For example, a recent change to the Year 5 curriculum has led to an improvement in standardised test results, and the introduction of a 'wellbeing room' provides additional support for pupils' physical and mental health.
14. Leaders ensure that the school complies with the Equality Act 2010. Reasonable adjustments are made for pupils who have SEND and pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school's 'Israel statement' celebrates the school's cultural and religious heritage whilst formally promoting tolerance and understanding towards all faiths.
15. Leaders understand and review the contextual risks of the school. They have responded robustly to the recently elevated national risk of extremist behaviour toward the Jewish community by increasing site security and introducing additional checks for visitors. Leaders have also facilitated additional mental health support for pupils affected by the conflict in Israel and the Middle East. Risks to pupils' emotional wellbeing have also been mitigated. For example, external experts have been used to deliver a series of workshops on topics such as anti-bullying and body image in response to concerns raised by the pupils and teachers.
16. Leaders ensure policies and procedures comply with regulatory requirements. Parents receive termly reports on their child's progress and attainment. There is a clear complaints procedure. Parental concerns are logged, monitored for patterns and trends and resolved in a timely manner.

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

17. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. A recent focus on academic attainment has led to a steady improvement in standardised scoring which illustrates that pupils are making good progress in their literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, leaders have made decisions designed to further promote pupils' creative and technical interests. For example, they have introduced opportunities to study the eye through 3D headsets or paint with robotic spheres.
19. Leaders have established tracking systems to measure pupils' progress within both age groups and subjects. This data informs termly pupil progress meetings which, in turn, lead to the generation of additional and revised provision to both support and challenge individuals or small groups. These include 'finger gym' and specific work to improve handwriting and understanding of the sounds that letters make. These measures have a positive impact on individual pupils' outcomes.
20. Pupils who have SEND receive effective support and appropriate resources to support their learning, so they also make good progress. Leaders set challenging and measurable termly targets through individual education plans, written and reviewed in collaboration with both pupils and parents. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive support from trained staff to improve their use of English. Leaders share key information with staff to promote a cohesive approach to support these pupils, which often involves one-to-one support.
21. The early years team promote the children's communication and language skills effectively. The setting is a vocabulary rich environment and data show that children are consistently ahead of age-related expectations in this area. Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well. Children are encouraged to engage with number constantly, whether through measuring digging beds in the garden or creating a passport number of their travel role play. Daily stories ensure that the children are regularly immersed in engaging narratives, and the early years library is a well-used resource which encourages children's love of learning.
22. The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent across the school. In the most effective lessons, teachers planned with the aptitudes and prior learning of the pupils in mind, additional adults are utilised to provide specific support and management of time and behaviour are effective. In these circumstances, pupils are able to acquire new knowledge or skills. Pupils are particularly engaged and self-motivated whenever their intellectual or creative interests are promoted. However, in some lessons, resources are not effectively used and the breadth of pupil aptitudes is not sufficiently considered. As a result, some pupils became disengaged and behaviour management was challenging.
23. Extra-curricular provision is well attended and highly regarded by the pupils. Leaders ensure that teams are rotated so that as many pupils as possible have the opportunity to represent the school in sports fixtures. The extra-curricular activities provided enable pupils to hone their skills in areas of interest to them. For example, pupils successfully requested the introduction of a backgammon club so that they could develop their proficiency in this game.

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

24. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

25. Leaders prioritise pupils' emotional wellbeing by ensuring there are carefully developed programmes of physical, personal and health education appropriate to their needs. The newly created 'wellbeing room' gives pupils a space to reflect on their emotions and strategies to manage them. Pastoral leaders and external experts in fields such as art or play therapy, work together to identify pupils who would benefit from additional support. Additional provision such as 'mindfulness' sessions and a construction brick club contribute towards wraparound mental health support. As a result, pupils feel safe and supported at school.
26. Leaders promote pupils' physical health. Pupils learn about loving and respectful relationships through an age-appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum. Parents are kept informed of the programme's content and the curriculum is well planned and responsive for the pupils' needs. For example, as a result of concerns raised by a member of staff, an external expert led a workshop on maintaining a healthy body image. Pupils learn about physical development and nutrition in science. The benefit of exercise is promoted through weekly sports clubs, physical education (PE) lessons and fixtures.
27. Levels of supervision are appropriate for pupils' ages and needs. Staff are deployed effectively to ensure that all pupils have adults nearby should they require support. High staff to child ratios are maintained in the early years.
28. Pupils behave well outside of the classroom. The introduction of new behaviour management systems and an increased presence of pastoral leaders during breaktimes has led to a reduction in the number of incidents of poor behaviour. Leaders respond effectively to behavioural concerns and any trends within these. For example, they introduced seminars about social media and internet safety for parents in response to growing concerns reported about online behaviour at home. Bullying is rare and is dealt with swiftly whenever it does occur. However, behaviour management during lessons is not as effective.
29. The school premises are secure and well maintained with any hazardous materials safely stored. Regular fire drills and fire prevention training as well as comprehensive monitoring of exits and fire safety equipment ensures that fire risk is minimised and mitigated.
30. There are suitable arrangements to care for pupils who are hurt or unwell including a designated medical room, securely stored medication and first aid provision for school trips. Staff receive regular and relevant training in first aid.
31. Admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained. Staff are vigilant to pupil absences, follow up any absenteeism and adhere to local authority procedures for in-year leavers or joiners.
32. Early years leaders have responded to findings from baseline data and enhanced opportunities for children to develop their physical health. A member of the team now has specific responsibility to track and promote fine motor skills and the introduction of new play equipment and a digging garden has seen the children become more active and their physical skills develop. The children's personal, social and emotional development is tracked and reported to parents. If necessary, staff

liaise with the wellbeing practitioner to offer additional support for children's emotional health. Children behave well. They are kind, considerate and respectful in their attitudes toward one another.

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

33. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

34. The school community's connection with its own faith underpins a deep sense of spiritualism in the pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils develop tolerance and empathy via a study of world religions from Nursery onward. They mark festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year and teachers of diverse faiths openly talk about their beliefs in school assemblies. An understanding of and respect for diversity are further promoted through events such as neuro-diversity week and the 'Faces of Israel' week where pupils learn about the different Jewish cultures and nationalities from around the world. As a result of the education about Jewish and other faiths, Pupils are respectful towards different backgrounds, cultures and religions.
35. Leaders encourage pupils to respect their responsibilities within modern British society. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme covers the principles and processes underpinning British institutions. Recent national events such as the Jubilee and Coronation were marked with whole school celebrations and the PSHE curriculum is also tailored to annual events such as the state opening of Parliament. Roles within the school's pupil committees are highly sought after and an application and democratic process elevate the importance of these positions. Pupils are encouraged to contribute and take responsibility from a young age. For example, leaders organised a whole school debate and vote for a change to the names of the school's houses. The culture of promoting responsibility supports Year 6 pupils in showing initiative in their prefect roles, such as by recently asking to accompany Year 1 pupils to their prayer book ceremony, 'Chagigat Siddur', so that they could celebrate this milestone as part of the school's 'buddy' system.
36. The three pupil committees oversee the schools charitable, environmental and community initiatives respectively. By setting up this structure, leaders have given the pupil committees clear purpose. The pupils are proud of the contributions they make to their school and wider society. Successful ventures include a choir trip to a local care home, closer involvement with the community synagogue and an eco-project to improve the environmental impact of the community.
37. The 'Kerem Principles of Learning' are centred around an education designed to promote the development of character which prepares pupils to be part of both British and Jewish society. The 'Kerem characteristics' are promoted throughout all aspects of school life and represent values such as curiosity and resilience which are representative of both the school's cultural and religious heritage. Ex-alumni regularly talk to the children about potential careers and the annual secondary schools fair offers an insight into the breadth of transition options available. Financial management skills are a regular feature of the curriculum. For example, pupils are taught to budget for a meal, read a bank statement and run the school stationery shop.
38. The early years sits within its own site and, as such, Nursery and Reception children are free to explore their setting and interact with one another throughout the day. Leaders deliberately set up activities to encourage collaboration and children therefore regularly hone their teamwork and conflict resolution skills. An understanding of the wider world is embedded within the curriculum. Children study world religions and recently engaged with a travel role play, demonstrating a developing knowledge of world heritage sites.

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

39. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

40. The governing body maintains a robust oversight of the school's safeguarding culture and arrangements. The governor responsible for safeguarding and designated safeguarding lead (DSL) regularly review safeguarding procedures, including those relating to safer recruitment, and ensure annual policy updates are in line with regulatory guidance. Contextual risk is discussed at every board meeting and mitigations are introduced whenever necessary. For example, leaders recently introduced different coloured lanyards for visitors to denote necessary supervision levels.
41. The safeguarding team provide regular, comprehensive and detailed safeguarding training for staff. As a result, staff are confident in following the school's safeguarding and whistleblowing procedures. Staff receive regular updates on issues such as early help assessment, the management of child-on-child abuse and the Prevent duty.
42. The DSL and deputy DSLs are suitably qualified and trained. The school follows appropriate safeguarding procedures including those relating to child-on-child abuse and allegations against staff. The safeguarding team readily engages with relevant local agencies for guidance and support. Referrals to children's services, the police or other safeguarding partners are made in a timely manner.
43. Pupils feel safe at school. Leaders ensure regular curriculum coverage of e-safety and the safeguarding team are well known to the pupils. As a result, pupils know who to share concerns with and are confident and knowledgeable about issues such as how to keep safe online. Leaders ensure that the internet is suitably filtered and that regular and effective monitoring takes place.
44. Those responsible for recruitment and conducting pre-employment checks understand the importance of their role. They are diligent in ensuring that all required suitability checks are carried out robustly and before staff commence working at the school. Checks are recorded fully and accurately on the single central record of appointments.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Kerem School
Department for Education number	302/6068
Registered charity number	1063815
Address	Kerem School Norrice Lea Hampstead Garden Suburb London N2 0RE
Phone number	0208 455 0909
Email address	admin@keremschool.co.uk
Website	www.keremschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Kerem School Governors
Chair	Mrs Sonia Abrahams
Headteacher	Ms Naomi Simon
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	159
Date of previous inspection	3 to 5 December 2019

Information about the school

46. Kerem school is an independent, co-educational Orthodox Jewish day school. Founded in 1948, the school occupies its original site within the Hampstead Garden Suburb United Synagogue. The school is a registered charity, which has appointed a board of governors to oversee the work of the school.
47. The school has 32 children in the early years, split between one Nursery and one Reception class.
48. The school has identified 25 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Three pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
49. English is an additional language for 15 pupils.
50. The school states it aims to be a modern Orthodox Jewish school that gives pupils excellent academic outcomes and a genuine love for Judaism, Torah, and Mitzvot. It seeks to ensure that Jewish and British values permeate every aspect of school life. The school intends to infuse pupils with a love of Israel and a connection with its people. The school aims for pupils to experience nurturing learning environments that offer an innovative and engaging curriculum that, year on year, is moulded to the interests and needs of the cohort. Aspirational academic excellence is a key priority. The school aims to guide this by the 'Kerem characteristics of learning' which are collaboration, curiosity, developing good middot, flexibility of mind, humour, initiative, persistence, resilience, reflectiveness, and risk taking.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

26 to 28 March 2024

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

52. 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.

53. 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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