



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Tower House School

June 2023

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School's Details

School	Tower House School			
DfE number	318/6009			
Registered charity number	1068844			
Address	Tower House School 188 Sheen Lane East Sheen London SW14 8LF			
Telephone number	020 88763323			
Email address	admissions@thsboys.org.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Greg Evans			
Chair of governors	Mr Antony Phillips			
Proprietor	Tower House School Ltd			
Age range	4 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	181			
	EYFS	18	Juniors	62
			Seniors	101
Inspection dates	13 to 15 June 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Tower House School is an independent day school located in a residential area in Sheen, West London. It is registered as a single-sex school for male pupils and has a charitable foundation whose trustees provide governance. It is accommodated in a mixture of modern purpose-built buildings and a converted house surrounding a secure enclosed play area. The school is organised as the Junior School for pupils in Reception to Year 3, and the Senior School for pupils from Year 4 to Year 8. Since the previous inspection the school has completed a new building accommodating additional classrooms and a new multi-purpose hall. The chair of governors was appointed September 2022.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to provide academic excellence within a happy, stimulating and rich learning environment, where all pupils are treated as individuals. It seeks to give pupils time to learn about themselves as learners, whilst helping them to develop their skills of thinking, debating and inquiry. The school aims to encourage pupils to develop personal responsibility and compassion for others.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from mainly professional family backgrounds living within a three-mile radius of the school. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 45 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and autism of whom 19 receive additional specialist support. Two pupils have an educational, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language for 31 pupils, none of whom require additional support. The school provides enrichment activities for those pupils identified as the most able in the school's population, to broaden and extend their talents and prepare them for senior school scholarship examinations where required.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are

maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils.

2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils make excellent overall progress and achieve significantly well.
 - Pupils are highly motivated and engaged learners.
 - Pupils are extremely numerate and confident in mathematics.
 - Pupils are erudite and have well-developed communication skills.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils have high levels of self-awareness for their age.
 - Pupils are effective decision-makers.
 - Pupils have strong social awareness and show empathy towards others in need.
 - Pupils are respectful, courteous and hold themselves to high standards of behaviour.

Recommendation

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
- Deepen and broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of how Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be used to support their learning across all areas of the curriculum.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils make strong progress and their overall attainment is excellent. Data provided by the school confirm that in the last two years almost all Year 6 pupils achieved above expectations compared to those taking the same tests nationally. During their time in the EYFS almost all pupils show a good level of development in all their early learning goals. These high levels of achievement are a result of the expert and skilful teaching provided by staff. Pupils with SEND make strong progress in relation to their abilities, as a result of the focused and individualised support they receive. Pupils make excellent short-term progress in lessons, as seen in Reception children's rapidly developing knowledge of sounds and letter patterns. At the end of Year 8 in 2022 all pupils gained places at academically selective independent senior schools, with a quarter of pupils gaining scholarships for sport, academic

achievement, art, and music. The school successfully fulfils its aim to nurture academic excellence within a happy, stimulating and rich learning environment.

- 3.6 Pupils are highly motivated and active participants in their own learning. They engage with high levels of focus in lessons. Year 2 pupils' focused attention in art enabled them to follow complex instructions to successfully begin to use perspective in their drawings. They undertake set tasks with enthusiasm achieving a high volume of work in lessons across all subjects. This high level of productivity was seen when Year 7 pupils shared with inspectors their extensive writing in English across a range of genres. Pupils' willingness to risk making mistakes, encouraged by teachers, makes a significant contribution to their overall success. Pupils collaborate successfully, often giving one another high levels of mutual support. For example, Year 2 pupils in mathematics helped each other without prompting whilst completing work on giving directions. Pupils successfully work independently to meet their own needs. When given the opportunities, pupils enthusiastically take ownership of their learning, as when Year 8 pupils completed fieldwork projects in geography. They readily take steps to deepen or confirm their understanding.
- 3.7 Pupils are highly capable in mathematics, demonstrating strong understanding. Pupils have excellent mental arithmetic skills and secure knowledge as shown by Year 4 pupils' rapid and correct recall of challenging multiplication tables. They complete large numbers of calculations in a short time with consistent high levels of accuracy. In discussion with inspectors, Year 7 pupils described the satisfaction they gained from accurately resolving four step algebraic equations. They have strong knowledge and understanding of a broad range of mathematical concepts and readily choose to solve challenging number problems. For example, Year 4 pupils accurately calculated the correct ratios of differently coloured balloons in a cluster. Pupils frequently apply their secure understanding of mathematics across other areas of the curriculum. Year 6 pupils in art accurately measured and drew lines to create images showing perspective. Pupils' deep mathematical understanding for their age is strongly supported by teaching that encourages pupils to reflect on and explore different ways to undertake calculations. Senior pupils have been successful in national mathematics challenge competitions, several achieving at very high levels.
- 3.8 Pupils have outstanding communication skills. They are articulate, readily expressing their thoughts with confidence. Year 2 pupils in literacy spoke with clarity and feeling, using rich and varied vocabulary when describing a picture of a dark forest. Pupils' acute listening skills are a significant contributory factor to their overall success in school. Reception children's focused attention in literacy to their teacher's instructions enabled them to successfully write simple sentences using new words. They listen effectively to one another, which enables them to debate ideas effectively. Year 4 pupils in PSHE successfully discussed their own genetic characteristics with their peers, listening intently to one another and responding sensitively to what they heard. Pupils are enthusiastic readers. In discussions with inspectors, older pupils described their enjoyment of reading and the wide range of challenging and interesting books they are reading at the moment. This success is supported by a schoolwide culture of reading, nurtured by leaders and the school's welcoming and well-resourced library. Consequently, pupils' comprehension skills and their ability to infer information from text is excellent. For example, Year 6 pupils' geography work demonstrated clear understanding of the scale of impact on communities of natural disasters, such as hurricanes. Pupils writing skills are highly developed, showing a strong understanding of writing for different purposes. Year 7 pupils shared excellent examples of persuasive writing in discussion with inspectors, which evidenced their extensive and sophisticated knowledge of vocabulary.
- 3.9 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are extensive for their age. Year 7 pupils in science successfully determined the amount of pressure they were exerting on the ground through their shoes. Pupils show an excellent questioning approach in history, as seen when Year 8 pupils successfully identified potential causes and consequences of the Cuban missile crisis. Pupils also have excellent geographical understanding. Year 5 pupils successfully identified important legacies of the London Olympics. Pupils are highly creative in the arts, as seen in the excellent standard of pupil art

on display around the school. Year 8 pupils' scholarship artwork on display shows exceptional finesse in their charcoal portrayals of elephants. All Year 8 pupils have completed a national arts award. Many pupils are outstanding musicians for their age. The excellent physical skills demonstrated by many pupils are supported by the wide range and high standard of sporting opportunities provided by school leaders.

- 3.10 Pupils have strongly developed study skills. They enjoy the challenge of considering new ideas by actively engaging in discussions. Year 8 pupils demonstrated complex thinking and reasoning whilst energetically debating a philosophical conundrum during a registration period. Year 4 pupils gave well-reasoned explanations for their varied approaches to solving a time puzzle in mathematics. Year 5 pupils successfully analysed sentences in French to identify and then correct the mistakes they found. Year 2 pupils demonstrated strong skills of hypothesis when energetically debating the possible reasons for the match-stick style of Lowry's industrial scenes.
- 3.11 Pupils achieve great success outside the formal curriculum. A significant proportion of pupils learn musical instruments, achieving high standards in grade examinations. Many take part in the numerous opportunities to perform at school. Year 3 pupils sang with expression and actions, successfully keeping in time and in tune whilst preparing for the end of term performance. Annually, all pupils participate in the numerous performances, for example in the main school drama production, performing to a high standard for their age. Pupils are accomplished in team sports achieving regular success in fixtures against similar schools, for example in rugby, football, cricket and triathlon. Individual pupils from the school have been selected to play at county level in cricket and badminton, whilst others attend football academies. Year 7 pupils achieved considerable success in a local school's poetry slam. Pupils have gained awards for their environmental awareness as a result of leaders' encouragement of pupils to take an interest in conservation. For example, Year 5 pupils were finalists in a sustainable village project for local London schools.
- 3.12 Pupils are highly competent users of computers, showing secure understanding of how to use a range of applications that support learning both at school and at home across several areas of the curriculum. Year 6 pupils made effective use of an online sketching application to create house designs. Year 2 pupils in mathematics successfully formulated instructions to guide a virtual robot around a road map to various destinations. Older pupils successfully use coding to create a range of applications. Pupils make effective use of online research to support their learning in some subject areas, for example when Year 4 pupils researched animal habitats in science. However, counter to the innate thirst for knowledge that they so strongly exhibit, pupils do not routinely default to using digital resources across the wider curriculum.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils demonstrate strong self-awareness for their age. They are comfortable with making mistakes having a mature understanding that this is part of the learning process. They are determined to improve and will readily make the effort to ask for guidance from staff on what they need to do to achieve their ambitions. For example, children in Reception worked with determination to write sentences correctly during a literacy session. Pupils show resilience when faced with difficulty. Pupils are quietly self-confident having a sophisticated understanding for their age that over-confidence can be seen by some as arrogance. Year 6 pupils in PSHE showed clear and thoughtful awareness that striving to be perfect might lead to poor self-confidence. They stated that being the perfect you is about being yourself and not trying to be like anyone else.
- 3.15 Pupils are thoughtful and considered decision-makers, often making appropriate choices in learning. They make creative choices, showing imagination and aesthetic skill in art and design work, as when Year 5 pupils made stylish design choices using 3D computer software to create exciting car designs. Pupils make thoughtful choices of activities to attend, recognising that sometimes they have to

prioritise in order to make better overall progress. Older pupils in discussion with inspectors, gave thoughtful explanations for their choices of senior schools, recognising the importance of finding a school that suited their individual needs and interests.

- 3.16 Pupils' social development is excellent. They recognise and admire one another's successes, understanding that each individual's different abilities will lead to alternative ways to achieve. For example, Year 4 pupils in PSHE successfully found ways to describe themselves in distinctive ways that others found both surprising, but credible. They collaborate successfully in joint enterprises. Pupils maintain strong and supportive relationships with one another and staff. Older pupils readily offer support for younger pupils, for example in paired reading activities. Year 2 pupils in house activities are successfully enabled to work alongside older pupils up to Year 8 to solve problems. Pupils have an acute awareness of their privilege. Year 8 pupils, in discussion with inspectors, reflected with humility on the diverse circumstances they experienced on their recent tour to Barbados and its emotional impact on them. The school successfully meets its aim to encourage pupils to develop personal responsibility and compassion for others.
- 3.17 Pupils are well-behaved as observed in lessons, breaktimes and during lunch. They respond rapidly to instruction, engaging with enthusiasm and good will, helping to create a warm and welcoming environment. For example, Reception children in literacy paid close attention to their teacher's directions in order to accurately write simple sentences on white boards. They are extremely respectful of adults, showing high levels of courtesy and manners in their interactions. They are not, however, overly deferent, maintaining a cheerful and open manner with each other and staff. They show respect for the rules and will recognise rapidly when they have made an error of judgement. They frequently seek to make amends, often being able to do so before the intervention of staff. Pupils relish debating and are able to disagree well, showing respect for differing opinions and alternative perspectives. Pupils have a high regard for fair play, a trait strongly modelled by staff and leaders. In questionnaire responses, almost all parents agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour.
- 3.18 Pupils throughout the school are very inclusive of one another and show considerable respect in their interactions. During breaktimes, the pupils successfully co-ordinate a range of different games and activities around each other within the playground, showing high levels of awareness of others to avoid clashes. They have a suitable knowledge of the values that underpin national life, such as democracy and tolerance, supported by visits from the police and the fire service. They have a good awareness that others often have distinct needs that are different to their own, both visible and hidden, and readily adapt their approach to accommodate these in their games. They show an awareness of different cultural traditions, as seen in Year 6 pupils' excellent artwork, in the style of the American artist Lois Mailou Jones, representing the silhouettes of African women in traditional dress.
- 3.19 Pupils have a well-developed spiritual understanding. They have a deep, for their age, aesthetic appreciation as seen in their many thoughtful and creative responses to art tasks displayed around the school. They show strong ethical consideration, recognising injustice, and willingly engaging in activities to support ethical causes. For example, they show concern and consideration for a number of causes in the wide range of charities they choose to support in their forms, such as organisations providing water resources to poor communities in Africa and charities providing food to those in need locally. Pupils engage strongly with philosophical discussions, being able to think about issues from a variety of perspectives. For example, Year 8 pupils' mature consideration for why a picture of a smokers' pipe was not a pipe showed a willingness to work through cognitive dissonance to find new perspectives. Pupils have a strong understanding of the non-material aspects of life, finding beauty in the set-up of a chess board, a perfectly surfable wave and the natural world. They recognise the importance of silence and quiet contemplation and for those with faith, the value of prayer.
- 3.20 Pupils contribute strongly to the life of the school community. They readily engage with fundraising activities organised both by other pupils and school leaders. Year 8 pupils successfully take ownership for organising an annual day to raise funds for a national charity, organising fun events for all the pupils

to engage with. Pupils engage thoughtfully with the school council and readily offer their ideas on how school life could adapt and improve. This is most notable in their desire to see an increased response to environmental concerns such as recycling. Pupils, through the school council, have successfully agreed a code of conduct for the new changing rooms. Whilst some questionnaire responses from pupils, later explored in discussions with inspectors, suggested some pupils' frustration that not all of their ideas had been taken up by the school, inspection evidence confirms that pupils have been successful in bring about changes, for example by bringing improvements to the school lunch menu.

- 3.21 Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy. They have a mature understanding of the need for balance in their lives and recognise the importance this plays in maintaining good mental health. They understand the importance of a balanced diet. Year 1 pupils at lunchtime made their food choices based not just on what they wanted to eat, but also on what they knew they should be eating. Pupils understand the dangers posed by excessive exposure to sunlight and precautions they need to take to minimise the risk of skin cancer. They maintain strong physical health, participating readily in the many sporting activities offered throughout the school day, both in the curriculum and as activities. They readily seek support when they need it, showing resilience and maturity in their attitudes to meeting challenges. In the questionnaire responses, almost all parents agreed that the school's relationships and sex education programme prepares their child effectively for life in modern society and encourages their child to adopt a healthy lifestyle. This is confirmed by inspection evidence. Pupils have a strong awareness of how to stay safe, both online and in the physical world, for example, when cycling to school.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Matthew Lovett	Reporting inspector
Mr Norman Patterson	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, SofH school)
Mr Ian Sterling	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)