

Material change inspection report

23 June 2025

Polwhele House School

Polwhele House

Truro

Cornwall

TR4 9AE

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'.

Inspection outcome

The school has requested a material change request to amend the age range from pupils aged 2 to 14 to 2 to 16.

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school Standards if the material change is implemented. It is recommended that the material change be approved.

Inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

ISSR paragraphs 2, 2A, 3 and 4

1. The curriculum is suitably documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. These include appropriate plans for a curriculum for pupils aged 14 to 16. The school has created a suitable careers programme as part of the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum which is also includes plans for supporting older pupils if the material change is approved.
2. There is a suitable programme in place for relationships and sex education (RSE). The programme reflects regulatory requirements. Leaders have made appropriate provision to ensure that the RSE curriculum is appropriate for pupils aged 14 to 16 if the material change is implemented. Leaders provide suitable training to help ensure that staff have the knowledge to teach RSE effectively.
3. Teachers use effective behaviour management strategies and suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place. Leaders ensure that the curriculum and teaching help enable pupils to make good progress. Teachers plan lessons that take account of pupils' prior learning and attainment. Senior leaders have recruited specialist subject staff where required to teach the older pupils.
4. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is effectively managed. The school's behaviour policy is implemented consistently to promote positive behaviour and a culture of mutual respect. Senior leaders have adapted the behaviour policy to accommodate pupils up to the age of 16.
5. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

ISSR paragraph 5

6. The school's principles and values are actively promoted by leaders and understood by pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils understand fundamental British values through the curriculum and wider experiences. Leaders promote a positive culture of respect, tolerance and empathy towards the needs of all. Interactions between pupils, and between pupils and staff are positive and respectful.
7. Pupils understand the importance of rules and laws to ensure equality and fairness within society. School leaders have set up a committee to allow pupils' opinions to be heard. Leaders provide a range of opportunities, such as assemblies, form time and PSHE lessons to enable pupils to explore topics such as sustainability and current affairs. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of different cultures and international affairs. Leaders monitor the curriculum and teaching to ensure that pupils are presented with a balanced view.
8. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR Paragraphs 7(a) and (b)

9. Leaders ensure an appropriate safeguarding policy is in place and that it is implemented effectively. All staff, including the school's safeguarding leaders, are suitably trained. Staff receive regular information and safeguarding updates to keep them well informed about matters of safeguarding. The designated safeguarding leader (DSL) and deputy designated safeguarding leaders are knowledgeable about their roles and work effectively with external agencies to ensure pupils get the help and support that they need. Staff are vigilant and report concerns relating to welfare of pupils without delay.
10. Leaders have introduced effective procedures to monitor and filter the use of the internet by pupils and staff. Senior leaders receive immediate notification if users are attempting to access inappropriate online content. Leaders work effectively with children's services and the police. Safeguarding and pastoral staff work together effectively to consider how best to meet the needs of individual pupils. Safeguarding records are detailed and stored securely and referrals to external agencies are made promptly. Concerns relating to the behaviour of adults working in the school are dealt with in a timely manner and in accordance with statutory guidance.
11. Governors maintain effective oversight of the school's safeguarding procedures and their implementation. Regular meetings take place between the governors and the school's safeguarding team to review the arrangements that are in place to safeguard pupils. This includes arrangements for when pupils are off site and attending school trips. An annual safeguarding review takes place and any findings are actioned promptly. Governors ensure that leaders act promptly on any recommendations to ensure that the school maintains a positive culture of safeguarding
12. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

13. Particulars of the school's safeguarding arrangements are published on the school's website.
14. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standard if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraphs 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c), 34(2)

15. Governors ensure that senior leaders demonstrate good skills and knowledge. Leaders and managers fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that all the Standards are met consistently, and wellbeing of the pupils is actively promoted.
16. Governors have ensured that leaders' plans to extend the age range of pupils are robust and take account of the needs of pupils at the school. They carefully assessed the risks associated with the change and have put suitable control measures in place.
17. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

School details

School	Polwhele House School
Department for Education number	908/6076
Address	Polwhele House School Polwhele House Truro Cornwall TR4 9AE
Phone number	01872 273011
Email address	office@polwhelehouse.co.uk
Website	www.polwhelehouse.co.uk
Proprietor	Polwhele House Ltd
Chair	Mr Robert Tasker
Headteacher	Mrs Emma Edwards
Age range	2 to 14
Number of pupils	89
Number of children in the early years	12
Date of previous inspection	21 to 23 January 2025

Information about the school

18. Polwhele House School is a co-educational day school located in Truro, Cornwall. Since the previous inspection a new board of directors has been appointed. The school comprises early years provision, a junior school and three classes of pupils in the secondary school, in Years 7 to 9.
19. The early years comprises one Nursery class and one Reception class.
20. The school has identified 34 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
21. The school does not have any pupils for whom English is an additional language.
22. The school states that its aims are to enable pupils to fulfil their academic potential and to find their special talent within a friendly, stimulating and caring environment. The school aspires to help each child to feel valued and to develop strong moral values that will support them in their future lives.

Purpose of the material change inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection following an application made by the school to the Department for Education to make a material change to the school's provision. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about whether the school is likely to meet the Independent School Standards if the material change is implemented.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

23 June 2025

23. One reporting inspector visited the school for one day.

24. Inspection activities included:

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- tour of the school site
- discussions with the chair of governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils.

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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