

# School inspection report

31 October 2023 to 2 November 2023

## **Alpha Preparatory School**

19–21 Hindes Road  
Harrow  
Middlesex  
HA1 1SH

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 fulfil their responsibility to promote pupils' wellbeing effectively. The governing body has appointed leaders with the required skills and knowledge to carry out their role. Leaders report to the board to inform their oversight.
2. Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have overseen a number of initiatives, which have had a demonstrable impact on the wellbeing of pupils. These include increasing the breadth of the curriculum and extra-curricular provision and ensuring that suitable emotional and mental health support are in place. These have improved the pupils' knowledge and skills alongside promoting their self-esteem and self-confidence.
3. A broad and balanced curriculum affords the pupils opportunities to develop their linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological and creative knowledge and skills. They develop additional skills from a range of activities, including sports and performing arts. Leaders promote good progress throughout the school underpinned by a detailed understanding of the needs of pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive targeted support. Pupils achieve consistent success in gaining entrance to a wide range of selective and non-selective schools. Leaders provide specialist support for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), which improves their understanding and fluency.
4. Children in the early years make good progress due to a curriculum which is carefully planned to match their needs. Leaders know the children well and create a supportive learning environment where children feel secure and grow in confidence.
5. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and generally plan their lessons to meet the needs of pupils. For some teaching, activities and teaching strategies do not engage and motivate pupils, and their progress is less consistent.
6. Leaders promote pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing effectively. Sport, science lessons, relationships education and online safety lessons help pupils to understand how to stay healthy and safe. Leaders have recently enhanced support for pupils' mental health. When specific pastoral issues arise, leaders ensure there is suitable support to address the issues, which are informed by the views of pupils. Pupils behave well and are generally courteous and kind to each other.
7. There are effective arrangements in place for health and safety and for fire safety. The site is secure, staff are suitably trained, and supervision and first aid arrangements are appropriate. Leaders are aware of the contextual risks relevant to the school, and have developed effective local partnerships to support their work and to ensure they remain aware of the latest guidance.
8. Leaders successfully promote an inclusive environment. The pupils are tolerant and respectful of diversity. They develop an appropriate understanding of the world beyond the school and an understanding of the values intrinsic to British society. Their charitable work and engagement with the local community help them to develop a sense of citizenship. The school's life skills programme prepares pupils well for senior school and life beyond.

9. There are effective safeguarding arrangements, which are based on the latest statutory and local guidance. Staff are suitably trained and respond promptly when concerns are raised. All required recruitment checks are in place.

### **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 teaching activities engage and motivate pupils, so they apply themselves and make consistently good progress in all lessons.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Governors have appointed senior leaders with the appropriate skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. The governing board is made aware of their regulatory responsibilities through presentations by senior leaders, who also provide them with detailed reports. These enable governors to maintain an appropriate oversight of the school. Governors undertake external training in safeguarding and health and safety. Governors are visible to the school community, including when they attend at assemblies and the annual prizegiving.
11. Leaders ensure that pupils receive a broad and balanced education, which instils in pupils a sense of civic responsibility and kindness. They have created a detailed tracking systems which allow them to monitor pupils' academic and pastoral needs. As a result, leaders provide effective support and promote the wellbeing of pupils.
12. Since the previous inspection, leaders have drawn up a detailed development plan. This has led to initiatives to increase the breadth of the curriculum and extra-curricular provision, in areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). They have increased the support for the emotional and mental health of pupils. Leaders are currently reviewing ways to assess the impact these changes have made to the wellbeing of pupils.
13. Leaders in the early years setting know the children well and meet their needs effectively. Teaching is carefully planned so that the children make good progress and lay down foundations for their next stage of education.
14. Leaders have also provided additional opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school community. These include planning and leading house assemblies and clubs, and a wider representation of pupils on the school council. These measures make pupils feel their input is valued and they become more active members of their community.
15. A wide range of information is either accessible or provided to parents. Relevant policies and inspection reports are made available to parents. There is a suitable complaints procedure and parents receive a clear and timely response to any concerns. The complaints log is monitored regularly to identify any areas for improvement.
16. Effective risk assessment procedures are implemented for school activities, including trips and outings. They accurately identify specific ways to support pupils who may have particular vulnerabilities. Leaders and staff update their own skills and knowledge by attending regular training through local partners and external training agencies. As a result, training relating to areas such as safeguarding, fire safety and first aid is kept up to date.
17. School leaders meet their responsibilities in relation to the Equality Act. An accessibility plan is in place which identifies any adjustments to curricular provision, as well as access to the school site. There are accurate admissions and attendance registers, and the school makes the required reports when pupils join the school or move to other schools.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Leaders provide a broad and balanced curriculum suited to the ages and aptitudes of the pupils. The curriculum has recently been reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of pupils. There is a core focus on numeracy and literacy, which is enhanced through the addition of subjects such as modern foreign languages, science, technology and engineering as pupils progress through the school.
19. Pupils are both creative and expressive in subjects such as PE, music, drama and modern languages. They make particularly good progress in English and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). This is due to a particular curriculum focus on these subjects by leaders, and effective teaching. Pupils have been successful in national science competitions and gained awards to senior schools.
20. An effective assessment framework tracks pupils' performance using nationally standardised test data. Leaders use this to monitor pupils' progress. Pupils make good progress, and they often exceed predictions based upon their starting points.
21. Leaders ensure that provision for pupils who have SEND accurately identifies and meets their needs. They use assessment data to monitor the effectiveness of this support, ensuring pupils make good progress.
22. Pupils who have EAL receive specialist support to improve their understanding and fluency. Younger pupils have opportunities to extend their language and social communication skills. Older pupils learn to determine nuance and idioms in English writing.
23. Children in the early years settle in quickly and apply themselves enthusiastically to their learning because staff know them as individuals and provide a welcoming environment. They make good progress because staff plan activities which meet children's interest and needs. Most children reach their expected developmental milestones.
24. Teachers typically have the necessary knowledge, skills and technique to maintain the pupils' engagement. They manage behaviour effectively and monitor progress, offering support and challenge where it is needed. At times, the planned activities do not engage and motivate pupils, and as a result progress is not always consistent.
25. The extra-curricular activities programme helps pupils to develop a broad range of skills and interests. These sessions are well attended, and pupils from Reception to Year 6 learn together as they engage with clubs ranging from origami to chess.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

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

26. Leaders promote pupils' physical health effectively. Pupils learn to stay healthy through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum, as well as by taking part in a range of sporting and other physical activities. They apply themselves well in these, as teachers plan engaging activities and pupils value the opportunities to represent their school in sports fixtures. Children in the early years develop their fine and gross motor skills well through music, dance and outdoor play sessions.
27. School leaders give priority to the pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing. Recent changes include the creation of support sessions, such as an art therapy group. 'Fantastic Fridays' and 'Terrific Tuesdays' promote the importance of wellbeing across the school. Pupils know each other well and readily help each other, such as at the 'friendship stop', where anyone in need of a playmate receives support. Pupils behave well. Bullying is rare and staff deal with it effectively if it occurs. There are effective supervision routines throughout the school day to manage pupils' behaviour and safety.
28. As a result of school leaders promoting the pupils' physical and mental health and their emotional wellbeing, the pupils are self-aware and self-confident young people. All children receive age-appropriate relationships education. They are respectful and considerate in their behaviour.
29. Staff in the early years setting model considerate behaviour and kindness, which children observe and seek to emulate. As a result, children learn to respect each other, take turns and share items such as play equipment. Children are well supervised at all times.
30. The site and buildings are well maintained, and any issues are promptly addressed. The site is secure, and health and safety checks are carried out regularly. Fire drills are logged and appropriate fire prevention measures are monitored by specialist contractors. Minor health and safety matters raised during the inspection, such as adequate drinking water signage, were quickly rectified.
31. The admissions register contains the required information, and school leaders follow their procedures for providing information about joiners and leavers. The attendance register is up to date, checked daily and any unexplained absence investigated. Leaders effectively promote high levels of attendance.

The first-aid record includes concise details on pupils' medical needs, including any allergies, and accidents are recorded and analysed half termly for any trends or patterns. First-aid support is readily accessible and there are adequate facilities for any pupil who falls ill. All staff are well trained in paediatric first aid and fire prevention.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.



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

32. Leaders ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and understand the ways in which they can make a positive contribution to society. Leaders promote respect and understanding of other cultures through an effective PSHE and assembly programme. In both planned and incidental activities, teachers identify broader social and moral themes, such as how societies respond to migration.
33. Pupils respect and value the diversity within their school and wider society. They show sensitivity, empathy and respect towards those around them. Older year groups develop their understanding through activities such as producing a journal about the experiences of someone aboard the Empire Windrush and a mathematics display on Islamic geometric patterns. Children in the early years understand that all families can be different and enjoy finding out about the traditions and festivals of a range of faiths. Teachers are swift to respond on the very rare occasions that disrespect towards others is shown.
34. Leaders ensure pupils have a secure understanding of democracy and public institutions. Pupils learn that their voice has value as they elect council members and suggest ideas for clubs. This is supported by visits to the Houses of Parliament and local places of worship. A range of visiting speakers includes members of the medical profession and local religious leaders. Pupils understand the importance of rules and laws in society and develop their own class behavioural charters. Through their contributions to the local community, including performances at a local care home, donations to the local foodbank and maintaining an ongoing partnership with a local charity, pupils gain a sense of citizenship.
35. Children in the early years are encouraged to develop independent routines, such as organising their coats and other belongings. They understand that rules exist to protect people and learn why it is important for people to undertake various roles in society, such as those working in the emergency and medical services.
36. To support their transition to life in senior school and beyond, school leaders promote increasing levels of independence, responsibility and collaboration as the pupils move through the year groups. Pupils are introduced to handling money, and their economic financial awareness increase as they engage in projects such as financial planning for a garden suitable for people who face physical challenges.
37. Older pupils plan and run their own house assemblies, eco-initiatives and clubs. They are introduced to possible career options. They debate how to tackle real-world problems such as the challenge of reducing coastal erosion in geography. They also undertake a life-skills course with skills from car maintenance, ironing and sewing to engaging in polite conversation.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

## Safeguarding

38. Leaders ensure that effective arrangements are in place to promote the welfare of pupils. Governors undertake appropriate training and carry out the required annual review of safeguarding procedures.
39. The designated safeguarding leaders (DSLs) undertake training with the local safeguarding children board (LSCB) and are aware of contextual risks in the local area. All staff have completed appropriate safeguarding training and demonstrate a secure understanding of how to recognise and report any concerns, including issues such as child-on-child abuse. The safeguarding team understand and follow the referral procedures where required.
40. Safeguarding records are properly maintained and kept securely. Low-level concerns are managed in an appropriate manner.
41. The PSHE programme teaches pupils how to stay safe online. There are suitable filtering and monitoring arrangements.
42. The school has a secure recruitment process. All necessary checks are undertaken and recorded, supported by corresponding evidence in staff files.
43. The safeguarding policy has recently been updated. Some minor administrative errors were rectified before the end of the inspection.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding**

All the relevant Standards are met.

## School details

<b>School</b>	Alpha Preparatory School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	310/6050
<b>Registered charity number</b>	312640
<b>Address</b>	19–21 Hindes Road Harrow Middlesex HA1 1SH
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://alpha.harrow.sch.uk">alpha.harrow.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:sec@alpha.harrow.sch.uk">sec@alpha.harrow.sch.uk</a>
<b>Proprietor</b>	Alpha Preparatory School Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Karen Brookes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Padraic Fahy
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	128
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 November 2019

## Information about the school

44. Alpha Preparatory School, located in Harrow, Middlesex, is a co-educational day school for pupils from Reception to Year 6. The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors.
45. There are 29 children in the early years comprising one Nursery class and one Reception class. There are currently 13 children in the Nursery and 16 children in Reception.
46. The school has identified nine pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
47. English is an additional language for 18 pupils.
48. The school states that its aims are to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which gives priority to literacy, numeracy and science. It seeks to provide a happy, safe and disciplined environment and to encourage in children a sense of responsibility and respect for the values and beliefs of others. It endeavours to help children develop a sense of pride, teach children the value of good manners and the need to accept responsibility for their own actions. It aims to adhere to the school's Christian tradition but, at the same time, develop an understanding and respect for the beliefs of others.

## Inspection details

**Inspection dates** 31 October 2023 to 2 November 2023

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

50. Inspection activities included:

- observations of lessons and activities
- discussions with senior leaders and staff
- meetings with groups of pupils
- reviews of pupils' work with pupils and staff
- a meeting with governors
- a tour of the school site
- scrutiny of documentation supplied by the school.

51. 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](http://www.isi.net).

#### Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

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