

# School inspection report

Date 12 to 14 March 2024

## **Lime House School**

Holm Hill

Dalston

Carlisle

Cumbria

CA5 7BX

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'.

## Contents

<b>SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
AREAS FOR ACTION .....	5
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS.....	5
<b>SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....</b>	<b>6</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....	7
<b>SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....</b>	<b>8</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....	8
<b>SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....</b>	<b>9</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....	10
<b>SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....</b>	<b>11</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY .....	11
<b>SAFEGUARDING .....</b>	<b>12</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING .....	12
<b>SCHEDULE OF UNMET STANDARDS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Safeguarding .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<b>SCHOOL DETAILS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>INSPECTION DETAILS .....</b>	<b>17</b>

## Summary of inspection findings

1. In line with the school aims, leaders provide a caring environment in which pupils are nurtured as individuals. Pupils are well supported by staff, both academically and socially. Pupils respond positively and embrace the opportunities the school affords.
2. Boarding is well managed and supports pupils' personal development. Boarders appreciate the strong sense of community that pervades each boarding house. Pupils recognise the benefits from being part of a culturally diverse school.
3. The school provides a balanced curriculum which is adapted for pupils' individual needs. The specialist support provided for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) is highly effective. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported by specialist staff. All groups of pupils make good progress as a result of the effective teaching they receive.
4. An appropriate personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme is in place. Respect and tolerance of others is well promoted through the curriculum. Not all pupils show a well-developed understanding of the characteristics protected under law, including those of race, sex and gender.
5. Teaching is generally well planned, and resources are used effectively to support pupils' learning. Pupils' engagement levels within lessons vary and a lack of engagement can affect some pupils' learning outcomes. Recently introduced teaching strategies to address this are making a positive difference but are yet to fully embed.
6. Teachers use marking and feedback effectively and pupils respond positively to the advice given. The use of assessment and tracking data to identify pupils who are not making sufficient progress is in development and not yet used consistently across the school.
7. The proprietor maintains appropriate oversight of the work of the leadership team, in many areas. However, the proprietor does not ensure the effective oversight of safeguarding, and that the risk assessment policy in place is effectively implemented.
8. Leaders do not always demonstrate the skills and knowledge to carry out their roles effectively. Arrangements in place to safeguard pupils do not always follow statutory guidance. Staff show a lack of appropriate knowledge and understanding of how to recognise any potential low-level safeguarding concerns relating to themselves or other staff members. Also, the school does not have a clear approach to the 'Prevent' duty and designated safeguarding leaders do not have higher level 'Prevent' duty training as required.
9. Leaders do not ensure the implementation of an effective risk management strategy. Staff do not always understand how to identify and reduce risk, for example, from the dangers posed by extremism and radicalisation. Checks on licensing of relevant adventure activity centres are not always carried out effectively.
10. Appropriate recruitment procedures are in place and a suitable register of staff appointments is kept. However, administrative errors are not always identified and the systems in place for monitoring the accuracy of the record of appointments are not thorough enough.

11. A suitable complaints policy is in place. However, details of complaints are not always recorded in a timely manner.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are not 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 not met.

### Areas for action

The proprietor must ensure that:

- leaders and managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge
- fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the independent school standards are met consistently, and
- they actively promote wellbeing of pupils

so that

- oversight and staff understanding of risk management is effective
- all the requirements of statutory guidance relating to safeguarding, are met and in particular so that:
  - requirements relating to the 'Prevent' duty are met including regular risk assessments and their review, that required training is in place for relevant staff and that pupils understand the dangers posed by radicalisation and extremism
  - staff recognise low-level staff safeguarding concerns and when to report them
  - checks on the licensing of any adventure activity centres used by the pupils are carried out appropriately.

### Recommended next steps

- embed strategies for promoting pupil engagement in lessons and pupils' assessment
- ensure all pupils consistently demonstrate respect for others
- ensure effective ongoing oversight and monitoring of the single central register of recruitment checks
- ensure that robust systems are in place for the recording of complaints.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. Leaders promote the school's values of excellence, integrity and compassion. Their self-evaluation supports decision-making and guides school improvement. Leaders listen to and act on pupils' views by engaging with pupil form representatives and through regular meetings with pupil prefects and heads of school. Pupils feel listened to and know that their views matter.
13. Leaders provide effective oversight of boarding and ensure that boarding accommodation is safe and secure. Specialist boarding staff run the boarding houses well and provide appropriate care for boarders, creating a friendly and open boarding environment which supports boarders' personal growth and wellbeing.
14. Leaders design and implement a curriculum which supports pupils to find and develop their individual strengths, in line with the school aims. Pupils become confident in their abilities and by the time they leave the sixth form, they are well prepared for life in wider society.
15. Leaders ensure that pupils' mental and physical health and emotional wellbeing are supported effectively through the work of form tutors and a team of wellbeing support staff. Boarding staff communicate well with teaching staff which ensures that boarders are well supported both pastorally and academically. Leaders make appropriate links with other agencies as required, in line with school policy.
16. Equality and diversity are promoted effectively by leaders. The school fulfils its duty under the Equality Act and a suitable accessibility plan is in place which addresses the needs of pupils who have SEND. All required policies comply with relevant legislation. However, not all policies are implemented effectively, due to insufficient oversight in some cases.
17. The proprietor understands their responsibilities, in most respects. Through regular meetings the proprietor works closely with school leaders, to generally provide support and challenge as required.
18. However, the proprietor does not ensure the effective oversight of safeguarding. Arrangements in place to safeguard pupils do not always follow statutory guidance. Leaders show a lack of understanding of the 'Prevent' duty guidance and there is no clear approach to the Prevent strategy. Staff also show a lack of appropriate knowledge and understanding of how to recognise a staff low-level safeguarding concern.
19. A process is in place for the creation of risk assessments, including those for health and safety, educational visits and boarding activities. There is no effective oversight of the risk assessment process by leaders, however, and risk assessments are not always completed appropriately. Staff have not received risk assessment training and risk assessments are not routinely reviewed. As a result, the risk of harm to pupils' wellbeing is not effectively identified and managed. Appropriate action is not always taken to identify and reduce risk, for example, the dangers posed by extremism and radicalisation. Checks on licensing of relevant adventure activity centres used by pupils are not always carried out.
20. A suitable complaints policy is in place, which is implemented in a timely and effective manner. However, the record of formal complaints is not always kept up to date. This was rectified during the inspection.

21. All relevant policies are made available to parents through the school's website, or from the school office on request. Informative pupil progress reports are sent to parents at regular intervals. An annual review of each education, health and care (EHC) plan is carried out and provided to the responsible local authority, along with related annual accounts, as required.

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

22. Standards are not met consistently with respect to the safeguarding of pupils, and the identification and management of the risk of harm.
- 23. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included at the end of the report.**

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

24. Classrooms are well resourced and staff create a learning environment that promotes enthusiasm for learning. The carefully planned curriculum supports pupils' individual needs and interests with a variety of vocational courses offered alongside GCSE and A-level options. Through the subjects provided pupils of all ages develop a broad range of knowledge and skills. They grow to be self-motivated and independent learners, and they are well prepared for their next steps on leaving school.
25. Pupils' numeracy skills are strong and they apply their mathematical knowledge with ease across subjects, for example, in science and geography. Mathematical skills are further developed through the provision of GCSE statistics and a level 3 accountancy qualification. Through effective teaching in English and modern foreign languages (MFL) pupils hone their linguistic skills and use these skills confidently to express their thoughts both orally and in writing.
26. The curriculum is supplemented by a varied extra-curricular activities programme. Through activities such as the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) award and participation in a local music and drama festival, pupils develop their creative skills and become confident performers. Pupils achieve in a range of activities, for example, the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and the UK Maths Challenge, and pupils successfully engage in the extended project qualification (EPQ).
27. Pupils who speak EAL are well catered for. The individual support provided by specialist staff is highly effective. Pupils make advance quickly from their starting points. They show well-developed listening and speaking skills and express themselves confidently in lessons.
28. Individualised provision for pupils who have SEND ensures that pupils make good progress in their learning. The supportive culture created by the learning support department enables pupils to gain confidence and engage well in lessons.
29. Teaching enables pupils to make good progress across each stage of their education. Resources are deployed well and used effectively to support pupils' learning. Teaching is generally well planned with a variety of effective teaching methods employed with well-structured activities and opportunities provided for pupils to make positive contributions in lessons. In some senior school lessons, however, fewer opportunities are provided for pupils to engage actively. Leaders have identified pupil engagement as a teaching and learning focus. Newly introduced teaching strategies are having a positive effect but have yet to fully embed.
30. Teachers' feedback to pupils is effective and pupils respond well to the support given. Effective tracking and monitoring systems are in place in some areas, for example, in the junior school, where the use of assessment data to inform teaching and learning is well embedded. In other areas of the school the use of data is not as developed and the identification of pupils who are not making sufficient progress is inconsistent across subjects.

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

**31. All the relevant Standards are met.**



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

32. The school is a welcoming and caring community. Staff know pupils well and relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful. Through participation in group activities, for example, house competitions and charity events, pupils develop trust in one another and respect for others.
33. The broad curriculum develops pupils' self-knowledge. Staff encourage pupils to explore new skills. The bespoke junior school life-skills programme enables pupils to develop personal attributes and build resilience from an early age, for example, when learning to ride a bike. Pupils develop self-confidence as they perform in LAMDA and music recitals at the weekly, '1:45 club'. Pupils enjoy these activities and their self-esteem grows as a result.
34. Pupils have appropriate access to a range of physical education activities both through the curriculum and the extra-curricular programme. Pupils participate in sports that they enjoy which supports their wellbeing and promotes positive mental health. Pupils use recreational sport in boarding time to complement other technology-based activities.
35. A suitable PSHE programme is provided which includes the required provision for relationships and sex education (RSE). Pupils' spiritual understanding grows through the study of world faiths in religious education (RE) and participation in regular assemblies. Discussion and debate on a range of topics supports pupils' moral and ethical understanding. For example, in PSHE, pupils discussed confidently how people may respond in a difficult situation, for example exploring the moral choices faced by individuals within a gang culture. Through topics studied, pupils learn how to live a healthy lifestyle, form healthy relationships and look after their physical and mental wellbeing. Effective behaviour management and anti-bullying strategies are in place. The effective rewards and sanctions system and high expectations set by staff, ensure that pupils understand right from wrong and accept responsibility for their own behaviour. Pupils respond positively to the use of house points, for example, for helping at school functions and showing good sportsmanship. Any misbehaviour is acted upon swiftly and sanctions are used appropriately.
36. Appropriate records are kept and used effectively to monitor trends and adapt policy and practice if required. The behaviour of pupils in lessons and when moving around the site is courteous and respectful. However, some older pupils have a less developed understanding of the need to show respect and tolerance for other people which at times can lead to them acting disrespectfully towards others.
37. The school premises, including the boarding houses, are secure and well maintained. Classrooms and facilities are well looked after and provide safe learning environments.
38. Appropriate health and safety procedures are implemented effectively. The school complies with relevant fire safety legislation and effective precautions are taken to reduce the risk of fire. Regular fire drills are carried out, including during boarding time. First aid systems are effective and records are well kept. Suitable care is provided for pupils who are injured or unwell and medication is stored and administered appropriately.
39. Admission and attendance registers are kept and stored correctly and pupil absence is monitored effectively. Pupils are well supervised during the school day and in boarding time.

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

**40. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

41. Pupils are encouraged to explore and express their own views on the importance of British values, for example, through pupil led assemblies on democracy, individual liberty and respect. Teaching encourages pupils to listen to one another's viewpoints. This helps pupils to develop mutual respect and tolerance for others. British values are well promoted across the curriculum and are a core part of the PSHE programme. Pupils show a well-developed understanding of and respect for the laws within society, and institutions such as the police and fire service.
42. Pupils appreciate the diversity of the school community and seek to understand one another. Pupils, particularly boarders, can share experiences and learn from one another's cultural traditions. Pupils understand different customs and practices, which promotes an inclusive culture.
43. An appropriate careers guidance programme is in place which informs and supports pupils in deciding their next steps. Through participation in a range of activities, for example careers week, pupils develop a wide understanding of how their skills and aptitudes can be applied in different professions. Staff provide personalised support for pupils as they choose option subjects and apply for work placements and further education courses. Pupils are encouraged to be ambitious and are successful in gaining places at a range of competitive universities. They subsequently take up a wide range of occupations, for example, in veterinary science, medicine, law and engineering.
44. The PSHE programme and sixth-form assembly programme provide pupils with opportunities to develop economic awareness with a focus on financial planning, financial decision-making and wider economic awareness. As a result, pupils develop a broad understanding of how to budget and manage their personal finances.
45. Through the activities programme and enrichment opportunities, the school nurtures and guides pupils to be responsible citizens and active members of society. Pupils make positive contributions to the school community, for example, as form reps, wellbeing prefects and heads of school. Older pupils mentor and support younger pupils with their learning. Organised charity events give pupils the opportunity to contribute to wider society and utilise their own talents for the benefit of all. Pupils volunteer through the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, for example, to work in local charity shops. Through an outdoor environmental learning programme pupils take pride in the stewardship of their local surroundings and pupils are keen to make a positive difference to the world in which they live.

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

46. All the relevant Standards are met.

## Safeguarding

47. Arrangements made to safeguard pupils are not always effective. While an appropriate safeguarding policy is in place, arrangements to safeguard pupils do not consistently implement and follow statutory guidance. As a result, systems are not in place to effectively monitor some aspects of safeguarding practice. An annual review of safeguarding is carried out by the proprietor, but this has not identified where areas of safeguarding practice do not meet the Standards.
48. Safeguarding induction training for staff, supported by regular updates, ensures that staff know how to recognise child protection issues and respond appropriately. Issues reported are acted upon promptly. Suitable records are kept and used effectively to identify trends and make changes to improve practice. Staff understand how to report a safeguarding allegation about another adult. However, staff lack appropriate knowledge and understanding of how to recognise low-level safeguarding concerns. A low-level concerns policy is in place, but staff are not sufficiently aware of the policy and related procedures.
49. In most respects, designated safeguarding leaders are trained to the appropriate level and show appropriate knowledge and skills. They work well in partnership with external agencies when managing child protection issues and any referrals are made in a timely manner. However, while staff undergo Prevent duty training, designated safeguarding leaders do not have the appropriate level of training required by statutory guidance. There is no system in place to routinely risk assess the dangers posed by extremism and radicalisation. Pupils show a lack of understanding of the threats posed by extremism and of how to protect themselves from the potential dangers associated with radicalisation. By the end of the inspection a Prevent risk assessment was in place.
50. Suitable online filtering and monitoring systems are in place. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils know to report any safeguarding incidents to a trusted adult.
51. Recruitment procedures are thorough with checks undertaken as required on all staff and adults who come into contact with pupils. An appropriate record of appointments is kept. However, there is no effective system in place for monitoring the accuracy of this record. On cross-referencing the record with recruitment documentation, transposing errors were found and dates within the record are not always accurate. These errors were rectified during the inspection.

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

52. Standards are not met consistently with respect to the arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. Arrangements do not always have due regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The school does not have a clear approach to the Prevent duty.
- 53. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included at the end of the report.**

## Schedule of unmet Standards

### Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

The relevant Standards are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34 (1)	The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school –
34 (1)(a)	demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
34 (1)(b)	fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
34 (1)(c)	actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.
NMS 2.2	The school's leadership and management, including its governing body where appropriate, demonstrate good skills and knowledge, appropriate to their role and undertake appropriate training as required.
NMS 2.4	The school's leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities consistently and effectively so that the standards are met.
NMS 2.5	The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.
NMS 2.8	The records specified in Appendix B are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –
16(a)	the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
16(b)	appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
NMS 9.3	The school ensures that the welfare of boarders at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
NMS 9.5	Schools should have procedures to ensure boarders' safety when off-site, but under the care of the school, including when on organised visits. These procedures should be proportionate and focus on managing assessed risks.

### Safeguarding

The relevant Standards are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –

7(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
7(b)	such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
ISSR 8 Part 3, paragraph 8	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –
8(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
8(b)	such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.
NMS 8.1	<p>The school should ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and</li> <li>• such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.</li> </ul>

## School details

<b>School</b>	Lime House School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	942/6001
<b>Address</b>	Lime House School Holm Hill Dalston Carlisle Cumbria CA5 7BX
<b>Phone number</b>	01288 710225
<b>Email address</b>	office@limehouseschool.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.limehouseschool.co.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr Nigel Rice
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Andrew Guest
<b>Age range</b>	7 to 18
<b>Number of pupils</b>	135
<b>Number of boarding pupils</b>	87
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 March 2021

## Information about the school

54. Lime House School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school. The school comprises a junior school and a senior school which includes a sixth form, situated on the same site, with some shared facilities. It is owned, governed and managed by three proprietors, one of whom is the former headmaster. A new headteacher was appointed, in September 2022.
55. Boarders, from the age of 11, are accommodated in five houses, three for male pupils and two for female pupils.
56. The school has identified 26 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Three pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
57. English is an additional language for 70 pupils.
58. The school states it aims to provide a safe and caring school environment in which pupils are treated as individuals, and a high-quality education so that pupils can achieve their full potential both academically and socially. The objective is to produce successful, confident, happy pupils who are prepared for life beyond school.



## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

12 to 14 March 2024

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

60. 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 proprietor
- 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
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

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