

School inspection report

10 to 12 October 2023

Sarum Hall School

15 Eton Avenue
London
NW3 3EL

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. Senior leaders have a clear vision for the continued development of the school. Leaders and staff throughout the school maximise opportunities to prioritise the wellbeing of pupils across all aspects of school life as well as promoting pupils' good progress through effective teaching and learning.
2. The standard of pupils' work, including that of children in the early years, is high and pupils make good progress across a range of subjects. Leavers are successful in obtaining places at a range of senior schools with competitive entry requirements, including those of their first choice.
3. Teachers use their subject knowledge to good effect. They plan learning well to ensure that pupils increase their knowledge and understanding. Leaders check the quality of teaching and learning. However, this has not ensured that teaching in all subjects consistently meets the needs of pupils to ensure they make consistently good progress. A framework for assessment is in place but its effectiveness varies across subjects and year groups.
4. Staff encourage pupils' positive behaviour successfully. The school's 'six golden values' which pupils understand and use to guide their actions, support pupils to behave well and to treat each other with kindness. Staff use the values to reinforce high expectations for pupils' conduct. Staff promote respect for others to develop an inclusive school community, where world religions and cultures are embraced and celebrated. Leaders and staff deal with any bullying or concerning behaviour sensitively and appropriately.
5. The premises and accommodation are maintained to a high standard. Leaders diligently check health and safety requirements including to put measures in place to reduce the risk from fire. Trained staff provide first aid and pupils know who they can go to if they are hurt or unwell. The school's website provides parents with all the required information including about the school's policies and procedures.
6. Pupils learn about their local community and wider society through their community action and through the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) curriculum. They learn about the value of diversity and that it is important to respect all groups of people.
7. The school's arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils are effective. Staff respond to any safeguarding concerns appropriately and teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online. The governors maintain effective oversight of safeguarding procedures and have put in place appropriate monitoring and filtering of internet use.

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 and learning is adapted to meet the needs of pupils effectively in all subjects
- effective assessment processes, used in some subjects and year groups, are used consistently across the school.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Governors are well informed about the school provision and outcomes, through appropriate committees, visits to the school and meetings with key people. They are actively involved in identifying school priorities and have effective skills and expertise which they utilise to support the school and check that it meets the Standards.
9. Leaders and governors regularly evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a result of this self-evaluation, they take joint strategic decisions regarding necessary improvements. For example, leaders and governors recently prioritised amendments to some curriculum areas to enable pupils to be more actively involved in their learning.
10. Governors monitor the school's policies and procedures effectively. They run a series of policy and practice reviews to look in detail at aspects of the school's provision. These are carried out on a rolling programme involving key staff with leadership responsibility. The outcomes of these reviews are reported to the board so that any improvements can be planned. For example, leaders conduct an annual safeguarding audit to ensure that the school's procedures are effective and the policy is consistently followed.
11. The promotion of pupils' welfare is a key determinant in the decisions taken by governors. They have supported leaders' creation of a wellbeing room for pupils and have provided training for staff to become mental health first aiders to support pupils' good mental health. Pupils benefit from this support, promoting their personal development.
12. The premises and outside space are well maintained and provide opportunities to support pupils' physical development, including by providing suitable play equipment. Recently, leaders have developed specific curriculum areas to provide improved facilities and resources. For example, in the areas of science, mathematics, art, and technology leaders have provided additional resources to enhance pupils' learning. Governors have invested in the provision of information and communication technology (ICT) across the school, which pupils use effectively to enhance learning. For example, when pupils film and review group drills to refine the techniques of shooting and passing in netball.
13. Leaders demonstrate a systematic and effective approach to the management of risk. Effective risk assessments are carried out for all areas of the school, trips and activities, to promote the safety and wellbeing of pupils. Procedures are well understood by staff and the process is robust.
14. Leaders ensure that the school meets its requirements under the Equality Act. Leaders have a suitable plan to improve access to the school and its curriculum for all groups of pupils. They ensure that the school promotes principles of equality and respect. Leaders monitor schemes of work to ensure fair treatment for all.
15. Leaders provide parents with all the required information. They implement a suitable complaints procedure diligently. Complaints are logged and responded to within published timescales.

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

All the relevant Standards are met

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

16. Senior leaders have given careful consideration to the design of the curriculum to provide breadth and balance to the educational provision. During their time in the school, pupils achieve well in a wide range of curriculum areas and their outcomes are typically high, including in the early years.
17. Leaders and staff prioritise building highly positive relationships with pupils. They know pupils well and act quickly if a pupil needs support or guidance. As a result, pupils can acquire new skills and knowledge within a positive working environment.
18. Assessment systems are developing, but these vary across departments. In some subjects, leaders and teachers track pupils' progress carefully and act if progress slows. However, this process is not consistently effective in all subjects.
19. There is a well planned programme to develop pupils' linguistic and literacy skills. As a result, pupils have well developed communication skills. They are articulate and confident in their use of language from an early age. Pupils' written skills develop well as they mature, partly because of the use of suitably chosen texts as a basis for the study of English. Pupils' mathematical competency develops steadily as they move through the school, supported by a curriculum that is well planned and carefully assessed. Leaders have committed to specialist teaching in creative subjects, which has ensured pupils receive an enthusiastic and thorough introduction to these subjects. In music, younger pupils develop their understanding of the different instruments of an orchestra. Older pupils use their knowledge of specific musical terms to compose their own bugle fanfares. In art, pupils develop their understanding of different techniques through a varied curriculum which includes consideration of the work of well known artists and the use of a variety of art media.
20. In the early years, children make good progress from their starting points. Leaders provide an ambitious early years curriculum, which introduces children to written methods of recording both numbers and letters, when appropriate to their stage of development. High expectations for behaviour, and the use of consistent praise and reward ensure that children are engaged in their learning. Children develop concentration and listening skills well. The planned activities are closely linked to the desired learning outcomes for children and include opportunities for extension for the more able children. Staff support children well and enable them to succeed including through effective questioning to develop children's vocabulary.
21. Staff provide additional targeted support for pupils who have SEND, enabling them to access the curriculum and progress well. However, some teaching does not support the needs of all groups of pupils when teaching and learning activities are not adapted adequately. Additionally, the quality and effectiveness of teachers' feedback and marking vary across subjects and age ranges.
22. The range of extra-curricular activities available enable pupils to develop their skills beyond the classroom. Opportunities include learning about robotics, playing chess and taking part in the performing arts. Music and drama performances are a regular feature of the school year. Many pupils enjoy the sporting opportunities available and relish the chance to take part in competitive fixtures and tournaments. As a result of the varied programme, pupils further develop their talents and interests, outside the school day.

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

23. Pupils are confident and show mature levels of self-discipline and care for each other. This is largely because of the priority attached by leaders to the fostering of pupils' emotional wellbeing and the resources they have in place to support pupils. Leaders support the physical and mental wellbeing of pupils and equip them with the skills to take good care of themselves, including through the work of a health and wellbeing co-ordinator.
24. Teachers respond promptly to any unkindness or upset, using lessons or assemblies to reinforce how this behaviour can be prevented in the future. Pupils learn strategies to protect their own physical and mental wellbeing. For example, by writing about their worries so that they are shared with a teacher or by visiting the wellbeing room for some quiet reflection time.
25. Staff encourage pupils' positive behaviour using the school's golden values which are central to school life. They form the basis of acceptable behaviour and are used to explain to pupils how their behaviour might contravene one of the school's values. The school's positive values underpin pupils' understanding of the expected conduct and guide pupils in how to be kind and respectful to others. Pupils know who to turn to with problems or concerns. The PSHEE programme includes provision for relationship education. This programme is highly effective in encouraging respect for others and in helping pupils to consider how to build positive relationships with others.
26. Bullying is rare and there is low tolerance for unkind behaviour. Pupils are supported to address unfavourable actions and to resolve friendship issues. Leaders and staff model the school's expected conduct well. Pupils treat each other with consideration and respect. Pupils mix with ease across age groups. They are keen to help and support their peers both inside and outside the classroom, respecting and recognising individual differences and needs.
27. From a young age, pupils can make clear distinctions between right and wrong. Pupils readily take responsibility for their own behaviour. At breaktimes and lunch times pupils use the techniques they have learned to remain calm if a peer has upset them. They behave with much courtesy and consideration for others.
28. Pupils learn effectively about Christianity and other world religions. Visiting speakers and special events promote pupils' understanding of different cultures and of the world faiths.
29. Pupils participate in a programme of physical education, supplemented by the additional extracurricular clubs on offer. Many pupils are involved in a range of sporting fixtures. Staff make good use of the outside space to provide for unstructured play and for organised activities enabling older pupils to practice their skills in sport and younger children to develop their gross motor skills. Pupils learn about healthy eating and benefit from a range of healthy foods available.
30. The school's premises and accommodation are maintained to a high standard. Leaders implement methodical systems to ensure that health and safety and fire safety arrangements are effective. Trained first aiders care for pupils when they are hurt or unwell.

31. Pupils are suitably supervised across the site and clear protocols, which maintain their safety, are well established and understood by staff and pupils. Staff maintain admission and attendance registers appropriately. Leaders monitor and promote pupils' attendance, resulting in high levels of attendance.

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. Pupils are involved in community action, for example when they visit a local residential care home and when involved in local tree planting. The art department have adopted a local telephone box as a community gallery. As a result of such initiatives pupils see themselves as part of the local community and are keen to be involved. They learn about life beyond school. Pupils contribute to an annual charity which they choose themselves through a democratic process in house groups. Pupils plan and organise fund raising activities, developing collaborative working skills, leadership, and organisational skills through these events.
33. The PSHEE and assembly programmes and displays around the school, which include aspects of fundamental British values, develop pupils' understanding of diversity and respect. Pupils understand the need for tolerance and respect for other people. Older pupils have a mature understanding of the value of diversity. For example, a workshop and activities based around the theme of stereotyping led to mature discussion and expression of the appreciation of differences between people.
34. Pupils understand what democracy means. This understanding is further embedded by the opportunities to vote for house captains, school council and eco-council representatives, and to act as playground buddies. Through a well planned series of visits and talks, pupils learn about different institutions and their role in British society.
35. Children in the early years have an early introduction to economic awareness, learning about the role of money in play shops. Older pupils decide on effective ways to fundraise for their chosen charity.

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

36. Governors carry out an annual safeguarding review and ensure they are in regular touch with the safeguarding team at the school. Governors check the safer recruitment practices to ensure that all necessary checks are carried out on adults who work with children. Recruitment procedures are well understood and accurately followed.
37. Safeguarding procedures are clear, well understood and followed by staff. Safeguarding training is appropriate and regular. Staff receive regular updates to complement their training. Staff report that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and they feel well trained and confident to deal with any concerns raised. Staff respond to safeguarding concerns appropriately, including by liaising with relevant external agencies.
38. The internet is suitably filtered and effective monitoring procedures are in place. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils confidently explain the steps they should take if they have any concerns, citing a range of adults they would approach with any concerns. The 'Let me know, red post box system' is one of the effective conduits enabling pupils to report any worries they may have. Pupils are confident their concerns will be dealt with.

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

All the relevant Standards are met

School details

School	Sarum Hall School
Department for Education number	202/6016
Registered charity number	312721
Address	Sarum Hall School 15 Eton Avenue London NW3 3EL
Website	http://www.sarumhallschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Sarum Hall School Trust Ltd
Chair	Dr Caroline Sayer
Headteacher	Miss Karen Coles
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	189
Number of children in the early years	48
Date of previous inspection	18 June 2019

Information about the school

39. Sarum Hall School is an independent day school for girls located in Swiss Cottage, London. It has a single form in each year group. The school is a charitable trust, overseen by a board of governors. The current headmistress took up her position in September 2022.
40. There are 48 children in the early years, which comprises one nursery and one reception class.
41. The school has identified 27 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
42. English is an additional language for five pupils.
43. The school states that its mission is to identify and develop the natural talents and potential of each individual pupil, preparing them for a full, happy, healthy and productive life within the context of the culture, ethics and values of the Christian faith, emphasising those moral and spiritual tenets shared with other faiths.

Inspection details

Inspection dates 10 to 12 October 2023

44. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The onsite inspection was quality assured by a monitor.
45. The inspectors conducted the following activities:
- They held discussions with the headmistress, senior leaders and other members of staff and met with governors
 - They visited different areas of the school, observed lessons, completed joint lesson walks and other activities
 - They scrutinised samples of pupils work alongside pupils and staff
 - They talked with groups of pupils from different year groups
 - They scrutinised a range of documentation, records and policies.
46. 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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