

# School inspection report

8 to 10 October 2024

## Gatehouse School

Sewardstone Road

Victoria Park

London

E2 9JG

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. Governors, leaders and staff carry out their roles effectively. They maximise opportunities to prioritise the wellbeing of pupils across the school. Governors provide support to the school leaders and help ensure that requirements of the statutory guidance and Standards are met. Pupils' wellbeing is a priority at the school, and the committed staff team ensures that every individual is given the potential to thrive.
2. Pupils of all ages and abilities make typically good progress because of effective planning and typically effective teaching which enable the pupils to increase their subject knowledge and skills as they progress through the school. In the most successful lessons, teachers use a variety of well-chosen teaching methods to enable pupils to engage in learning and make good progress. However, in a minority of lessons, where the planned teaching activities are not as well matched to the range of abilities and needs of the pupils, the learning is not as effective.
3. Leaders' employment of skilled and knowledgeable teaching assistants contributes well to pupils' learning and development, particularly supporting those pupils who may find the learning process more challenging and ensuring they make good progress. Leaders have a suitable behaviour strategy in place. However, where the strategies are not consistently applied, pupils' behaviour outside of lessons is not always appropriate.
4. A well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is in place at the school. This enables pupils to develop their appreciation of diversity well. Leaders and staff successfully promote positive relationships and the importance of mutual respect and tolerance. The PSHE programme teaches pupils about the importance of the rule of law, democracy and British institutions effectively.
5. Leaders prioritise the individual, and consider carefully every pupil's pastoral and educational needs. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have their requirements quickly identified by the learning support department and their needs met well by a trained team of teachers, teaching assistants and learning support staff. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress.
6. Leaders in the early years have developed a cohesive programme of learning that facilitates children's ability to acquire new skills and knowledge and to have the confidence to tackle problems. Children enjoy a happy and inclusive learning environment, where there is a balance of directed activities and opportunities for them to follow their own interests. Staff develop positive relationships with the children in their care, ensuring that they are challenged and supported to make good progress.
7. The school's safeguarding arrangements are effective and in line with current statutory guidance. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding have received appropriate training for their role. Staff are suitably trained and receive regular updates, so they know how to report concerns, and leaders ensure that safeguarding records are kept as required. The nominated safeguarding governor maintains an oversight of the safeguarding policy and procedures and ensures that recruitment procedures are accurately followed and recorded.

8. Governors and leaders have allowed the school to operate outside of its registration with the Department for Education (DfE). The number of pupils enrolled at the school currently exceeds the maximum number of pupils it is registered for.

## 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 all lessons are as well matched to the pupils' needs and abilities as they are typically
- ensure that the behaviour management strategy is applied consistently outside of lesson times
- ensure that the school only operates within the number of pupils registered with the DfE.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. The leadership team ensures the school provides a nurturing and inclusive environment where pupils are supported both academically and emotionally. The emphasis on individual success and personal development, coupled with effective pastoral care, supports pupils' wellbeing and contributes to their overall positive school experience and provides many opportunities for them to succeed.
10. Governors and leaders work effectively together to identify areas for improvement and development. Leadership and governors have made strategic decisions to ensure that the staff body includes those with specialist skills specifically related to particular pupils' needs. Leaders have also invested in training for all staff to ensure the wide range of pupil needs can be well supported. This decision has impacted positively on the academic and social outcomes for pupils who have SEND and for those who speak English as an additional language (EAL).
11. Governors monitor the school effectively. They scrutinise aspects of the school's work through visits and reviews of policy and practice. Governors provide suitable support and, where necessary, challenge, to ensure that leaders and managers have the knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities.
12. Leaders provide current and prospective parents with all the information required. Parents receive information about their children's progress through regular meetings and written reports. An annual account of income and expenditure for any pupils who receive funding by a local authority is provided to that local authority as required.
13. Leaders implement a suitable complaints procedure. Staff and leaders listen to the concerns of parents and resolve matters as swiftly as possible. The school keeps appropriate records relating to any formal complaints.
14. Early Years leaders have the knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities. Leaders ensure that early years staff have effective guidance to support their professional development.
15. The school's risk assessment procedures are effective. Clear risk assessments assess potential risks relating to educational visits, activities, and pupil health concerns and identify appropriate actions to mitigate these. Staff receive regular training on completing effective risk assessments.
16. Leaders and staff promote the principles of equality, respect and fair treatment across all aspects of the school. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders have an appropriate accessibility plan in place. It is reviewed by governors and enhances access to the curriculum and buildings for any pupils with disabilities. For example, a lift has been installed to enable easier access to the upper floors.

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

- 17. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

18. Leaders plan the broad curriculum effectively. Schemes of work provide clearly articulated expectations for pupils' learning and progress. The early years curriculum develops is tailored to children's individual needs and interests, while the curriculum for the oldest pupils is planned to prepare them effectively as they seek to gain entry to their preferred secondary or senior schools.
19. In the early years there is an engaging programme of learning, covering all the areas of learning and development. The curriculum is enhanced by subject specialist lessons that develop children's creative and physical skills. Teachers plan carefully to ensure the indoor and outdoor environments support children's learning effectively. Staff match learning experiences to children's individual needs. They use skilfully crafted questions and modelling to develop children's understanding and to encourage rapid language development. Children make good progress from their respective starting points.
20. Teachers plan lessons thoughtfully, utilising their subject knowledge to provide interesting content. They use a variety of teaching methods and activities that typically engage the pupils. Most lessons are well-matched to the pupils' needs, abilities and prior attainment and support staff are deployed effectively to support pupils' learning. As a result, all groups of pupils make good progress. However, pupils' learning is less effective when the planned teaching activities are not as well matched to the range of abilities and needs of the pupils as they are typically. In addition, where lessons are less effective in engaging pupils, or the pace does not support learning, pupils can lose focus.
21. Leaders and staff effectively support pupils who have SEND. The learning support department identifies pupils' learning needs promptly, and teachers adapt lessons to meet these needs. Pupils who have SEND receive additional support, often provided by capable teaching assistants, who are available in every class to support those that are finding concepts difficult. The learning support department also works with external specialists, where relevant, to ensure pupils receive effective support. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress.
22. The needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are quickly identified and those who require it receive effective support for their English both within and outside the classroom. This ensures that these pupils quickly improve their fluency and understanding of English. Children and younger pupils are immersed in the English language through play and social opportunities, and older pupils who share the same first language are buddied up to support them.
23. An assessment framework is in place that tracks the performance of individual pupils. Subject leaders use this data to identify and address any gaps in learning by providing targeted additional support when required. Pupils with high prior attainment are given extension work that develops their thinking and extends their learning, both within and outside the timetabled lessons.
24. There is a wide range of after-school clubs for pupils to join which cater for a large range of interests and needs. Clubs enhance creativity and physical, mental and social skills. These include a construction brick club for younger pupils, and astro-physics and chamber choir for older pupils. Oracy skills are developed through acting and speaking clubs, contributing to success in external examinations.

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

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

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

26. Leaders promote inclusive relationships between pupils by creating opportunities for different age groups to mix in the playground and in after-school activities. Older pupils are buddied up to support a younger pupil, enabling them to mentor and befriend younger pupils, through the opportunity to work together in school and take part in out-of-school visits together. As a result, pupils across the school benefit from the positive relationships developed and these support their self-esteem.
27. Pupils learn about different religions and beliefs through a carefully planned religious education (RE) programme. Pupils increase their learning about different faiths through a varied assembly programme and visits to different places of worship, such as a synagogue and a mosque. This supports the development of mutual respect between the pupils.
28. The PSHE programme, which includes relationships education, is age-appropriate and successfully supports the emotional needs of pupils. It is well planned and informed by annual communication with parents. Younger pupils gain knowledge of different types of family structure, and older pupils develop their understanding of consent and respecting boundaries. The PSHE and relationships education lessons enable to discuss potentially sensitive issues in a supportive environment. The PSHE curriculum supports pupils in developing strategies to manage their own emotions. Morning 'sensory circuits' provide physical and social activities to support pupils who find responding to the multiple stimuli in their school day challenging. These help them to make a positive start to their day.
29. The school has an appropriate behaviour management policy in place which sets out rewards and sanctions. Leaders and staff put emphasis on encouraging pupils to reflect on their behaviour and how it may affect others. As a result, most pupils behave well in lessons. The behaviour as pupils move around the school and out on the playground is less well managed, as staff do not always enforce the expectations and rules in place.
30. The anti-bullying strategy is effective. Leaders and staff teach pupils about the difference between bullying and unkindness. Leaders keep detailed records so incidents can be monitored. Incidents of bullying are rare and those reported are well managed by staff who are supportive and act effectively to address and resolve the situation.
31. Staff in the early years promote and model respectful behaviour and kindness. Children learn to manage their own emotions and understand the feelings of others. The children learn to appreciate each other, take turns, work cooperatively, and share equipment.
32. The school has developed a physical education (PE) curriculum that provides pupils, from the youngest age, with activities that help develop their physical skills, health and wellbeing. The lessons are well planned to ensure pupils of all abilities make progress and feel confident to participate at their level. For example, Year 4 pupils demonstrated sportsmanship and respect towards each other during circuit training, and Year 2 pupils have an awareness of how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy through their diet and exercise.
33. Children in the early years are well supervised at all times. The staff-to-child ratios are generously met, and suitably qualified staff are deployed to ensure children are effectively supervised during

the school day. Staff are timetabled and deployed effectively to supervise the pupils while they are at school.

34. The school premises are well maintained and provide a suitable learning environment for the pupils. The school implements suitable health and safety and fire safety procedures effectively, including through regular safety checks and maintenance. Leaders make use of external audits to support the effectiveness of health and safety and fire safety arrangements. Staff receive regular training in health and safety and fire safety procedures.
35. The school meets pupils' medical and first aid needs in a timely and appropriate manner. Staff receive regular first aid training, including in paediatric first aid, enabling them to meet the medical needs of the pupils under the direction of the school nurse. The school nurse liaises closely with staff to ensure they are aware of pupils with medical or behavioural needs so that they are catered for effectively on trips and sports fixtures.
36. Leaders ensure that attendance and admissions registers are appropriately maintained in line with current statutory guidance. The local authority is appropriately informed when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times. Absences and late arrivals are efficiently followed up to maximise pupils' attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance is high.

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

- 37. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

38. Pupils develop their understanding of the social and economic education curriculum through specific lessons as part of the PSHE programme and through a well-planned programme of visits and assemblies. The curriculum is enhanced through visits to local museums and public institutions, and inviting visitors and speakers into school. Children in the early years learn about important people in their local community, such as the local fire service and police force, including through their visits to the school.
39. Leadership and staff use assemblies and curriculum opportunities to develop the pupils' awareness of cultural diversity and different faiths. Lessons explore themes such as gender stereotyping, disability awareness and the importance of respecting people's protected characteristics, such as their religion, race or sex. As a result, pupils develop their understanding and appreciation of diversity and the importance of mutual respect.
40. The culture of the school promotes pupils' understanding of the needs of others. Leadership ensures that the vertical integration through the house system and mixed playtimes is effective in promoting respect and consideration between different members of the community. Pupils are involved in local citizenship projects, such as raising money for Great Ormond Street Hospital, and donating to a Salvation Army food bank. As a result, they develop empathy and an awareness of the needs of those in wider society, helping to prepare them for life in British Society.
41. In PSHE, older pupils learn about the role of Parliament, supplemented by visits to the Houses of Parliament and to the local council. Pupils learn about the advantages of living in a democracy. The school council adds to pupils' understanding of democratic representation. Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 meet weekly and discuss how the school could be improved. Discussions range from lunches to controlled use of the astro.
42. Pupils from Year 1 are provide with many leadership opportunities, including being school council representatives, house buddies, reading buddies and eco-warriors. Year 6 pupils take on additional leadership roles, including digital leaders and head pupils. As a result, these roles enable pupils of all ages to develop their sense of responsibility towards others and contribute positively to the school community.
43. Staff help pupils develop a clear sense of right and wrong through encouraging them to consider their actions toward others and showing mutual respect for everyone in the school community. Older pupils learn about British values, such as the need for rules and laws to ensure people can live safely in a community. Year 6 pupils learn about rights and responsibilities. Their engagement with themes such as the situation of refugees supports their developing understanding of ethical issues.
44. Children in the early years are introduced to economic matters through learning about the role of money in roleplay shops. Older pupils gain an understanding of costs and profit through their participation in organising events to raise money for chosen charities. They learn about budgeting and put their understanding into practice when they plan how much money might be needed on residential school trips.

45. Children in the early years enjoy opportunities to play and to collaborate with others. Early years staff support their social development, encouraging them to take turns and listen to the ideas of each other. As a result, children quickly learn to co-operate effectively and resolve conflicts peacefully. Older pupils develop their social skills through, for example, collaborating with their peers in lessons, listening to the views of others during current affairs lessons and supporting younger pupils in the school at break times and on school trips.

**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. The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders take the approach that safeguarding incidents could happen in their school. There is an open, positive safeguarding culture, including in the early years. Leaders follow appropriate procedures should any safeguarding concern arise, including any allegations or concerns about staff. Safeguarding records are detailed and well maintained by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). Pupils are encouraged to speak to a trusted adult to share any concerns they may have and are confident that staff would respond appropriately if they have a concern.
48. The safeguarding policy accurately reflects current statutory guidance. Governors maintain effective oversight of safeguarding and review school procedures and processes regularly. All governors receive appropriate safeguarding training. A nominated governor has specific oversight of safeguarding, and has regular discussions with the safeguarding team to ensure the school team are supported and that appropriate procedures are followed. The annual completion of a local authority safeguarding audit is scrutinised by the governors to identify any areas for development.
49. All staff receive regular and comprehensive safeguarding training. Leaders work closely with school staff to make sure everyone understands the part they play in keeping pupils safe from harm. A detailed induction programme for staff and volunteers enables them to have the knowledge and confidence to act swiftly in accordance with the school's policy. Staff are alert to concerns such as the risks of extremism. Staff understand leaders' expectations regarding their conduct.
50. Those with designated safeguarding responsibilities receive appropriate training for their role and are well informed about local child protection procedures, understanding the importance of continually updating their knowledge to enhance pupils' safety. Leaders have a positive relationship with external agencies, consulting and working effectively with the local safeguarding partners when required.
51. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online. They understand the potential dangers when using the internet, including the importance of not sharing personal information. The internet is suitably filtered and effective monitoring procedures are in place to protect pupils. These systems are regularly monitored by the DSL.
52. A robust system is in place for the recruitment of staff. Leaders conduct all appropriate safer recruitment checks before an employee or new governor starts to work at the school. These checks are recorded accurately on the school's single central record (SCR) of appointments.

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

- 53. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## School details

<b>School</b>	Gatehouse School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	211/6089
<b>Registered charity number</b>	282558
<b>Address</b>	Gatehouse School Sewardstone Road Victoria Park London E2 9JG]
<b>Phone number</b>	020 8980 2978
<b>Email address</b>	admin@gatehouseschool.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.gatehouseschool.co.uk/">https://www.gatehouseschool.co.uk/</a>
<b>Proprietor</b>	Gatehouse Educational Trust Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Rej Bhumbra
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sevda Korbay
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	531
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 to 8 October 2021

## Information about the school

54. Gatehouse School is an independent co-educational day school situated in East London. It was founded by Phyllis Wallbank in 1948. The school is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors. The school comprises three sections: the Nursery, for children aged 3 to 4; the lower juniors for pupils in Reception, Years 1 and 2, and the upper juniors for pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.
55. The early years section of the school comprises 127 children in four Nursery classes and three Reception classes.
56. The school has identified 141 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Eight pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
57. English is an additional language for 156 pupils.
58. The school states its aims are to provide pupils with a caring and supportive learning environment to develop each pupil's abilities and help them to build a strong foundation for life beyond the school. It seeks to enable pupils to fulfil their individual potential. The school seeks to base provision on what it terms Christian values and principles.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

8 to 10 October 2024

59. A team of five 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
- discussion with a governor
- 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
- 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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