ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

School inspection report

4 to 6 November 2025

Annemount School

18 Holne Chase

Hampstead Garden Suburb

London

N2 0QN

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 are highly successful in promoting the school's aims through purposeful and ambitious opportunities for pupils to develop their academic, emotional and social skills. They bring their considerable expertise to a reflective and thorough process of self-evaluation, employing a systematic and strategic approach when considering improvements to provision. Leaders monitor teaching effectively, providing bespoke training for teaching staff which equips them with the expertise they need to support the individual pupils in their care. Leaders communicate frequently and purposefully with parents so that pupils' learning and development are fostered collaboratively from the start of their time at school. These measures result in the successful implementation of ongoing programmes and new initiatives which have a clear and demonstrable impact on pupils' development in all aspects of their school lives. This is a significant strength of the school.

2. Leaders provide a broad curriculum which is successfully taught to enable pupils to develop their skills and knowledge beyond age-related expectations. The curriculum includes carefully selected subjects to help pupils develop specific skills which benefit other areas of their learning. These include chess for all pupils in the older classes, weekly walks in the local area and substantial encouragement for pupils of all ages to take up the violin. Pupils achieve very well across the curriculum, supported by effective teaching and well-planned provision. Teachers plan lessons that make effective use of assessment data and take pupils' different needs and prior attainment into account. They use a range of strategies and resources effectively so that pupils are engaged in their work and make consistently good progress.

3. Leaders continually promote pupils' emotional and physical wellbeing through an array of effective strategies and routines. Leaders involve pupils of all ages in school events and activities so that they become aspirational in their goals and learn to respect everyone in the school community. Pupils become highly confident, considerate people in response to the many daily routines and high expectations that help promote their understanding of themselves and others. Pupils acquire well-embedded habits of healthy eating and physical exercise as a consequence of leaders' close attention to their current and future needs when reviewing and adapting provision.

4. Leaders are acutely aware of the need to prepare pupils for their future lives in a modern and changing world when planning activities to promote their social and economic understanding. They tailor the curriculum to pupils' interests and ages, so that they develop a mature appreciation of their social responsibilities and of British life and values. Leaders act as role models in showing pupils the importance of respect and kindness. They help pupils to acquire an advanced understanding of democratic processes and of the difference they can make to the lives of others. Pupils learn about the varied traditions, festivals and celebrations that feature in the lives of people in Britain and the school community. However, the curriculum does not enable pupils to develop an equivalent understanding about the daily lives of people who live further afield.

5. Leaders are effective and diligent in their approach to safeguarding. When appropriate, they actively seek advice from relevant external agencies to inform their own expertise and decision-making. Policies and procedures pay close attention to current statutory guidance and are well understood by staff. The proprietor maintains effective oversight of safeguarding when carrying out their own responsibilities within the leadership team. Leaders implement robust procedures to manage

safeguarding concerns when they arise. They carry out all required pre-employment checks on adults working in the school systematically and rigorously.

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:

- strengthen pupils' learning about the different ways in which people live their daily lives outside Britain to increase their understanding of different cultural traditions.

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Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

6. Leaders are highly skilled and knowledgeable, attentive to the needs of the children in their care and ambitious in their aspirations for pupils. The proprietor fulfils the role of headteacher, working alongside school leaders to discharge their responsibilities extremely effectively so that the Standards are met. As a result, pupils' wellbeing is actively and successfully promoted throughout all aspects of school life.

7. Leaders have a comprehensive knowledge of relevant legislation and current statutory guidance. They pay close attention to these requirements when drawing up systems and routines that are tailored to the needs of the pupils and the context of the school. Leaders ensure that school policies and procedures include suitable arrangements to meet the needs of children in the early years. They provide guidance, information and training for staff throughout the school so that they are very well equipped to play their part in the implementation of policies and procedures. Leaders monitor school systems and records frequently to confirm effective and consistent implementation and to identify improvements. The proprietor makes judicious use of the expertise of external consultants when assessing the suitability and effectiveness of provision.

8. Leaders continuously evaluate provision methodically and thoroughly in order to improve and extend the means by which the school promotes its aims and values. They maintain a clear and consistent focus on preparing pupils for the wider world and helping them to achieve their academic potential. Leaders monitor teaching and learning systematically, making effective use of the expertise and advice of external advisors alongside their own observations. They use their findings, and their knowledge of pupils' needs to identify suitable training opportunities for each teacher. Leaders scrutinise proposed changes rigorously to ensure they are likely to be of clear and demonstrable benefit to all pupils. They challenge their own thinking to identify any potential unintended and negative consequences, adapting their ideas accordingly. The resulting high-quality, meticulously planned programme of activities provides opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding to an advanced level in all areas of learning and development.

9. Leaders make information about the school's policies and procedures available on the school website. They provide parents with frequent and helpful information about the curriculum and the ways in which they can support their child's learning. Leaders communicate the school's aims and values clearly and frequently to parents so that they may understand the part they can play in ensuring their child benefits from the education provided. This partnership supports pupils to make good progress and grow in confidence and independence throughout their time in school.

10. Leaders adopt a diligent and rigorous approach to the identification and management of risk. They continually assess the potential risks associated with existing arrangements and proposed changes. Leaders identify the means to manage risks in suitable written risk assessments for all aspects of school life and ensure that these risk assessments are well understood and acted on by staff. Leaders review risk assessments and monitor their implementation regularly.

11. Leaders maintain effective links with external agencies. They share information with the local authority about pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition times and about early years assessment results. Leaders are diligent in contacting safeguarding partners to seek advice or clarification when concerns arise.

12. The school undertakes regular and frequent review of its provision in relation to its duties under the Equality Act 2010. It fulfils these effectively, including through the implementation of a suitable accessibility plan.

13. Parents are able to report any concerns or complaints to the school through a clear and suitable complaints procedure. Leaders manage complaints in line with the school's stated timescales.

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

14. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

15. The curriculum includes a wide range of carefully selected subjects and activities which are taught effectively to enable pupils to learn and make good progress throughout their time in the school. Children in the early years make good progress from their starting points, typically attaining a good level of development in all aspects of the early years curriculum. Pupils attain highly by the time they leave the school and are successful in gaining places at a number of academically selective schools.

16. Leaders provide parents with detailed information about their child's progress and attainment at frequent intervals through discussions and in written form. They provide guidance so that parents understand how they can support their child's learning at home. Parents support pupils of all ages when completing well-planned activities and projects which extend their knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils continue their learning purposefully outside school, enhancing their progress.

17. Leaders make effective use of assessment data to identify whole school trends, areas for improvement and pupils who may need additional challenge or support. Teachers undertake assessments throughout the school year and during lessons. They make effective use of these to plan and adapt their teaching so that pupils are provided with the activities they need to extend and consolidate their learning from their different starting points. Teachers use assessments and observations in lessons to set pupils appropriate targets. They help pupils understand how they can improve through written feedback in their books and frequent guidance in lessons. Pupils respond positively to feedback, leading to clear improvements in their understanding.

18. Staff in the early years help children to develop their language skills well through the skilful use of conversation, effective teaching of phonics and the introduction of subject-specific vocabulary. Leaders include simple reading prompts in assemblies, which supports children in their acquisition of secure reading and writing skills. Older pupils use language effectively for a range of purposes, such as descriptions, poems, letters and reports. Leaders implement a graduated programme of public speaking so that pupils develop mature speaking and listening skills. Children in the Nursery share their ideas in increasingly structured and complex 'show and tell' sessions. Those in Reception become 'mini professors' when speaking about their specialist subjects, using objects and subject-specific language. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 prepare independent projects which they present to their class, providing responses to questions and challenges.

19. Staff in the early years encourage children to look for mathematical patterns, helping them to acquire a secure understanding of number through practical activities and regular opportunities to reinforce their knowledge throughout the day. Teachers set older pupils ambitious targets which they are helped to achieve through clear explanations, individual support and challenge, and informative classroom displays. As a result, pupils develop an advanced understanding of concepts such as place value. Leaders utilise chess in the timetable to help pupils develop skills of reasoning and strategy. Pupils gain a secure grasp of the rules of the game and of the importance of planning ahead and solving unexpected problems.

20. Teachers use a range of effective strategies to help pupils learn. Children in the early years broaden their understanding of the world around them during weekly walks. Older pupils develop a confident knowledge of topics, such as the ancient Egyptians, in lessons that include the engaging presentation of new knowledge and opportunities to extend their understanding through challenging activities.

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When appropriate, teachers include practical activities in lessons that enable pupils to explore and understand concepts such as how electrical circuits work.

21. Pupils produce colourful and creative artwork in lessons that foster their technical, observational and representational skills. Leaders provide specialist teaching in subjects such as drama, music and computing so that pupils benefit from focused and relevant subject knowledge which enables them to develop their skills well. Teachers in these subjects provide well-planned activities which enable pupils to learn to sing tunefully, perform confidently and develop their skills in coding and animation.

22. Teachers help children in the early years to engage in positive behaviour when they are learning. Older pupils are focused and attentive in well-paced lessons, responding positively to unobtrusive but effective reminders of behaviour expectations when needed. Staff throughout the school make purposeful use of resources to enhance learning, including technological devices and the outdoor learning space. Leaders promote pupils' high levels of independence in their learning through carefully structured research projects, such as those focused on people and places in Britain. Staff enable pupils to explore their own interests, developing a deep understanding of topics that are relevant to pupils' lives.

23. Leaders identify the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and work closely with staff to draw up and implement strategies to support their needs in class. Pupils who have SEND make good progress because teachers adapt their lessons effectively to meet their needs, including through the use of individual support and specialist resources when appropriate.

24. Leaders identify the individual needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). They plan personalised strategies to support them in learning English and accessing the curriculum. Teachers use a range of resources such as picture cards, visual timetables and support in the pupil's home language, as appropriate. Pupils who speak EAL make good progress in their language skills and across the curriculum in response to these measures.

25. Leaders take pupils' interests and ideas into account when compiling the extra-curricular programme. This includes activities such as baking, art and science clubs, which help pupils to extend their classroom learning and develop skills and new interests alongside both older and younger peers. Leaders communicate the positive impact of learning the violin on children's learning in other subjects, encouraging pupils to take up the instrument from an early age. As a consequence, a large proportion of pupils play the violin and perform proficiently in school events.

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

26. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

27. Leaders implement a personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum which is appropriate to pupils' ages. Teachers provide a range of activities in well-planned lessons which help pupils to develop an understanding of themselves and other people. Staff in the early years plan activities which help children to learn about how they are similar and different to their friends and people in the wider community. Older pupils learn about the importance of respect for the opinions of others. They show a readiness to accept and learn about the differences between themselves and other people in their school and British society.

28. Pupils learn to respect the ways in which people celebrate religious festivals and have different faiths and beliefs through the religious studies (RS) curriculum, assemblies and visits from parents. They are interested in and become knowledgeable about the variety of faiths represented in their school. Leaders help pupils to develop their own spiritual awareness through times of reflection in assemblies and in lessons. Teachers encourage pupils to notice and recognise the benefits of the natural world on weekly walks and in the playground. As a result, pupils develop an appreciation of non-material aspects of life, such as friendship and their environment.

29. The relationships education programme provides pupils with suitable and age-appropriate guidance about the features of healthy relationships. Staff teach children in the early years about different kinds of friendship and the importance of privacy. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn to recognise the dangers of peer pressure and the features of unhealthy relationships.

30. Children in the early years grow quickly in self-esteem in response to the praise and encouragement they receive from the moment they come into school each day, exchanging a handshake and polite greeting at the door. Staff establish warm relationships with children, understanding their different needs and providing individual support where it is needed to help them settle into the classroom environment. They combine high expectations with individual support and encouragement so that children show independence and perseverance, such as when engaging in complex puzzles and construction activities.

31. Leaders provide a carefully planned programme of activities throughout the school to help pupils develop self-confidence. Pupils of all ages routinely support leaders in assembly in simple ways that help them to become confident in front of others. Older pupils act as role models in performing more complex tasks, such as when reading out reports or presenting awards to their peers. Leaders utilise public speaking opportunities to help pupils to develop self-confidence within increasingly structured and complex 'show and tell' sessions.

32. Leaders promote pupils' physical health through the broad physical education (PE) programme, taught by specialist teachers throughout the school. Leaders make use of external facilities so that older pupils benefit from appropriate high-quality resources in a suitable setting. Leaders provide a wide range of resources on the school premises which enable children in the early years to develop their gross and fine motor skills. Pupils higher up the school acquire skills in a range of sports, dance and physical education (PE), which they extend through the extra-curricular programme and events outside school.

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33. Pupils develop healthy and mature eating habits due to leaders' carefully considered policies relating to snacks and healthy packed lunches. Pupils learn about the components of a healthy diet and about which foods are best eaten in moderation. Teachers help pupils to understand the ways in which they can promote their mental health in lessons and through planned activities during 'mental health awareness week'.

34. Strategies to promote positive behaviour throughout the school are tailored effectively to pupils' ages and needs. These strategies are underpinned by continual reinforcement of the importance of kindness through assemblies, discussions and the school song. Staff in the early years model their expectations and help children to understand and follow class rules through gentle reminders and praise as appropriate. Older pupils understand and routinely meet leaders' high expectations of their behaviour. They recognise the importance of apologising in both spoken and written forms when the need arises. Staff are quick to respond when any behavioural concerns arise, providing support and guidance as appropriate. Leaders ensure that pupils understand what bullying is and how to respond should it occur. Pupils have a confident understanding of the steps to take on the rare occasions that they witness or experience bullying in school.

35. Leaders have a detailed knowledge of legislation relating to health and safety and the management of risk from fire. Policies and procedures are consistently in line with the relevant requirements and are implemented effectively. Leaders maintain a meticulous system of monitoring and checks, including on fire safety equipment. As a result, the premises are well maintained. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and fulfil these diligently, such as when undertaking fire drills and identifying maintenance issues.

36. Leaders ensure that pupils are supervised throughout the day by a sufficient number of adults. Children in the early years are supervised appropriately when sleeping and eating, including by staff with paediatric first aid training. Suitable arrangements are in place to provide first aid when required and to look after pupils who are unwell.

37. Leaders maintain attendance and admission registers as required by current statutory guidance. They monitor attendance closely, taking appropriate action should concerns arise.

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

38. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

39. Leaders implement an extensive programme of activities to help pupils prepare for their adult lives. They promote the school's positive values through the PSHE curriculum and well-established daily routines which highlight the importance of consideration and respect and provide pupils with opportunities to put them into practice.

40. Staff in the early years support children in making friends within daily routines and the planned curriculum. They help children to recognise the features of a good friend and to resolve conflicts when they occur. Staff encourage children to engage in shared play from the start, so that this becomes a natural way of working. Children in the Nursery spontaneously explore their surroundings and share their ideas with each other. They readily support each other when completing challenging tasks and tidying up the classroom.

41. Leaders create a deep sense of community across the school by including the very youngest children in whole school activities such as assemblies, performances and competitions. They give children classroom responsibilities which develop in scope as they move through the school. Older pupils readily help younger pupils when they come into school in the mornings and children of all ages play co-operatively in the playground.

42. Pupils develop an understanding of the principles of democracy through voting for school councillors and for the initiatives that they introduce. Leaders teach councillors and their classmates about the responsibilities of elected members to represent their classes through a systematic process of seeking views and reporting council findings. Pupils recognise the impact of the council on their experiences in school, including through events such as 'beach day' and the school fete. Leaders enable pupils to witness the process and impact of democratic change through the thorough implementation of pupil-led initiatives, such as posters and reminders from the head boy and girl after assemblies to be quiet on the stairs.

43. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to acquire a broad understanding of British institutions and services through activities in and outside lessons. Children in the Nursery begin to learn about people who help them through visits from healthcare professionals and the emergency services. Older pupils develop a secure understanding of institutions such as the monarchy, enhanced by well-planned and clearly explained celebrations of national events. Pupils broaden their knowledge of Britain and its culture through focused project work and presentations to their peers. This helps them to acquire a wide knowledge of the lives of people such as Helen Sharman and David Attenborough, and British locations and institutions such as Lewes and The Royal Mint.

44. Leaders help pupils develop a mature appreciation of the impact they can make on those around them and in the wider community. Pupils learn to take responsibility for their actions in school in response to guidance from their teachers. They show an advanced understanding through independent project work and competitions focused on how their actions impact the environment. Leaders demonstrate the importance of listening to the views of others by listening and acting on the views of pupils. This has resulted in the introduction of initiatives such as the school's internal competition based on the Earthshot prize for innovation around environmental issues, and support for the local foodbank.

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45. Pupils develop a deep understanding of how they can help others because leaders select charities that they can readily relate to, such as those that support children. Pupils are personally involved in delivering the monthly contribution to the local foodbank and regularly sing for residents in care homes and the local area. Leaders encourage pupils to identify the means by which they will support charities through the school council, focusing on practical activities such as baking cakes or singing in the community as well as donations. As a result, pupils understand the importance of giving up their time to support others and readily devote time to helping others in school.

46. Starting in the early years, leaders include opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to learn about the different cultures that make up British society. Pupils regularly learn about the different ways in which people celebrate festivals and national events, alongside some of their cultural traditions. Leaders help pupils to develop respect for people from different backgrounds through their active encouragement for pupils and their families to share their experiences and traditions with the school community. However, the school does not develop pupils' learning about the different ways in which people in countries outside Britain lead their daily lives.

47. Leaders help pupils to develop skills designed to support them when they eventually take up employment or apply to senior schools. This includes the practice of writing formal letters when applying for positions of responsibility, requesting to take part in performances and inviting neighbours to school events. Staff are continually alert to opportunities to extend pupils' awareness of how society operates and to prepare them for their adult lives. For example, a discussion about the Mary Rose led to an investigation into how to use the rail network in order to go to Portsmouth to see the ship.

48. Staff in the early years help children to gain an understanding of what money is and how it is used. Children put their knowledge into practice in role-play activities and whole school events when they select which items to purchase. As they grow older, pupils learn about the importance of saving and the difference between needs and wants. Older pupils develop an advanced economic understanding for their age through challenging projects such as shopping for cake ingredients and an enterprise project in which pupils learn about the importance of production costs and profits.

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

49. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

50. Leaders have a detailed and thorough understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and current statutory requirements. They draw up suitable policies and procedures which are implemented effectively. Leaders seek out and act on the advice of local safeguarding partners when identifying ways to improve their practice.

51. The proprietor ensures that suitable arrangements are in place to mitigate any potential risks arising from their joint role as a school leader. Those with designated safeguarding responsibilities have sufficient independence, status and time to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. The proprietor oversees the annual review of safeguarding policy and procedures, with support from external expertise and advice.

52. Members of the safeguarding team and staff are appropriately trained for their roles. Leaders provide a suitable programme of training for staff when they join the school and regular updates throughout the school year. They undertake checks to ensure that staff understand the signs of safeguarding concerns and how to respond should they arise.

53. Staff report concerns about pupils promptly and in line with school procedures. Leaders take swift and appropriate action when concerns arise. They seek advice and liaise with external agencies when required. Leaders keep detailed, confidential records of concerns, which they review and monitor to identify any patterns that require attention.

54. Leaders provide staff with clear and detailed guidance around expectations for their conduct in school. Staff have secure understanding of these and of the action to take if an adult in the school does not adhere to them. Leaders are swift to address any concerns relating to staff behaviour should they arise.

55. Leaders put suitable arrangements in place to filter and monitor pupils' use of the internet when they are in school. Pupils learn how to stay safe when they are online from an early age. Older pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of the precautions they should take when using the internet. Pupils also develop an understanding of how to keep themselves physically safe in the local area, such as through learning to cross the road and keeping themselves safe on weekly walks in the local area.

56. Pupils have trusted adults in school in whom they can confide. Leaders and staff encourage pupils to share their concerns with adults such as their class teachers and the safeguarding team.

57. Leaders undertake the required safer recruitment checks on adults before they begin work in the school. They maintain an accurate record of these checks in a single central record (SCR) of appointments.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

58. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Annemount School
Department for Education number	302/6051
Address	Annemount School 18 Holne Chase Hampstead Garden Suburb London N2 0QN
Phone number	020 8455 2132
Email address	headteacher@annemount.co.uk
Website	www.annemount.co.uk
Proprietor	Mrs Geraldine Maidment
Headteacher	Mrs Geraldine Maidment
Age range	2 to 7
Number of pupils	56
Date of previous inspection	22 to 24 November 2022

Information about the school

59. Annemount School is an independent co-educational day school located in Hampstead Garden Suburb. It is governed by the proprietor, who is also the headteacher.

60. There are 32 children in the early years in two Nursery classes and one Reception class.

61. The school has identified a very small number of pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).

62. The school has identified 17 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL).

63. The school states its aims are to enable its pupils to realise their own potential and to maintain a balance of work, play and physical exercise. It intends to encourage pupils to aspire to their own high standards and to treat those around them with consideration. The school seeks to prepare pupils to be valued members of their community and to develop self-discipline and respect for others.

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Inspection details

Inspection dates 4 to 6 November 2025

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

65. 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 headteacher, school leaders and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

66. 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.
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