

School inspection report

26 to 28 September 2023

TASIS The American International School in England

Coldharbour Lane
Thorpe
TW20 8TE

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. The school's governing body, together with leaders and managers, ensures that pupils receive education that is wide-ranging and appropriately personalised with a range of academic pathways in the senior years. Leaders and managers put pupil wellbeing at the centre of their decision making. Self-evaluation, risk and review is integral to leaders' approach to strategic development. Consequently, leaders' planning is well informed by the current context of the school. Governors maintain a generally well-informed oversight of how leaders are fulfilling their responsibilities.
2. Leaders ensure that effective teaching allows pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and English as an additional language (EAL), to make good progress. Pupils of all ages, including in the early years, actively engage in their lessons, encouraged by carefully planned, appropriately challenging and enthusiastically delivered subject matter. Teachers' assessments provide pupils with clear, detailed feedback for further improvement. Pupils recognise their teachers as approachable and supportive, keen to help them fulfil their potential. The many recreational extra-curricular opportunities open to pupils provide a very successful balance to classroom activities whilst encouraging pupils to develop new skills and interests.
3. Leaders and managers have put in place well-considered programmes and facilities to encourage pupils' health and wellbeing to flourish. The relationships and sex education (RSE) programme is typically developmental and informative. However, it does not fully meet the needs of older pupils to help them develop a stronger understanding of factors affecting their relationships and wellbeing.
4. In line with the school's aims, diversity, mutual respect and tolerance are celebrated across the school. Encouraged to teach others about their cultures, languages and faiths, pupils feel valued and appreciated. Leaders provide ample opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school community, so that pupils confidently take up leadership roles and run clubs and activities. Leaders also encourage and support pupils to take up a wide variety of community service and charity initiatives. The school's careers programme supports older pupils effectively but is less well developed for some younger year groups.
5. Boarders feel very well supported; they appreciate their comfortable, well-equipped houses and the dedicated boarding staff who care for them. However, leaders have not paid due regard to all of the national requirements for boarding provision. Leaders did not ensure that at least one member of staff was supervising overnight in one of the boarding houses as required.
6. Pupils are taught about safeguarding matters; they know how to report concerns and are confident that they will be listened to. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained, as a result, safeguarding is effective.

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 not met consistently
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met

Areas for action

The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities:

- demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
- fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
- and actively promote the wellbeing of pupils so that they pay due regard to the requirements of the National Minimum Standards for boarding provision, particularly regarding staffing and supervision in boarding houses.

Recommended next steps

- Develop opportunities for careers education for pupils aged 11 to 13 so that they are better able to make informed choices about a broad range of career options.
- Strengthen the RSE curriculum so that older pupils develop a stronger understanding of factors affecting their relationships and wellbeing.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

7. Leaders and managers have relevant knowledge and skills and fulfil their responsibilities effectively across almost all areas of school life. They have a range of appropriate policies in place and ensure their effective implementation. Leaders have a very well-defined vision for the school's future development based on thorough self-evaluation, including a comprehensive consideration of risk. Governors monitor leaders' work through focused committees and almost always provide appropriate levels of challenge. However, leaders and governors have not ensured that all of the Standards relating to boarding are met consistently.
8. Leaders and governors successfully enable the school to meet its aim to nurture intellectual curiosity. They have put in place well-developed processes to ensure ongoing and effective professional development for teachers. This supports teachers in planning and delivering effective lessons so that pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with SEND and EAL, are successful in their learning.
9. Leaders actively promote pupils' wellbeing. They have engaged a team of counsellors to play an active part in pupils' development. Pupils are encouraged to speak out if they have concerns and they recognise the school as inclusive. Pupils are taught to look out for each other.
10. Leaders and managers ensure that pupils have a very good understanding of the need to respect others in informative personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons. Leaders are reflective about the curriculum offer and teachers encourage discussion. Leaders review their plans to enhance access to the school and the curriculum for all pupils. Attention to pupils' views means that teachers can adjust the programme to meet the needs of pupils, calling on external speakers, as necessary.
11. Leaders ensure that boarders feel very well cared for, the diverse international make up of boarders is integral to the school's ethos and sense of its global community. Communication between academic and residential staff about pupils' progress and needs is highly effective. Leaders of boarding and boarding staff generally have the appropriate skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles effectively. They undertake regular, relevant training. However, one element of boarding provision did not reflect statutory guidance at the outset of the inspection because leaders had not paid due regard to the requirements.
12. Staff, including boarding staff, are readily contactable by parents. They deal with any concerns swiftly. Complaints are recorded systematically and responded to appropriately within policy timelines. Parents receive regular feedback on their child's progress and are provided with helpful academic and pastoral reports. All other relevant information is made available to parents as required via the school's website.
13. Leaders actively promote the wellbeing of all children in the early years setting. Safeguarding and identification of risk are rigorous, and staff are appropriately trained. They check and self-evaluate their practice regularly. As a result, children are well cared for in a calm and happy environment.

14. Leaders in the early years use assessment information effectively to target support where it is needed. Leaders ensure there is a suitable personalised learning pathway for each child. This results in almost all children making rapid progress, including those with EAL. Leaders are clear about how they can deliver the school's aims and ethos.
15. Safeguarding is of central importance to governors and leaders. They ensure that safeguarding is robust by developing a mandatory training programme for staff, as well as providing regular updates. Leaders have well-developed links with external agencies and understand which circumstances should give rise to a referral. Governors appoint expert external consultants as part of the school's own quality assurance processes who are called upon to advise on matters, as necessary.

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

16. Standards are not met consistently with respect to the National Minimum Standards for boarding.
17. As a result, Standards relating to governance, leadership and management are not met.

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

18. Leaders plan the curriculum effectively, making sure the range of subjects on offer ensures that pupils gain knowledge and develop skills well. They systematically monitor pupils' progress, alongside the quality of teaching. Professional development opportunities provided by leaders help teachers to be confident in their teaching skills. This enables pupils including those pupils who have SEND and those with EAL to make good progress as they develop.
19. Pupils achieve well at all stages of their education, including in the early years. They are enthusiastic and well-motivated learners. Pupils benefit from curriculum opportunities for enquiry-based learning and the teaching of study skills. This reflects the school's desire to inculcate effective lifelong learning habits. Older pupils are enabled to make their own decisions about the most appropriate academic pathways. A wide range of choices are available in the advanced placement and the international baccalaureate (IB) programmes. Examination results show that most pupils taking the IB and advanced placement courses make good progress. Pupils with EAL are regularly assessed in English language proficiency tests and make good progress from their starting points.
20. Effective and regular assessment of pupils gives teachers a thorough understanding of pupils' aptitudes and needs, gained through regular, systematic appraisal of their progress. Teachers then draw on effective strategies to meet the needs of pupils, including those who have SEND and those with EAL. Pupils value the personalised feedback they receive from their teachers, recognising that this helps them to reflect on and improve their work.
21. Teachers encourage pupils of all ages to grow in confidence as successful, increasingly independent learners, keen to think for themselves. Teachers' careful planning ensures that pupils are engaged and highly motivated. Pupils are encouraged to consider before responding to questions and, across the school, teaching encourages pupils to become effective collaborative learners. In line with IB principles, assignments often focus on a global context including in literature, history, politics and languages. This allows pupils to draw astute comparisons. Pupils also make well-reasoned connections between the different areas of their learning, clearly seen in the theory of knowledge course. Teachers use the whole school educational technology systems to create effective online resources, which pupils access with ease to support their learning.
22. Pupils appreciate the approach to learning promoted by leaders and staff and the quality and highly supportive nature of the teaching. Inspectors saw this effective approach in action. Boarders are quick to recognise that access to facilities outside lesson time, within a nurturing community, plays an important part in their academic development.
23. In the early years, almost all children, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their starting points. They are highly engaged in their learning, motivated by well-planned activities. Storytelling sessions encourage pupils to identify and discuss key themes thoughtfully. Leaders ensure that children have access to appropriate high-quality outdoor spaces and sporting facilities. Children negotiate space and obstacles safely and with increasing confidence, while considering others.

24. Leaders have designed a wide-ranging recreational extra-curricular programme. Timetabling ensures a generous allocation of time to enjoy activities outside of lessons. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to propose and run clubs alongside teacher-led activities.

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

25. Pupils' health and wellbeing is seen as of paramount importance by leaders and governors. The school's pastoral structures provide a great deal of practical and emotional support for pupils. Pupils also have access to school counsellors, boarding counsellors and an independent listener to support good mental health.
26. Pupils feel heard. They are encouraged to raise issues and advocate ways forward with, for example, house parents and mentors, as student council representatives, or via the student voice portal. Pupils can readily turn to staff for advice if they have a problem.
27. Diversity is celebrated across the school and inclusion is promoted. Pupils enjoy learning about others' cultures, languages and faiths. Leaders have encouraged pupils in their desire to set up clubs to promote better understanding of the need to respect others. Pupils are supported in their chosen faith. Staff facilitate worship and encourage attendance at religious celebrations.
28. Suitably equipped common rooms and kitchens in the boarding houses allow boarders to enjoy communal life, mixing easily with day pupils and those from other houses. Boarders feel well-known as individuals and house staff are always available for advice and support. Boarders much appreciate their bespoke personal development programme, introduced with governors' support and reviewed annually. This encourages self-esteem and self-confidence.
29. Boarding staff prioritise boarders' health needs so that they are fully met. There is a suitable programme of induction for new boarders. All boarders are provided with good quality nutritious meals as well as a variety of snacks. Boarders' personal possessions are protected. Their privacy is respected and they can always contact a member of staff, including at night. Boarders say that they feel very well supported. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is known and understood by boarders and is made available to parents.
30. A health centre with appropriately trained staff ensures that suitable arrangements and accommodation are in place to care for all pupils who become unwell or have specific medical needs. All staff in the early years are trained in paediatric first aid.
31. Leaders ensure that procedures and policies, risk assessments, first aid, fire safety, maintenance, and security processes are thorough and appropriate. Attendance and admission registers are properly maintained and stored. Premises and accommodation are well maintained so that pupils feel comfortable in a secure learning environment.
32. The school's policy of 'sport for all,' regardless of skill level, has led to a strong culture and high levels of participation. The creation of additional sporting opportunities, such as development squads in volleyball and football, allows pupils the chance to represent the school.
33. The school delivers a comprehensive programme for RSE. Leaders are reflective about what they offer within these lessons. Whilst most pupils speak positively about the range of topics covered in

lessons, the RSE curriculum does not always meet the needs of older pupils who would like the opportunity for more in-depth discussion of age-appropriate matters.

34. Robust anti-bullying and behaviour policies are implemented effectively, which results in very good behaviour and rare incidents of bullying. When cases arise, pupils acknowledge that these are dealt with swiftly. Pupils feel comfortable raising concerns and are confident these will be taken seriously. The school's approach to behavioural issues is proportionate and pupils learn to take responsibility for their actions. Children in the early years behave well. They learn to share and are considerate of each other's needs, guided sensitively by their teachers.
35. Leaders and managers regularly review extensive risk assessments covering the safety and security of the school site. However, no member of staff was sleeping overnight in a building housing six boarders aged 17 to 18. This was rectified during the inspection. Leaders ensure that pupils are properly supervised. They usually deploy staff effectively, including an approachable and efficient security team.

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

Standards are not met consistently with respect to the National Minimum Standards for boarding.

Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included at the end of the report.

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

36. The opportunities, supported by governors, that leaders provide both in and out of the classroom promote the school's mission for learners to flourish as principled, open-minded, and compassionate members of a global community.
37. Pupils show a clear understanding of the importance of mutual respect and tolerance. This is encouraged, including in assemblies, by the diverse subject matter in the curriculum, and the many recreational events that take place. Pupils value the international character of the school community and recognise that this rich diversity helps them to develop open-mindedness. The culture of the school encourages pupils of all ages to mix freely whilst helping and supporting fellow pupils whenever they can. Older pupils take the lead in supporting younger pupils, including when welcoming new arrivals from overseas into the multi-languages club.
38. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. They are taught about British laws and institutions and concepts of democracy. Pupils show a strong understanding of world political issues and can debate them sensitively. Pupils across the school learn to synthesise different viewpoints to arrive at inclusive solutions.
39. Leaders are committed to programmes which promote the development of skills for life in modern society. The open-ended approach to the recently introduced innovation and design middle school course puts significant emphasis on pupils' responsibility for design ideas and peer feedback. Therefore, pupils appreciate the contribution that both teamwork and independent thought plays in modern life, as they prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of British and international society.
40. The school's careers provision is extremely thorough for pupils aged 14 onwards. Pupils value helpful feedback from a psychometric profile assessment they undertake. This, along with regular feedback and reports from their teachers, allows them to make informed choices about the Advanced Placement courses offered to all Upper School pupils aged 15 – 18 and IB Diploma offered to pupils aged 16 and over. Pupils are extremely appreciative of the highly personalised support and expert advice they receive from highly trained careers advisors. Pupils go on to study at a wide range of universities, many of which have challenging entry requirements.
41. In the middle school, pupils follow a varied programme of lifelong learning skills which includes some exploration of the world of work. This is not sufficiently developed to enable pupils to explore a broader range of careers as they move through the school.
42. Pupils are aware of their social responsibilities. Leaders provide many opportunities for them to contribute to the school community. These include language clubs, school bands, choirs and drama. In the locality, pupils support the local food bank, help with churchyard tidying at the village church and join in a programme to support elderly residents. Older pupils engage with a variety of social and charitable projects, both close to home and on a global platform, including as part of the service leadership requirements of the curriculum. Pupils care about supporting others less fortunate than

themselves and raise funds for a range of local, national and international causes.

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

43. Leaders and governors successfully promote the safety and wellbeing of pupils. The school has a firm commitment to protecting and supporting pupils. The safeguarding policy is implemented efficiently and effectively. There is a culture of transparency and leaders take concerns seriously.
44. Any reported safeguarding concerns are acted upon promptly and the leaders work effectively with external agencies when concerns arise. Leaders make prompt referrals to children’s services, the local authority designated officer and the police when appropriate.
45. Leaders ensure that staff receive safeguarding training when they join the school and this is updated at regular intervals. Those with designated safeguarding lead responsibilities receive appropriate training. Staff are knowledgeable in child protection procedures, including those for online safety and are informed about the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism. This is supported by judicious use of expert external advice. The school implements an effective internet filtering and monitoring system. Staff check pupil attendance closely and understand how to recognise and report a safeguarding concern. These measures enable pupils to feel safe in school.
46. Safer recruitment checks are completed for all staff, volunteers and governors and properly recorded on a suitable central register of appointments. Safer recruitment practice is thorough.

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

All the relevant Standards are met

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)(a), (b) and (c) | 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 – (a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; (b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and (c) actively promote the well-being of pupils. |

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

The relevant Standards are met

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

The relevant Standards are not met consistently

| Paragraph number | Standard |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Part 3 paragraph 8 | Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that - |
| Part 3 paragraph 8(b) | such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. |
| Part 3 paragraph 14; NMS 20.7 | Schools should ensure that they have a suitable number of staff (and at least one) sleeping or on duty in each building, who is responsible for the boarders and available to meet boarders' needs during the night. |

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

The relevant Standards are met

Safeguarding

The relevant Standards are met

School details

| | |
|--|---|
| School | TASIS The American International School in England |
| Department for Education number | 936/6532 |
| Address | Coldharbour Lane Thorpe TW20 8TE |
| Website | http://www.tasisengland.org |
| Proprietor | The TASIS Foundation |
| Chair | Mr David King |
| Headteacher | Mr Bryan Nixon |
| Age range | 3 to 18 |
| Number of pupils | 641 |
| Number of boarding pupils | 233 |
| Date of previous inspection | 1 to 2 May 2019 |

Information about the school

47. TASIS, The American School in England, is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between 3 and 18 years. It is part of the TASIS Foundation which operates four schools in England, Switzerland, Portugal and Puerto Rico. The school was founded in 1976 and is governed by an international board of directors. It is divided into three sections: the lower school for pupils in the early years to Year 5; the middle school for Years 6 to 9; and the upper school for Years 10 to 13.
48. Boarding is offered for pupils from the age of 13. Boarders are accommodated in nine boarding houses on the school site.
49. There are twenty-three children in the early years, comprising one Nursery and one Reception class, located in the lower school building.
50. The school has identified 63 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
51. English is an additional language for 122 pupils.
52. The school states that its aims are to nurture intellectual curiosity and embolden each learner to flourish as a principled, open-minded, and compassionate member of a global community.

Inspection details

Inspection dates 26 – 28 September 2023

53. A team of eight inspectors visited the school for three days. The onsite inspection was quality assured by a monitor.
54. The following inspection activities were undertaken:
- observation of lessons
 - observation of extra-curricular activities
 - attendance at form meetings and assemblies
 - visits to boarding houses
 - visit to facilities for the youngest pupils
 - visits to the SEND, the EAL and the educational resources areas
 - discussions with pupils
 - discussions with members of staff
 - discussion with a group of governors.
55. 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**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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For more information, please visit isi.net