ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

School inspection report

17 to 19 June 2025

Orchard House School

16 Newton Grove

Chiswick

London

W4 1LB

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

Contents

Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively and ensure all statutory requirements are met. The proprietor and advisory governors hold leaders to account through regular review and support. Leaders' decision-making aligns with the school's aims and is focused on promoting pupil wellbeing.

2. Leaders evaluate the work of the school thoroughly. They use performance data, lesson observations and pupil feedback to set ambitious targets. Priorities for development are identified and acted upon. Staff understand their roles and work collaboratively to ensure policies are consistently implemented.

3. Leaders identify risks to pupils' wellbeing and act to minimise them. They anticipate challenges and implement suitable mitigations. Leaders typically manage daily hazards effectively. However, a small number of risk assessments are not sufficiently flexible to respond to changing circumstances.

4. Safeguarding arrangements are robust. Staff understand their responsibilities and act promptly when concerns arise. The safeguarding team maintains detailed records and consults external agencies when appropriate. Pupils feel safe and know how to seek help. The curriculum teaches pupils how to stay safe, including online. Recruitment checks meet all statutory requirements.

5. Leaders have implemented an ambitious and cohesive curriculum that focuses on pupils acquiring and applying new knowledge to real-world situations. Subjects are carefully sequenced and linked to build knowledge and skills over time, reflecting pupils' needs and starting points.

6. Teaching is purposeful and well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers plan lessons that build on prior learning and develop key skills. As a result, pupils make good progress from their starting points. They are confident, articulate and can apply subject-specific vocabulary with precision.

7. Children in the early years thrive due to a well-structured curriculum and stimulating environment, which balances academic and social development. Adults model language effectively and support children's social and emotional growth. Children learn to co-operate, take turns and explore new ideas with increasing confidence. They are well prepared for the next stage of education.

8. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified and effectively supported. Staff adapt teaching appropriately and closely monitor progress.

9. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive structured support to develop vocabulary and comprehension. They are well integrated into lessons and participate confidently in discussions and group work.

10. Pupils are respectful towards each other and typically behave well. Incidents of bullying are rare and dealt with promptly. Pupils understand the importance of treating others kindly, and they show consideration for different views. They are comfortable expressing opinions and listen carefully to others when discussing sensitive topics.

11. Staff promote mental health and emotional wellbeing. Pupils express how they feel and are taught effective strategies for managing challenges. Relationships between staff and pupils are supportive and trusting, and consequently pupils are confident. Pupils are resilient when faced with academic and emotional setbacks. Adults notice when pupils need help and respond appropriately.

12. Pupils learn about British values and life in modern Britain. They reflect on ethical issues, justice and democracy in lessons and assemblies. They show respect for others, including those who are different from them. Pupils take responsibility for their actions and understand the importance of equality, fairness and participation in society.

13. Pupils contribute to school and wider community life. They participate in charitable projects, support their younger peers and take on leadership roles. Careers and economic education are effectively structured and develop pupils' understanding of future possibilities and the management of money.

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 risk assessments are suitably monitored so that they respond to changing situations.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

14. Leaders have the knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They ensure that policies are well understood by staff and pupils so that the school consistently meets the Standards and supports its values of excellence, honesty and kindness.

15. Assisted by a body of advisory governors, the proprietor offers effective strategic support, and maintains robust oversight. Governors hold leaders to account through regular monitoring activities such as gathering feedback from parents, staff and pupils. By providing both challenge and support, they ensure leaders act in line with the school's ethos and have the knowledge and skills to promote pupils' wellbeing.

16. Leaders are ambitious and use self-evaluation effectively to plan school development. Leaders systematically analyse assessment data, behaviour records, and feedback from parents and pupils to identify trends and areas for improvement. This data informs strategic planning in curriculum development, staff training and site developments. For example, the changes to the teaching of letters and the sounds they represent have increased the already high pupil outcomes in reading at the end of Year 1.

17. Staff and leaders consistently model the school values of kindness, honesty and excellence. Pupils reflect these values in their behaviour and interactions.

18. Leaders in the early years ensure that provision is appropriately planned, safe and responsive to the developmental needs of young children. They have established clear routines and expectations which support children's independence and readiness to learn. Staff are suitably trained and well deployed to maintain a purposeful atmosphere in which children feel secure. Professional supervision and coaching by leaders enable staff to refine teaching strategies and plan developmentally appropriate activities for the children.

19. Leaders are aware of risks to pupils and are proactive in their planning to foresee potential issues, ensuring that appropriate mitigations are in place. In preparing for the recent merger with another school, leaders considered the risks to wellbeing and culture, and modifications were effectively implemented. These included the deployment of safeguarding and SEND specialists to ensure staff and pupils in each building have access to expert help and advice. Leaders identify day-to-day hazards, such as the use of equipment in science and technology, risks associated with the early years setting or educational trips, and mitigate them appropriately. Almost all risk assessments are detailed and up to date. However, a small number are not reviewed by staff in such a way as to make them adaptable to changing circumstances, for example very hot weather.

20. Leaders publish all required policies and information, including those on safeguarding, the curriculum and anti-bullying, on the school website. They provide parents with regular updates on their child's progress and achievements. Leaders submit the necessary information to the local authority for pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan, including information on the use of funds.

21. Leaders ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010. They implement and review the accessibility plan regularly to support effective access to learning and facilities for pupils who have disabilities. Staff receive training on equality and anti-discrimination, which contributes to pupils' understanding of diversity being embedded in the school's culture.

22. Partnerships with external professionals enhance the school's ability to meet a range of needs. Leaders have established effective partnerships with local authorities and specialists, such as educational psychologists and speech and language therapists, so that expert advice can be sought and followed.

23. Leaders respond promptly to complaints, often resolving them informally. When formal procedures are required, they are followed diligently and within expected time frames. Leaders access the expertise of external experts when appropriate to ensure fully informed decisions. The proprietor provides a suitable overview of the complaints process and collaborates with leaders to identify trends and make changes if necessary.

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

24. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

25. The school's well-planned, cohesive and ambitious curriculum ensures pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of significant human and social topics alongside linguistic, mathematical, scientific and creative skills. Links between topics enable pupils to connect and apply knowledge to real-world issues such as environmental change and civil rights. For example, pupils studying suffrage in history make connections with current events in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and writing projects. Teaching inspires pupils to care about real-world issues. Plans contain specific reference to strategies to support the wide range of needs of the pupils, ensuring that the curriculum is accessible to all.

26. Lesson planning builds from prior knowledge and matches pupils' developmental stages. Teachers explain concepts clearly, identify and address misconceptions, and select tasks that develop precision and fluency. They use various strategies, including targeted questioning and modelling of answers, to help pupils secure understanding. Pupils demonstrate this when using complex vocabulary to respond or reason in French, science and history.

27. Most pupils who speak English as an additional language join in the early years. Staff support language development through play and conversation. Older pupils receive structured support, including bilingual books, translated materials, and the opportunity to rehearse answers orally. As a result, they acquire English quickly.

28. Written and oral feedback from teachers enables pupils to evaluate their work and make improvements. Pupils accept making mistakes as part of learning and confidently try tasks again. Staff use assessment information to shape teaching and support. They review outcomes in collaboration with subject leaders, who monitor progress and guide planning. In the early years, observational assessment is embedded into daily practice and informs focused planning that supports children in meeting developmental milestones. As a result, pupils make expected, or in the case of many, greater than expected progress.

29. Staff in the early years have the skills and knowledge to deliver a curriculum that successfully enables pupils to make good progress. Activities and learning experiences are well-planned, well-resourced and purposeful. Teachers use children's interests to introduce abstract concepts, such as number, through cooking activities or story sequencing, encouraging engagement and strengthening emerging skills.

30. Pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points. Teachers identify indicators of potential barriers to learning and adapt their teaching with advice from the SEND team. These adaptations to teaching, questioning and resources enable pupils to access lessons effectively while retaining a sense of independence. Leaders engage effectively with speech and language therapists, educational psychologists and social care teams to provide additional expertise and advice.

31. Embedded quality assurance systems enable leaders to respond to emerging needs. Assessment data, lesson observations and feedback inform targeted teacher development. Recent training on vocabulary development as part of the implementation of the revised curriculum, for example, has improved pupils' comprehension and oracy.

32. Teachers plan a wide range of clubs and enrichment activities that extend learning and promote wellbeing. Pupils join sports, art, chess, debating and drama groups, developing friendships and

confidence outside lessons. Participation is high, and staff ensure inclusivity of access by adapting the programme in response to pupil requests.

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

33. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

34. Teachers guide pupils to reflect on their actions and consider the impact of their words. Through class discussion and informal interactions, pupils demonstrate mutual respect and empathy. Staff model inclusive attitudes and address unkindness with sensitivity. For example, pupils recognise and praise acts of courage, such as overcoming personal challenges during school trips.

35. Leaders make sure pupils develop spiritual understanding and self-awareness through planned opportunities for reflection and celebration. In the early years, children explore ideas through role play, art and music, and learn to express their preferences and show empathy. This lays the foundation for increasing self-knowledge and confidence as they move through the school. Pupils participate in assemblies and themed events that promote respect for diverse beliefs, including the celebration of religious and cultural festivals. Staff reinforce a culture in which pupils express opinions and learn to recognise their achievements and develop self-esteem.

36. Pupils explore moral questions through creative writing, philosophy and discussion. Assemblies and literature choices reinforce ethical thinking. These opportunities support the development of moral reasoning in accessible and age-appropriate ways. For instance, pupils reflect on moral dilemmas, such as who should bear the cost of combatting climate change, in philosophical debate sessions, and consider themes of revenge and forgiveness in English.

37. Behaviour expectations are reinforced through consistent adult modelling and shared routines. Pupils understand and accept rewards and sanctions. Assemblies and PSHE lessons help pupils recognise unkindness and understand how to report it. When incidents occur, pupils know how to seek help, and trust adults to respond. Staff intervene sensitively and manage incidents discreetly. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils behave responsibly and respond well to boundaries.

38. The anti-bullying strategy is effective. Incidents are rare and, when they occur, pupils report concerns confidently. In addition to talking to their teacher, worry boxes and access to staff specifically trained in mental health provide safe avenues for pupils to raise issues. Assemblies and class discussions reinforce personal responsibility and kindness. Early years staff closely monitor group interactions and intervene to support inclusion. Pupils are confident that adults will take action.

39. Sensitive and well-sequenced lessons enable pupils to explore relationships, privacy and respect. In PSHE and relationships and sex education (RSE), teachers respond thoughtfully to pupils' needs. Teachers answer questions in an age-appropriate manner, whether they are posed directly by enquiring pupils or anonymously via the 'ask me' boxes in each classroom. Leaders equip pupils with the language and confidence to speak openly about emotions and relationships and ask for support when needed.

40. Physical education (PE), active play and PSHE lessons enable pupils to understand how to maintain physical health through regular exercise. PE lessons focus on developing skills and promoting inclusive participation. Specialist staff adapt activities to meet pupils' needs, set appropriate levels of challenge and encourage co-operation. Teachers emphasise the benefits of exercise, healthy routines and nutrition in ways suited to pupils' ages. Pupils engage positively in various physical activities such as tennis, swimming and rowing and recognise how these contribute to their

wellbeing. Staff celebrate both individual progress and collaborative effort. Children build co-ordination and confidence in the early years through structured outdoor play, including balancing, climbing and running.

41. From the early years onwards, adults support children in articulating their feelings. Staff use whole-school agreed vocabulary prompts and model emotional regulation, helping children develop positive mental health. Leaders provide access to staff trained in mental health support, including counsellors, and drop-in sessions for pupils to talk.

42. Classrooms and communal spaces are tidy, secure and well maintained. Outdoor areas are appropriately supervised by staff, who promote positive behaviour and physical or creative activity. Leaders timetable the use of outdoor play spaces, including local facilities, to allow pupils to play safely and with enjoyment. Staff and pupil routines and appropriate supervision levels ensure pupils move between buildings safely.

43. Leaders ensure effective health and safety systems are maintained. Staff follow regular maintenance schedules for items such as security, water temperatures and lighting. When health and safety issues are raised, maintenance is prompt and thorough. Leaders' plans to reduce the risk of fire include fire alarm tests, extinguisher servicing, and fire door inspections. Staff lead regular fire evacuation drills to enable pupils to be familiar with routes. The proprietor monitors the work of leaders through regular meetings, scrutiny of records and site inspections.

44. Leaders maintain an accurate admission register. Families are supported to maintain regular attendance, and staff intervene quickly if patterns of absence occur. Leaders inform the local authorities of any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition times.

45. Staff trained in first aid supervise pupils with care and confidence. Incidents are recorded accurately, and systems are in place to ensure a quick response. Parents are informed promptly, and follow-up is consistent.

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

46. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

47. Teachers plan lessons to include debate, so that pupils respect others' views and respond with reasoned argument. Assemblies, and the appropriate choice of literary texts across the curriculum, reinforce themes of equality, fairness and democracy. Staff guide younger pupils to recognise kind actions and explore the importance of rules. Pupils aspire to respect all and take responsibility for their actions.

48. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to participate in, and help lead charity events such as donations to the local food bank, park planting schemes and book donations. In collaboration with local groups and businesses, pupils initiate service projects and encourage their peers to participate. Leadership roles, performance opportunities and school council involvement help pupils build confidence and a sense of ownership. Pupils engage positively with these roles and contribute to the wider school community. They recognise that their actions will make a difference, such as initiating the recent refurbishment of toilets.

49. Careers events include workplace visits and careers day, enabling older pupils to learn about specific occupations such as law, medicine and finance. They gain a deeper understanding of possible future pathways by following a virtual day in the life of professionals. Pupils ask informed questions and reflect on their aspirations. Preparation for transfer to secondary school includes study skills, mock interviews and visits from local transport partners.

50. Pupils understand and apply fundamental British values through the taught curriculum, PSHE and assemblies. They learn to listen attentively, express their views respectfully and consider different perspectives. Philosophical debate and oracy are embedded across subjects, helping pupils to explore ideas such as fairness, respect and individual liberty. Pupils demonstrate these values when discussing the impact of civil rights movements. They consider the experiences of others, for example when reflecting on fairness through historical inquiry. In early years, staff model respectful communication, and support turn-taking and co-operative behaviour.

51. The curriculum enables pupils to develop social and cultural awareness. Teachers plan learning experiences that support pupils to explore human and social issues such as the environment, and freedom of expression. Pupils develop empathy and show curiosity about the world around them as a result of these experiences and modelling by staff. In the early years, staff support cultural development through storytelling and role-play activities.

52. Leaders prepare pupils effectively for life in British society. The curriculum includes opportunities to understand governance, law, and civic responsibility, particularly through history, PSHE and philosophy. Pupils discuss ideas linked to justice and equality and recognise the importance of public services and shared values. Teachers help pupils make connections between classroom expectations and broader legal or social principles, reinforcing the importance of rules and fairness. Adults promote routine and responsibility in the early years, helping children understand how agreed rules support safety and fairness in shared spaces.

53. Leaders actively promote respect for individual differences. Activities and adult interactions are tailored to individual needs in the early years. Children are supported to celebrate difference. Older pupils recognise and challenge unfairness and treat others with kindness and dignity. The curriculum

includes age-appropriate content about equality and diversity, and pupils reflect on how people may experience the world differently.

54. Pupils receive effective economic education. They develop an understanding of topics such as budgeting, debt, and need versus want through integrated projects. Pupils recognise how effort, planning and perseverance support achievement. In the early years, children develop awareness of value and exchange through structured play, such as choosing and trading resources.

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

55. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

56. Leaders prioritise safeguarding, ensuring arrangements to protect the welfare of pupils follow current statutory guidance and are effective.

57. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies are suitably trained and experienced. The DSL is a member of the school's leadership team and has the authority to carry out the role effectively. The team works closely with each other and external agencies, drawing on professional advice when needed. Safeguarding leaders maintain detailed, well-organised records. Responses to concerns are timely and appropriate.

58. Staff understand their responsibilities and follow the school's safeguarding procedures consistently. They receive regular training and updates, which include safeguarding themes such as contextual risks, child-on-child abuse and online safety. New staff complete safeguarding induction before commencing employment. Leaders provide additional training for specific roles, such as lunchtime supervision or early years practice, to ensure that safeguarding expectations are well understood in all contexts.

59. Systems for identifying and reporting concerns are clear. Where concerns require escalation, leaders act swiftly and involve external agencies where appropriate. Leaders are alert to behaviour, attendance or wellbeing changes that may indicate underlying risk.

60. Staff know how to raise potential concerns about the behaviour of adults in the school. Leaders record any concerns, however minor, and take appropriate action.

61. Pupils feel safe and know how to seek help. They trust staff to listen and respond. Opportunities to raise concerns are embedded, including access to trained staff, use of worry boxes and peer mentoring systems. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm, respectful and underpinned by clear boundaries.

62. Pupils learn to keep themselves safe through the curriculum, including computing and PSHE, and assemblies. They understand the importance of privacy, consent and how to respond to peer pressure. Leaders provide the opportunity and facts that enable pupils to talk confidently about strategies they use to stay safe, including online.

63. Recruitment procedures are robust. Leaders complete all required checks before staff begin working with pupils. These checks are recorded accurately on the single central register. Leaders verify the suitability of visiting professionals and volunteers.

64. The proprietor regularly and robustly reviews the effectiveness of the safeguarding policy and practice. This oversight, combined with leaders' actions, maintains a rigorous and consistent approach to safeguarding.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

65. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Orchard House School
Department for Education number	313/6051
Address	Orchard House School 16 Newton Grove Chiswick London W4 1LB
Phone number	020 8742 8544
Email address	info@orchardhs.org.uk
Website	www.orchardhs.org.uk
Proprietor	Dukes Education Limited
Chair	Mr Aatif Hassan
Headteacher	Mrs Henrietta Adams
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	398
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2023

Information about the school

66. Orchard House School is a co-educational day school located in Chiswick, London. It is housed on four sites which are within 0.3 miles of each other. It is owned by Dukes Education Group Ltd and the board of directors provide governance. Since the last inspection, Orchard House School has merged with another local school and a new headteacher has been appointed.

67. There are 100 children in the early years, comprising three Nursery and three Reception classes.

68. The school has identified 48 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Three pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

69. The school has identified English as an additional language for 117 pupils.

70. The school states its aims are to celebrate personal strengths, build confidence and resilience and develop a lifelong love of learning. To do so, it seeks to provide a warm and nurturing atmosphere which values diversity and fosters a strong sense of community within which pupils feel safe and happy. It aims to promote high academic standards and help pupils develop good learning habits and thinking skills.

Inspection details

Inspection dates   17 to 19 June 2025

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

72. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders

- observation of registration periods

- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection

- discussions with a representative of the proprietor

- discussions with the headteacher, 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.

73. 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

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

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