

School inspection report

31 October 2023 to 2 November 2023

Pembridge Hall School

18 Pembridge Square
London
W2 4EH

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 is led and managed effectively by a highly organised, efficient leadership team. Governors and leaders display good knowledge, skills and understanding and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Governors maintain an effective oversight of the school that ensures standards are met consistently. Leadership and management have created a collaborative culture throughout the school that promotes pupils' wellbeing successfully.
2. Leaders make sure teaching is well planned and resourced so that pupils' learning needs are met effectively across the curriculum. Teaching enables pupils to develop their skills across the range of subjects. Pupils are successfully encouraged to use their well-developed skills in digital technology across the curriculum. Leaders use sophisticated systems of assessment and monitoring to inform planning. These help to ensure that most pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points. Leaders and staff meet the needs of pupils who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. This is because the school provides SEND pupils with appropriate support within lessons.
3. Leaders have established a relationships education programme that meets statutory requirements. However, the depth of pupils' understanding of themes studied within relationships education and their expression about these vary.
4. Leaders successfully implement a highly effective whole school behaviour policy. This is suitably linked to the school values of kindness and responsibility. Pupils show a strong appreciation of these values. Incidents of misbehaviour or bullying are infrequent and responded to effectively.
5. Governors and leaders make appropriate checks and take measures to provide a safe environment for staff, pupils and visitors. They ensure that all checks on premises and health and safety procedures are made in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance.
6. Pupils experience human, social and economic education which helps them to fulfil their potential and appreciate the contribution they can make to the lives of others. Pupils are prepared well for each stage of their education. However, leaders recognise accurately that pupils' understanding of economic wellbeing is not fully developed.
7. Leaders ensure that safeguarding at the school is robust. The school's safeguarding policy is effectively implemented as leaders ensure that staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff receive thorough safeguarding training which is updated regularly.

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

- Strengthen pupils' confidence in expressing and evaluating their understanding of Relationships Education.
- Further develop pupils' economic education so that their understanding of economic wellbeing is strengthened.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders and governors demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Leaders ensure that the promotion of pupils' wellbeing is central to all decision-making. For example, in ensuring that the school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act, the school places pupils' wellbeing at the centre of its accessibility plan.
9. Leaders implement effective performance evaluation across all areas of the school. These evaluations are linked to the school's development plan. As a result, leaders target aspects of the school's provision for further development in a well-informed and strategic manner.
10. Leaders ensure that the school's policies and procedures are clearly understood so that they are implemented effectively. For example, the school's principles are consistently communicated and actively promoted so that staff and pupils demonstrate them confidently.
11. Leaders successfully maintain links with relevant external agencies that foster pupils' wellbeing. This extends from developing child protection training for staff with local authorities to working with reputable bodies to extend the pupils' understanding of personal safety effectively. Governors and leaders have encouraged senior staff to be trained as mental health first aiders and enabled access to external counselling to benefit pupils' mental wellbeing.
12. Governors maintain an effective oversight of the school, supported by appropriate training and specialist advice from elsewhere within the proprietary group. They monitor the school's provision systematically to ensure that Standards are met.
13. Leaders and managers actively promote pupils' wellbeing by creating opportunities for pupils to share their experiences. The varied systems in place for this enable trends and individual concerns to be identified and actioned.
14. Leaders take active and effective steps to minimise and prevent harm to pupils and their wellbeing. For example, leaders have established robust procedures to support the pupils' safety at transition time when they leave school at the end of the school day. Governors review the school's risk assessment procedures annually and assess the implementation of the risk assessment policy effectively.
15. The school implements its complaints policy effectively. Leaders guide staff well when responding to informal complaints. They maintain an effective overview of any complaints submitted in order to identify any trends that may require further attention. Leaders provide the required information to parents and prospective parents. This includes detailed and informative reports to parents about their own child's progress.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

16. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is planned and implemented so that pupils make good progress. They plan subjects with due regard to pupils' ages, abilities and needs. Teachers tailor lessons to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding effectively. Imaginative curriculum planning includes project-based learning that successfully develops pupils' independence and enables them to make their own decisions around their learning. The curriculum includes stimulating themed days, educational visits and visits from external providers, all of which enrich the pupils' learning.
17. The broad curriculum enables pupils to gain knowledge and develop their skills across a wide range of subjects. Pupils are confident in applying their speaking, listening, reading, writing and numerical skills to different subjects. Teaching encourages pupils to ask questions and enables them to think critically, as demonstrated well in their philosophy and current affairs lessons. Pupils throughout the school capitalise on extensive opportunities to develop their creative skills effectively. They write imaginatively, produce artwork and make music of high quality. Leaders ensure that pupils' technological skills are well embedded, and pupils use these with confidence to enhance their learning across the curriculum. This demonstrates an effective response to a previous inspection recommendation.
18. Pupils who have SEND often exceed expectations and make rapid progress. This is because leaders make certain that teachers and teaching assistants are equipped with appropriate skills and strategies to support these pupils effectively. Suitable practical resources aid pupils' learning well.
19. Leaders have established an effective framework to evaluate pupils' work. Leaders use their analysis of data to inform strategies that further improve pupils' performance. Teachers encourage pupils to self-evaluate and explicitly teach skills of reflection and target setting. This enables pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. Pupils regularly reflect on their work, considering what they need to do to achieve best quality and effect good progress.
20. Teachers display secure subject knowledge. Pupils make good progress in lessons because teachers engage their interest and enthusiasm. Teachers ensure that their classroom management promotes positive behaviour whether pupils are engaged in lively or calm activities. They create an environment in which pupils, including those who have SEND, can focus on making progress with their work.
21. The programme for learning in the early years meets the needs of the children highly effectively. Teachers have high expectations, and this leads to the children having high aspirations for themselves. Staff encourage children to be independent, to problem-solve, be reflective and self-correct. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points across the areas of development and learning.
22. Leaders provide an extensive extra-curricular programme that interests and engages the pupils well. Pupils' enthusiasm is reflected in high participation in a variety of recreational activities that develop their learning and promote their wellbeing.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

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

23. Leaders ensure that staff training and curriculum planning maintain a strong emphasis on the promotion of pupils' wellbeing. Whole school initiatives on mental health, self-care and looking out for one another enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. Leaders use tracking systems effectively when assessing pupils' mental health and wellbeing, enabling appropriate support to be given such as helping improve pupils' self-regulation skills.
24. Leaders ensure that there are regular and effective opportunities for pupils to exercise and improve their physical development. Pupils' mental and physical health benefit from breaktimes in the park, physical education and sports lessons, after school clubs and activities such as yoga and gymnastics. Pupils learn to understand the benefits of good physical and mental health and other aspects of personal development during personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons and in assemblies.
25. Leaders successfully ensure that codes of conduct are effective. Children in the early years and beyond understand the school's 'behaviour ladder' clearly. Pupils throughout the school behave well in class and outside of lessons. Pupils show high levels of respect for one another because of the clear expectations and modelling of such behaviour by leaders and staff.
26. Pupils feel that staff are approachable and that they can turn to an adult for support if they experience problems. Pupils are confident of the effectiveness of staff in helping to resolve friendship issues and to deal effectively with any bullying.
27. Leaders provide a relationships education programme that is in line with national expectations and meets current requirements. However, pupils' depth of understanding and ideas about themes studied within relationships education is varied.
28. Through teaching and other occasions such as assemblies, staff effectively encourage pupils in their development of spiritual understanding and appreciation of non-material aspects of life. Staff introduce older pupils to sophisticated philosophical questions and pupils recognise that there may not always be a definitive answer to these.
29. Leaders deploy staff efficiently to ensure pupils are always supervised. This enables pupils to be confident of their safety and secure in the knowledge that they have adult support immediately available.
30. The school's admission and attendance registers are maintained appropriately, and leaders ensure that unexplained absences are swiftly followed up. Staff contact the destination schools of leavers in accordance with statutory guidance.
31. Governors and leaders ensure that the school premises are well maintained and that required health and safety checks and maintenance are implemented effectively. Appropriate precautions are taken to reduce the risk from fire. Leaders ensure that pupils can evacuate the building efficiently through termly drills and staff receive regular fire safety training. An appropriate fire risk assessment is in place.

32. Arrangements for pupils who are unwell or require first aid are suitable. Staff receive regular training in paediatric first aid.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

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

33. The curriculum and enrichment programmes provide opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of human and social themes. Pupils' cultural knowledge is developed well in religious education lessons and in visits to places of worship. Experiences in art, music, dance and poetry strengthen pupils' cultural understanding well. Teaching ensures that British values are effectively encouraged from the early years onwards. Pupils show respect in how they speak to one another and in how they freely socialise at lunch and breaktimes. Staff astutely take opportunities to focus on the value of teamwork and the rules for playing. These develop pupils' respect, tolerance and appreciation for the rule of law.
34. Pupils begin to gain an understanding of British institutions and prepare for their future life through the wide range of curricular activities and teaching afforded to them. They learn to understand democratic processes through experiencing elections to the school council and food council. Older pupils are encouraged to take this further by setting up elections for their own political party and developing policies to tackle national issues. Outdoor learning days and residential trips effectively develop pupils' character and life skills. Staff successfully encourage older pupils to broaden their understanding and knowledge of current affairs, such as by distinguishing between refugees and asylum seekers.
35. Leaders and staff consistently promote the school values and successfully guide pupils to take responsibility for their actions. This is reflected in pupils' respect for people from diverse cultures and in their desire to help those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils are enthusiastic in charity fundraising, for a range of local, national and international causes. Staff effectively support pupils' endeavours to help others in the local community. For example, pupils give time to charitable initiatives such as TimeGivers, as well as actively supporting the local church food bank.
36. Pupils communicate their understanding of moral values articulately, having explored these in lessons and weekly assemblies. The successful embedding of the school's values by leaders and staff contributes to pupils having a clear sense of right and wrong.
37. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education. Leaders encourage pupils to have high aspirations. For example, older pupils understand how studying science can help one become a doctor or astronaut. Leaders have recently introduced an enterprise and design programme designed to broaden pupils' horizons. However, leaders recognise accurately that pupils' development of enterprise skills and understanding of economic wellbeing are not yet fully developed.

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

38. Leaders prioritise safeguarding and ensure that effective arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils are in place. They ensure that the school's policy and procedures meet the requirements of current statutory guidance.
39. Leaders ensure that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training when they join the school and that this is updated at regular intervals. Staff are confident in their understanding of child protection procedures and how to recognise and report concerns.
40. Those with designated safeguarding lead responsibilities receive appropriate training. They work effectively with external agencies when concerns arise and demonstrate thorough record-keeping in line with the requirements.
41. Staff are aware of the risks pupils face online and are alert to the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. They develop pupils' awareness of how to stay safe, including when online.
42. Governors maintain an effective oversight of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures, including the filtering and monitoring of internet usage.
43. The school implements appropriate procedures with regard to children missing or absent from education.
44. Leaders ensure that the required safer recruitment checks are completed for all staff, volunteers and governors and that a suitable central register of appointments is maintained.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Pembridge Hall School
Department for Education number	207/6303
Address	Pembridge Hall School 18 Pembridge Square London W2 4EH
Website	http://www.pembridgehall.co.uk
Proprietor	Inspired Education Group
Chair	Mr Nick Wergan
Headteacher	Mrs Sophie Banks
Age range	4 to 11
Number of pupils	460
Date of previous inspection	30 June 2023

Information about the school

45. Pembridge Hall School is single-sex day school for female pupils located in central London. The lower school and upper school are located on separate sites approximately one hundred metres apart on the same street. Since the previous inspection the school’s ownership has changed. The current chair of governors was appointed in October 2023.
46. There are 80 children in the early years in four Reception classes.
47. The school has identified 82 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
48. English is an additional language for 175 pupils.
49. The school states that its aims are to combine traditional values with innovative education to prepare pupils for life. The objective is to nurture, challenge and empower pupils to succeed by providing an environment in which pupils are happy and develop a love of learning. The school’s values are for the pupils to be individual, kind, curious, aspirational, resilient and responsible.

Inspection details

Inspection dates 31 October to 2 November 2023

50. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The onsite inspection was quality assured by a monitor.
51. Inspection activities included:
- discussions with senior leaders, governors, staff and pupils
 - observations of lessons, extra-curricular activities, assemblies and pupils’ breaktimes
 - reviewing pupils’ work with staff and pupils
 - examining curriculum and other documentation provided by the school
 - scrutiny of information made available to parents.
52. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI’s pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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