

School inspection report

26 September to 28 September 2023

Wetherby Senior School

Marylebone Lane
London
W1U 2QU

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 a vibrant, busy and happy community where senior leaders and governors share a strong vision based upon the core values of character, community and respect. They consistently place the child at the centre of their planning and there is a demonstrable sense of shared purpose among staff and pupils. Senior leaders and those with defined leadership roles, some of whom are new in post, make decisions to the benefit of pupils. They evaluate carefully, consider unintended consequences and adapt their plans, as necessary. This creates a purposeful environment of well-managed change and growth.
2. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and oversee the work of the school effectively. They ensure that there is a comprehensive strategic development plan in place. They work closely with school leaders to check its implementation. This oversight includes receiving regular reports across all aspects of school life, reviewing policies and procedures and providing support and challenge where appropriate.
3. Leaders ensure that a suitable curriculum is provided that includes a broad range of subjects. An appropriate programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), which includes relationships and sex education (RSE), is in place for all pupils. Although the required content is covered, opportunities to discuss issues further are sometimes limited and when this is the case pupils' understanding is less comprehensive.
4. Staff regularly assess and monitor pupils' progress and give them support when necessary. As a result, pupils make good progress. The provision of support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is highly effective in helping them to achieve. A large proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL) and attain high levels of competence in English.
5. Pupils highly value the leadership opportunities at all levels of this school community. Pupil leaders and senior school staff act as role models. Younger pupils look to emulate them in the wide range of leadership opportunities available to pupils of all ages. Leaders encourage pupils to express their views about their school in a variety of ways and pupils' suggestions have been acted upon in several cases, such as when revising lunchtime menus in the dining room and in the acquisition of new gym equipment.
6. Senior pastoral leaders have developed strong systems that promote pupils' good behaviour, minimise bullying incidents and provide effective support to pupils when issues arise. As a result, pupils are well supported and this has a positive impact on their wellbeing. Pupils celebrate the diversity of their community and exhibit high levels of tolerance and respect for each other.
7. School leaders encourage pupils to use their initiative to set up and take part in charitable endeavours. In response, pupils offer service within and beyond the school and engage with the cultural and educational opportunities of London, attending theatre performances and a wide variety of lectures, facilitated by the school.
8. Supervision at both school sites is appropriate. The school has suitable arrangements in place to reduce the risk to pupils when they walk between the two sites. However, pupils do not always report any near misses with regard to traffic or the public.

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

- Develop the effectiveness of the delivery of the personal, social, health and economic education including the relationships and sex education and its impact on pupils' understanding.
- Create an effective system for reporting any incidents which occur as pupils move between the two sites of the school so that leaders have the information they need to take action to reduce any risks that remain.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Governors successfully enable the school to fulfil its aims and to offer a vibrant, inclusive education that nurtures pupils as individuals. Governors work closely with senior leaders to ensure that wellbeing is at the fore of their strategic thinking. Governors monitor school standards systematically through regular audits of all aspects of school life. Governors challenge leaders appropriately, requiring them to report regularly regarding their areas of responsibility.
10. Senior leaders and governors have a vigilant and appropriate awareness of risk. They have developed appropriate systems to assess risk across many areas of school life. The contextual risks of the school are well understood.
11. Leaders at the school have a productive relationship with the proprietorial group and benefit from the expertise available in areas such as health and safety. This ensures that the premises are maintained to a safe standard and that risks from fire are minimised.
12. Leaders and managers have a clear oversight of academic matters, including a quality assurance programme for departments. They regularly review and refine the curriculum so that its content is covering history and culture from across the globe wherever possible. More experienced senior leaders work collaboratively with those newly appointed to increase opportunities for the pupils to extend their learning. This has a positive impact on pupils and contributes to effective preparation for their future lives by broadening their educational experiences.
13. Leaders ensure that teachers deliver well-planned lessons that are characterised by clear learning aims, engaging activity and high-quality input from the teacher. Teachers encourage pupils' sense of enquiry and challenge them to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
14. Leaders understand their responsibilities under the Equality Act. Leaders ensure that teaching does not discriminate and that pupils who have SEND are able to access the curriculum.
15. Leaders ensure that staff are easily accessible to parents and deal with their concerns promptly and carefully. Complaints are recorded and responded to appropriately and promptly. Information is made available and provided to parents, as required, on the school's website and by the school office. Regular reports to parents on pupils' progress are detailed and informative.

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 have a clear vision for the curriculum at the school. They ensure that pupils undertake a broad programme of studies. Leaders have shown imagination in allowing the development of courses such as non-examination philosophy, which is delivered to all pupils in Years 7 to 11, resulting in pupils who think for themselves and learn to put forward differing points of view effectively.
17. Leaders are committed to broadening the experience of pupils and encouraging them to take up new interests. Their effective implementation of this commitment has a distinctly positive impact on pupils' wellbeing. Leaders have developed an extensive co-curricular programme that includes opportunities for pupils to create clubs in areas that interest them. Many pupils embrace this challenge and pupils appreciate the wide variety of clubs, such as robotics building club, music technology, brass band and chess that are open to all year groups.
18. Leaders' systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning ensures that pupils, including those who have SEND, make good progress. Almost all pupils attain grades at GCSE and A Level in line with or above those expected, including for those pupils who have SEND and for those who have EAL.
19. Initiatives being put in place by senior and middle leaders, such as peer observations, inter-departmental sharing of practice and pupil surveys are developing teaching practice. As a result, much teaching challenges pupils' thinking, allows collaborative and discursive approaches to learning and is carried out in a spirit of discovering together. Consequently, pupils of all ages are typically highly engaged in their learning. They show resilience and an understanding that small failures are often a route to long-term success.
20. Leaders ensure that pupils who have SEND are well supported to learn and make progress. There is a highly effective system for identifying pupils with additional needs and a commitment to making sure their needs are understood by teaching staff. This means that appropriate adjustments are made for them. As a result, these pupils achieve well and those with emotional and social needs feel well supported. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) liaises closely with teachers in determining individual educational plans for pupils. The SENCo operates an effective tracking system to monitor pupils' progress and ensure that pupils have the support they need and that the support is effective.
21. Teaching places high value on an inclusive approach that supports British values and reflects the diversity of the school community. As a result of leaders' decisions and planning, the content of the curriculum is now more diverse than previously. The international nature of the pupil and staff body and the school's commitment to diversity enables pupils to develop a global perspective as they move through the school.
22. The effective assessment framework enables leaders to track progress and outcomes for pupils across all year groups. Pupils in examination years are aware of their academic targets and departments follow up with suitable support, such as extra sessions after school. These are very well attended by pupils who respond positively to the individual help provided by their teachers. Pre- and

post-module assessments and the reporting of pupil progress in PSHE help raise its status and emphasise its importance in pupils' development.

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. Pupils' wellbeing is central to the school's ethos. There are highly positive relationships between pupils and staff. Leaders promote pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem by providing support from the pastoral team, counsellors and mentors.
24. Leaders provide a suitable programme of physical education which includes wider sporting activities such as boxing, yoga and spinning as well as more traditional games sessions such as football. Leaders have provided two off-site areas for pupils' recreation which are highly valued by pupils. In planning these sites, leaders considered all the positive and negative consequences as well as the views of pupils. Pupils understand the value of physical exercise and its impact on their mental health and wellbeing.
25. Leaders have developed the content, resourcing and timetabling of PSHE and RSE this academic year. The PSHE programme reflects the school's ethos of empowering individuality and promoting inclusivity. Thorough planning and staff training is benefitting the pupils' knowledge and understanding in these areas and pupils demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of the differences that exist between people. Teaching does not always provide the opportunity for pupils to discuss and explore the topics they cover.
26. Supported by their philosophy and religious studies programme, pupils develop a well-rounded spiritual and moral understanding. Leaders and managers promote good behaviour effectively and pupils usually behave well in lessons. Outside lessons, behaviour can be lively at times. Leaders manage this by ensuring there is effective supervision and a scheduled activity programme to engage pupils in constructive activity. Any significant incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with appropriately by staff, following a well understood behaviour policy.
27. Leaders have taken steps to minimise bullying at the school. When instances occur, pupils are supported to overcome the impact of bullying and pupils are helped to resolve any disputes. Pupils value the involvement of members of the pastoral and wellbeing teams when conflict arises and benefit from the use of mediation and conflict resolution. This support helps pupils to move forward.
28. Leaders and experts from the proprietorial group ensure that the premises at both school sites are well maintained. Leaders ensure that pupils have a comfortable space where their medical needs are met. Leaders are vigilant about the health and safety of the community and ensure that action is taken to reduce the risk from fire. The split site means that pupils must walk between the sites during the school day. This has been risk assessed and many mitigations have been put in place. Pupils and staff are carefully trained in the route to be used and walked through it. Supervising staff, with easily recognisable uniforms, are always deployed at key points along the route when transfers take place. However, pupils do not readily report any near misses and so there is no record of these which could be used to identify patterns and plan appropriate action.

29. Leaders ensure that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner. Pupils are confident that, if they are unwell, their needs will be met and appropriate action will be taken. Admission and attendance registers are well kept and the staff monitor attendance carefully.
30. Leaders ensure that pupils have many ways in which to make their views known. These include through the elected school council, by responding to surveys, and by talking to the pastoral, academic and senior staff as well as to their school prefects. Many pupils value these various routes and use them effectively. Pupils feel that they facilitate a meaningful contribution to how the school operates.

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

31. Leaders have created an environment where pupils develop socially and are encouraged to show mutual respect. Leaders enable pupils to consider how they can be of service to others and prepare for life in British society. Pupils enthusiastically stand for election for positions of responsibility such as middle school ambassadors, anti-bullying ambassadors, school council representatives and peer mentors. Pupils of all ages regard these opportunities as central to the contributions they are keen to make to the school community and as preparation for life beyond school.
32. Leaders prioritise inclusion and the celebration of diversity in the school. They enable pupils to enjoy broad perspectives and experiences within and beyond the curriculum and draw upon the resources of a globally oriented staff and parent body. Leaders are further developing schemes of work to include a more diverse range of literature, art and aspects of history to increase understanding of the contribution of a wider range of cultures. Pupils are highly respectful and tolerant of all members of their school community and wider society.
33. Careers education is well organised and comprehensive. The programme begins in Year 7 and includes advice about subject choices in the middle school. Sixth-form pupils are particularly well supported in making their choices and applications for university courses in Britain and overseas. They feel confident that they will be supported to reach their goals. Pupils benefit from a wide programme of engaging talks by leaders in industry. The ethical leadership workshop arranged by staff was particularly impactful. These opportunities serve to widen pupils' horizons and help them to consider various forms of leadership.
34. Staff and pupils recognise that philanthropy is an important aspect of the school's vision. Leaders have initiated a pupil-led charity committee of sixth formers who organise charity events along with the school's houses known as *Tribs*. These are instrumental in driving initiatives to raise money for local charities in London and for those further afield. Pupils assist in local primary schools, sometimes as part of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme programme. All members of the lower sixth gain valuable experience by carrying out community service across a range of settings in the local community. These activities improve pupils' feelings of self-worth and promote their social development, introducing them to a wide range of people and environments and enabling them to make contributions to local communities.
35. Leaders make good use of the school's location in central London to provide many opportunities for pupils to broaden their cultural and educational experience.

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

36. Suitable arrangements are made by school leaders to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. The school liaises effectively with external agencies. Referrals to children's services and the local authority designated officer are made in a timely manner. Records are appropriately kept and the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) monitors the recording of any concerns by staff effectively.
37. The designated safeguarding governor liaises closely with the DSL and rigorously reviews the annual audit of safeguarding practice to ensure processes and procedures are effective. Governors carry out regular checks of all safeguarding practice and ensure that leaders promote a positive safeguarding culture.
38. Leaders of safeguarding liaise closely with pastoral leaders to ensure that staff are vigilant about the needs of pupils, to ensure pupils' wellbeing. As a result, pupils feel very safe, well cared for and confident to report any concerns that they have. Leaders and governors are alert to and thorough in their analysis of risk. They employ robust systems to assess risk across the many areas of school life.
39. Appropriate safer recruitment checks are completed for all staff, volunteers and governors and these are recorded diligently.

The extent to which the school meets standards relating to safeguarding

All the relevant Standards are met

School details

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| School | Wetherby Senior School |
| Department for Education number | 213/6002 |
| Address | 100 Marylebone Lane London W1U 2QU |
| Website | www.wetherbysenior.co.uk |
| Proprietor | Alpha Plus Group |
| Chair | Sir John Ritblat |
| Headteacher | Mr Joe Silvester |
| Age range | 11 to 18 |
| Number of pupils | 443 |
| Date of previous inspection | 4 to 6 June 2019 |

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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