

School inspection report

19 September 2023 to 21 September 2023

Avenue House School

70 The Avenue
London
W13 8LS

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. Over time the proprietor has not ensured that leaders and managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities, so that the independent school standards are consistently met, and that the wellbeing of the pupils is maintained. The proprietor's monitoring of the school's policies and procedures over time has failed to identify that records, including those relating to behaviour, bullying, fire safety and risk assessment, have not been maintained since 2019. Apart from in the early years, leaders have not consistently assessed risks or put measures in place to mitigate any identified risks. Leaders' evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's success in meeting its aims is underdeveloped.
2. The newly appointed headteacher supported by the wider leadership team is aware of many of the failings and is taking action to improve the school's policies and processes.
3. Teaching enables pupils, including those with additional needs, to make good progress. This is because teachers have good subject knowledge and deliver well-planned lessons that take into account individual pupils' needs effectively. The standard of pupils' work, including that of children in the early years, is high. Leavers are successful in obtaining places at a range of senior schools, including those of their first choice.
4. Teachers use the school's assessment processes to gather information about pupils' progress and use the information to plan further learning. However, the use of this information is too limited. Leaders have oversight of the progress for children in the early years and for individual pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL). However, leaders' evaluation of pupils' progress is limited because systems to track progress for all pupils are not in place. Leaders have begun to implement measures to develop a process to evaluate all pupils' progress across the school.
5. The information about relationships and sex education (RSE) given to parents does not meet the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE)'s current statutory guidance. Parents have been incorrectly informed that consent can be given for pupils to withdraw from relationships education. Additionally, leaders have not consulted with parents about the school's RSE policy.
6. Staff promote pupils' positive behaviour effectively. However, the school does not maintain an up-to-date record of the sanctions for pupils for any inappropriate behaviour, including bullying. Therefore, leaders do not have a clear overview of the behaviour and bullying incidents to identify trends or take action to improve where necessary.
7. Leaders are vigilant about the health and safety of the school community in most areas. The school's provision of first aid is effective and pupils know who they can go to if hurt or unwell. Leaders ensure that the premises and accommodation are maintained suitably. However, the school does not meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 as leaders do not regularly review fire risk assessments in line with its fire safety policy.
8. Leaders promote positive values, such as that of respect for all groups of people. Leaders and staff develop pupils' understanding of right and wrong, through a well-planned curriculum. Pupils are well

prepared for future education and life beyond school. Pupils' learning about the management of money contributes to this preparation. Staff provide much support for pupils in their preparation for senior school, which aids transition.

9. Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils are not wholly effective. The proprietor does not maintain effective oversight of the safeguarding policy and procedures or ensure that appropriate monitoring of internet usage is in place. While there are sufficient leaders of safeguarding who have been trained appropriately, not all staff with responsibility for overseeing safeguarding procedures have up-to-date training. Staff do not receive the information they need to follow the school's safeguarding procedures. They are not always informed of any changes to the safeguarding policy. Leaders do not ensure that staff receive the staff code of conduct when they commence working at the school. The code of conduct does not guide adults about how to respond when there are low-level concerns about staff. Leaders do not ensure that the local authority is informed, as required, when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition times, to guard against the risk of children going missing in education.
10. Staff respond to known safeguarding concerns effectively and teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Leaders ensure that all appropriate pre-appointment checks are made to ensure the suitability of adults working with pupils.
11. Deficiencies in the proprietor's monitoring of the school's policies and procedures have led to serious and multiple failings in the school's provision.

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 not met

Areas for action

- The proprietor must ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the independent school standards are consistently met, and that they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils.
- The proprietor must ensure that leaders maintain effective oversight of the safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Leaders must ensure the school keeps an up-to-date record of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for inappropriate behaviour, including for bullying.
- Leaders must consult with parents effectively before making or revising its relationships and sex education policy and must ensure that it informs parents correctly of the right to withdraw their children from aspects of RSE.
- Leaders must implement a systematic and effective approach to risk assessment, including fire risk assessment.
- Leaders must ensure that the staff receive the staff code of conduct when they commence working at the school. The staff code of conduct must comply with current statutory guidance by including information about how staff should respond to low level concerns about adults.
- Leaders must ensure that the school informs the local authority, as required, when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition times.
- The proprietor must ensure that appropriate monitoring of internet usage is in place.

Recommended next steps

- The proprietor should ensure that all staff with responsibility for overseeing safeguarding at the school have up-to-date training.
- The proprietor should strengthen leaders' evaluation of the progress made by pupils by developing a system of tracking pupils' progress systematically and thoroughly.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. The proprietor has not ensured that the school's policies and procedures are effective in ensuring that leaders and managers carry out their responsibilities effectively and actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils. The proprietor was not aware that records, including those relating to behaviour, bullying, fire safety and risk assessment were not in place since 2019.
13. There are few central records of the school's provision that would enable leaders to monitor and analyse the impact of the school's provision. For example, while accident records are kept in each individual classroom, there is no central record of accidents that would enable leaders to analyse these for any trends and patterns.
14. Other aspects of self-evaluation demonstrate effective decision-making to improve pupils' well-being. For example, leaders have reconsidered how best to deploy staff to meet the educational and welfare needs of the pupils. As a result, the headteacher has revised the leadership structure of the school so that leaders' academic and pastoral roles and responsibilities are more clearly defined.
15. Leaders provide parents with all the required information. However, some of the information on the school's website is not up to date, including the safeguarding policy which does not refer to current statutory guidance as required. Leaders respond to any complaints from parents in a timely manner, following the school's policy.
16. Leaders at all levels ensure that the school meets its requirements under the Equality Act and does not discriminate against pupils unlawfully. Leaders ensure that the school promotes principles of equality and respectful and fair treatment including through the curriculum.
17. The proprietor does not effectively monitor the school's safeguarding policy and procedures, including in relation to the monitoring of internet use which means that the risks to children through exposure to harmful content on the internet cannot be assured.
18. A lack of effective oversight by the proprietor has resulted in serious and multiple failings in the school's provision, relating to behaviour, bullying, fire safety, risk assessment, RSE and safeguarding.

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

19. Standards are not met consistently with respect to RSE, behaviour, bullying, fire safety, risk assessment and safeguarding. Standards relating to governance, leadership, management are not met.

All the relevant Standards are not met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included at the end of the report.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. Leaders across the school, including in the early years, ensure that the curriculum is planned well and appropriately wide-ranging. Pupils' literacy skills develop well from the early years and throughout the school as a result of clear and well-pitched teaching about the relationship between letters and sounds, a focus on the use of effective vocabulary and the development of self-editing skills.
21. Pupils attain highly in mathematics. Pupils respond well to challenging tasks set by their teachers. They use resources such as number lines effectively. Teaching ensures pupils' understanding of a range of mathematical methods. In music, pupils develop their understanding of the various families of an orchestra and of specific musical terms through effective questioning and demonstration of the use of instruments. In art, pupils develop their use of a range of techniques well. Leaders provide pupils with themed days and trips, such as local English and mathematics events and curriculum days hosted by other schools. These experiences strengthen pupils' levels of interest and engagement in their subjects.
22. Teachers communicate their good subject knowledge effectively through well-structured lessons. They consider pupils' individual needs effectively. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching. They check the quality of pupils' work and ensure that teaching is pitched at the appropriate level to meet pupils' needs. As a result, all groups of pupils, including the most able, those with EAL and those who have SEND, progress and attain well and produce a high standard of work.
23. Across the school, staff adapt their teaching well to meet the needs of pupils with differing levels of attainment. Pupils who have SEND and those with EAL have individual support. This along with the provision of specific resources, when appropriate, ensure that pupils develop their understanding and make good progress across the curriculum.
24. Teaching typically features an appropriate level of challenge that promotes pupils' high achievements. More able pupils make good progress because of teaching that challenges them to consider more complex ideas. From the early years, teaching often features the effective use of practical activities and well-chosen resources that stimulate pupils' interest and help reinforce their understanding. Teachers make the objectives of their lessons clear, so that pupils know what they need to do to succeed. Teachers also provide helpful feedback that supports pupils' understanding. Pupils are positive about their learning and the support that they receive from their teachers.
25. Teaching across the school, including in the early years, consistently promotes positive behaviour through the effective use of well-established reward systems.
26. Leaders and staff monitor pupils' achievement through end-of-year assessments and teachers' understanding of individual pupils. However, leaders do not track all pupils' progress systematically. This means that the school's framework to evaluate pupils' progress, while suitable, is limited in its effectiveness.
27. Pupils participate in a range of extra-curricular activities, both after school and during lunch periods. These contribute towards pupils' development of core skills. For example, the book, magazine and mathematics clubs help pupils to develop and build their literacy and numeracy skills.

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

28. Leaders ensure that the curriculum meets the school's aim of enabling pupils to develop their social skills and develop resilience for later life. Leaders and staff successfully create a supportive and encouraging atmosphere and pupils are praised readily for their achievements. As a result, pupils develop high levels of self-confidence both in and out of lessons.
29. Pupils participate in a suitable programme of physical education. For example, pupils in all year groups, including in the early years, are taught how to swim, thus developing their confidence and skills in this area.
30. Leaders provide pupils with a suitable and effective personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme, which includes relationships education. Leaders also provide 'mindfulness' lessons that support the pupils' emotional wellbeing very successfully. As a result of this provision, pupils can speak with confidence about their own personal strengths, areas for development, interests and aspirations. Older pupils speak thoughtfully about strategies for looking after their own mental health, such as developing good night-time routines and using breathing techniques to help manage any moments of anxiety.
31. Leaders and staff take effective steps to support pupils' mental health. For example, the school has provided a 'social stories' club to support pupils. Staff provide highly effective personal support for pupils across all year groups including in the early years. For example, any pupils experiencing moments of distress are swiftly and suitably supported so that pupils feel confident and able to fully participate in activities again.
32. The PSHE policy made available to parents includes reference to RSE. However, the information about RSE provided to parents is inaccurate. Leaders have not consulted appropriately with parents about developing and reviewing the RSE policy.
33. Pupils' spirituality is developed well. For example, pupils are enabled to consider what spirituality is and how different religions have some common threads. As a result, pupils can express ideas about such themes with confidence.
34. Leaders and staff promote pupils' positive behaviour effectively through consistent application of the behaviour management policy. Staff support pupils to deal with any unkind behaviour. As a result, pupils report that behaviour in the school is usually positive. However, the school does not keep an up-to-date record of the sanctions for inappropriate behaviour, including bullying. As a result, there is no effective analysis or long-term overview of behaviour and bullying.
35. Leaders and staff actively work to address bullying, including through anti-bullying days and assemblies. Pupils understand what cyber-bullying is and understand ways to guard against it.
36. Leaders ensure that health and safety requirements are met, and that the premises and accommodation are maintained suitably. However, leaders have not ensured that fire safety procedures are robust.

37. Leaders ensure that pupils are always supervised well, including in the early years, where there are ample staff to support children well.
38. The school's provision of first aid is effective. First aid is administered in a timely fashion when required. Pupils know where to go to if they are hurt or unwell.
39. Admission and attendance registers are maintained as required. Leaders promote attendance effectively, contributing to high attendance. However, the school does not follow secure processes to reduce the risk of children becoming missing in education, by reporting, as required, to the local authority when pupils leave the school at non-transition times.

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

40. Standards are not met consistently with respect to RSE, behaviour, bullying and fire safety.
41. Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are not met.

All the relevant Standards are not 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

42. Leaders ensure that the curriculum teaches pupils about the wider world and prepares them for the future well. The oldest pupils learn about finance, which includes taking on the role of 'finance advisor' and the exploration of different types of bank account. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to learn about a variety of possible future careers through a programme of regular visits to the school across a range of careers including dentistry, psychology and coding specialists.
43. Leaders and staff promote positive values through PSHE and assembly programmes, such as that of respect for others, including all groups of people. Teachers demonstrate the behaviours they expect and want to encourage in pupils, including by valuing the contributions of pupils. Displays across the school, which include positive representation of women and different cultural groups, develop pupils' respect for those with different backgrounds to their own. Trips to a range of religious places of worship deepen pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures. Older pupils apply their understanding of the rights of people and can draw parallels between the suffragette movement and the position of under-represented women in modern societies.
44. Pupils learn to appreciate democracy through their engagement with the school council and eco-council. Pupils' understanding of democracy is also furthered by visits to Parliament and discussions about different types of democracies and totalitarian rule, such as in fascist states during World War Two.
45. Leaders and staff make effective use of the curriculum, assemblies and school displays to enhance pupils' understanding of right and wrong. Staff use picture books effectively to develop the moral understanding of children in the EYFS and younger pupils. Older pupils accurately and confidently explain what they understand by law, rules and rights.
46. Leaders and staff successfully encourage pupils to develop their social skills and a sense of responsibility towards others. The eco-council has organised litter-picks, while the oldest pupils support younger ones by carrying out a range of responsibilities. Pupils are proud of their roles.
47. Leaders and staff successfully encourage and enable pupils to contribute to the community beyond the school. For instance, pupils have engaged in collections for a local food bank and for those affected by war. Pupils contribute to a range of charities and causes, some of which they choose themselves. For example, pupils initiated the fundraising to support families affected by earthquakes in Syria.

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

48. Leaders and staff respond to known safeguarding concerns effectively, including by liaising with external agencies when appropriate. Leaders ensure that pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Leaders ensure that staff conduct all appropriate safer recruitment checks and record these as required on a single central register of appointments. However, not all arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils are effective.
49. Safeguarding training does not always include all required elements, such as the current safeguarding policy. Leaders do not always ensure that staff receive a suitable staff code of conduct, that incorporates statutory guidance, when commencing work at the school.
50. There are sufficient staff who have the necessary knowledge and skills to managing safeguarding concerns. However, the training for one member of staff was not fully up to date. This was addressed during the inspection.
51. The school does not inform the local authority as required when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition times, in order to guard against the risk of children going missing in education.
52. The proprietor does not ensure the appropriate monitoring of internet usage, with the result that any potential attempts to access inappropriate sites are not flagged to enable leaders to take appropriate action. Leaders do not ensure that the safeguarding policy is implemented effectively in this regard.
53. The proprietor does not maintain effective oversight of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures. The most recent annual safeguarding review did not identify deficiencies in the school's policies and procedures.

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

54. Standards are not met consistently with respect to the safeguarding of pupils, including the requirement to comply with current statutory guidance.

All the relevant Standards are not met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included at the end of the report.

Schedule of unmet standards

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

The relevant Standards are not met

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR 16(a) and (b)	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that – (a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and (b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
ISSR 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 wellbeing 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
ISSR 2A(1)(e) and (f)	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor – (e) makes and keeps up to date a separate written statement of its policy with regard to the provision of education as required by each of paragraphs (a) and (b) (f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e).
ISSR 9(c)	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that a record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.
ISSR 10	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.

ISSR 12; EYFS 3.56	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
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Section 4: Pupils' social and economic wellbeing and contribution to society

The relevant Standards are met

Safeguarding

The relevant Standards are not met

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR 7(a) and (b)	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that – (a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and (b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

School details

School	Avenue House School
Department for Education number	307/6075
Address	Avenue House School 70 The Avenue London W13 8LS
Website	http://www.avenuehouse.org
Proprietor	Mr David Immanuel
Headteacher	Ms Natalia Ambridge
Age range	4 to 11
Number of pupils	84
Date of previous inspection	16 September 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.

Independent Schools Inspectorate 2023

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

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