

School inspection report

19 to 21 May 2026

Hereward House School

14 Strathray Gardens

Belsize Park

London

NW3 4NY

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	3
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....	4
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS	4
SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....	5
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE	6
SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	7
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	8
SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	9
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	10
SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....	11
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY	12
SAFEGUARDING	13
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING	14
SCHOOL DETAILS	15
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	16
INSPECTION DETAILS	17

Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders continually review the school's successes in achieving its aims and seek ways to improve provision. They identify and implement new initiatives that are based on their knowledge of pupils' needs and the high priority they place on pupil wellbeing.
2. Governors meet with leaders to offer appropriate support and challenge through their scrutiny of policies and reports, and by visits to the school. Leaders demonstrate that they have the acquired skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the Standards are met.
3. Pupils benefit from a curriculum that builds securely from the early years to Year 8. Leaders use an effective assessment framework to analyse and evaluate pupils' progress. This is used well to identify pupils' needs and to provide them with appropriate help, through whole-class and individualised support. Teachers provide clear and effective feedback for pupils, which enables them to improve their work and learn more effectively. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL), typically make good progress.
4. Leaders in the early years are knowledgeable and create a curriculum that is responsive to the children's evolving needs. Well-trained teachers provide opportunities for children to engage in independent learning and explore their own interests. This supports children's progress and lays a solid foundation for lifelong learning and their development.
5. Leaders, governors and staff work effectively to promote pupils' emotional wellbeing. Leaders actively uphold the school's aims and ethos, fostering a welcoming and inclusive community. Consequently, pupils approach their learning with confidence and positive self-esteem. Pupils benefit from accessing nearby sports facilities that enhance the opportunities available to them.
6. Leaders ensure that robust health and safety checks, including those relating to fire safety, are in place and regularly reviewed. The school's premises and accommodation are well maintained and provide a safe environment for pupils.
7. Leaders maintain a purposeful culture that supports pupils' development and readiness for life in British society. Pupils develop an understanding of important social, cultural and moral issues in modern society. They learn about values such as equality, respect and tolerance through a wide-ranging curriculum. However, the provision of economic understanding is not consistent across all year groups. Pupils support charitable initiatives for local communities. However, opportunities for younger pupils to contribute positively to communities beyond the school are somewhat limited.
8. Knowledgeable and skilled leaders prioritise the safeguarding of pupils. Staff receive appropriate and regular training and contribute to a robust and effective culture of safeguarding. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online and can report any concerns to named trusted adults who listen and respond promptly. When needed, leaders work effectively with external agencies to seek specialist support for pupils.

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 the provision of economic education is consistent across all year groups, so that all pupils develop a better understanding of how to manage money
- develop more opportunities for pupils in the lower year groups to contribute positively to the lives of others in the locality and wider world.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. The proprietor, supported by the governing body, maintains effective oversight of all aspects of school life. Governors scrutinise reports, visit the school and meet with school leaders to offer appropriate challenge. They carry out audits and questionnaires to seek the views of pupils, parents and staff. Leaders demonstrate that they have the required knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. As a result, the school meets all the Standards and promotes pupils' wellbeing effectively.
10. Leaders embed the school's aims and ethos of being kind, considerate and confident consistently across all aspects of school life. They apply these themes and emphasise respect throughout the curriculum. Warm relationships between pupils and staff enable pupils to feel safe and confident.
11. Following self-evaluation by school leaders, a development plan has been created that has led to increased information and communication technology (ICT) provision and more activities for children in the early years. Annual reviews, some of which focus on academic departments, are completed with governors and these encourage a culture of improvement across the school.
12. Leaders in the early years have developed a well-organised curriculum that includes all required areas of learning. Continuous provision and responsive planning enable children to make good progress. Children are well prepared for their transition into Year 1.
13. Leaders make information about the school and its policies available to parents of current and prospective pupils on the school's website. Parents receive detailed and informative reports of their child's attainment and progress and have regular meetings with staff.
14. Safeguarding leaders train staff effectively, maintain suitable connections with external agencies such as children's services and work closely with them when necessary. They provide necessary information about any pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) to the local authority as required. Leaders keep appropriate records and provide suitable mechanisms for pupils to report concerns to staff.
15. Leaders demonstrate that they have a clear understanding of how to manage risk. They remain vigilant to contextual risks and take suitable steps to mitigate them. Such measures include regular training for staff and a thorough understanding of the visiting speaker policy. Leaders are also aware of the risks due to the school's location and ensure that pupils move safely to a nearby venue for sport sessions. Risk assessments, including those for trips, are detailed, appropriate and reviewed regularly.
16. The school has a suitable complaints policy. Complaints are dealt with in line with stated procedures and timescales. Governors check on the appropriateness of leaders' approaches to dealing with complaints. Leaders and governors ensure that any learning points taken from complaints are acted upon diligently.
17. The school meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Leaders implement an appropriate and well-considered accessibility plan that is reviewed routinely so that it remains relevant. Leaders ensure that they plan effectively to ensure that all pupils can fully access the premises and curriculum.

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

18. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

19. Leaders develop a broad and balanced curriculum that is reviewed regularly to ensure that pupils learn effectively and make good progress in all subject areas. Clear subject plans outline what pupils will learn and how knowledge builds from the early years to Year 8. The curriculum covers a wide range of subjects. Younger pupils begin the study of modern foreign languages so that, by Year 3, pupils can repeat different sounds and words to improve their use of the language. Older pupils learn Latin and pupils from Year 1 to Year 8 study Mandarin. In science, pupils in Year 1 learn to investigate, question and draw conclusions from practical exploration of seed development. By Year 8, pupils can discuss scientific ethical issues, such as embryo screening, with confidence.
20. The creative and aesthetic curriculum is carefully planned to provide pupils with opportunities to develop skills across a wide range of disciplines, including music, drama and art, which are taught by subject specialists. Pupils in Year 8 are encouraged to experiment using the various techniques of different artists such as Andy Warhol. Younger pupils are encouraged to explore art from different parts of the world. For instance, pupils in Year 5 create their own Samba masks. Pupils have many opportunities to learn different musical instruments, perform in concerts and work collaboratively in school plays and productions throughout the year.
21. Adults throughout the school foster a supportive learning environment where pupils are encouraged to aim high and do their best. Pupils across all sections of the school achieve well and make good progress. Older pupils are successful in gaining places at selective senior schools and a large number of pupils in Year 8 achieve success in mathematics competitions, both locally and nationally.
22. Teachers know their pupils well. They plan learning that takes account of pupils' needs, experiences and prior knowledge, ensuring that all have equal opportunities to succeed. Teachers use a range of resources effectively to engage pupils and teach essential knowledge and skills. Pupils regularly use ICT equipment in lessons to extend their learning, such as when researching the water cycle in geography lessons or composing their own pieces of music.
23. Teachers draw on their good subject knowledge to plan lessons well and pose well-considered questions that stimulate pupils' thinking. Pupils are given opportunities to express their thoughts and ideas through class discussions, where different opinions are considered carefully and respectfully.
24. Leaders promote a culture of continuous improvement, collaboration and professional development. They monitor teaching and learning by conducting regular work scrutiny and learning walks and by analysing pupil progress data. Team teaching takes place every week and this involves staff who are responsible for supporting pupils who have SEND.
25. Leaders track attainment carefully across subject areas using standardised assessments and a clear framework that helps staff put suitable support in place promptly and offer consistent and appropriate challenge for those with higher prior attainment.
26. Throughout the school, pupils receive regular and useful feedback from teachers that enables them to clearly understand their progress and next steps. Teachers provide pupils with verbal feedback in lessons. Pupils maintain a collaborative dialogue with teachers and respond positively to the guidance provided in their written work.

27. Teachers work closely with leaders to identify pupils who have SEND and identify means by which they can be supported in lessons. Pupils make good progress in response to the effective implementation of tailored strategies and rigorous tracking. Good collaboration between senior leaders, heads of department and the leader of the provision for pupils who have SEND secures consistency of provision and ensures that these pupils receive appropriate and effective support.
28. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are provided with individual support where needed through a bespoke programme for learning.
29. Children in the early years develop their language and communication skills effectively. Adults use skilful questioning to develop children's thinking. Teachers plan activities that take account of children's interests and prior learning, so that each child receives the support and challenge they need. Staff organise classrooms to encourage exploration, independence, creativity and collaboration. They make effective use of carefully selected materials and resources that cater well for children's needs.
30. The school has appropriate systems to share pupils' performance with parents in written form and during face-to-face meetings that happen throughout the school year.
31. Leaders provide a range of extra-curricular activities for pupils to explore their varied interests and develop their skills. These include multi-sport clubs, judo, orchestra and choir, along with debating and chess, in which deeper critical thinking skills are developed. Pupils are given opportunities to make new suggestions for clubs. School leaders listen and make suitable amendments to the programme. Through these activities, pupils develop new interests and skills.

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

- 32. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

33. Leaders and staff actively promote pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing through clear routines, consistent expectations and warm relationships. Adults throughout the school promote the school's values of kindness and respect and their consistent approach helps pupils feel safe, confident and secure. Older pupils model these expectations to younger ones within a positive learning environment.
34. Leaders implement a personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme that prepares pupils to develop as responsible citizens who can play a positive part in the world. The PSHE curriculum is supported by a suitable scheme of work. Lessons are delivered effectively by well-trained staff. Pupils develop a mutual trust and respect for other people. They learn about the ways in which they can support each other and develop healthy relationships. The PSHE and relationships and sex education (RSE) topics are covered in form times and assemblies, as well as in lessons. They are age-appropriate and include topics such as toxic masculinity and digital role models. In these lessons, pupils feel confident to openly discuss topics and to respectfully listen to the views of others.
35. Pupils behave well. They understand the importance of good behaviour to enable learning. There are respectful relationships between pupils and teachers and between the pupils themselves. Senior leaders act quickly to support teachers, where necessary, if there is any misbehaviour in lessons, to enable pupils to learn without disruption. There is a system of rewards and sanctions, which is applied consistently.
36. An appropriate and clearly defined anti-bullying strategy is in place. Pupils are taught what constitutes bullying. They are supported to develop strategies to prevent this from happening or respond appropriately should bullying occur. Rare cases of bullying are managed promptly and effectively by leaders in accordance with the school's policy. If they experience unkindness or bullying, pupils know how to access support through worry boxes and talking to a trusted adult, with whom they have good a relationship.
37. Pupils benefit from a well-structured physical education (PE) curriculum. This includes a range of activities that develop their skills progressively over time. All pupils participate in PE lessons and those in Year 3 and above all play in competitive fixtures against other schools, allowing them to develop skills in communication, leadership and teamwork. Pupils in the older years are part of a strength and conditioning programme that has seen a reduction in injuries. Teachers are well trained and able to modify lessons so that all pupils can make good progress and grow in confidence. Leaders also encourage older pupils to participate in external events such as a local park run, where they can run alongside their families.
38. Pupils in Year 8 engage in leadership roles that are tailored to their individual strengths, such as music captain, charity captain and magazine editor. Older pupils support literacy skills by listening to younger pupils read to them. These experiences foster a sense of responsibility among the pupils. Pupils develop resilience and confidence through the wide range of opportunities available to them. They understand the importance of mental wellbeing and know how to access support when needed.

39. Leaders ensure effective and visible supervision across the day. Supervision at arrival, lunchtime, breaktimes and dismissal is consistently applied, so that pupils move calmly around the site and routines are followed.
40. Staff in the early years provide a caring environment and plan nurturing and purposeful activities that help children develop confidence, emotional understanding and co-operative play. Activities such as a minibeast hunts and number work with a large dice offer rich and stimulating opportunities for development of gross motor skills and promote co-ordination, independence and confidence. Children in the early years begin to learn about physical health, including how to brush their teeth. Leaders ensure that correct ratios and paediatric cover are maintained appropriately, so that children in the early years are well supported throughout the day.
41. Admission and attendance registers are well managed according to government guidance, with clear systems in place. Leaders track attendance carefully and the school collaborates with parents and outside agencies constructively where there are concerns about pupils' attendance. Leaders' diligence ensures that most pupils maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality. The school reports any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition points to the local authority.
42. Leaders ensure that they adhere to and maintain effective procedures related to health and safety, including fire safety. There is a suitable fire risk assessment and pupils practise fire evacuation drills regularly. Staff are well trained and vigilant to any health and safety concerns, which are reported and acted upon in a timely manner. As a result, the premises are well maintained and provide a safe environment for pupils and staff.
43. Appropriate first aid arrangements are in place for pupils who become unwell, are injured or who have specific medical needs. Staff are well trained and undertake their roles appropriately, including those who are responsible for paediatric first aid. The medical room is suitable and accident records are maintained effectively.

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

- 44. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

45. Leaders and staff consistently model the school's values of kindness and consideration for all, regardless of background or belief. The school actively promotes mutual respect and inclusivity across the curriculum. Pupils are taught the importance of listening to and valuing the perspective of others from different social and cultural backgrounds. Pupils celebrate different religious festivals such as Diwali, Eid and Chinese New Year and successfully present information about different faiths to other pupils and staff in school assemblies.
46. Pupils' economic understanding is developed through an appropriate curriculum that covers budgeting and saving, alongside opportunities to engage in real-life experiences. Pupils in Year 6 complete a project to design their own bedroom within a budget and pupils in Year 8 visit the Olympic Park as part of a geography topic to gain a greater understanding of sustainable housing. Fundraising events help pupils gain experience in planning an enterprise and working out profits and losses. However, coverage of different economic and financial topics is not consistent across all year groups.
47. Pupils benefit from an engaging and practical careers programme that prepares them for future education and employment. Pupils in the older years gain an understanding of future opportunities and professional expectations through visiting speakers and weekly lessons. Parents visit the school and talk about their own careers to help pupils understand the various routes and opportunities that are available to them.
48. Pupils are prepared well for life in Britain. British values are woven into school life and align with the school's values. Pupils are given the opportunity to vote for their peers when allocating different leadership roles in school and arrangements are made for them to share their views with school leaders, helping them to understand democracy, tolerance and respect. This has led to changes in the school, including a new artificial covering in the playground and the introduction of a touch-typing club. Pupils develop a wider understanding of how democracy works when discussing with teachers how elections take place in different countries.
49. Pupils contribute positively to the lives of others and pupils in Year 8 run a community café once a year to raise money for a charity. The pupils organise making the products to sell and take account of costs in order to make a profit before running the café for parents. Pupils participate in the local harvest festival and deliver food for this to a nearby church. However, pupils in the younger years do not have as many opportunities to contribute positively to the lives of others.
50. Children in the early years are well supported by teachers and develop communication skills, positive relationships and mutual respect. Children develop their social skills through learning to listen to each other and sharing, during planned activities and tasks, in a nurturing and inclusive environment.
51. Pupils in Year 5 and above help the school leaders by acting as tour guides for families of prospective pupils. These opportunities help pupils develop social skills, confidence and an understanding of how they can contribute positively to their school.

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

52. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

53. Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective and in accordance with current statutory guidance. Processes and systems are outlined appropriately in a safeguarding policy that is available on the school's website.
54. Governors are appropriately trained and provide effective oversight of safeguarding. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding checks on the effectiveness of leaders' work through reviewing safeguarding records, visiting the school and speaking with pupils, staff and parents. Regular information is provided to governors and reviewed thoroughly at weekly safeguarding meetings and governor board meetings. As a result, governors have an accurate and thorough understanding of safeguarding policies and practice across the school. They ensure that leaders are undertaking all reasonable actions to keep pupils safe.
55. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are knowledgeable and appropriately trained. They act quickly when concerns are raised. They meet regularly to review their practice and to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the pupils. They ensure that records are maintained thoroughly and clearly. Leaders work effectively with external agencies, such as children's services and mental health teams, to ensure that pupils get the timely help that they need.
56. Staff are well trained in their safeguarding responsibilities. New staff receive induction training and all staff receive regular updates that include discussing different safeguarding scenarios. Safeguarding practice is consistent across the school, including in the early years, where policies and processes related to aspects such as supervision and the use of online devices are strictly adhered to. Staff are diligent in reporting any concerns they may have about pupils.
57. There is a suitable code of conduct for staff. Training supports staff to identify and report low-level concerns about adults working with pupils and to self-refer when necessary. Consequently, staff are vigilant to any signs of concern and report these appropriately using the school's online system.
58. Leaders understand that, for pupils to feel confident in seeking support, they need different ways of sharing their concerns. Pupils have a range of options for letting teachers know they have a problem either in person, anonymously in writing or speaking to one of the trusted adults that they have nominated themselves.
59. Suitable monitoring and filtering systems are in place to ensure pupils stay safe when working online. The safeguarding team is alerted if inappropriate searches have been made in school and acts swiftly on concerns. Pupils are taught from an early age about online safety in PSHE, ICT lessons and during sessions led by visiting speakers.
60. Leaders ensure that parents are provided with information about how they can support keeping their child safe. For example, items in the weekly newsletter and recent changes to the mobile phone policy led to the parent handbook being updated and shared with them.
61. Staff responsible for recruitment have appropriate skills and knowledge. Leaders ensure that pre-employment checks are carried out appropriately on adults before they start working with pupils. The single central record of appointments (SCR) and staff files are maintained accurately and are routinely checked by leaders and governors.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

62. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Hereward House School
Department for Education number	202/6179
Address	Hereward House School 14 Strathray Gardens Belsize Park London NW3 4NY
Phone number	020 7794 4820
Email address	office@herewardhouse.co.uk
Website	www.herewardhouse.co.uk
Proprietor	Mrs Leonie Sampson
Headteacher	Mr Pascal Evans
Age range	4 to 13
Number of pupils	158
Date of previous inspection	25 to 27 April 2023

Information about the school

63. Hereward House School is an independent day school for male pupils located in Belsize Park, London. In 1980, the school was purchased by the current proprietor, who oversees the operation of the school with support from an advisory board of governors.
64. The school has identified 38 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
65. The school has identified English as an additional language for a very small number of pupils.
66. The school states its aims are to provide a warm, welcoming and safe atmosphere in which every child can thrive and feel comfortable. Whilst embracing the highest academic aspirations for their boys, leaders strive to create a stimulating, purposeful and happy community, where every child feels valued and secure. For the school, the most important outcome is for all boys to be kind, considerate and confident whilst looking out for every member of the school community.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

19 to 21 May 2026

67. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

68. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- 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.

69. 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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