

School inspection report

26 to 28 November 2024

Wetherby School

11, Pembridge Square

London

W2 4ED

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. Leaders and governors maintain a clear, ambitious vision for the school. Governors ensure that leaders employ the appropriate knowledge and skills to ensure the wellbeing of pupils. Effective governance provides well informed oversight, challenge and support for leaders so that the school improves continuously.
2. Leaders' support of pupils' emotional development is evident throughout the school. It is seen in the effective, individually tailored support provided and the celebration of effort as well as attainment. Pupils are encouraged to learn from mistakes and teachers have a detailed knowledge of pupils' academic and personal development. This helps pupils to develop self-awareness, self-esteem and confidence. Pupils show pride in their own achievements and are keen to celebrate those of others. They demonstrate respectful behaviour to each other in and out of lessons, which allows them to readily express their thoughts and ideas. Pupils develop confidence and resilience in their learning. This is a significant strength of the school.
3. Pupils in Reception follow a curriculum which focuses on formal academic learning. Children are well-known by staff and make good progress in their learning due to well-planned and effectively tailored teaching. Children are well cared for within a happy and encouraging environment which nurtures self-confidence. The rate of children's social development in the classroom is limited because of the small number of opportunities for free play.
4. Leaders assess and support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. This enables targeted support to ensure that pupils make good progress.
5. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive appropriate support according to their level of fluency. This allows them to access all areas of the curriculum fully and do their best.
6. The Learning for Life (LfL) curriculum, which incorporates personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), promotes pupils' self-confidence, mental health, and safety through exploration of a range of topics. It includes comprehensive relationships education which reinforces the school's values of mutual respect and understanding as pupils learn about and discuss people's differences.
7. The effective teaching and coaching of sports, including swimming and football, enable pupils to develop positive physical and mental health. Leaders ensure that an appropriate number of staff are trained in first aid. During the inspection, some medication was stored insecurely. This was rectified during the inspection.
8. The school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies are clear and consistently applied, with any incidents swiftly addressed. Leaders ensure that comprehensive risk assessments are completed alongside fire drills, and there is effective supervision in both on and off site activities meaning that pupils' safety is given due regard at all times. The site is appropriately maintained. During the inspection, posters to indicate drinking water were not displayed by a small number of taps in the Reception building. This was rectified during the inspection.
9. The LfL curriculum promotes British values such as democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. Assemblies, religious education (RE) lessons, and the integrated curriculum develop pupils' respect for different cultures and beliefs.

10. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities, such as charity ambassadors and eco-warriors, which help them to develop leadership and teamwork skills. Leaders encourage pupils to engage in charity events and fundraising activities, preparing them to be responsible, active citizens.
11. The robust safeguarding policy is updated regularly to reflect the latest guidance. Staff receive safeguarding training upon joining and at regular intervals. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) responds promptly to concerns, maintains secure records, and works closely with the safeguarding governor, deputy designated safeguarding lead (DDSL) and external agencies. Pupils are confident in sharing concerns, knowing they will be supported. Effective online safety measures are carefully monitored. Leaders ensure that safer recruitment practices are robust.

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:

- develop the balance of play-based activities with the formal curriculum in Reception to enhance children's social development
- ensure that medication is stored securely at all times
- ensure that signs to indicate drinking water are displayed consistently.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. Leaders and governors maintain a clear vision for the school and promote ambitious aims by setting high expectations for pupils and staff. They actively promote the school's ethos in assemblies and the positive encouragement given to all pupils. They regularly evaluate the quality of the school's provision to identify areas for development, with pupils' wellbeing and happiness at the centre of their planning. Leaders monitor and review the implementation of policies and procedures to ensure that all aspects of provision are of a high quality. The comprehensive induction programme for new staff and an ongoing appraisal cycle help to ensure that teaching, pupils' academic attainment and pastoral care are of a consistently high standard across the school.
13. Governors provide perceptive oversight and support for leaders. Governors regularly visit the school to check the implementation of policies and seek evidence that the school's aims and ethos are successfully promoted. As a result, they maintain a well-informed understanding of current strengths and relative weaknesses. Regular meetings with the leaders and discussions with staff and pupils assure governors that the Standards are met and that pupils' wellbeing is prioritised. The effective governance and leadership of the school has a positive impact on outcomes for pupils' academic and personal development.
14. Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. They maintain regularly reviewed accessibility plans to address both physical access and curriculum provision for pupils with additional needs.
15. Leaders and governors prioritise the assessment of potential risk to pupils, including children in Reception, in terms of premises, safeguarding and pastoral care. They ensure that risk management procedures are robust. Staff are well trained in completing risk assessments, including routine checks in Reception. Leaders review all risk assessments to ensure that potential concerns are pre-empted and mitigated. Any incidents are reviewed to inform future risk assessment. Leaders promote success for all by celebrating individual achievement alongside attainment. If pupils give cause for concern leaders intervene promptly to provide support.
16. Leaders ensure that activities for Reception children are well planned and delivered by knowledgeable and dedicated staff who understand children's individual needs and interests. As a result, children make consistently good progress in their learning and development.
17. Parents have access to all required information regarding policies and procedures, much of which is available on the school website. They receive regular reports about their child's progress throughout the year. Additionally, regular communication and meetings between teachers and parents are offered. Leaders and teachers are quick to contact parents should there be a concern. Leaders have effective links with external agencies and contact is made should the need arise in relation to a concern about a pupil or adult. Leaders ensure that the local authority receives the required information, including an annual update on use of funds, about pupils who have education, health and care plans.
18. The complaints procedure is published on the school's website. Leaders investigate any formal complaints raised by parents in detail and respond quickly. Records of complaints are maintained thoroughly. Governors and leaders review complaints to evaluate what can be learned from them so that trends or patterns can be acted upon swiftly.

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

19. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. The broad curriculum enables pupils, including children in Reception, to experience a variety of lessons and activities. This fosters diverse interests while focusing on literacy, numeracy, and reasoning skills. The integrated curriculum encourages pupils' curiosity about the world around them, how people live and lived and develops their knowledge of and respect for institutions and services in Britain. Specialist teaching in art, drama, computing, music, French, and physical education (PE) inspires pupils' enthusiasm and self-motivation.
21. The school's ambitious aims for academic success and teachers' high expectations enable pupils to attain highly. Praise, constructive feedback and celebrating 'marvellous mistakes' help pupils maintain a positive attitude towards learning.
22. Teachers track pupils' progress and employ the analysis of data effectively to provide appropriate levels of support and challenge to meet pupils' needs. Pupils make consistently good progress from their individual starting points.
23. Teachers use engaging activities, open questions and discussions to help pupils attain high levels of knowledge and understanding. Teachers and assistants work closely together, using their high levels of knowledge and skills to ensure pupils' progress. Targeted individual support in lessons helps pupils to achieve their best.
24. In English lessons, teachers' expertise and enthusiasm encourages pupils to expand their vocabulary, explore new words and read fluently. Pupils use literary devices such as metaphors and personification successfully in creative writing from an early age. Well-planned lessons, which consolidate previous learning while introducing new topics, allow pupils to make good progress in mathematics. Skilled teaching enables them to manipulate complex numbers mentally and explain their reasoning. Pupils choose methods for solving mathematical problems confidently and handle various types of data competently. Interactive teaching enables pupils to hold simple conversations in French using a range of vocabulary.
25. Pupils in Reception follow a curriculum that reflects the school's aim for academic achievement, balanced with children's developmental needs. Well-planned, engaging lessons, enable children to grasp the sounds that letters make and begin to read and write simple words and phrases independently early in the first term. They work confidently with numbers up to at least 20, and some understand place value into the thousands. Pupils are taught effectively and knowledge is reinforced frequently. PE lessons and activities in a local wooded environment are well planned to support the development of children's physical co-ordination and fitness and encourage collaboration.
26. Leaders responsible for the provision for pupils who have SEND, including those with an education, health and care (EHC) plan, assess their needs thoroughly. Teachers use detailed individual learning plans (ILPs) to plan effective targeted support, with additional one-to-one sessions if needed, so that pupils make good progress consistently. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) closely monitors pupils' progress towards their targets, making adjustments to provision as required. ILPs are regularly reviewed to ensure pupils continue to make good progress.
27. For pupils who speak EAL, language proficiency is assessed on entry, and progress is carefully tracked. Targets are set to ensure effective support and good progress.

28. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to learn an instrument and perform in choirs, orchestra, or as soloists in concerts and assemblies. As a result, pupils speak, sing, or play to an audience with confidence. A range of extra-curricular activities, including chess, football, martial arts, drama, and art, allows pupils to explore their interests and develop new skills.

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

29. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

30. The curriculum enables pupils to explore talents and interests, fostering self-awareness and confidence. Staff and leaders reward effort and contribution alongside achievement, helping pupils feel successful and build self-belief. Praise and encouragement from teachers and positive discussions about errors or misconceptions mean that pupils see mistakes as part of learning. From Reception onwards, the Learning for Life (LfL) curriculum includes the use of a self-reflection programme that helps pupils recognise, express and regulate their emotions.
31. The LfL curriculum is planned and delivered effectively. As a result, pupils develop their understanding of how to be physically and mentally healthy, safe and confident in themselves. The annual mental health day and regular mindfulness activities enable pupils to understand the importance of a balanced lifestyle.
32. The relationships education programme helps pupils to understand family diversity, how to build positive relationships, and the importance of accepting differences. As a result, pupils demonstrate the school values of kindness and mutual respect in their interactions. The school regularly consults parents in order to help shape the curriculum, and leaders assess its relevance and appropriateness.
33. The religious education (RE) curriculum and visits to places of worship enable pupils to develop an early understanding of different world religions, spirituality and moral dilemmas. Assembly themes, the LfL curriculum, and the Wetherby ambassador rules encourage pupils to show respect and kindness to one another. As a result, pupils demonstrate mutual respect and learn in a supportive environment.
34. The physical education (PE) curriculum includes a variety of indoor and outdoor sports which help to ensure pupils' positive mental and physical health. Leaders provide opportunities for older pupils to use sports fields and a swimming pool. Pupils participate in engaging and competitive sports such as football, cricket, swimming and gymnastics. They respond positively to the well-delivered coaching, which helps them build confidence, develop skills and fitness and enjoy physical activity.
35. The school's behaviour policy is clear and understood, ensuring consistent and fair application. Staff supervision is effective, including adhering to regulatory ratios in Reception, which allows incidents to be addressed swiftly. As a result, pupils typically exhibit good behaviour, with rare instances of misconduct. When misbehaviour occurs leaders respond promptly, encouraging pupils to reflect on their actions and learn from their mistakes. Detailed records of misbehaviour are kept, reviewed regularly to identify patterns, and appropriate action is taken.
36. The school's approach to bullying is equally proactive. Leaders and staff prevent disagreements or jokes from escalating into bullying, offering support to all involved. The Wetherby ambassador rules promote positive interactions, and staff model respectful behaviour. As a result, bullying is uncommon. Pupils are confident that they can talk about concerns and that they will be addressed.
37. The school premises are well maintained and fire safety and health regulations adhered to. Risk assessments are conducted and reviewed regularly, with measures in place to minimise fire risks. Fire drills are conducted frequently, and both staff and pupils are well informed about fire safety

procedures. During the inspection, posters to indicate drinking water were not displayed by a small number of taps in the Reception building. This was rectified during the inspection.

38. In Reception, the curriculum supports children's personal and emotional development, balancing formal learning with creative activities and physical activity. The rate of pupils' social development in the classroom is limited because of the few opportunities for free-play. Children are well-known by staff and enjoy positive relationships with teachers. This creates an environment where they are happy and well cared for.
39. Pupils are effectively supervised on site, at sports venues, and during educational visits to ensure safety. Robust arrival and departure procedures at both sites keep pupils secure and safe. First aid provision is effective, with appropriate numbers of staff trained in first aid, including paediatric qualifications. During the inspection, some medication was stored insecurely. This was rectified during the inspection.
40. Accurate admission and attendance registers are kept. A school leader monitors attendance, and the recently updated policy is available to parents on the school website. The school promptly notifies the local authority when pupils join or leave at non-standard transition times to help ensure that children do not miss education.

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

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

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

42. The LfL curriculum promotes British values, including democracy, the rule of law, and individual liberty. Pupils' understanding of these values is supported by assembly themes, the school's respectful ethos, and their enthusiasm for recognition as a Wetherby ambassador. The LfL and RE curriculums encourage pupils to appreciate and respect different personal characteristics and cultures. Visiting speakers help pupils understand and celebrate religious festivals like Diwali and Hanukkah, while the integrated curriculum introduces them to diverse cultures and lifestyles from around the world. Pupils appreciate that others may hold different beliefs and celebrate different traditions.
43. Pupils elect school council members to experience a democratic process. They learn that some people may have different views, and that their own opinions may not always be the most popular. Teachers foster a respectful classroom environment where pupils feel confident to express their ideas. This helps them to understand that the opinions of others are as valid as their own. From Reception onwards, visiting speakers, such as police officers and firefighters, help pupils to learn about the roles of public institutions and services in British society.
44. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities within their classrooms as monitors. They may also apply for roles such as charity ambassadors, eco-warriors, school council representatives, and digital leaders. These roles provide pupils with the chance to build confidence, leadership and teamwork skills. Pupils take pride in wearing their badges and fulfilling these responsibilities. The school council meets regularly with leaders to discuss pupils' ideas and plan changes or events. Pupils are involved in decision-making within the school. Similarly, the eco-warriors take the initiative to promote environmental awareness and help make the school more ecofriendly.
45. The school's behaviour policy is consistently followed, helping pupils to understand the importance of right and wrong. Pupils understand that rules, rewards, and sanctions are in place to ensure the school is a positive and pleasant environment for everyone. They are polite to each other and, from Reception onwards, learn how to share and assist with classroom routines. Pupils also have opportunities to develop their social skills during play, work, and events such as the annual Grandparents day. As pupils progress through the school, they develop strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work well as part of a team.
46. The LfL and mathematics programmes teach pupils about money in an age-appropriate way helping to develop their financial awareness. Leaders encourage pupils to plan and raise money for charities through events like the sponsored readathon so that they develop early skills for their future economic wellbeing. In the annual entrepreneur week, pupils present and practise business ideas, gaining a basic understanding of how business works.
47. Leaders encourage pupils to participate in initiatives that benefit both the local and wider communities. Pupils sing at a local residential home, collect coats for the homeless, and gather food for the local food bank. Digital leaders help ensure devices are ready for use and assist in organising a robotics day with a neighbouring school. Through these activities, pupils learn the importance of being positive contributors to British society.

48. The school's efforts to instil British values through the curriculum, extracurricular activities, and community involvement help pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility and understanding of their role in society. These experiences prepare pupils to become thoughtful, respectful, and active citizens in the future. Pupils are well prepared, both academically and socially, for their next schools.

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

49. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

50. The school implements a robust safeguarding policy which is regularly reviewed to reflect the most recent guidance. Leaders ensure that all staff receive safeguarding training when they join the school and at regular intervals thereafter. Governors and leaders monitor the effectiveness of training to ensure that staff are confident in how to identify and report concerns.
51. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy designated safeguarding lead (DDSL) respond quickly to concerns. Leaders maintain secure, detailed records which are closely monitored and compared to behaviour and bullying logs. This enables any patterns or trends to be identified so that swift action can be taken. Staff are confident to report concerns about other adults. Leaders formally record any low level concerns and take appropriate action which may include support, intervention and training.
52. The designated safeguarding governor (DSG) provides advice and support for the DSLs and oversees the effective implementation of procedures. The school has established a positive relationship with external safeguarding agencies from whom advice is sought to make sure that appropriate action is taken when a concern arises.
53. From the youngest years, pupils know that they can share any worries with staff. Pupils are listened to and help is given when needed.
54. There are suitable filtering and monitoring systems in place to support online safety. Leaders check their effectiveness in line with statutory guidance and respond swiftly to alerts.
55. Leaders and staff have a secure understanding of the risks posed by radicalisation, extremism and terrorism and ensure that appropriate procedures are known and practised.
56. Governors and leaders are meticulous in overseeing safer recruitment procedures. All suitability checks are completed before staff start work and recorded accurately on the single central record (SCR). Those responsible for the recruitment process are trained regularly and diligent in their roles.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Wetherby School
Department for Education number	207/6189
Address	Wetherby School 11 Pembridge Square London W2 4ED
Phone number	0207 7279581
Email address	learn@wetherbyschool.co.uk
Website	wetherbyschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Inspired Education Group
Chair	Mr Nicholas Wergan
Headteacher	Mr Paul David
Age range	3 to 8
Number of pupils	326
Date of previous inspection	16 to 19 November 2021

Information about the school

58. Wetherby School is an independent day school founded in 1951. It is registered as a single-sex school for male pupils. The school occupies two sites: Years 1, 2 and 3 are housed at the main site and Reception in another building close by. Since September 2023, the school has not accommodated children under the age of four years. In 2023 the school became part of the Inspired Education Group, who carry out the corporate governance responsibility for the school. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2023. Another inspection team undertook inspection of Wetherby Preparatory School concurrently.
59. There are 92 children in the early years setting which comprises four Reception classes. The school has been granted exemption from the learning and development requirements of the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (EYFS).
60. The school has identified 50 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Very few pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
61. English is an additional language for 18 pupils.
62. The school states its aims are to create a vibrant community dedicated to encouraging pupils to pursue dreams, develop personal excellence and maximise individual growth while celebrating grace, grit and courage. It seeks to provide a broad educational offering that is challenging and empowering for learners and secures their success in the long term. Pupils are encouraged to dream big, do their best and be ready with appropriate skills for future life.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

26 to 28 November 2024

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

64. 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 head, 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.

65. The inspection team considered the views of 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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