

Progress monitoring inspection report

9 December 2024

Walthamstow Hall

Holly Bush Lane

Sevenoaks

Kent

TN13 3UL

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'.

Inspection outcome

The school meets all the relevant Standards that were considered during this inspection.

Inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR Paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b), 15; EYFS Safeguarding and welfare requirements 3.7

1. School leaders have embedded a strong culture of safeguarding across the school in which the wellbeing and safety of pupils is prioritised. There is an appropriate policy for safeguarding and a staff code of conduct that are in line with statutory guidance.
2. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is a senior leader with sufficient time and authority to carry out the role effectively. There are four deputy DSLs including one with responsibility for the early years. The DSL and deputy DSLs meet weekly to monitor any concerns including the contextual needs of pupils.
3. Safeguarding leaders maintain suitably detailed safeguarding records in line with statutory requirements. Timely and appropriate action is taken including referrals for early help to the local authority children's services and when needed, the local authority designated officer (LADO). They communicate effectively with parents and put in place suitable support for individual pupils including personal welfare plans.
4. The DSL and the deputy DSLs are trained to the required level including inter-agency and partnership working. The training of staff, including those who work in the early years, is comprehensive. This includes a rigorous staff induction programme, termly training with quizzes to assess staff understanding and regular safeguarding updates throughout the year. Consequently, staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures including how to identify and support pupils in need. Staff fully recognise their responsibilities in understanding the school's whistle-blowing policy, the staff code of conduct and in mitigating the risks to pupils from extremism. Staff understand the latest statutory government guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), including their responsibility for children absent from education. Leaders maintain meticulous records of staff training and ensure that suitable catch-up sessions are provided for anyone missing training.
5. Suitable arrangements are in place to handle allegations against staff. Leaders monitor low level concerns about adults diligently. Immediate action is taken to address concerns, including providing members of staff with additional support and training. Leaders understand reporting thresholds and when required, the DSL takes advice from the LADO and makes referrals. Staff have a clear understanding of what constitutes a low-level concern and will report issues, no matter how small, about others as well as themselves.
6. The school has suitable filter and monitoring systems in place to track internet activity. Alerts from the monitoring software are investigated by the safeguarding team. Records are clearly categorised with appropriate action taken if inappropriate internet use has taken place.
7. Pupils know that they have many trusted adults to whom they can turn to share concerns and seek support, and they will willingly do so if needed. Pupils are in no doubt that staff actively listen and that the school takes effective and prompt action when required. Pupils are knowledgeable in their awareness of how to keep themselves safe, including online, through the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum.

8. Governors maintain an effective oversight of the school's implementation of the safeguarding policy. A designated governor takes responsibility for reporting to the board of governors on a regular basis following visits to the school to meet with the safeguarding team. The governing body formally reviews the safeguarding policy on at least an annual basis. In addition to the designated governor reports, governors receive monthly safeguarding updates from the DSL enabling them to gain a comprehensive overview of safeguarding matters.
9. The school's attendance and admission registers are accurately maintained in line with current statutory guidance. Leaders have ensured that staff are trained to incorporate the new attendance codes into attendance registers from September 2024. Attendance, including at lessons, is monitored carefully with any patterns of absence quickly identified and appropriate action taken. Leaders inform the local authority of any pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard transition points or are absent for the specified periods of time.
10. The school meets the Standards.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

ISSR Paragraphs 18(2)(a), (2)(c)(i), (2)(d) and 18(3); EYFS 3.9

11. The school implements its recruitment policy effectively. Since the previous inspection, those involved in appointing new staff have had their safer recruitment training updated. Leaders have also ensured that staff, including those who work in the early years, have undergone safer recruitment awareness training. Staff now have a clear understanding of why all adults working and volunteering must go through a rigorous vetting process prior to appointment.
12. A single central record of appointments (SCR) is accurately maintained for all members of staff, governors, supply staff, volunteers and contractors. All the required checks are completed prior to adults starting work and having contact with pupils. Staff personnel files are well organised and include a checklist which ensures all the checks have been completed including prohibition from teaching, management and, where relevant, childcare. If any of the checks are delayed, including an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, leaders do not allow the member of staff to start their employment at the school.
13. The school meets the Standards.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

14. The school meets the requirements for providing information relating to safeguarding to parents. Particulars of the arrangements for safeguarding are published on the school's website.
15. The school meets the Standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraphs 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c) and 34(2)

16. Leaders have effectively implemented the school's action plan to address the Standards which were not met at the previous inspection. Leaders' oversight of the staff recruitment process is more rigorous including regular monitoring of the SCR and personnel files. Leaders have ensured that all staff involved in the appointments process have all been externally trained in safer recruitment.

17. Governors have increased the level of oversight of leaders' implementation of the action plan. Regular inspections of staff appointments are carried out by governors. Since the previous inspection governors have ensured that leaders have the skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, actively promote the wellbeing of pupils and ensure that the Standards are met.
18. The school meets the Standards.

School details

School	Walthamstow Hall
Department for Education number	886/6054
Registered charity number	1058439
Address	Walthamstow Hall Holly Bush Lane Sevenoaks Kent TN13 3UL
Phone number	01732 451334
Email address	whoffice@whall.school
Website	www.walthamstow-hall.co.uk
Proprietor	Governors of Walthamstow Hall
Chair	Mrs Jayne Adams
Headteacher	Ms Louise Chamberlain
Age range	2 to 18
Number of pupils	532
Date of previous inspection	28 to 30 November 2023

Information about the school

19. Walthamstow Hall is an independent day school predominantly for female pupils, based on two separate sites in Sevenoaks, Kent. The nursery and pre-school became co-educational from August 2023. The junior school is located approximately a mile away from the senior school. The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new senior deputy headteacher, who took post in September 2024, and a new bursar who took up position in June 2024.
20. There are 48 children in the early years comprising nursery, pre-school and Reception classes.
21. The school has identified 117 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
22. Leaders have identified six pupils for whom English is an additional language.
23. The school states that its aims are to educate girls with academic potential to lead confident, challenging and fulfilling lives. In a Christian setting, the schools five values are respect, integrity, aspiration, community and individuality.

Purpose of the progress monitoring inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. This inspection was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection which was carried out at the request of the DfE. The purpose of this inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the Independent School Standards, Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and any other requirements that the school was judged not to comply with at its previous inspection.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

9 December 2024

24. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for one day.
25. Inspection activities included:
 - scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
 - discussions with a member of the governing body
 - discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
 - discussions with pupils.

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

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