

School inspection report

17 to 19 June 2025

Norfolk House School

4 Norfolk Road

Edgbaston

Birmingham

West Midlands

B15 3PS

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

Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders have an effective approach to school development based on focused monitoring and self-evaluation. The proprietor maintains efficient oversight of the school in order to ensure that leaders fulfil their responsibilities.
2. The curriculum is suitably broad and designed to meet the needs and aptitudes of all pupils. Children in the early years access a wide range of activities which develop their basic skills. Teachers consider the prior attainment of pupils and teach their next steps so that pupils make good progress. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn successfully because of the personalised support they receive. Pupils' progress is systematically monitored. Leaders use this information to ensure that pupils are supported and challenged.
3. The curriculum is complemented by a well-resourced co-curricular programme, which benefits pupils of all ages and abilities. The programme is well-thought through so that it builds pupils' skills and interests.
4. Pupils' physical, emotional and mental health are successfully promoted. Behaviour is typically good in lessons and at breaktimes. However, a small number of pupils who struggle to develop social skills are not as well supported to develop positive social relationships. The school has developed its response to these pupils over time but has not always been successful in helping these pupils to manage situations effectively.
5. The school's strategy to prevent bullying is firmly in place. Pupils are confident that there are trusted staff who they can approach with any concerns. Pupils participate in a wide range of physical activity. Leaders have effective systems in place for the management of health and safety, including fire protocols. Appropriate first aid is readily available when required. Leaders take effective and appropriate action to mitigate any risks identified.
6. Pupils understand the importance of tolerance and respect for others. Pupils are well prepared to contribute positively to British society through a relevant curriculum and links with the local community.
7. The proprietor maintains a rigorous oversight of safeguarding practices at the school. Staff understand and implement the school's procedures for reporting any safeguarding concerns that might arise. Leaders carry out recruitment checks following current statutory guidance and these are recorded appropriately. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

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:

- further develop the support for the few pupils who need extra help to develop their social skills, so that they can self-regulate and have more positive social interactions with their peers.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders and managers have the required knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, including actively promoting pupils' wellbeing. The proprietor has a thorough knowledge of the Standards and ensures that they are met through effective scrutiny and monitoring of the school's practice and procedures. The proprietor receives detailed reports, regularly visits the school and scrutinises documentation, and provides appropriate challenge and support to leaders.
9. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness and areas for development. They carefully consider the impact that their actions have on pupils' wellbeing and success. Methodical and detailed self-evaluation informs their strategic school development planning. This planning focuses on improving the impact of all aspects of the school's provision on pupils' wellbeing.
10. Leaders manage any parental complaints appropriately. They keep thorough records of these, and of the actions taken by the school in response. Complaints are dealt with within the timeframes stated in the school's policy.
11. Parents receive regular reports about their child's attainment, progress and attitudes to learning. Required information about the school, including its aims and ethos, is made available to parents, largely through the school's informative website.
12. Leaders have a comprehensive and robust approach to risk management. Leaders understand physical, welfare and safeguarding risks. They respond with urgency and diligence to potential risks when these are identified. Risk assessments detail appropriate steps to reduce or remove these. Leaders monitor risk assessments to check their continued effectiveness.
13. Leaders work closely with external agencies to support pupils' safety and wellbeing. In particular, leaders maintain effective working relationships with local safeguarding partners and experts in health and safety, including fire safety. The school liaises with destination schools to enable pupils' smooth transition to the next stage in their education.
14. The early years setting is well resourced. Leaders provide staff with training and guidance, ensuring that they have an in-depth understanding of how to teach and support children. Children are happy and encouraged. They make good progress over time.
15. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010. The detailed accessibility plan includes actions to ensure that pupils who have additional needs can access the curriculum and facilities.

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

16. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

17. The curriculum is wide-ranging and academically ambitious. Pupils make good progress across different subjects. In mathematics and English, teaching focuses on pupils gaining a firm grounding in core skills. Subject content supports pupils to build their numeracy and literacy knowledge and skills over time. Younger pupils learn how to relate letters to the sounds they make, which develops their early reading and writing skills. Older pupils produce extended writing pieces as a result of independent research or as creative writing.
18. Staff carefully consider how they can best teach the curriculum to maximise pupils' achievements. The aesthetic and creative curriculum is taught both within the classroom and outside. Pupils regularly visit the Botanical Gardens or the nearby reservoir to complete practical tasks, such as using the area to practise map-reading skills. In science lessons, pupils have opportunities to investigate and develop their experimental skills. In art lessons, pupils are taught how to apply their previous learning to more complex work. For example, pupils in Year 1 learn how to shade by applying different levels of pressure. Pupils continue to refine their shading skills and in Year 6 use these to draw a human hand.
19. Leaders check the quality of teaching and learning across the school to make sure their high expectations are met. Teachers want to improve their practice. They have an open and reflective approach to getting better. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and plan well-paced lessons. Pupils work well together. They share ideas and help each other during class discussions.
20. Teachers check what pupils have learned and use this information to plan future lessons. Leaders and teachers make sure that pupils achieve to the best of their abilities. Teachers of all subjects plan how to teach key knowledge and skills and identify what resources are needed to enhance their teaching and motivate pupils. Pupils are typically keen to learn. They act responsibly and independently when following instructions or receiving guidance from teachers.
21. Leaders identify the needs of pupils who have SEND as soon as they join the school. Individualised teaching plans set out pupils' targets and how they can be supported to achieve these. Where necessary, adaptations are made, such as the provision of fidget toys and quiet spaces. Pupils who have SEND make good progress from their different starting points.
22. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are supported to develop their understanding of subject-specific vocabulary and language structures. Pupils who speak EAL increase their confidence and English fluency. They make good progress over time.
23. In the early years, teaching focuses on children's early communication and language development. Staff make use of songs, rhymes and stories to teach children new vocabulary. They closely monitor what children know and can do and address any gaps in children's learning. Staff frequently model mathematical language to support the development of children's numeracy skills.
24. Leaders develop positive relationships with parents. Regular bulletins and emails provide parents with updates. Leaders share information about the curriculum so that parents understand what their child has been taught and how to support their child's learning at home. Additionally, parents' evenings, assemblies and events celebrate pupils' achievements.

25. The wider curriculum includes recreation activities, after-school clubs and an enrichment homework programme. The popular range of after-school clubs includes martial arts, chess and board games. These experiences develop pupils' resilience and thinking skills and give pupils opportunities to collaborate with others. Home enrichment activities such as going to a museum or cooking develop pupils' skills and interests beyond the classroom while at the same time enhancing pupils' vocabulary development and knowledge of the wider world.

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

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

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

27. The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education emphasises respect for individuals and their different backgrounds. Pupils learn about relevant topics from contemporary society. This supports pupils to understand relevant issues and appreciate the diverse world to which they will contribute.
28. Leaders have implemented an age-appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum. Lessons are well planned and delivered, ensuring that pupils understand different types of relationships and how their bodies change as they grow.
29. Leaders enhance pupils' moral and spiritual understanding through school assemblies and the reinforcement of the school's aims and ethos. Pupils learn about different countries, religions and cultures. They make connections between religion and art. Pupils discuss moral issues and consider reasoned arguments to support both sides. Pupils show empathy and kindness towards others and understand the rationale behind the pupil code of conduct.
30. Staff have a consistent approach to school routines. This helps pupils to understand what is expected of them. Pupils take pride in their work and can explain what they have learned. Regular pupil-led assemblies develop pupils' confidence in public speaking. Consequently, most pupils have high levels of self-esteem and confidence.
31. The physical education (PE) curriculum is carefully planned to develop pupils' physical skills as they move through the school. Younger pupils learn basic ball skills. Pupils become increasingly adept and apply more complex technical skills to various team games. Pupils swim every week and receive coaching from the local tennis club. Pupils are taught a wide variety of team games and participate in matches and fixtures with other local schools. These experiences enable them to practise skills and develop sporting values and resilience. Pupils gain enthusiasm for physical activity and sport alongside an appreciation of the health benefits of exercise.
32. Pupils' behaviour is typically good. Leaders monitor and record pupils' behaviour so that any patterns can be identified and addressed. Staff issue rewards and sanctions fairly and in line with the pupil code of conduct. In the main, the school manages incidents appropriately. However, a small number of pupils have limited social skills and struggle to interact with their peers successfully. Sometimes they do not behave appropriately. The school does not always support these pupils to manage their behaviour and emotions well. This leads to occasional low-level disruption during lessons.
33. The school's anti-bullying policy is well understood by staff and pupils. Incidents are systematically recorded so that any trends can be identified and addressed.
34. The school premises are well maintained. Pupils are appropriately supervised at all times. Pupils learn and play in a safe environment. Effective security measures are in place. Potentially hazardous areas such as halls, computer rooms and music rooms are free of clutter. Maintenance records are kept, and leaders' robust oversight ensures that staff training is up to date.

35. Attendance and admission registers are well organised and comply with regulations. Leaders inform the local authority when children join or leave the school at non-standard points as required. Leaders expect pupils to attend school as often as possible. They follow up any unexplained absence on a daily basis. If needed, leaders provide support for individual pupils and their families to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and punctually.
36. First aid is administered if pupils are injured or unwell. All accidents, injuries and first aid treatment are documented. Early years staff are suitably trained in paediatric first aid.
37. In the early years, children learn successfully through a carefully balanced combination of explicit teaching and purposeful play. Staff in the early years check how well children learn and adapt activities to match children's needs and interests. Physical activities improve children's fine- and gross-motor skills, such as developing their pincer grip. This improves children's dexterity and early writing skills. Children's emotional development is nurtured sensitively from the moment that children join the lower school. Children are supported to manage their emotions and develop positive relationships with their peers. Staff encourage children through praise and emotional support. Consequently, children develop skills for effective learning, being active and 'having a go'. They demonstrate resilience and confidence. They follow class routines with increasing independence.

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

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

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

39. Pupils are taught about human, social and economic themes through the PSHE curriculum and the wider enrichment curriculum. Pupils in Year 1 learn about different ways to pay for items. Older pupils carry out calculations involving VAT. They participate in an enterprise activity where they use budgeting skills and financial decision-making.
40. Leaders model behaviours and attitudes which are consistent with British values. The diversity of the school community is celebrated. Pupils have a firm awareness of inclusivity and respect. Pupils' understanding is developed through the PSHE curriculum, assemblies and positive signage around the school. Stories are regularly used to raise pupils' awareness, for instance, about different family structures. Pupils learn about a range of cultures, including through a chosen 'country of the month'.
41. Pupils are provided with meaningful activities that prepare them for life in British society. They learn about democracy when a 'general election' is held at the end of the school year. Pupils in Year 6 create parties and write manifestos before pupils across the school cast their votes.
42. The school values of 'readiness, respect and responsibility' are embedded across the curriculum. Leaders and teachers refer to these frequently so that pupils learn to use them in their daily interactions with each other. Pupils explain why these values are important and understand what they need to do in order to demonstrate them.
43. The curriculum challenges pupils to reflect on moral issues within society. In history, pupils learn about slavery, and in geography, pupils consider environmental themes. As a result, pupils' awareness of these wider societal issues is raised.
44. Pupils are encouraged to engage with and support the local community. Pupils visit the library and sing at a nearby retirement home, and their artwork is displayed in local coffee shops. Pupils in Year 6 recently spoke at a public consultation over the proposed closure of the library. These experiences help to develop pupils' personal and social skills alongside enhancing their sense of responsibility.
45. Children in the early years are taught to develop their social skills. They learn to share equipment, take turns and listen to each other. Staff work closely with parents to support children to become more independent with their self-care, such as by developing healthy eating habits.
46. Leaders make sure that teachers give a balanced perspective when presenting any political issues. Through the PSHE curriculum, pupils are taught to challenge stereotypes and develop knowledge and understanding of the media, such as by recognising features of 'fake news'.

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

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

Safeguarding

48. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and reflect the requirements of current statutory guidance. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities respond promptly and appropriately to any safeguarding concerns that arise. They consult with external safeguarding partners and refer safeguarding concerns to them when required. Staff understand the arrangements for handling allegations against staff or senior leaders. Leaders keep suitable records of safeguarding concerns and the decisions and actions taken in response to these.
49. The proprietor maintains effective oversight of the safeguarding policy and procedures. He visits the school regularly to ensure that safeguarding procedures are carried out effectively.
50. Safeguarding training for the proprietor, leaders and staff is thorough, regular and in line with local requirements. Leaders provide safeguarding updates and scenario-based training for all staff. This is supplemented by regular checks and quizzes to review staff understanding. Staff are confident regarding their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to report and record concerns. Staff new to the school undergo safeguarding training as part of the induction process so they are clear about the school's policy and systems.
51. Leaders are aware of potential safeguarding risks for pupils beyond the school, including those relating to radicalisation and extremism. Staff receive training about the 'Prevent' duty that considers such risks and how staff should respond to any concerns.
52. Leaders ensure that all required safer recruitment checks on adults are made in a timely manner and are accurately recorded within a single central record (SCR).
53. Suitable internet filtering and monitoring procedures are in place. These systems are tested regularly by the school and any alerts are immediately reviewed by members of the safeguarding team, who take action as required.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

54. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Norfolk House School
Department for Education number	330/6027
Address	Norfolk House School 4 Norfolk Road Edgbaston Birmingham West Midlands B15 3PS
Phone number	0121 454 7021
Email address	info@norfolkhouseschool.co.uk
Website	www.norfolkhouseschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Norfolk House School Limited
Chair	Mr Jonathan Challinor
Headteacher	Mrs Susannah Palmer
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	134
Date of previous inspection	18 to 20 May 2022

Information about the school

55. Norfolk House School is an independent co-educational day school situated in Edgbaston, Birmingham. It was founded in 1967. The school's proprietor is a limited company, whose single director is responsible for the school's governance. The school comprises the lower school, which caters for pupils from Nursery to Year 2, and the upper school, which caters for pupils from Year 3 to Year 6.
56. The registered early years provision, adjacent to the school, is inspected separately by Ofsted.
57. The school has identified 19 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
58. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for a very small number of pupils.
59. There are currently 41 children in the early years in one Nursery class, which the school refers to as the Transition class, and one Reception class.
60. The school states its aims are to foster a culture in which the safeguarding of each child is paramount and where this is promoted in a positive and supportive, family atmosphere which empowers each child to learn, develop and thrive. The school aspires to nurture each child as an individual, and to encourage and challenge each child to develop their skills and interests fully. It seeks to inspire each child to be a caring and responsible citizen who strives to make a positive contribution to the community.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

17 to 19 June 2025

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

62. 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 proprietor
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

63. 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**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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

For more information, please visit isi.net