

School inspection report

25 to 27 March 2025

Normanhurst School

68-74 Station Road

North Chingford

London

E4 7BA

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 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	13
SCHOOL DETAILS	15
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	16
INSPECTION DETAILS	17

Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders have developed a school culture in which pupils' wellbeing is effectively promoted, in line with the school's aims. This is demonstrated in leaders' decision-making and in the positive relationships between the pupils, and between pupils and staff.
2. The proprietor provides suitable oversight of policies and decision-making and school leaders plan carefully and thoroughly so that the Standards are met.
3. Leaders have shaped a curriculum for the senior school which enables pupils to make good progress in a broad range of subjects. Pupils choose from one of three science pathways and between two modern languages.
4. In the junior school staff have developed a balanced curriculum which is topic based and which stimulates interest and develops intellectual curiosity in the pupils. Cross-curricular links enrich the pupils' acquisition of key skills.
5. Teachers in the early years setting follow a curriculum that is reviewed and adapted to meet each child's needs. Some lessons are taught in mixed age groups to facilitate good progress and children develop their language, number skills and confidence successfully.
6. Pupils make good progress across the curriculum. Children in the early years develop key skills effectively. The school's assessment and tracking data shows pupils in the junior and senior schools make good progress from their starting points.
7. Well-planned lessons facilitate pupils expressing their thoughts, with older pupils exploring societal expectations in readiness for the world beyond school. Pupils articulate their ideas fluently and discuss with confidence, showing respect for each other's opinions.
8. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified early. The dynamic SEND register is regularly updated. A system of pupil passports shares key information for success with teachers. Consequently, pupils who have SEND make good progress.
9. Lessons in the effective personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme help pupils to understand different facets of an individual's identity and promote a culture of respect in the school.
10. Typically, pupils behave well across the school. Leaders and staff reinforce positive behaviour and there is a suitable behaviour policy. However, in the senior school, when rare incidents of poor behaviour occur, the implementation of sanctions by staff is not always consistent and pupils do not always understand the rationale behind decisions made.
11. Leaders have designed a range of roles for pupils to take on responsibility and contribute to their community, including working as prefects or mental health ambassadors.
12. Leaders have established a robust culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that meeting safeguarding requirements is fundamental to organising any activity.

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 behaviour policy is implemented consistently and is well understood by staff and pupils.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

13. Leaders and the proprietor ensure that the promotion of pupils' wellbeing is at the heart of the school's provision. Leaders have the appropriate knowledge and experience to fulfil their responsibilities in ensuring that the school meets the Standards. They are supported by the proprietor and the board of management for the Oak-Tree Group of schools who carry out effective oversight of the school's senior leaders.
14. Leaders in the early years ensure that the individual needs of each child inform planning. Staff working in the early years are in receipt of appropriate supervision and training and form constructive working dynamics with the children in their charge. The setting is nurturing and also facilitates appropriate levels of challenge for each child so that they can make good progress towards the early learning goals.
15. Leaders work effectively with other agencies, including those for safeguarding. They ensure that the local authority is informed appropriately about the use of funding for any pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Senior and middle leaders work with their parallel postholders in other schools in the Oak-Tree Group to develop provision. Staff with responsibility for premises operate a clear system of regular checks, using outside agencies to ensure the school's buildings and outdoor areas are safe.
16. Leaders demonstrate a thorough approach to managing risk. Staff receive training and prepare effective risk assessments for activities within school, for the site and for visits beyond school. Risk assessments are drawn up for vulnerable pupils. Leaders ensure appropriate action is taken when a risk is identified. They employ preventative measures to mitigate potential future risks.
17. Leaders have established effective structures for evaluating the school's provision. A strategic improvement plan is drawn up with contributions from staff across the school. Departmental planning is linked to the overall vision for development and leaders ensure that pupils' wellbeing is prioritised.
18. The school provides all required information to parents mostly by way of its website. Suitably detailed reports inform parents about their child's progress. Teachers and leaders have frequent contact with parents and a series of information evenings is held to ensure parents are well informed about their child's programme for the year.
19. A suitable accessibility plan is in place and subject to regular review. It outlines strategies to ensure that the school's curriculum is accessible for all its pupils and that reasonable adjustments are made, as far as is possible, for pupils with a temporary physical disability. Recent modifications have seen increased availability of wheelchair ramps and the installation of further external lighting. In this way, the school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.
20. The school provides a suitable complaints policy which outlines a three-stage process for dealing with complaints. Leaders respond in a timely manner and appropriate records are kept of all complaints received.

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

21. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. Leaders have designed a broad and relevant curriculum in which lessons are well planned and provide appropriate levels of challenge for pupils. In the junior school staff have developed topic-based schemes of work which stimulate interest and curiosity in the pupils. This approach enables cross-curricular working such as connecting the study of the geography of Antarctica with reading a novel about penguins. Specialist teaching for subjects such as modern languages and music extends the pupils' knowledge and their linguistic and creative skills. In the senior school pupils can choose a wide range of subjects to study at GCSE level, including graphics and sociology.
23. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and plan lessons well so that they provide appropriate levels of challenge for pupils. Junior pupils are given choices about which task to complete and can increase the level of difficulty at their own pace. In this way they develop resilience in their learning. Teachers use questioning skilfully so that pupils willingly contribute to discussion and are confident in communicating their ideas. While studying humanities, senior pupils debate persuasively and display the necessary skills to work through an idea.
24. Across the whole school, pupils make good progress in mathematics owing to the secure subject knowledge of their teachers and clear explanations about processes. Well-planned lessons in English enable progress to be made in the study of literature, with dramatic reading complementing traditional analysis. Lessons in modern foreign languages make judicious use of the language being studied for instructions and conversational phrases so that pupils make progress in listening to and using the target language.
25. In the junior school leaders promote reading beyond the curriculum through a 'drop everything and read' programme. Pupils develop their reading confidence by choosing books in a reading genre of their choice and staff encourage pupils to persevere in their literacy by modelling their own successful reading habits.
26. In the early years, creative planning means that children are engaged in their learning, and staff actively encourage children to participate in dialogue. As a result, the children communicate their thoughts and needs well. Activities are adaptable and are supported by effective tracking of each child's progress so that their next steps are personalised and relevant. Learning, social and emotional needs are quickly identified and provide the basis of effective dialogue with parents.
27. Pupils make good progress in aesthetic and creative tasks from the early years upwards owing to well-designed activities by teachers which allow them elements of choice and personal involvement. Pupils of all ages show confidence in the use of technology. Older pupils are able to outline the necessary steps for designing a simple website.
28. If a pupil speaks English as an additional language (EAL) they are carefully monitored by staff so that suitable support can be provided, should it be necessary. This includes pictorial resources and vocabulary lists for specific subjects.
29. Teachers use data effectively to track progress, enabling them to provide tailored feedback to individual pupils which identifies relevant areas for improvement. Pupils use assessment trackers in their exercise books to respond to the feedback provided by teachers which helps them understand the next steps needed for progress.

30. Pupils who have SEND are supported effectively in one-to-one and group sessions outside lessons, in addition to receiving in-class support and tailored resources. Pupils reflect on their needs and inform staff of how they can be supported by contributing to their own pupil passport. They understand the support they will be getting and how the staff will be helping them. Teachers ensure that pupils who have SEND are given sufficiently challenging material.
31. There is a suitable programme of activities available to the pupils, ranging across the arts and sports. This includes coding, boxing and chess, as well as pupil-led initiatives such as the crochet club where pupils enjoy teaching their teachers a new skill. Leaders ensure that the activities provision includes clubs suitable for pupils with a wide range of interests such as for those who thrive in quieter environments. The programme helps pupils develop new skills and understand how these can be applied in a range of contexts and when working with others.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to 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 have established a school culture where mutual respect is expected and demonstrated between pupils and between pupils and staff, with teachers modelling and guiding appropriate behaviours that are reflective of the school's aims.
34. Lessons in the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme, along with assemblies and activities with tutors, mean that pupils have a secure knowledge of fundamental British values. A key aim of the school concerns developing pupils' respect for others and this is established across the curriculum where diverse cultures are discussed, for example in Spanish lessons where the meanings of national traditions are explored. Pupils understand that everyone is different and treat each other with respect.
35. Leaders monitor the school's provision to promote the spiritual development of pupils through opportunities in lessons and in assemblies alongside involvement in school performances. Pupils learn about different faiths across the curriculum, including in work for English, religious studies and sociology. The school's culture in teaching about faiths emphasises the similarities between them rather than their differences as part of its way of working towards an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding.
36. Effective and age-appropriate lessons for relationships and sex education (RSE) mean that pupils understand consent and the basis of a positive relationship, which they are able to articulate clearly. There are regular consultations with parents about the content of the RSE curriculum, which is reviewed by senior leaders and adapted as necessary.
37. A suitable behaviour policy is in place. Pupils understand the school's expectations and know the range of sanctions and rewards associated with them. However, staff do not always implement the policy consistently. This means that pupils in the senior school do not always understand the reasons for any sanctions given following occasional incidents of poor behaviour.
38. Pupils are well supervised both on-site and when on visits out of school. In the early years setting leaders ensure that appropriate ratios are observed and children are always within sight or sound in both indoor and outdoor areas. Staff supervising breaktime activities engage with the pupils of all ages so that they encourage constructive play and conversations.
39. The school's premises are maintained to an appropriate standard with defined areas for outdoor activity and suitable space for the younger children. When a maintenance need is identified, an online system makes specialist staff aware quickly and their response is efficient and effective. External agencies carry out specialist checks including those for fire prevention. Fire drills are conducted with appropriate frequency and pupils are clear about how to respond.
40. The school has in place a range of procedures to support the health and safety of its community. This includes guidance for direction of travel on staircases and protocols for accompanying pupils when moving between buildings.
41. Admission and attendance registers are kept effectively. Data is backed up as appropriate and stored for suitable time periods. The school notifies the local authority if a pupil joins or leaves at a non-

standard time. Leaders discuss attendance on a weekly basis and the school continually engages in promoting good attendance.

42. The inclusive programme for physical education is effective. Leaders have designed a curriculum to support sporting confidence, with the emphasis on participation and introducing pupils to a wide range of sports, including badminton and handball. The fitness programme allows pupils to identify activities which engage them and which will encourage their long-term physical fitness. Pupils are given guided choices in their fitness programmes and learn to take responsibility for their physical training.
43. Leaders in the early years have designed a programme which promotes the physical development of pupils, including weekly visits to the local forest where controlled risks can be taken and pupils gain confidence in physical activities such as climbing and balancing. A range of tasks, including cooking and craft, some completed outdoors, sees the children develop their fine motor skills appropriately.
44. Suitable procedures are in place for first aid. Staff training is up to date and staff trained in paediatric first aid are always on site.
45. Keeping mentally healthy is prioritised by the school's leaders. Pupils know that they can talk to a range of adults, and they value the provision of the supportive space known as the 'hub'. Leaders conduct surveys to monitor pupils' wellbeing so that any patterns can be quickly identified and support put in place.

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

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

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

47. Leaders have ensured that economic education is threaded effectively through the curriculum. In lessons for business studies GCSE, pupils develop an understanding of business ethics, including responsible attitudes towards the environment. Through visits to local shops, children in the early years develop their economic understanding of concepts such as reuse and recycling and the role of repair shops. Pupils in the senior school develop skills in financial literacy effectively. An appropriate programme promotes their understanding of credit cards, mortgages and banking amongst other practical situations. Pupils develop an understanding of marketing and economic viability through leaders designing a competition in which pupils can explore economic options for a product.
48. Leaders develop pupils' understanding of charity, emphasising the importance of giving time and using skills. Pupils learn about processes for charitable collection and distribution and what happens with the money they raise. They contribute to the local community through raising funds for the nearby foodbank. Pupils from the early years upwards visit elderly residents in a nearby residential setting, working with them on craft activities and singing for them. These activities help the pupils appreciate the lives of different generations.
49. A programme of careers assemblies introduces pupils from Year 7 upwards to a range of options beyond school. Suitable work experience is supported for pupils who then share their experiences in a presentation, developing further skills while reflecting upon their careers advice. The effective programme incorporates a careers day and a series of careers lunches, where pupils develop their knowledge of careers in which they are particularly interested.
50. Leaders monitor outside speakers, checking their materials to ensure a balanced perspective on political issues is presented to the pupils. Teachers in charge of debating and delivering lessons in subjects where political issues play a part, such as history, are scrupulous in maintaining balance in the discussion of world events.
51. Leaders in the early years promote the social development of the children through the provision of shared activities including mixing groups across the age range so that pupils work at an appropriate level in achieving collaborative tasks.
52. Leadership roles, including working as prefects, are available for older pupils to contribute to a cohesive school community. They require applications, and interviews take place, so pupils gain experience in a process which prepares them for the next stage of their education. Older pupils are appraised of their effectiveness in carrying out these roles.
53. Pupils are pleased to note when their suggestions lead to a change in provision, such as a recent modification to the uniform rules for Year 11. Leaders require pupils whose suggestions have a cost to fill in forms so that they understand the financial aspect of the proposed change. Pupils in Year 6 plan their own leaving party and develop their awareness of what it means to get value for money. Pupils develop their knowledge of the rule of law. Visits by the police help their understanding of incidents such as speeding, with pupils experiencing the use of a speed gun to complement their discussion of the consequences of a motoring offence. Lessons in physical education also emphasise the role of following rules and how this links to the respect embodied in sportsmanship. Pupils studying sociology discuss the context and consequences when something is deemed illegal and

develop an appreciation of how attitudes and laws change over time. Pupils have a good understanding of democracy owing to effective teaching within the PSHE programme, complemented by a trip to Parliament and visits from a local member of Parliament. Pupils in the Junior School work on comprehension exercises about national institutions. Democracy is modelled across the school when pupils take part in mock elections, and in the use of surveys and forms for feedback to teachers on a range of issues.

54. Pupils can distinguish right from wrong. This is helped by lessons in the PSHE education programme that involve scenarios in which pupils adopt the perspective of people who have moral dilemmas to resolve.

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

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

Safeguarding

56. Staff training for safeguarding is rigorous and updated to respond to changes in statutory guidance. Staff are confident in knowing how to respond to a concern and whom they should contact. Staff in the early years know the importance of reporting marked differences in a child's behaviour such as might be observed during play. Should there be a concern about a pupil, action is taken quickly in response. Staff know the importance of raising a low-level concern about an adult and understand the necessary procedures should they need to raise a concern which meets the harm threshold.
57. A clear and appropriate safeguarding policy is in place which is revised annually and reviewed by the proprietor in response to statutory guidance. The proprietor has the experience to exercise effective oversight of safeguarding and has completed higher level safeguarding training.
58. Advanced level training is in place for staff who have leadership roles in safeguarding, enabling them to understand contextual factors and take a broad perspective on the safeguarding of pupils at the school. Safeguarding concerns are on the agenda for weekly staff briefings so that staff are kept informed frequently and appropriately.
59. Leaders of safeguarding work effectively with external agencies including local authority designated officers for several London boroughs. They understand thresholds and take advice as needed.
60. Pupils know who to contact if they have a concern. They are aware of the range of staff available for support, including their tutors and the safeguarding team. Pupils know the structures to report concerns anonymously or privately, including use of an online email address, and they use these methods with confidence.
61. Lessons in computing and PSHE help pupils to know how to navigate the digital world and manage their digital footprint appropriately. Pupils can explain effective strategies for online safety. The school's arrangements for filtering and monitoring are rigorous. Leaders receive alerts should anyone attempt to access inappropriate material. The system is subject to frequent testing with results discussed in weekly meetings by specialist staff.
62. Record keeping for safeguarding is effective and meets statutory guidance. Detailed timelines are clearly noted and any trends identified. An online system collects all documents pertaining to an incident effectively. Records indicate prompt responses to any concerns raised.
63. The management of attendance reflects recent changes to guidance and has been shared with parents. Staff explore the reasons for any sustained absence and contact the local authority as required.
64. A single central record of recruitment checks is kept effectively. All necessary checks, including verified references, are completed before a member of staff begins work at the school.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Normanhurst School
Department for Education number	320/6059
Address	Normanhurst School 68-74 Station Road North Chingford London E4 7BA
Phone number	020 8529 4307
Email address	info@normanhurstschool.co.uk
Website	www.normanhurstschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Oak-Tree Schools Holdings Ltd
Chair	Mr Matthew Hagger
Headteacher	Mrs Jacqueline Job
Age range	2 to 16
Number of pupils	249
Date of previous inspection	22 to 24 and 28 to 29 March 2022

Information about the school

66. Normanhurst School is an independent co-educational day school located in Chingford in north London. The school consists of a junior school, which includes early years, for pupils up to age 11 and a senior school for pupils aged from 11 to 16. In 1996 it became one of four schools which make up the Oak-Tree Group of Schools. This group is family owned, and one member of the family undertakes the role of proprietor as the chair of governors. Since the previous inspection two new assistant headteachers have been appointed in the senior school with responsibility for pupils' mental health, and teaching and learning. A new headteacher of the junior school took up her post in September 2023.
67. There are 24 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in two Nursery classes and one Reception class.
68. The school has identified 36 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
69. The school has identified that no pupils speak English as an additional language.
70. The school states its aims are: to be a secure and safe community in which each pupil can achieve academically and personally; to help children develop a clear sense of right from wrong and take responsibility for their own actions; to develop the skills and attributes children need to face the future with confidence; and to nurture a sense of family in which there is care and respect amongst pupils, parents and staff.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

25 to 27 March 2025

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

72. 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, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

73. 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