

School inspection report

30 January to 1 February 2024

Duke of Kent School

Peaslake Road

Ewhurst

Surrey

GU6 7NS

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. Governors and leaders are self-reflective and build a school community which values respect and kindness. Risk management and self-evaluation processes are well developed, and regulatory requirements are met. Governors monitor leaders' work rigorously, whilst also providing them with appropriate challenge and support.
2. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding and skills across a broad range of subjects. The curriculum is delivered successfully throughout the school and pupils make good progress and attain well from the early years onwards.
3. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive appropriate support. Pupils' needs are quickly identified, and the curriculum is appropriately adapted to meet the needs of pupils.
4. Staff maintain positive relationships with pupils. Most staff implement the school's behaviour policy and as a result, pupils generally behave well, work hard, and show interest in their learning. However, a few staff do not consistently implement the behaviour policy which leads to occasional low level off-task behaviour.
5. Pupils feel safe and well cared for in the school. Pupils are given the support and encouragement they need to become independent thinkers and learners.
6. Pupils' personal development is supported through an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities and through the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. The careers programme is comprehensive and prepares pupils for their next steps in education. Pupils receive appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE) and supportive guidance in this area.
7. The ethos of the school encourages pupils to make connections with the wider community, both locally and internationally. Pupils enjoy a range of trips such as engaging with local farms, historical sites associated with British history as well as international travel and charity work.
8. Safeguarding is a high priority for governors, leaders and staff. Leaders work with external agencies when necessary to safeguard pupils. Staff respond quickly and appropriately to safeguarding situations and report any concerns promptly in line with statutory guidance and school policy. Pupils feel safe at school and know how to keep themselves safe 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 step

Leaders should:

- Review behaviour management procedures and ensure that the behaviour policy is implemented consistently by all staff throughout the school in order to eliminate the small amount of low-level disruptive behaviour that occurs from time to time.

Material change request

- Inspectors considered the school's request for a change to the details of its registration to include increasing its capacity from 350 to 360 pupils.
- The school has prepared a thorough risk assessment which carefully considers the impact of the increased numbers of pupils. The quality of education will be maintained, and staffing will be closely monitored and adjusted if necessary. In terms of health and safety, appropriate steps have been taken to minimise the impact of on-site traffic movement. Suitable toilet and changing facilities are already in place. The dining hall, medical room and other facilities are sufficient for increased pupil numbers.
- It is recommended that the requested material change be approved.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

1. Governors are fully involved in writing and monitoring the school's development plan. They regularly review policies with leaders to ensure that all policies reflect regulatory requirements. Governors committees work effectively to quality assure all aspects of the school's provision. Governors know the school well and regularly visit the school to offer support to leaders. Governors ensure that leaders and managers have appropriate skills and knowledge, so they fulfil their responsibilities effectively and consistently.
2. The wellbeing manager works effectively with staff to raise awareness of wellbeing, through initiatives such as mental health awareness week and through sharing weekly information about wellbeing in the school bulletin.
3. Leaders are fully aware of the school's strengths and the areas which could be improved further. Leaders seek and welcome the opinions of parents, pupils and staff and use this information to inform their development planning.
4. Leaders are ambitious for pupils throughout the school. The school ethos is one which encourages pupils to work hard and to enjoy school life. Teaching and learning are combined with effective pastoral care which supports pupils to make good progress. Teaching staff and teaching assistants are appropriately deployed to support pupils who have SEND.
5. Leaders use data to carefully monitor the progress of each pupil and ensure departments incorporate data into their planning to promote the confidence and wellbeing of pupils.
6. Throughout the school, leaders promote the values of kindness and respect through assemblies, the curriculum, and the support they provide to pupils. Pupils are encouraged to promote these values through their own behaviour and opportunities for leadership.
7. Governors and leaders quality assure school provision including the accessibility plan, to ensure that the school meets the requirements of the Equality Act. Staff make suitable adjustments to pastoral and academic provision which supports all pupils to access the curriculum and to feel valued as members of the school community.
8. The school complaints policy is published on the school website and leaders respond to any complaints promptly and effectively. Leaders and staff are accessible to parents to ensure the prompt resolution of any concerns. Detailed records are maintained, which allow leaders to detect any trends and to make changes to practice when needed.
9. Parents receive regular reports on pupil progress and attainment. All required information can be found on the school website or by request from the school office.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

10. The curriculum is carefully planned and offers a wide and varied range of subjects and activities, including specialisms such as the London academy of music and dramatic art (LAMDA) qualifications. Leaders regularly review the curriculum and amend it to offer to meet the needs of pupils. For example, Business studies GCSE is planned to be on the curriculum offer in the next academic year. Spanish and French are both taught to Year 9, and pupils take the Foundation Certificate of Secondary Education (FCSE) in both languages. There are several concerts and performances during the year and the house music festival includes all pupils.
11. Teaching is planned with care and schemes of work are detailed and well structured. Teachers adapt these plans to meet the needs of individual pupils. Teachers ensure pupils feel well supported and balance this with making sure they are challenged appropriately. Teachers know pupils well and understand their needs. Strong links between teaching, learning, safeguarding, SEND and wellbeing teams mean pupils feel valued and supported to be able to learn effectively.
12. Teachers provide pupils with useful feedback that helps them to improve their work. The school ethos encourages pupils to have a 'growth mindset'. Teachers explain to pupils how to assess their own work, and learn from their mistakes. This helps pupils to take responsibility for their learning. Leaders use assessment information skilfully to track the progress pupils make. Progress tests are taken at the end of every year and track pupils effectively. The scores and target grades from assessments are used as part of whole school tracking together with subject results, matched against GCSE grades. This close review of data supports pupils to make good progress with pupils achieving an average of one grade above their expected grade at GCSE. Teachers give pupils challenging but appropriate targets and motivate pupils to achieve and exceed these targets.
13. Teachers continually review pupil data in their subject and use this information to adjust their lessons so that they meet pupils' individual needs. Teachers also use assessment information as a starting point for discussions with colleagues about the most effective strategies to support pupils.
14. Pupils who have SEND are identified at the earliest opportunity. Staff implement effective strategies and make adaptations throughout the school, so that pupils' needs are met consistently. There is early intervention in the lower years, with staff providing a graduated approach to support. This helps pupils to build independence and readiness for their next steps in education. The effective learning development team encourage and support pupils who have SEND and speak English as an additional language. Pupils readily approach staff with confidence if they need additional support. This helps pupils who have SEND and who speak EAL to make good progress from their individual starting points.
15. Children in the early years have an appropriately engaging curriculum covering the required areas of learning. Children's learning is carefully tracked, and additional support is provided when needed to support children to make good progress during their time in the early years.
16. Teaching in the pre-prep classes is engaging, with interesting topics supported by themed days and visits out. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to new topics, making links between their learning and the school values.

17. Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as Duke of Edinburgh's Award, choir, swimming and dance. Many extra-curricular activities take place in dedicated and well-resourced school facilities which support pupils' personal, emotional and physical development.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

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

18. Pupils' wellbeing is a high priority for governors and school leaders. Mental wellbeing and self-esteem are fostered by the school ethos and the strong relationships pupils have with their teachers who know them well.
19. Spiritual and moral understanding permeate different aspects of the school curriculum. Pupils engage with different faiths and visit places of worship. In art, following a visit to an art gallery, pupils are able to reflect on the non-material aspects of life. In English, pupils study the writers' language which enables them to understand the emotions and abstract thought behind the text. Reading, imaginative writing, performing, role-play and discussion develop pupils' awareness of the non-material, spiritual world whilst encouraging self-confidence and self-belief.
20. Leaders ensure that the PSHE and relationships and sex education curriculum is appropriate and meets the needs of pupils. Pupils find these sessions helpful and welcome the opportunity to make suggestions about the topics to be discussed. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and diet. The PSHE curriculum follows a programme of life skills, health and wellbeing, relationships and preparation for living in the wider world. Pupils understand the importance of looking after their own wellbeing, as well as supporting the needs of the others. Pupils value the support provided by the wellbeing manager and form tutors.
21. Leaders actively promote good behaviour and the behaviour policy is well understood by staff and pupils. Pupils are courteous and confident because leaders establish a climate of trust and support.
22. Leaders deploy staff appropriately so that pupils across the school, including the youngest pupils in the early years are effectively supervised. Behaviour incidents are usually dealt with effectively. However, some staff do not implement the behaviour policy consistently and where this is the case, some pupils engage in off-task behaviour and low-level disruption of learning occurs.
23. All reports of unkind behaviour or bullying are taken seriously by leaders and acted upon immediately in line with school policy. Pupils understand how to challenge and report behaviour incidents and trust that responsible adults will take effective action.
24. Pupils' physical health is promoted through an appropriate programme of sport and exercise. Pupils understand how such activities contribute to their own self-confidence and wellbeing. In the early years, physical development is supported through a programme designed to develop fine and gross motor activities. Children in the early years have regular access to the outdoors, such as swimming, 'junior jungle' and the woodland.
25. Pupils share their views happily and feel that doing so is an important part of school culture. For example, in English, pupils explore different scenarios where they are able to support their viewpoints about sustainability effectively. For example, pupils write letters to school leaders expressing their concern about the potential environmental impact of a building project. The letters reflect pupils' understanding that their views are valued by leaders and that they have a responsibility to look after their school and the environment.

26. Effective risk assessments cover all the main areas of the school and daily safety checks are in place to support pupil safety. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and leaders ensure that suitable mitigations are in place to minimise areas of high risk, such as movement of vehicles on site.
27. Qualified nurses manage an effective medical centre which meets pupils' needs, ensuring first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by trained staff. All staff in the early years and pre-prep are paediatric first-aid trained. They are supported well by the nurses, who respond to medical needs and administer medication when required.
28. The school's buildings and grounds are well maintained, and classrooms are bright and colourful. Leaders ensure that relevant health and safety legislation is met, including fire safety. Fire drills are held termly.
29. Leaders ensure the school's admission and attendance register is well maintained. The local authority is informed when pupils arrive or leave the school at non-standard transition points.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

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

30. Pupils are given many opportunities to serve their local community and to engage with the wider world. Pupils engage with the local community through projects such as their choir and sustainability work with a local trust. Pupils value their local surroundings; the nursery regularly visits a nearby farm to gain insight into ecology, the environment, where food is grown and reared, and how it becomes local produce. Leaders encourage pupils to 'log out, log in' which involves pupils stepping away from screen time to do other things, for example, to build habitats for local wildlife. Pupils take part in a national garden birdwatching scheme which encourages them to notice and appreciate nature in their local environment.
31. Leaders promote the importance of sustainability and encourage pupils to develop links with the international world where they learn how to steward resources responsibly. Pupils have opportunities to travel internationally where they engage with the local culture and learn about community projects.
32. The school's values, such as kindness and respect, are 'front and centre' and permeate all aspects of school life. For example, pupils create artwork celebrating inclusivity, diversity and togetherness. Assemblies are used to focus on the need to treat others with respect and, as a result, pupils are inclusive and respectful of all groups of people. Pupils enjoy being wellbeing prefects and value their diversity forum.
33. Staff regularly take groups of pupils to the Houses of Parliament and other important British institutions, which is at the heart of the school identity as a former Royal Air Force (RAF) school. Pupils learn about democracy through the opportunities offered by the school to vote, for example, for their preferred charity for fundraising or for the democratically elected school council. Pupils learn to listen to and value other people's opinions through, for example, debating and collaborating during lessons. These opportunities support pupils to learn how to compromise and how to express their opinions clearly.
34. Leaders provide an effective careers programme that meets the needs of pupils. Pupils receive helpful guidance on subject choices, and possible schools and colleges during transition points. An established speaker programme informs pupils about a wide range of careers. Older pupils benefit from interview practice with external professionals as well as a series of workshops designed to improve their teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving skills. An online programme is used effectively from Year 7 upwards to help guide pupils to potential future careers in an unbiased and balanced manner.
35. Pupils are given a range of ways to express their views and concerns, including online. Improvements and changes are made as a direct result of feedback from pupils. For example, the pupil council plans for a new playground for the Prep School which includes a new trail. The pupil-led charity committee gathers pupil feedback and decides on the projects pupils will support in the year ahead. Mixed-age mentoring, where older pupils support younger pupils, is effective at helping pupils to develop responsibility and social conscience.
36. Pupils learn about personal economic management and sustainability in PSHE lessons. This helps pupils to think about their own future development. For example, pupils carry out independent

research on designing an eco-home, highlighting issues about measures to combat excessive energy use, climate change and the cost of living. Staff support Reception pupils to develop their economic awareness through a planned opportunities in the curriculum. For example, pupils design a café, creating their own menu, pricing each item and learn how to manage money.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

37. Leaders and governors undertake regular training in safeguarding and safer recruitment practices in line with statutory guidance. Governors regularly check and quality assure recruitment processes and ensure that all employment checks are carried out.
38. The safeguarding policy, which is published on the school's website is reviewed annually and meets current statutory guidance and requirements.
39. The school's safeguarding team comprises the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), deputy safeguarding leads, medical staff, the school counsellor, and the wellbeing manager. The team provides both support and supervision for those working in safeguarding, whilst also ensuring safeguarding information is shared appropriately. Records are maintained with care and monitored regularly. Those with designated safeguarding responsibilities are all well trained for their roles. When the need arises, they seek advice and guidance from external agencies and safeguarding partnerships.
40. On arrival at the school all staff receive effective safeguarding training. This is followed by termly training and regular updates. Staff have a confident understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They know how to detect signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm and report any concerns promptly when they arise.
41. Pupils always have a teacher that they can talk to, and this helps them to feel safe at school. Staff take pupil concerns seriously and take swift and appropriate action when necessary.
42. Pupils receive appropriate online e-safety guidance through both the PSHE and the computing programmes of study. Filtering and monitoring systems are effective, helping pupils to stay safe when using online technology.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Duke of Kent School
Department for Education number	936/6036
Registered charity number	1064183
Address	Duke of Kent School Peaslake Road Ewhurst Surrey GU6 7NS
Phone number	01483 277313
Email address	office@dokschool.org
Website	www.dukeofkentschool.org.uk
Proprietor	Governors of Duke of Kent School
Chair	Mr Richard Brocksom
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Knox
Age range	3 to 16
Number of pupils	341
Date of previous inspection	20 to 21 November 2019

Information about the school

43. Duke of Kent School is an independent co-educational day school in Ewhurst, Surrey. The school caters for pupils aged between three and 16 years. The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. The school was founded in 1976 by the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund and was formed by merging Vanbrugh Castle School with Woolpit School.
44. There are 31 children in the early years comprising one Nursery and one Reception class.
45. The school has identified 66 pupils who have SEND. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
46. English is an additional language for two pupils.
47. The school states its aims are to build a community in which kindness and respect are central to all they do; to provide pupils with exceptional pastoral care and to provide opportunities for personal, physical, social, cultural and moral development; to equip pupils to be independent thinkers and learners throughout their lives; to maintain and develop links, with their own parent community and with the wider local and international world; to steward resources responsibly; maintain and develop business stability.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

30 January to 1 February 2024

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

49. 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.

50. 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

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