

School inspection report

28 to 30 November 2023

Box Hill school

London Road

Mickleham

Dorking

Surrey

RH5 6EA

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. The school is a vibrant and diverse community which celebrates internationalism. Leaders promote the *IDEALS* of the *Round Square* philosophy of Kurt Hahn which are internationalism, democracy, environmental concern, adventure, leadership, and service. School leaders and governors are ambitious to develop the character of the individual. As a result, pupils are provided with an array of opportunities which they choose from to challenge themselves.
2. School leaders have developed a curriculum which is broad and inclusive, balancing academic, practical, and creative subjects. Pupils respond well to this balance and consequently demonstrate independence and drive in their work. Subject leaders challenge more able pupils with aspirational targets, and teachers provide effective feedback. However, tracking pupil progress using baseline data is not consistent across the whole curriculum.
3. Teachers are passionate about their subjects. This motivates pupils to explore topics in greater depth to develop their knowledge and understanding. Well-planned lessons mean that pupils with differing needs, for example, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or English as an additional language (EAL), engage positively in the activities. As a result, pupils are well-motivated, self-aware and active in their learning.
4. Leaders provide pupils with many opportunities to compete in sport, to perform on stage, and to advance music and design skills. As result, pupils develop physical, creative and communication skills as well as their confidence and resilience.
5. Leaders in boarding, with the support and oversight of governors, manage the boarding houses well. Boarders receive a thorough induction to the school and therefore settle quickly into their routines and show respect for each other. Arrangements for boarding are secure, and boarders are proud to be a central part of the school community.
6. Leaders and governors meet regularly to consider risk. Leaders assess risk appropriately and then take mitigating action accordingly in response to risks to pupils that are identified, for example in relation to the school site and to trips and visits.
7. Strategies to promote good behaviour and prevent bullying are not always successful. Supervision of communal areas is not always effective and consequently poor behaviour sometimes goes unchecked, which has a negative impact on pupils. School leaders do not keep accurate and centralised records of behavioural incidents and this limits their understanding of the overall extent and patterns of such behaviours across the school.
8. Leaders demonstrate a diligent approach to safer recruitment and they carry out annual safeguarding audits. Their policy relating to safeguarding arrangements is implemented consistently.
9. Leaders create many opportunities to broaden pupils' experiences by engaging with a number of local and international initiatives. This has a positive impact on pupils' confidence and communication skills.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance, are not 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 not met consistently.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Areas for action

- Those with leadership and management responsibilities must demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently, and they must actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.
- School leaders and managers must ensure there is a consistent and effective approach to identifying, recording and managing poor behaviour and to the prevention of bullying among pupils.
- School leaders and managers must ensure that the supervision of pupils, especially outside lesson times, is appropriate and vigilant.

Recommended next steps

- Leaders and managers should make more analytical use of data in order to improve pupils' progress and attainment.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders, governors and managers possess good skills and knowledge and use appropriate tools, such as self-evaluation, actively to promote pupil wellbeing. Policies are thorough and in most cases they are effectively implemented.
11. Leaders deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. As a result, pupils develop academic skills, knowledge and learning strategies, as well as self-confidence, individuality, and cultural understanding. Through a carefully planned careers programme, pupils consider their future options, and they explore possibilities for service in their local communities and beyond.
12. Under the direction of leaders, boarding, which plays a central role in the life of the school, is well managed and led by experienced, well-trained practitioners. As a result pupils enjoy their boarding experience, and they feel safe in the care of their house parents. Boarding arrangements reflect thoughtful planning, consideration of individual pupil needs, and an emphasis on pupil wellbeing.
13. Leaders understand and implement effectively risk identification, management and mitigation. However, systems to identify, monitor and prevent poor pupil behaviour and bullying are not always effective. Some pupils exhibit unacceptable and harmful behaviour towards others and school leaders are not always aware of such incidents. Supervision of pupils' behaviour is inconsistent. Leaders are aware of this and have begun to implement strategies to ensure that poor pupil behaviour does not go unchecked.
14. Leaders and governors have oversight of safeguarding matters and there is a dedicated governing board member who provide support and guidance. The single central register is well managed and accurate, and leaders have a diligent approach to safer recruitment. Staff are trained appropriately in safeguarding, and there are suitable filtering and monitoring systems in place to protect pupils online.
15. Since the previous inspection, leaders have prioritised independent learning and challenge for more able pupils. Pupils enjoy the extra responsibility they have for their own learning and make secure progress as a result. Leaders and governors have a clear and ambitious vision of the school's future academic development and direction, based on comprehensive and thoughtful self-evaluation. Leaders publish key school-related information and academic performance reports and make these available as required.
16. The complaints policy is on the school's website, and any complaints the school receives are responded to appropriately and in a timely way. Leaders demonstrate a secure knowledge of different formal stages and these are implemented appropriately.
17. A suitable accessibility plan is in place, and risk assessments for premises and school trips are thorough and contextualised.

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

18. Standards are not met consistently with respect to the management of pupils' behaviour, the supervision of pupils, and the implementation of the anti-bullying policy.
19. As a result Standards relating to governance, leadership and management are not met consistently.
- 20. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included at the end of the report.**

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. Leaders have designed a broad and varied curriculum that includes the curriculums for GCSE, A level and the International Baccalaureate (IB). There is an extensive International Study Centre course for overseas pupils to prepare them for sixth form. As a result, pupils have a number of academic pathways to choose from. Subject leaders implement the curriculum effectively and consequently pupils demonstrate critical thinking skills and develop discipline in their work.
22. Schemes of work incorporate the *IDEALS* of the Round Square and teachers set clear targets for pupils in subject areas. Leaders value the development of communication skills, and many lessons offer opportunities to improve oracy, listening, writing and reading skills. For example, in an IB English lesson, challenging questioning was used to instigate a detailed discussion of the text 'Sesame and Lillies' by John Ruskin exploring self-development. Pupils demonstrated depth of understanding in their contributions to this. Boarders receive support during their homework sessions which they find useful.
23. Many pupils attain well and outcomes at GSCE, A level and IB are broadly in line with national expectations. However, levels of progress are not consistently good for pupils across all subject areas. While a framework is in place to monitor pupil outcomes, leaders and managers do not consistently analyse data to evaluate progress and identify pupil need. As a result, additional support to further pupils' learning is not always provided.
24. Academic leaders oversee the delivery of well-planned lessons, and most pupils engage enthusiastically with topic themes. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and effectively encourage pupils to become more independent in their learning. As a result, pupils are confident when approaching assessments. Boarders find this approach very supportive. Teachers generally use effective strategies to manage pupil behaviour in lessons, although there can be disruption in class that hinders pupils' learning.
25. The learning support department provides an effective framework to promote pupils' fulfilment of their potential. This is reflected in the positive outcomes for pupils who have SEND in national assessments. SEND leaders carefully consider and respond to pupils' individual aptitudes and needs, and detailed support plans are regularly reviewed and monitored. As a result, pupils with SEND make good progress and are highly motivated to learn. Pupils with EAL also make good progress due to the effective and bespoke support that leaders put in place.
26. Many pupils display well-developed communication skills, and they are not afraid to take risks in their learning. Teachers evaluate work and give regular oral and written feedback, so pupils develop skills as reflective learners. In some lessons, pupils consider their feedback on a piece of work and are then encouraged to write their own analytical response to this feedback.
27. Creative subjects like music, drama, art and fashion and textiles provide pupils with different platforms where they can express themselves and take their learning beyond the classroom. Opportunities to perform are extensive, and they contribute to pupils' academic and personal development.

28. There is an inclusive and adventurous co-curricular programme, and leaders have set time aside in the school day for pupils to broaden the range of activities in which they participate. Pupils enjoy the freedom of choice they are given to take part in activities such as debating club, the green team, and writers' collective club. Numerous trips are arranged to enrich pupils' learning, including overseas excursions. There are additional activities in the evening that boarders may choose from if they wish.

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. Leaders and governors have developed strategies to support pupils' mental and emotional wellbeing and there are processes in place to identify concerns. As a result, pupils are clear on how to access help if needed. Pupils value the good relationships that they have with staff, both academically and pastorally.
31. Staff, including those in boarding, are trained on mental health and wellbeing, and the school works closely with a local foundation to provide extra support for pupils who need this. Boarders feel safe in their houses and are well cared for by house parents.
32. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum is relevant and adaptable and staff are suitably trained in its delivery. The programme takes into account the age, cultural backgrounds and needs of all pupils, reflecting the aims of the school to promote global citizenship and mutual respect. In focused assemblies at the end of each week, pupils develop their understanding of key social issues.
33. Leaders recognise the importance of educating pupils about the protected characteristics, and they adopt a variety of strategies to achieve this. These include hosting visiting speakers and an extensive programme of assemblies and discussion groups. However, while the protected characteristics are understood by pupils, on some occasions pupil behaviour does not show respect for them.
34. Leaders consult and collaborate with parents on the delivery of relationships and sex education lessons. Themes embedded in the programme include equality, diversity, and inclusion. This develops pupils' understanding of the importance of respect. Suitable class discussions facilitate the exploration of different views in order to develop understanding. An example of this was seen in a Year 12 PSHE lesson in which gender and race stereotypes were considered by pupils.
35. Leaders are ambitious in developing the physical health of each pupil. As a result pupils engage positively in activities such as mountain biking and walking. They also compete in fixtures against other schools in many sports including hockey, cross country, netball, and football, and they develop high levels of physical fitness.
36. Leaders do not ensure that policies to promote good behaviour and prevent bullying are consistently effectively implemented. Behaviour in the school is sometimes poor, and incidents are not always effectively dealt with. Supervision is not always effective and sanctions imposed do not always have the positive impact intended. Records of behaviour and bullying incidents do not allow for patterns and trends to be easily identified. Leaders have identified this issue and have begun work to improve the management and recording of behaviour and bullying, but this is at an early stage.
37. Induction for boarders is comprehensive and contextualised for the pupil body in the school. Induction content includes consideration of cultural differences and British values. There is a varied activity programme for boarders at the weekend and frequent cultural trips are arranged to broaden their experiences. Boarders enjoy the responsibilities they are given by their house staff. Leaders provide pupils, including boarders, with ways to raise concerns, including through an active student

council. For example, when pupils questioned the quality of food provision, leaders considered the views raised and acted appropriately in response.

38. Health and safety policies are drawn up and implemented effectively. Precautions are taken to reduce the risk of fire and there is systematic checking of fire equipment. External providers carry out regular risk assessments. All staff receive regular first aid training, and the attendance and admissions registers are properly maintained. Leaders, managers and governors take a diligent approach to matters of site security.

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

39. Standards are not met consistently with respect to management of pupil behaviour, implementation of the anti-bullying policy, and supervision of pupils.
40. As a result standards relating to behaviour, bullying and supervision are not met consistently.
- 41. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included at the end of the report.**

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

42. The curriculum promotes pupils' social and economic understanding. Pupils contribute to society through charity work, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, and debating club, in which sustainability and long-term environmental issues are considered and then acted upon. Through these activities, pupils gain an understanding of the importance of engaging with local and national communities.
43. Leaders conduct an annual review of schemes of work. They monitor lessons for coverage of internationalism, as well as values such as democracy, the rule of law, equality, diversity and inclusion. Pupils are accepting of others around them and celebrate each other's liberty, faiths, and beliefs.
44. The careers programme spans all age groups. Pupils find the careers advice they have received helpful. This includes dedicated sessions in school, university trips, visiting speakers, UCAS advice and a careers week. Year 9 take part in a GCSE options event which allows them to consider their future employment.
45. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to engage with the world beyond school through service, and to develop their understanding of current issues. These include assisting in the local church, and setting up a village food bank. Pupils can also work during holidays at a sister school in South Africa. Pupils participate in Model United Nations, developing their understanding of global politics and their ability to articulate their ideas.
46. Pupils contribute positively to the school community in a number of ways. For example, sixth-form prefects guide younger pupils on their journey through the school. Prefects also work within the student council and older pupils support young readers once a week. Pupils learn about national institutions through PSHE and history, which strengthens their understanding of how they can contribute positively to society.
47. Pupils develop their understanding of the difference between right and wrong through, for example, the PSHE curriculum and when staff intervene effectively in pastoral matters. However, pupils do not always exhibit respectful behaviour during their interactions with each other. Leaders deliver assemblies on inclusion and respect, and organise workshops on topics such as gender stereotyping.
48. Pupils make their views known through the school council and leaders commission surveys to understand more about how pupils believe the school could be improved. Some pupils state that staff do not always listen to their thoughts or comments, including in relation to pupils' behaviour. As a result, some pupils do not feel confident that improvements will be made.
49. Leaders encourage pupils to form their own opinions and be respectful of others' viewpoints. As a result pupils communicate their thoughts with confidence and most show good social skills, expressing their views in an articulate way. They understand how they can contribute positively to society and develop skills to enable them to do so.

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

50. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

51. Training for the designated safeguarding lead and deputies is carried out effectively and staff responsible for leading safeguarding have a suitable amount of time to perform their duties.
52. Leaders seek advice and liaise appropriately with external agencies to support pupils. The school has a new, effective recording system for all safeguarding concerns and safeguarding leaders make appropriate contact with the local authority safeguarding team.
53. Leaders contextualise the school's safeguarding and associated policies and these reflect the most recent guidance. Staff are effectively trained in safeguarding at induction and in regular updates, and understand the risks of extremism and radicalisation.
54. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and suitable internet filtering and monitoring systems are in place to protect them. Leaders have a sound understanding of thresholds for child-on-child abuse and staff understand the role they play in preventing it and responding if they believe that a child is at risk from it.
55. Pupils feel safe in school.
56. Leaders take a diligent approach to completing safer recruitment checks on all staff, governors and volunteers and this is effectively overseen by a member of the governing body, as well as by the headteacher.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

Schedule of unmet Standards

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

The relevant Standards are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34(1)	The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school – (a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently (b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and (c) actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

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

The relevant Standards are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 9 (behaviour)	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that – (a) written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils' misbehaviour (b) the policy is implemented effectively; and (c) record is kept of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour.
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 10 (bullying)	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14 (supervision)	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through appropriate deployment of school staff.

NMS 15.1	<p>The school has and consistently implements a written policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils, including boarders. The school's approach to behaviour is easily apparent to anyone joining or visiting the school and is evident in the actions and messages from all staff and pupils, including boarders. The school behaviour policy includes detail on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the underlying objective to create a safe environment in which all pupils, including boarders, can learn and reach their full potential and to reflect the values and ethos of the school the role of designated staff in maintaining consistent behaviour expectations, including the responsibilities of school leaders, any resources allocated, and the involvement of governors or trustees
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the behaviour expected of pupils (including boarders), including treating others with dignity, kindness and respect, and the measures to promote positive behaviour, including positive reinforcement and reward and consequence systems • how the needs of all pupils, including boarders, and staff are met so members of the school community feel safe knowing that bullying, physical threats or abuse are not tolerated, and that they belong • school systems and social norms, including rules, routines and consequences systems for pupils, including boarders' behaviour when in the charge of the school and including when outside of the school premises and online • pupil (including boarder) support, including the roles and responsibilities of designated staff and the support provided to pupils with additional needs where those needs might affect behaviour • measures to prevent child-on-child abuse and the response to incidents of such abuse, including disciplinary action • when restraint, including reasonable force, is to be used and other physical contact and how this will be managed; and arrangements for searching and screening children and their possessions and how this relates to safeguarding policies. Any search of boarders' personal belongings should be carried out in accordance with section 550ZA of the Education Act 1996 and with regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
15.2	The policy complies with relevant legislation and has regard to guidance, and is accessible, clear and easily understood by staff, pupils, parents and carers.
15.3	Senior leaders should monitor the use of restraint, take appropriate action to prevent the inappropriate use of restraint, and take effective action when inappropriate restraint has been used.
15.4	The headteacher should consider whether members of staff require any additional training and support to enable them to de-escalate potential confrontations between pupils, or potentially violent behaviour, to minimise the need for restraint.
NMS 16.1	The school ensures that all forms of bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory), at the school, are prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of a proactive and effective antibullying strategy. The strategy should include accessible and effective systems for children to report bullying.
16.2	Any instances of bullying are dealt with effectively. Staff take steps to help pupils to overcome the impact of bullying. All school staff are trained to recognise bullying and know who to go to, if required, in order to ensure bullying is dealt with.
16.3	The school's anti-bullying strategy should reflect that unlike at day schools, boarders who are being bullied (offline) cannot escape their

	bullies for long periods of time as they are not going home as often.
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School details

School	Box Hill school
Department for Education number	936/6259
Registered charity number	312082
Address	Box Hill school London Road Mickleham Surrey RH5 6EA
Phone number	01372 373382
Email address	hmpa@boxhillschool.com
Website	boxhillschool.com
Proprietor	Box Hill school Trust
Chair	Mr Trevor Johnson
Headteacher	Mr Corydon Lowde
Age range	11–18
Number of pupils	403
Number of boarding pupils	111
Date of previous inspection	30 April to 2 May 2019

Information about the school

58. Box Hill School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school for pupils situated in Surrey. It is a charitable trust with a board of governors. Founded in 1958, the school was a founding member of the Round Square, an organisation devoted to the educational philosophy of Kurt Hahn. It comprises a senior department and sixth form. The school has an international study centre which supports overseas pupils in readiness for sixth form. Since the last inspection the school has been accredited with HMC status, and they have restructured their leadership team.
59. There are six boarding houses at the school, three for male pupils and three for female pupils.
60. The school has identified 143 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
61. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
62. English is an additional language for 149 pupils.
63. The school states its aims are to create successful lifelong learners who will positively impact the world around them through the *IDEALS* of internationalism, democracy, environmentalism, adventure, leadership, and service. The school aims to develop self-confidence and well-being by providing a broad range of experiences in academic, creative, sporting and pastoral areas.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

28 to 30 November 2023

64. A team of 5 inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

65. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair of 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
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

66. 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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For more information, please visit isi.net