

School inspection report

8 to 10 May 2024

Park Hill School

8 Queen's Road
Kingston-Upon-Thames
Surrey
KT2 7SH

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. Park Hill School has the welfare of its pupils at the core of its mission. Leaders promote and model the school's values of compassion and inclusivity which contributes towards a highly positive learning environment for pupils.
2. Governors use their expertise to challenge and support leaders in their evaluation of pupils' educational experience and the formulation and execution of the school's comprehensive development plan. They gain detailed knowledge of the workings of the school through regular face-to-face meetings with pupils, staff and parents.
3. Leaders promote a detailed knowledge of individual pupils by staff. This creates a nurturing and safe environment which supports pupils to develop their self-esteem and sense of wellbeing. Pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing is effectively promoted by leaders and managers who support staff in responding promptly and effectively to causes for concern. Leaders actively promote understanding, tolerance and respect in the school community, through strategies such as their decision to promote a comprehensive awareness of neurodiversity amongst pupils, staff and parents.
4. Leaders maintain rigorous oversight of the delivery of the school's curriculum. Pupils have access to a broad range of learning experiences both in and out of the classroom. Governors fully support leaders' decision to invest significantly in the use of technology to support pupils' progress and outcomes. Teachers support pupils to learn well in the majority of lessons. However, a small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not as well supported as their peers in some lessons to access the activities.
5. Leaders and staff in the early years enable children to enjoy a high-quality learning environment. An atmosphere of purposeful learning and fun permeates the setting. Teachers' skilful questioning that builds on children's interests enables children to make good progress in developing their communication and language skills. They are well prepared to move into Year 1 by the end of their time in Reception.
6. Leaders oversee rigorous health and safety policies and processes. Procedures to safeguard the welfare of pupils are robust. Leaders and managers provide regular opportunities for pupils and parents to understand how to safeguard their children, including the potential pitfalls to be found online.
7. Leaders support pupils as they prepare for the next stage of their learning journey. Early years children regularly interact with older pupils whose consistently high standards of behaviour provide high quality role modelling for their younger peers. Older pupils benefit from the wide variety of opportunities to undertake positions of responsibility and through the meetings they have with secondary age pupils to gain an understanding of the transition to a bigger school environment.

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:

- extend the good quality provision and support found in many lessons for pupils who have SEND across all subjects.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders place the welfare of pupils at the centre of their decision making. The evaluation of school performance is thorough and supports appropriate strategic development objectives. Leaders are reflective and evaluative and listen attentively to the views of pupils as can be seen in their responsiveness to suggestions made by members of the pupils' school council and older pupils' 'student voice box'.
9. Governors have the appropriate knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities and they support leaders well. Governors gain a first-hand understanding of pupils' educational experience and the implementation of policies through regular visits to the school to meet with leaders, staff, pupils and parents. They ensure that leaders consistently meet the Standards.
10. Leaders actively promote the school's core aims and values which positively supports pupils' personal growth and achievements. Pupils work confidently with their peers in lessons, take turns, listen to each other, and play harmoniously at break and lunch times. Pupils are kind to each other, making sure that everyone is included in their learning, activities and play.
11. Pupils have access to an appropriate range of subjects and extra-curricular activities. Pupils' achievement is supported by teaching which allows them to successfully acquire knowledge and develop their skills and understanding. Pupils benefit from leaders' decision to invest significantly in the use of technology as a learning tool. Teachers plan lessons carefully to develop pupils' critical thinking and their ability to analyse and evaluate. Most teaching supports pupils with SEND to learn effectively. However, in some lessons, teaching does not ensure that pupils can access the activities to learn as well as their peers.
12. Leaders' implementation of an appropriate personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum means all the required topics are covered enabling pupils to gain a clear insight into the diversity to be found in modern society. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities to promote equality, diversity and inclusion for pupils. A suitable accessibility plan is in place to increase opportunities for pupils and adults to access the curriculum and physical environment.
13. Leaders ensure that children in the early years receive a good start to their education. Staff are knowledgeable about how young children learn and develop. They know children well and tailor learning to the needs of individuals. Children settle quickly and develop confidence in their learning. For example, children in the Nursery class were absorbed in researching how they could look after a robin they named Dave who had built a nest outside their classroom.
14. Leaders promote constructive relationships with parents which positively supports pupils' welfare and learning. Parents are regularly informed about the most up-to-date ways in which they can support their child to stay safe online. Information required by current or prospective parents is made available through the website. Concerns raised by parents and any complaints are recorded and managed appropriately and in line with the school's policy.
15. Leaders employ a systematic and rigorous approach to risk management, identifying hazards and the means with which to reduce risk. Risk assessments and strategies are monitored effectively by governors.

16. Oversight of safer recruitment processes is robust and a well-embedded safeguarding culture is in place. Leaders work in a timely and effective way with external agencies to support pupils, when required.
17. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

19. Leaders and managers devise comprehensive subject curriculums enabling pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy, linguistic and scientific skills. A notable emphasis is placed on developing pupils' creative and artistic talents.
20. Pupils benefit from a rich English and mathematics curriculum which includes many opportunities to read a range of fiction and non-fiction materials. Leaders have addressed the recommendation from the school's last inspection by improving the quality, opportunities and attainment in writing. The curriculum for mathematics provides pupils with challenge which supports rapid progress due to the effective use of resources, targeted questioning and regular reinforcement of mathematical concepts across different subjects.
21. The curriculum is enhanced by varied, interesting and relevant theme days and educational visits. High quality extra-curricular activities are available to pupils. For example, pupils from Reception to Year 4 talk excitedly about developing their art and French skills through clubs. In addition, pupils have many opportunities to enjoy outdoor learning through activities undertaken in a woodland setting and the school's adventurous living classes for pupils as they get older.
22. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use technology effectively in supporting pupils' understanding and progress. In most lessons, teachers build on what pupils have previously learnt and use this to plan their next steps in learning. Teachers ensure that pupils understand what they are learning and provide a range of activities to support pupils' learning.
23. Early years staff are well trained and knowledgeable. Children access resources that support their physical and learning needs, including the development of their motor skills. Children initiate and engage with activities, curious to learn more, including in the woodland school where they develop increasing independence. Teachers use assessment effectively to plan and adapt learning opportunities to enable children to make good progress and meet their developmental goals, including in their communication and language. Parents are kept regularly informed of children's development and are provided with helpful guidance as to how they can support their child's learning journey.
24. Most teachers tailor lessons to support pupils to learn effectively. For example, leaders have developed approaches to feedback in several subjects, including in English, mathematics and science. These are still being developed in other subject areas. If pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), there is support available through early interventions, easy access to translation tools, the use of visual cues and the scaffolding of work. Teachers ensure that appropriate additional support is put into place for pupils with SEND. However, a small number of pupils with SEND are not as well supported by teachers to access activities and their learning as well as their peers.
25. Leaders and managers use data effectively to track pupils' progress. Trends in attainment of individuals and groups are identified and appropriate interventions support pupils' good progress. Pupils achieve well. Many pupils gain places at secondary schools with selective entry requirements. Parents are kept up to date about their children's progress through regular reports.

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. Leaders place the emotional wellbeing and physical and mental health of pupils at the heart of decision making. Pupils are happy at school and thrive due to the respectful, caring relationships they enjoy. They find staff approachable and are confident that there are trusted adults they can turn to when required.
28. Leaders support pupils to build their levels of self-esteem and self-confidence. Pupils have many opportunities available to them to work with buddies. Year 5 pupils spoke joyfully about performing 'Hop Little Bunnies' with their Nursery peers in a performance assembly. Year 1 and 2 pupils interacted purposefully with their early years buddies when building houses for woodland creatures outdoors. Early years children proudly held the hands of their Year 6 buddies as they walked to an assembly in the local church.
29. Staff understand the importance of promoting pupils' emotional wellbeing. The needs of pupils who are anxious or upset are sensitively addressed. The school's comprehensive PSHE programme promotes an understanding of others' feelings and emotions. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about what contributes towards healthy friendships and they develop understanding and respect for the diversity of relationships in society.
30. Pupils' mental health is supported through the high-quality relationships that they have with staff. Initiatives such as a national programme rooted in neuroscience provide pupils with positive mental health strategies. The school's PSHE programme helps pupils of all ages learn about the importance of nurturing secure mental health. Staff know pupils' individual needs well. Pupils benefit from the culture of care that pervades the school.
31. Pupils enjoy participating in a range of sporting activities through the school's physical education programme. They understand the benefits to be gained from regular exercise and develop confidence and teamwork skills through opportunities to represent the school in fixtures and participation in Woodland School and adventurous living activities.
32. The physical development of children in the early years is supported through the inclusion of regular activities designed to develop fine and gross motor skills and the specialist physical education (PE) lessons they receive. For example, children make rapid progress with their racquet and ball skills due to the highly skilled tennis coaching they receive. Children's personal and emotional development is greatly enhanced by the care and attention they receive from staff, and the time spent on helping them to understand how to be kind and help others in their class.
33. Pupils' behaviour is of a high standard both in and out of lessons. They move around the school site calmly and in an orderly manner. Early years children across all classes work both independently and collaboratively with high levels of concentration. Pupils are confident that bullying behaviour would be dealt with promptly and effectively by staff were it to occur.
34. Leaders oversee a robust approach to health and safety, ensuring that the premises are safely maintained, and all necessary checks are undertaken. Health and safety issues are addressed promptly and effectively. Suitable precautions are taken to mitigate the risk from fire and regular fire evacuation practices take place.

35. Staff are deployed suitably to ensure that pupils are supervised appropriately. Sufficient staff are trained to administer first aid and pupils' medical needs are effectively addressed if they are unwell.
36. Attendance and admissions registers are maintained appropriately. Staff transfer information to leavers' destination schools in accordance with statutory guidance. They inform the local authority when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times and when they have concerns about pupils' attendance.

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

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

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

38. Pupils learn about the place of democracy in Britain. They experience democratic processes first hand when being elected to the school council and when discussing manifestos to be elected children's mayor of London. Pupils understand that right and wrong choices have consequences. They are introduced to the concept of the rule of law in PSHE lessons and by formulating their own class rules. Pupils gain an insight into British institutions through educational visits and visitors to the school, such as the local member of parliament.
39. Early years children's social development is effectively promoted due to the kindness and care they receive from staff who demonstrate highly individualised knowledge of each child. Nursery children understand about taking turns in shared activities and show consideration towards their peers. Children participate fully and enthusiastically in group activities such as when working together, for example when making their clay volcanoes.
40. Pupils develop financial awareness through the mathematics and PSHE curriculums. They undertake a range of imaginative activities, such as the young entrepreneurs' challenges. In this challenge, older pupils learn how to set up small business, make small investments and make enterprises profitable.
41. Leaders enable pupils to transition confidently to their next phase of education. Reception children tell their Nursery peers about the activities they enjoy and share a teddy bears' picnic with their younger buddies. Year 6 pupils are supported in their transition to senior school by receiving guidance in how to use public transport safely. They learn about life in senior school from ex-pupils who attend other local schools. They learn about the skills required to thrive in the world of work from adults representing a wide range of careers.
42. Pupils gain an understanding of and respect for other cultures, through subjects such as history and PSHE. Pupils learn about different cultures and beliefs through lessons and educational visits. The school community regularly celebrates cultural diversity reflecting the school's aim to promote inclusivity. Staff actively promote respect towards others and an inclusive approach to people from a range of backgrounds, faiths and beliefs.
43. Pupils participate in activities that support the school, local and wider communities. Pupils undertake meaningful positions of responsibility, such as that of digital ambassador, playground buddy, school councillor or eco club member. A national Green Flag award received by the school in 2022 recognised the significant commitment by pupils to promoting high quality environmental practices within and beyond their own community. Pupils visit the local community, such as residential care homes. They play games with residents and perform to them at Christmas. Communities in South Africa, Turkey and Ukraine are also supported through charitable initiatives. These activities help pupils understand how to be a responsible and caring citizen.

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

44. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

45. Effective arrangements are in place to safeguard the welfare of pupils. Policies reflect current requirements and are implemented consistently. Leaders prioritise the safety and welfare of pupils which supports a well-embedded safeguarding culture across the school.
46. The safeguarding leads are knowledgeable and work effectively with external agencies. Staff receive regular training which enables them to identify causes for concern that are promptly recorded and appropriately addressed. Suitable procedures are followed regarding pupils who are missing or absent from education.
47. Governors understand their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and receive appropriate training. They ensure leaders have the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities. Governors rigorously monitor the implementation of safeguarding policies by leaders.
48. Pupils say they feel safe at school and well supported by staff who they trust. Pupils understand how to stay safe, including when using the internet due to regular guidance provided at school in PSHE and computing lessons. Governors and leaders maintain diligent oversight of the filtering and monitoring systems used to keep pupils safe online.
49. A thorough system for the appointment of all adults working with pupils is in place. Senior leaders receive safer recruitment training and regularly review the school's record of appointments to ensure appropriate checks are undertaken as to the suitability of all adults before they work with pupils.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

50. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Park Hill School
Department for Education number	314/6059
Address	Park Hill Preparatory School 8 Queens Road Kingston upon Thames Surrey KT2 7SH
Phone number	0208 546 5496
Email address	hello@parkhillschool.com
Website	www.parkhillschool.com
Proprietor	Inspired Learning Group (ILG)
Chair	Mr Amit Mehta
Headteacher	Mr Alistair Bond
Age range	2 to 11
Number of pupils	109
Date of previous inspection	11 to 13 February 2020

Information about the school

51. Park Hill School is a co-educational day school located in south-west London for pupils aged between 2 and 11 years old. Founded in 1949, the school became part of the Inspired Learning Group (ILG) in 2016. Governance is provided by an advisory board on behalf of the proprietor.
52. The full-time nursery opened in 2018. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) comprises three classes for children aged 2 to 5.
53. The school has identified 31 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and 24 pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL).
54. The school aims to embrace and celebrate pupils' individuality and creativity in a nurturing and safe environment, allowing each child to grow and achieve.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

8 to 10 May 2024

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

56. 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.

57. 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**.

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