

School inspection report

17 to 19 September 2024

Breaside Preparatory School

41–43 Orchard Road

Bromley

Kent

BR1 2PR

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 THE 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	11
SAFEGUARDING	12
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING	12
SCHOOL DETAILS	13
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	14
INSPECTION DETAILS	15

Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders promote the school's aims and ethos, including the school's five core values of respect, inclusivity, resilience, independence and curiosity effectively. Rigorous oversight by the proprietor supports leaders to ensure that the school meets the Standards.
2. Leaders demonstrate effective decision-making. For example, they have carefully planned and implemented the recent expansion of the school to ensure that pupils receive a consistently effective educational experience on both sites.
3. Pupils, including those with high prior attainment, benefit from teachers providing well-planned and appropriately challenging tasks. Effective analysis of assessment data informs teachers and adds to their understanding of the abilities of the pupils they teach. Leaders' analysis of data shows that pupils perform well in English but better in mathematics. Strategies to support development of pupils' skills in writing are not fully embedded. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive careful and individualised learning programmes. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and learn well.
4. Children in early years learn well because they are taught a suitable curriculum effectively. Teaching enables children in early years to communicate clearly and be confident when approaching new challenges. Children are prepared well for moving into Year 1.
5. Health and safety procedures are thorough. The proprietor and school leaders maintain rigorous oversight of health and safety, management of risk and first aid arrangements so that the school environment remains suitable for pupils.
6. Pupils behave well at the school. Pupils' positive behaviour is supported by an inclusive ethos and effective reinforcement of positive behaviour. Leaders implement a consistent anti-bullying strategy. As a result, pupils are kind and considerate towards each other and to their teachers. Pupils develop warm and supportive relationships with others and treat them with respect.
7. Pupils are effectively prepared for participation in British and wider global society. They have many opportunities to contribute to the school community through democratically elected positions of responsibility. Pupils are taught the principles of what is right and wrong, including the importance of equal treatment and respect for diversity.
8. Safeguarding is afforded appropriately high priority. An effective and experienced safeguarding team help to maintain a robust safeguarding culture and ensure that staff understand and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. Pupils report that they feel secure and happy at school.

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:

- strategically develop curriculum planning so that strategies to improve pupils' skills in written English are fully embedded.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Leaders and proprietors work together effectively to maintain a harmonious, tolerant and inclusive ethos. They ensure that the Standards are met so that pupils' wellbeing is nurtured and promoted.
10. Leaders implement an effective approach to self-evaluation and decision-making that considers staff's perspectives when determining actions to take to promote pupils' wellbeing. For example, leaders have introduced a revised strategy designed to ensure that pupils use digital technology in a more purposeful manner across the curriculum. Following consultation with staff, leaders adapted topics on diversity in the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme, to enable pupils to develop a deeper understanding about the diverse global society.
11. Leaders demonstrate good knowledge and carry out their responsibilities diligently. School policies are clearly written and communicated appropriately to staff. Regular review and thorough proprietorial oversight results in the consistent and effective implementation of policies and procedures throughout the school. For example, proprietors oversee annual audits regarding management of risk, safeguarding and health and safety. School leaders are challenged and supported in ensuring that Standards are understood and met.
12. All required information is made available to parents and prospective parents, mainly through the school's website. Relevant information is provided to the local authority for pupils who hold an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) to inform the annual review.
13. Leaders implement a suitable complaints policy. They maintain high visibility and professional approachability amongst the whole school community and parents welcome this. Timely face-to-face discussions usually resolve issues expediently so that formal complaints are rare. When concerns are raised, subsequent actions are appropriately taken and recorded.
14. Leaders maintain constructive partnerships with external agencies. For example, recent consultation with the local authority's safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty officers has informed updated training for all those who work at the school. Leaders also network with other local schools to share knowledge and ideas about effective practice.
15. Information about the progress of children in early years is shared with their parents every week through a digital platform. Leaders meet regularly with staff who work in early years to discuss children and to identify how to support their effective and continued progress.
16. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities under the Equality Act. This includes the implementation of a suitable accessibility plan. Adjustments are made to support pupils with disabilities so that they can access the curriculum effectively.
17. Leaders ensure that potential risks are identified and mitigated against effectively. Teachers receive focused training so that there is a consistent approach to risk assessment across the school. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and teachers frequently assess their teaching environments so that they remain suitable for pupils. Suitable risk assessments for off-site trips are checked by leaders prior to departure. Subsequently, trips are carefully reviewed so that effective risk assessment is further developed.

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. The suitably broad curriculum is designed effectively to facilitate pupils' development of skills, knowledge and understanding. Schemes of work for all the required areas of learning are detailed and do not undermine British values such as mutual respect for those with different faiths and beliefs. Leaders conduct learning walks to monitor the implementation of the curriculum and ensure that it meets pupils' needs.
20. Teachers know the pupils they are teaching well. Teachers set high aspirations for achievement and pupils respond well to these. Pupils' progress is further supported by the effective use of varied and appropriate resources. Pupils, including those with higher prior attainment, are appropriately challenged during lessons so that they deepen their thinking. Pupils are interested in their lessons because they are quickly presented with further challenges once they have grasped the learning points already presented to them. This means that pupils acquire and consolidate new knowledge so that they make good progress and remain motivated and engaged in their learning. All pupils throughout the school are encouraged and helped to make good progress from their starting points.
21. Leaders' effective scrutiny of data ensures that strategic curriculum planning is objective and developmental. Leaders understand that pupils already achieve well and enjoy the stimulation of academic curiosity. However, leaders are not complacent and feel that pupils of all abilities can always be inspired to even further educational aspiration. Academic leaders have identified that pupils currently perform slightly better in mathematics than in English. Consequently, leaders are widening strategies to develop pupils' skills in English writing to address this.
22. Pupils in Year 6 begin the academic year with an appropriate focus on examination preparation for those who wish to take examinations for the entry into selective senior and secondary schools. Pupils are well supported as they approach these examinations, including through effectively targeted preparation in areas where any pupils feel less confident. As a result, pupils achieve well and typically secure places to their chosen senior or secondary schools.
23. Pupils who have SEND make good progress. Information is carefully disseminated so that teachers know how to adapt their teaching to effectively meet individual pupils' needs. For example, teachers tailor their use of resources including the provision of yellow mini whiteboards and writing frames. Individual learning plans are written for pupils who have SEND and shared with them and their teachers. These are reviewed every term so that pupils understand the progress they have made and know what they need to do next to improve.
24. Pupils who speak EAL rapidly acquire efficient literacy skills. Ongoing and thorough assessments help pupils to acquire the skills and knowledge to develop their linguistic abilities. Pupils who speak EAL are supported with individual language interventions and translated information in their first language. This means pupils who speak EAL are able to quickly access the curriculum so that they progress well.
25. Children in early years become articulate and develop communication and language skills well. This is because teachers encourage children in early years to talk about the child-led activities they select. Children engage well with their learning and are keen to discuss their work. Social interactions between children in early years are warm and frequent, supporting the development of key language skills.

26. Leaders and staff utilise an appropriate assessment framework to carefully monitor and track pupils' performance. This includes moderating English and mathematics every term for consistency and to identify how to support pupils to make further progress. Parents receive timely and constructive information regarding their child's academic performance. Marking and feedback of pupils' work is focused. In mathematics, teachers adhere to a marking code so that pupils benefit from a consistent approach and quickly understand how to interpret their marked work and what they need to do to make further progress. The development of children in early years is carefully tracked and assessed. This enables their key people to remain well informed and respond effectively to their learning needs.
27. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular provision. Clubs and activities enable pupils to participate in new experiences where they acquire additional skills and understanding whilst developing new interests. The cooking club equips pupils with skills in hygienic food preparation. A quiz club enables pupils to develop their general knowledge, while extra-curricular dance extends pupils' skills in this area.

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

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

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

29. Leaders and staff utilise the curriculum effectively to promote the importance of treating others respectfully and fairly. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme engages pupils with themes relating to equality and diversity. Staff model respectful treatment of others in their interactions with pupils with regard to their protected characteristics, such as race, religion and sex. As a result, pupils feel that their identities are valued by the school.
30. The school develops pupils' self-confidence effectively. In the early years, staff respond positively to children when they select their own activities and share their observations, thus supporting the children's confidence and self-esteem. Throughout the school, in line with its core values, teachers encourage pupils to persevere when facing challenges so that the pupils develop resilience well.
31. The curriculum helps pupils to develop an awareness of spirituality. Pupils learn about different world religions, while assemblies encourage further spiritual and reflective thought.
32. The behaviour policy is implemented effectively to support appropriate behaviour. Positive behaviour is reinforced, including at a weekly celebration assembly and through the house point system. Teachers use appropriate classroom reward systems to encourage and reward behaviour and pupils respond positively to these initiatives. Effective management of behaviour creates a calm and purposeful learning environment. As a result of these measures, pupils behave well at school.
33. The anti-bullying strategy is effective. It teaches pupils about what constitutes bullying and about the harm that it can do. Staff encourages pupils to reject and report any bullying behaviour, and leaders and staff respond quickly and appropriately whenever any potential bullying incident is reported. As a result, bullying incidents are rare.
34. The physical education (PE) programme develops pupils' understanding that regular exercise contributes to a balanced and healthy lifestyle. Pupils learn specific skills relating to different sports. For example, in rugby, pupils develop skills such as passing at speed and utilise these skills effectively in competitive fixtures.
35. Staff supervise pupils carefully and effectively. Senior leaders supervise pupils when they arrive at and depart from school. Outside play areas are divided into zones which are each carefully overseen by staff. Leaders ensure that the required ratios in early years are always maintained.
36. Attendance and admissions procedures are in line with current statutory guidance. Attendance is high and leaders remain alert to any downward trends. Leaders notify the local authority when pupils leave or join the school at non-standard transition points.
37. Teachers plan PSHE lessons that meet pupils' needs. Pupils learn strategies to help them to regulate their feelings and emotions. As a result, they approach challenges with confidence and self-knowledge. The relationships and sex education (RSE) programme is relevant and effective. For example, pupils are taught about themes such as consent and different types of healthy relationship in an age-appropriate manner. This guides pupils effectively in how they should interact with each other. Leaders consult appropriately with parents and share information with them about the content of RSE lessons in advance.

38. Leaders and proprietors maintain effective oversight of health and safety procedures. Required checks and maintenance are conducted in a systematic manner. Proprietors make use of external expertise to inform their overview of health and safety and fire safety arrangements and procedures. Pupils rehearse evacuating the premises in case of fire and become familiar with the school's lockdown procedures. Regular health and safety meetings monitor any reported safety issues which are swiftly prioritised and resolved. As a result of these measures, the school premises are appropriately maintained.
39. First aid and medical facilities and procedures are suitable. Staff receive appropriate first aid training, with all staff in the early years trained in paediatric first aid. Medical records and documentation are maintained appropriately.

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

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

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

41. Leaders and staff successfully maintain a culture of inclusivity and respect for others. Staff teach pupils about the importance of British values, such as those of respect, liberty and tolerance. They explore the consequences of disrespectful and prejudiced behaviour, including online, towards others. Pupils learn about equality and fair treatment, such as when exploring themes and topics including poverty, what it means to be a global citizen and whether the United Kingdom should return historically significant artefacts acquired during colonisation. As a result of such discussions, pupils deepen their understanding about different viewpoints and develop their ethical sensibilities well. Pupils develop an appreciation of diversity and are interested and curious about the wider world outside school.
42. Pupils learn about public institutions and the democratic process in Britain in a way that develops their respect for the law and the principles of what is right. Visiting speakers representing the police, fire service and the National Health Service inform pupils about their roles. Visits to the Houses of Parliament and engagement in voting to elect pupils to positions such as Eco or equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) ambassadors further develop pupils' understanding of democracy.
43. Leaders encourage pupils' sense of social responsibility and promote their contribution towards others both locally and further afield. Senior pupils act as prefects and support younger pupils during breaktimes. The school council chooses charities for the school to support. Pupils raise money for these charities, such as those supporting people suffering serious illness or food poverty. To support 'Global Be Well Day', all pupils from Reception to Year 6 worked with the local authority to demonstrate environmental responsibility by helping to clean a beach.
44. Children in the early years are motivated to engage socially through carefully planned activities which promote and support the development of social confidence. Children learn to share resources and listen well to staff and each other during activities and when playing games. Leaders make use of weekly assemblies to reinforce expectations about appropriate social conduct outside school. As a result of these experiences, pupils develop their social skills, confidence and sense of responsibility.
45. Careful curriculum planning supports pupils' developing understanding of money and finance. Children in early years learn about money through role play where they use coins to sell and purchase items. Pupils in Year 6 explore entrepreneurship during their 'enterprise' topic, which includes writing business plans, producing digital advertisements and developing a marketing strategy.
46. Leaders and staff ensure that any subject matter with political dimensions is presented and explored in a balanced and impartial manner. Pupils confidently and regularly take part in debates about topical world issues. These are managed effectively and impartially by staff so that they contribute to pupils' understanding of the wider world.

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

47. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

48. Safeguarding is effective. Leaders ensure that effective and regular safeguarding training is given to all who work at the school, including at induction. Staff have a thorough and well-developed knowledge of safeguarding procedures. They are clear about how to report and respond to any concerns. The safeguarding and child protection policy reflects current statutory guidance and makes clear that the robust approach to safeguarding is a responsibility shared equally by all who work at the school. Proprietorial scrutiny of safeguarding is systematic. An annual external safeguarding audit contributes to the rigorous and vigilant safeguarding culture.
49. Experienced safeguarding leaders are trained appropriately for their roles. Safeguarding records are detailed and meet the requirements of current statutory guidance. Leaders with safeguarding responsibilities consult appropriately with local safeguarding partners when safeguarding concerns arise.
50. PSHE and computing lessons effectively teach pupils about digital responsibility and how to remain safe when online. Leaders are vigilant in monitoring and filtering online activity. When alerts are raised, they are quickly investigated so that pupils are protected from inappropriate online content.
51. Leaders and staff teach pupils how to express concerns and seek support. Pupils feel able to talk to any member of staff when they have a problem and are confident they will be carefully listened to and supported. Initiatives such as the 'ask it basket' and worry boxes mean pupils can also seek support anonymously.
52. Senior leaders in early years are included in the school's safeguarding team. Those who work in early years adhere carefully to safeguarding expectations, including appropriate use of mobile phones.
53. Leaders arrange for all required safer recruitment checks to be carried out effectively. They maintain a suitable single central register of appointments (SCR) which records these checks accurately. Regular oversight of the SCR is undertaken by senior leaders and proprietors.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Breaside Preparatory School
Department for Education number	305/6004
Address	Breaside Preparatory School 41–43 Orchard Road Bromley Kent BR1 2PR
Phone number	020 8460 0916
Email address	info.orchard@breaside.co.uk
Website	www.breaside.co.uk
Proprietor	Cognita Schools Ltd
Chair	Mr James Carroll
Executive Principal	Mrs Karen Nicholson
Age range	2 to 11
Number of pupils	430
Date of previous inspection	7 July 2023

Information about the school

55. Breaside Preparatory School is a co-educational independent day school. It is owned by Cognita Schools Limited. The school was originally a preparatory school for male pupils, which first opened in 1950. Following the retirement of the family owners in 2004, the school joined the Cognita group. In July 2023, the school opened an additional new site on Widmore Road.
56. There are 95 children in Nursery, arranged into three classes, and 57 children in Reception, arranged into three classes.
57. The school has identified 60 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Four pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
58. English is an additional language for 64 pupils.
59. The school states its aims are to foster independence and resilience in its pupils. It intends that each pupil is celebrated individually and offered a personalised child-centred journey. The school seeks to inspire a lifelong love of learning through outstanding teaching and a broad range of enrichment opportunities. It aims to provide pupils with the highest quality pastoral care with an emphasis on character and wellbeing. The school endeavours to empower its pupils as global citizens where they receive a voice and an understanding of the world around them.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

17 to 19 September 2024

60. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

61. 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 executive principal, 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.

62. 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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