

# School inspection report

1 to 3 October 2024

## **Danes Hill School**

Leatherhead Road

Oxshott

Surrey

KT22 0JG

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. Pupils learn well because the curriculum is designed to support their needs with appropriate leadership and oversight of the schemes of work. Teachers use the information about pupils' achievement effectively to plan and meet pupils' needs. Teachers use their subject knowledge well along with a range of effective teaching methods that keep pupils interested and enable them to make good progress.
2. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress because teachers understand their needs and provide them with appropriate support. Equally, pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive the support they need to learn English and access the full curriculum to make good progress. The school complies with the Equality Act 2010.
3. Children in the early years settle quickly and are well supported in their learning. Teachers provide an environment where children can develop their language, social and physical skills through an interesting timetable of lessons, activities and physical education (PE).
4. Pupils behave well towards others both in class and around the school. The school's values are central to the curriculum. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme is well designed and supports pupils' development of respectful relationships and behaviour. There is an extensive games provision in place, which provides pupils with opportunities to develop their physical health as well as supporting their emotional wellbeing.
5. Leaders have developed a wide range of activities both in and beyond the daily school curriculum, underpinned by the school's values to enhance pupils' appreciation of the world in which they live. Pupils understand the qualities required to contribute positively to life in modern Britain and make useful connections with the rule of law, democracy, personal liberty and mutual respect.
6. Pupils do not have a secure understanding about career options available. Currently, guidance on a wider range of career options to enable pupils to make informed choices and encourage them to fulfil their potential is limited.

## 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:

- develop pupils' understanding about career options through up-to-date guidance that enables them to make informed choices and encourages them to fulfil their potential.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

7. Governors have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. They know what the school does well and have a five-year plan in place to continue to develop and improve in line with the school's values and ethos. Leaders and those with management responsibilities have suitable knowledge and skills to demonstrate that the Standards are consistently met. Leaders are appropriately trained and actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.
8. The leadership team, led by an interim head, manage the school effectively. They enable all members of the school community to understand the shared values of growth, passion, courage and respect. There is a positive atmosphere in which pupils demonstrate purposefulness and a shared pride in their achievements. Pupils and staff readily refer to the values when discussing aspects of school life and teachers successfully apply these values in lessons. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning as they carry out their activities.
9. School policies reflect current statutory guidance, and leaders and governors check that these policies are effectively implemented. They ensure that there is no discrimination, and that diversity is promoted throughout the curriculum. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and there is also a suitable accessibility plan in place.
10. The environment for the youngest children is well maintained and supports the effective implementation of the early years curriculum provision. Early years leaders plan an interesting and stimulating curriculum for children, which makes effective use of the indoor and outdoor learning environment. Children's individual needs and interests are taken into account. Leaders ensure that all aspects of the early years supervision requirements are in place so that children can feel safe and secure.
11. The school has a comprehensive approach to the management of risk. Appropriate risk assessments are in place to support the safety of pupils and staff.
12. There is effective oversight of the complaints procedure. Any concerns and complaints are responded to in an efficient and timely manner.
13. All required information is provided on the school's website and parents receive regular reports about their children's progress.

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

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

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

15. Leaders have designed a balanced curriculum that enables pupils to develop their knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects. There are appropriate schemes of work in place to ensure the effective development of pupils' skills and knowledge.
16. In English and mathematics, pupils demonstrate strong skills and can apply their learning to a range of tasks. Teachers encourage pupils to use subject-specific vocabulary and skills effectively in history, geography and theology, philosophy and religion (TPR) lessons. Pupils develop creative and physical skills and understanding in music, art, dance and PE.
17. In the early years, staff help children to develop the speaking and listening skills they require to communicate their needs and to share their opinions. This is supported through storytelling, singing and clear modelling of words and phrases. Staff quickly identify young children who may need extra help and support. Adults prioritise the literacy and numeracy skills that children find most challenging and enable them to make good progress across all areas of learning.
18. Older pupils successfully develop subject-specific, age-appropriate knowledge and skills in all areas of the curriculum to support their development and preparation for their future lives. In the junior and upper sections of the school, pupils' attainment and progress are checked through a suitable framework for assessment. Leaders and teachers use this information to plan and ensure that pupils' needs are fully met and to enable them to make good progress.
19. Teachers teach effectively and provide lessons that are planned and suited to the age and individuals in the class. They have secure subject knowledge and they use this well when explaining new concepts. Through the effective use of a range of teaching methods, teachers ensure pupils remain interested and motivated in their learning. They provide useful feedback for pupils to know how to improve further. Pupils develop new skills and understanding quickly as a result.
20. Pupils who have SEND are identified in the early years and as their needs emerge throughout their school journey. Leaders have robust systems in place to ensure that individual pupils are appropriately supported by class teachers and learning support assistants through effective use of a range of different activities and resources, in-class support and one-to-one attention.
21. Pupils who speak EAL make good progress in all subjects and develop their English skills to enable them to participate fully in lessons.
22. The school provides an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended and enjoyed by pupils. This programme enhances and enriches pupils' skills and knowledge beyond the taught curriculum.

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

**23. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

24. Leaders place the PSHE education programme, known as 'personal development' (PD), prominently in the curriculum. Leaders make effective links between sport and pupils' social and emotional development. Sports coaches act as mentors to extend the reach of the PD programme, supporting pupils' physical as well as emotional wellbeing.
25. Pupils develop healthy habits, physical fitness and good attitudes towards mental and physical health through the extensive sports programme. Pupils have many opportunities to show respect for others, demonstrate good behaviour and engage with others from the local community, especially those who play against other schools in sporting events. Early years children take part in a range of physical activities led by specialist staff who help them to develop their gross motor and physical development skills.
26. Age-appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE) is included in the PD programme. Pupils learn about healthy and unhealthy relationships, and the effect they can have on mental health and emotional wellbeing. Pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing are supported through the provision of mental health first aiders, emotional literacy support assistants (ELSAs) and counsellors.
27. Pupils learn to consider the views, beliefs and feelings of their peers, regardless of differences. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and demonstrate a keen moral sense when considering school and world issues. As a result, pupils develop self-esteem and self-confidence when speaking and working with peers and adults.
28. Children in the early years settle well and quickly understand the routines. They listen to the adults and follow their expectations carefully. They are well cared for, and adults prioritise their emotional and physical wellbeing.
29. Pupils in the rest of the school continue to behave well. Leaders ensure that the behaviour policy is effectively implemented across a variety of contexts. Children are friendly and respectful with their peers and other members of the community. Robust policies are in place, which are well understood by pupils and consistently applied by teachers.
30. Pupils understand the difference between friendship issues, behaviour choices and bullying. They understand the meaning of bullying and how to resolve issues. Adults respond quickly to any instances of unkindness and effectively support those involved. Records show that instances of bullying are rare.
31. The premises are suitably maintained. Leaders and other external providers check through regular audits and any recommendations are followed up with improvements made in a timely manner. Outdoor spaces are well maintained and allow for physical education and recreation.
32. Effective systems are in place to record and monitor pupil attendance. Attendance and admission registers are appropriately maintained. The local authority is appropriately informed when pupils leave and join the school.

33. The school complies with relevant health and safety laws including those relating to fire safety and first aid.

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

**34. All the relevant Standards are met.**



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

35. Pupils develop respect for people who are different from themselves through assemblies, tutor time, PD and TPR lessons.
36. Children in the early years learn about a range of festivals from their own and other cultures. This helps children to learn about the similarities and differences between themselves and others, and helps to lay the foundations for their life in modern Britain.
37. Pupils reflect on the school's values in a range of different ways, such as through the school's own Raven Award scheme, charities council, a 'random acts of kindness' initiative and kindness boxes. Pupils speak out in class with confidence, and recognise personal growth as a result of trying hard and having passion to follow their interests.
38. Pupils' economic awareness is developed across various initiatives, such as buying second-hand clothes to make their own items for a fashion show. Leaders encourage pupils' active involvement in planning, raising, collecting and counting money for local charities through events such as sponsored walks.
39. The rule of law and an understanding of democracy are promoted. For example, in Year 7 PD lessons, pupils explore the creation of their own political parties, make speeches and canvass for votes to deepen their understanding.
40. Aspects of careers education are included in the PD curriculum, and leaders provide exposure to external speakers and agencies. However, guidance on a wider range of career options to enable pupils to make informed choices and encourage them to fulfil their potential is limited, and pupils do not yet demonstrate an understanding of this area of the curriculum and their development.
41. Pupils learn to take responsibility for their own actions. There is a prefect system in place which provides some pupils with duties and responsibilities, such as leading tours with prospective parents, supporting younger pupils or giving ideas to make changes to school life. Leaders ensure pupils are well prepared for senior school through providing support for entrance assessments, including scholarship examinations.
42. Pupils are involved in decision-making and initiatives that support the local community through performances in the performing arts. Pupils participate in fundraising events for local and global charities. Pupils develop leadership and volunteering skills to gain the school's Raven award through active participation in school, at home and in the local community, preparing them well for life in British society.

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

**43. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

44. There is an appropriate safeguarding policy in place that reflects statutory guidance and is effectively implemented. Governors take an active role in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are effective, providing support and challenge when needed.
45. Staff with responsibility for recruitment ensure that all required employment checks are undertaken before new staff take up their roles. The employment record is appropriately recorded and regularly reviewed.
46. Staff are confident in their knowledge of safeguarding matters and know how to report any concerns raised about pupils or adults. They are instructed well through induction and ongoing training, and receive regular updates from leaders.
47. Safeguarding leaders liaise with external agencies when appropriate. Suitable records are maintained to enable effective monitoring and decision-making. Information is shared appropriately to ensure pupils are well supported.
48. Staff teach pupils how to keep safe, including when online. Pupils recognise the dangers and threats when using the internet and can readily suggest appropriate actions to take, such as informing an adult and closing down the screen. The school filters and monitors pupils' use of the internet through appropriate systems.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	Danes Hill School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	936/6272
<b>Registered charity number</b>	269433
<b>Address</b>	Danes Hill Preparatory School Leatherhead Road Oxshott Surrey KT22 0JG
<b>Phone number</b>	01372 842509
<b>Email address</b>	reception@daneshill.surrey.sch.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.daneshillschool.co.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Vernon Educational Trust Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Cedric Ntumba
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Richard Brown
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 13
<b>Number of pupils</b>	640
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 to 30 January 2020

## Information about the school

50. Danes Hill Preparatory School is a co-educational day school. Pupils aged two to six are accommodated on a separate, self-contained site in the heart of the village. The Prep school is divided into two sections: junior school, for pupils aged seven to ten, and upper school, for pupils aged ten to thirteen. The headteacher has been in post since April 2024. The school is owned by The Vernon Educational Trust, a registered company. The board of governors are trustees. The chair of governors was appointed in March 2024. Since the previous inspection, the school has created a wellbeing hub in the Pre-Prep, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) facilities, a music technology room, a sports hall, a Year 8 common room and a putting green.
51. Children join the nursery in the term they turn three years old. There are 51 children arranged in three classes. There are 56 children in three Reception classes.
52. The school has identified 83 pupils who have SEND. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
53. There are 48 pupils who speak EAL.
54. The school states its aims are to help pupils to grow personally through hard work, effort, helping others, expanding their horizons and nurturing their community. It strives to ensure pupils are passionate about their learning and show curiosity, ambition and courage. The school encourages its pupils to demonstrate self-respect and mutual respect for others through dignity, kindness, consideration and empathy.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

1 to 3 October 2024

55. A team of six inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The onsite inspection was quality assured by a monitor.

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](http://www.isi.net)**.

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