

School inspection report

3 to 5 December 2024

Charlton House School

57 Midanbury Lane

Bitterne Park

Southampton

Hampshire

SO18 4DJ

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. Leaders are effective in supporting school development through a rigorous process of self-evaluation. They promote the school's aims effectively and make its values central to pupils' educational journeys. Pupils' welfare is consistently championed and is supported by leaders' clear understanding of pupils' individual needs.
2. Governors support and challenge leaders in the development of their strategic goals and in the implementation of the school improvement plan. Governors follow a systematic approach to ensuring that the Standards are met. They regularly visit the school to evaluate whether policy is consistently reflected in practice. Governors' regular discussions with pupils and parents enable them to gain a detailed understanding of the strengths of the education provided and areas for further development.
3. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make good progress due to the effective implementation of the broad and balanced curriculum that is followed throughout the school. Gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are swiftly identified and addressed as a result of regular and effective assessment.
4. Rigorous and effective teaching engages pupils' interest and contributes towards their good progress and positive outcomes. Pupils benefit from teachers' expertise and enthusiasm for their subjects. Teachers' highly individualised knowledge of pupils helps to meet their needs effectively. However, at times, pupils with higher prior attainment are not sufficiently challenged. Where this is the case, they do not make as much progress as they could.
5. Pupils enjoy high levels of emotional wellbeing due to the effective implementation of the school's 'heart values'. Leaders, managers, staff and parents work effectively together to promote pupils' welfare. Pupils' personal development is placed at the heart of school life. Diversity and difference are both respected and celebrated within the school community. Pupils feel happy and secure at the school. Pupils, parents and staff regularly liken being at the school to being part of a large and loving family.
6. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education. They develop an appropriate understanding of life in British society and the organisations and individuals that contribute towards it. They undertake roles of responsibility at school and engage in activities to support the wider community.
7. Risks to pupils' welfare are robustly mitigated. Leaders, governors and staff keep up to date with current safeguarding and health and safety guidance. Leaders oversee the rigorous implementation of policies. Recruitment processes are carefully managed and all the necessary checks are completed before anyone is allowed to work at the school. At the start of the inspection, a small number of dates were missing from the single central record of appointments. This was corrected before the end of the on-site inspection.

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:

- develop approaches to teaching so that pupils with higher prior attainment are routinely given sufficient challenge in their learning and make the progress they are capable of
- develop systems to ensure that all required information is always promptly and accurately recorded in the school's single central record of pre-appointment checks.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders effectively promote the school's aims and place pupils' wellbeing at the centre of all they do. Leaders systematically evaluate the school's strengths and areas for development. They use this information to inform the school's improvement plans. Leaders take effective action to address areas for development. Plans are followed closely and actions completed fully so that the school continues to improve.
9. Leaders keep up to date with changes to legislation and guidance. They review policies regularly and update them, as necessary, to reflect these changes. Policies are shared appropriately and are widely understood by staff and pupils.
10. Governors fulfil their responsibilities effectively in supporting and challenging leaders. They ensure that leaders have appropriate skills and knowledge and fulfil their roles effectively. Governors regularly review the school's improvement plan with leaders. They rigorously support them in ensuring the Standards are met consistently. Governors have a clear understanding of pupils' school experience. They receive regular reports from leaders, who also give presentations to them at board meetings. Governors also hold meetings with pupils and parents, visit lessons and look at pupils' work to help them gain an accurate understanding of what it is like to attend the school.
11. Governors maintain rigorous oversight of the school's risk assessment policy and practice. Leaders receive regular training to ensure that they have appropriate knowledge and skills relating to risk assessment. They are effective in identifying and mitigating risks to pupils' welfare, including those that are not immediately obvious. Detailed risk assessments are in place to optimise pupils' safety both on the school site and when undertaking visits to locations further afield. Comprehensive risk assessments are devised to protect the welfare of individual pupils, when required.
12. Leaders have established effective links with external agencies that support the wellbeing of pupils. For example, where appropriate, the school works with educational psychologists and speech and language therapists to enable them to better meet the needs of pupils who have SEND. Thresholds for reporting concerns to local authority professionals are clearly understood and followed.
13. The school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 well. Leaders evaluate the school's SEND provision systematically, making changes where necessary, in order to support pupils as well as possible. Pupils who have SEND are provided for appropriately and have full access to the curriculum. The school's accessibility plan is appropriate and effective. It identifies and addresses, for example, ways in which pupils' needs can be more fully met alongside ensuring full access to the site for pupils, staff and visitors.
14. Leaders are effective in promoting high levels of self-esteem, wellbeing and behaviour amongst pupils. Pupils feel safe and happy at school due to the culture of care consistently promoted by leaders.
15. Parents can access relevant information about the school via its informative website. Leaders post key policies, with up-to-date and clear guidance, on the website. Parents are kept informed about pupils' progress, attainment and wellbeing through regular verbal and written reports. Leaders inform the local authority regarding the use of funds received for pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. They share information appropriately about pupils in receipt of an EHC plan.

16. Appropriate guidance is provided to parents about the school's complaints process. The policy outlines timely and suitable procedures to be followed in the event of concerns or complaints being raised. Complaints are effectively addressed on the rare occasions that they occur.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Pupils experience a broad and well-planned curriculum that is tailored to meet their needs. Subject leaders work effectively together to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and interesting and supports pupils' good progress. A suitable range of subjects enables pupils to develop their literacy, mathematics, physical and linguistic skills well. The curriculum includes a variety of creative subjects, such as dance, drama, art and music. It also includes science, technology and computing. Pupils are taught by subject specialists in the afternoons. Leaders have found that this positively supports pupils' enthusiasm for learning and their good progress.
19. Pupils achieve well and make good progress during their time at the school. Staff rigorously evaluate pupils' progress. They provide effective feedback which helps pupils to understand and address gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Year 6 pupils are well supported in gaining places at senior schools, the majority of which have selective entry requirements.
20. Teachers know their subjects well. They use this knowledge to plan and deliver the curriculum effectively. They present new learning so that it is easily understood and answer pupils' questions clearly. Teachers anticipate which aspects of subjects pupils are likely to find difficult and intervene promptly to avoid any misconceptions.
21. Pupils acquire new knowledge and make good progress due to the effective methods used by teachers in lessons. Teachers select appropriate tasks for pupils to do, which help them to develop their skills and understanding. These are adapted, as necessary, to enable pupils of all abilities to access the curriculum. Pupils behave well in class due to teachers' effective classroom management and the appropriate pace of lessons. Teachers use educational resources well to support learning, such as a software programme to help older pupils improve their spoken French. Technology is used effectively to support learning across different subjects.
22. Teachers' in-depth understanding of pupils' individual needs enables them to deliver the curriculum appropriately. However, pupils with higher prior attainment are sometimes not challenged sufficiently. For example, they are not given enough opportunities to solve problems and think for themselves. As a result, some pupils do not always make as much progress as they could.
23. The needs of pupils who have SEND are identified promptly. Pupils' needs are addressed effectively by teachers, who use appropriate strategies to help them achieve well. Teachers use resources effectively to support pupils, such as a well-chosen, motivational computer programme that helps pupils to quickly improve their reading skills. Leaders regularly assess how well the curriculum meets the needs of pupils who have SEND and make changes as necessary.
24. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive appropriate support. This enables them to quickly acquire the linguistic skills necessary to access the curriculum and make good progress.
25. Teachers provide pupils with regular and effective feedback that supports them to make good progress. Feedback is consistently effective across all subjects due to the rigorous application of the assessment and marking policy. Teachers provide pupils with useful guidance about how to improve their work. Assessment information is regularly and thoroughly analysed, which enables teachers to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.

26. Children in the early years make good progress across the seven areas of learning. The curriculum positively supports children's personal, social and emotional development, enabling them to interact effectively with other children and adults. The learning programme is highly individualised to meet their needs. Children are well supported in their physical development, including through activities undertaken in local woodland. Children make good progress with their communication and language development due to the rich use of language by staff throughout the day.
27. Pupils' learning is enriched through a range of extra-curricular activities including clubs such as Spanish, karate, street dance and eco-club. Visits to places of interest such as art galleries, theatres and outdoor pursuits centres broaden pupils' experiences. Educational visits, such as geography trips to study rivers, deepen pupils' understanding and their interest in learning. Interactive workshops run by external providers about topics such as history and music further enrich pupils' experiences.

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. Pupils' welfare lies at the heart of the school, with well-understood and enacted values contributing towards high levels of emotional wellbeing. Staff value each pupil as an individual and take great care to get to know them well. This is reflected in the close bonds between pupils and staff. Pupils develop high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence.
30. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships education curriculums positively support pupils' personal development. The effective guidance that pupils receive in building secure relationships enables them to enjoy happy friendships with each other. Pupils learn to respect and celebrate the differences between people through the curriculum, assemblies, theme days and visits. This contributes towards high levels of mutual trust in pupils' relationships and an intolerance of discriminatory attitudes towards others.
31. Pupils' spiritual development centres on the Catholic values promoted by the school. This is enhanced through the study of other religions and beliefs. The school motto 'love one another' is effectively promoted during regular masses and other religious events. Pupils develop the ability to be calm, serene and reflective at these times.
32. Leaders promote high standards of behaviour. They monitor the school's behaviour policy, which pupils are involved in formulating, and ensure that it is implemented fairly. Pupils are motivated by the recognition and rewards they receive. They consider the school's approach to sanctioning inappropriate behaviour to be fair. Pupils behave well both in and between lessons and during playtimes. This is indicative of the moral compass that the school instils, which helps pupils to regulate their own behaviour.
33. Pupils recognise different forms of bullying, including what might take place online. The school has robust procedures in place to address bullying should it occur.
34. Leaders enable pupils to understand the positive impact of good physical health through a broad and balanced programme of physical education (PE). Pupils learn about healthy food choices in PSHE and science lessons. Children in the early years learn about healthy eating and oral hygiene in their 'healthy eating, healthy me' topic. They undertake yoga twice weekly, which contributes to their positive physical and emotional wellbeing. Pupils experience regular exercise at school and effective guidance which enables them to understand how to promote their physical health.
35. Leaders oversee the maintenance of the school site effectively. Pupils' welfare is prioritised through the rigorous implementation of the health and safety policy. Governors ensure leaders undertake relevant health and safety training, utilise appropriate external expertise and complete checks in a timely manner. Fire safety arrangements are secure. Pupils understand what to do in the event of a fire due to the regular school evacuation practices that take place.
36. Pupils are suitably supervised both at school and when undertaking off-site activities. Leaders in the early years maintain appropriate ratios of staff to children. Pupils have a range of adults they can turn to if they have a concern. Staff respond promptly and effectively if pupils raise an issue. The wellbeing of children throughout the school, including in the early years, is closely monitored.

37. Staff with responsibility for first aid arrangements and pupils' medical care undertake their roles effectively. First aid facilities are appropriate and staff are suitably trained to meet pupils' medical needs.
38. Attendance and admission procedures are well managed. Leaders take prompt and effective action in the event of pupils' absence. The local authority is informed when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition times.

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

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

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

40. The school's 'heart values' are the glue that binds the school community together. Staff systematically teach pupils about principles such as aspiration, pride and resilience so that they understand their meaning and importance. The values are regularly promoted and modelled by leaders and staff. Words such as 'honesty' and 'integrity' form part of the everyday vocabulary used to instil positive relationships between members of the school community.
41. Pupils develop a clear understanding of right and wrong as they progress through the school. Staff help pupils to understand how they can make better choices when they make mistakes and to take responsibility for their actions. Each class is involved in the formulation of classroom rules. They learn about how rules and laws govern wider society and the consequences that can follow when the law is broken.
42. Staff in the early years help children learn how to regulate their emotions and how to respond sympathetically towards others. Children learn to take turns, collaborate with others and wait for an opportunity to speak rather than interrupting. They learn to listen carefully and respond appropriately to what others say.
43. Leaders help pupils understand the importance of tolerance and respect towards differences in people. Pupils develop a clear understanding of the life experiences of individuals and groups within wider society through activities undertaken during events such as Black History Month.
44. Pupils are taught effectively to understand and respect public services, such as the police and the National Health Service, and the values that make up British society. They learn about democratic government in PSHE lessons and during UK Parliament Week. They experience democracy firsthand when pupils are elected as members of the school council. Visits by a coastguard, a member of parliament and local councillors help pupils to understand the roles played by different groups in society.
45. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to serve their school and the wider community. Older pupils undertake positions of responsibility such as house captains. Service towards others is promoted through engagement with the local community, including support for a Christmas 'shoebox' appeal and the local foodbank.
46. Pupils are well prepared socially and emotionally for their next stage in education. Transition to new year groups is well managed. Older pupils' transition to senior school is supported by close liaison between the school and senior school leaders.
47. Opportunities to learn how to manage money are developed through the mathematics curriculum. Children in the early years exchange money when buying and selling goods in their role play shop. Leaders support older pupils' economic education through talks and activities, led, for example, by representatives from a national bank.

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

48. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

49. Leaders with designated responsibility for safeguarding effectively implement policies and procedures to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. Members of the safeguarding team are trained to an appropriate level and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. All staff and volunteers receive regular safeguarding training which includes a comprehensive introduction for those new to the school.
50. Governors undertake regular safeguarding training and keep abreast of changes to government guidance. They closely monitor the school's safeguarding arrangements, which are discussed at every board meeting. Governors scrutinise the annual safeguarding audit which is produced by leaders and submitted to the local authority. Regular visits to the school enable governors to check firsthand how effectively safeguarding and recruitment policies are implemented.
51. Recruitment processes are effectively managed. All required checks are carried out before anyone is allowed to work at the school. These checks are recorded in the school's single central record of appointments. However, there were a small number of dates missing from the single central record at the start of the inspection. These were subsequently added during the inspection.
52. Pupils are clear about how they can share a concern, including through one-to-one wellbeing meetings with staff and posting notes in the 'worry box'. They are confident that issues they raise will be listened to and responded to sympathetically and effectively. Staff are knowledgeable about how to recognise and report different forms of abuse and neglect. They are clear about procedures to follow if a safeguarding concern is disclosed to them and to whom they should report it. They follow procedures promptly when concerns arise. Suitable arrangements are in place for the management of allegations against staff and for low-level concerns. Leaders maintain the confidential and secure storage of child protection records.
53. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding liaise effectively with external agencies, as necessary, to address concerns about pupils. Leaders attend local authority safeguarding training and understand thresholds for reporting issues that arise. They take prompt and appropriate action in response to concerns, when necessary.
54. Pupils are taught about a range of safety matters as they move through the school. They develop a secure understanding of how to stay safe, including when online. For example, pupils learn about 'stranger danger', road safety and cyber-bullying. The regular guidance they receive in computing and PSHE lessons is supplemented in assemblies and during an internet safety week. This enables them to understand emerging threats to their safety online. Robust filtering and monitoring systems provide effective oversight of internet use at the school. Parents are provided with regular and helpful advice about supporting pupils' welfare online.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

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| School | Charlton House School |
| Department for Education number | 852/6003 |
| Address | Charlton House School 57 Midanbury Lane Bitterne Park Southampton Hampshire SO18 4DJ |
| Phone number | 02380 671739 |
| Email address | admin@charltonhouseindependentschool.co.uk |
| Website | www.charltonhouseindependentschool.co.uk |
| Proprietor | Charlton House School Limited |
| Chair | Mr Christopher Holliss |
| Headteacher | Mrs Lea Pay |
| Age range | 3 to 11 |
| Number of pupils | 43 |
| Date of previous inspection | 17 January 2023 |

Information about the school

56. Charlton House School is an independent Roman Catholic co-educational day school in Southampton, Hampshire. It caters for pupils aged between 3 and 11 years. The school opened in September 2020. It is owned and run by a proprietorial body which is a private company limited by guarantee. Governance is provided by the named directors of the proprietorial body. The headteacher was appointed in March 2023.
57. There are six children in the early years comprising a kindergarten and a Reception class.
58. The school has identified nine pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Two pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
59. The school has identified four pupils as speaking English as an additional language.
60. The school aims to give pupils a strong foundation in academic subjects and the opportunity to develop through experiencing an exciting wider curriculum. The school also aims to enable pupils to treat themselves and others well, to feel proud of their successes and to cope with challenges and setbacks.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

3 to 5 December 2024

61. A team of two inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The on-site inspection was quality assured by a monitor.

62. 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 headteacher, 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.

63. 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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