

School inspection report

19 to 21 March 2024

ArtsEd Day School and Sixth Form

14 Bath Road

Chiswick

London

W4 1LY

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 well qualified and experienced and passionate about delivering the school's aim for every pupil to leave ArtsEd as a creative, articulate and imaginative young adult. They promote the school's values of aspiration, resilience, teamwork, self-discipline, empathy and drive, which underpin a well-planned curriculum of academic and vocational subjects. Leaders show sensitivity and plan carefully to manage the demands of performing arts on the other areas of the curriculum and on the welfare of their pupils.
2. There is effective oversight and challenge by the governors of the school through the monitoring and evaluation of policies and procedures, learning walks, committee reports and regular governors' meetings with reports from senior staff.
3. The school has a detailed and ambitious development plan which reflects the unique nature of the academic and vocational curriculum offered. It is flexible and takes into account the interests of the pupils, for example by the recent introduction of GCSE classical civilisation.
4. The teaching of performing arts is dynamic and responsive to the needs of the pupils. It is delivered by professionals who have expert knowledge so that pupils make rapid progress and achieve results well above the national averages in these areas. Pupils are prepared well in line with their aspirations for their future careers. The standards that pupils achieve in performing arts, in line with the school's expressed aims, are a significant strength of the school.
5. Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and take into account the contextual safeguarding requirements of the school. Safeguarding concerns are handled carefully and sensitively, and pupils feel safe and valued in school. There is a designated safeguarding governor who is in regular contact with leaders and is informed regarding any serious safeguarding issues.
6. Those staff with responsibility for pupils who have specific educational needs and or disabilities (SEND) are well qualified and experienced. The provision for those pupils is embedded throughout the curriculum and tailored to individual needs, allowing pupils to take a full part in the educational offering and achieve in line with their peers.
7. In academic subjects, there is variation in the quality of teaching across the curriculum in terms of the planning, the delivery of lessons and consequently the motivation of pupils.
8. Pupils take responsibility for their behaviour both in and out of lessons, they understand the difference between right and wrong and accept that sanctions are necessary to keep everyone safe.
9. Careers education is taught throughout the school. The primary focus is on careers in the performing arts and pupils are given limited information about other career pathways to enable them to make informed decisions about their future.

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:

- improve consistency in the standard of teaching in the academic curriculum so that pupils can make good progress in all lessons
- ensure pupils have an understanding of a broader range of career options.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders and managers have the knowledge, skills and experience to help pupils thrive and flourish. They are highly attuned to the specific demands of a creative performing arts environment, where pupils need a challenging and broad education as well as a high standard of vocational training. Leaders' belief in the aims and ethos of the school, which inform every aspect of their strategic decision-making. The senior leadership team works harmoniously and collaboratively, constantly evaluating their provision in line with the needs of the pupils.
11. Leaders and managers ensure that the environment of the school is inclusive and that all are respected regardless of their differences. The pastoral team, led by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), is well managed and contributes to the wellbeing of the pupils by creating a supportive environment where pupils are known and valued. Leaders ensure that all staff are appropriately trained and have the skills and knowledge to carry out their duties effectively.
12. There is effective oversight by the governing body through meetings, onsite visits, monitoring of policies and reports on their implementation. All governors have a designated day in school where they undertake tours of lessons and evaluate the implementation of policies. The safeguarding governor is in regular contact with the school and is informed of any serious issues and any contact with external agencies.
13. The risks associated with the school and in particular the contextual risks of safeguarding are well understood. Staff receive training in the identification and management of risk and actions to mitigate risks are in place, whether that is to do with supervision on trips, the safeguarding risks of physical contact, the safety of the site or working within professional performance venues.
14. Health and safety requirements are understood by management and staff. All staff are required to read the policy and understand their responsibilities in this area. There is a designated governor with responsibility for health and safety, who visits the school regularly and checks compliance.
15. Information required for parents and prospective parents is available on the website or in hard copy on request. The complaints procedure is comprehensive, and the management respond to any concerns promptly and appropriately. Records are kept of all complaints, the stage at which they are resolved and actions taken as a result of the complaint. The school has due regard to the Equality Act in all policies and procedures and has an accessibility plan in place which is regularly updated to support the needs of the pupils in their care.

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

16. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

17. Leaders plan a curriculum through which pupils study a wide range of academic and vocational subjects. Pupils develop linguistic, mathematical, scientific and technological skills. Leaders strategically plan ahead and adapt their curriculum in the light of the changing demands of the world of performing arts. Hence pupils develop high levels of creative skills encompassing dance, acting and musical theatre. Pupils are articulate, attentive, listen with respect and enjoy opportunities to work together in paired or group activities. Pupils have a sense of responsibility; they apply effort to their work and are self-motivated and ambitious particularly with respect to their work in the vocational subjects.
18. Results at GCSE, A level and BTEC National Diploma are above the national averages for all pupils, with pupils achieving results which exceed predictions based upon their starting points. Pupils with SEND and English as an additional language (EAL) achieve in line with their peers. This is due to a comprehensive programme of identification of need and support which is tailored to the needs of the individual.
19. There is a comprehensive system of assessment using a tracking system where the progress of individual pupils is monitored, and support put in place when required. When pupils ask teachers for help it is freely given, as seen in the numerous one-to-one coaching sessions.
20. Pupils are clear about their current level of attainment and about how to make progress. Verbal feedback and specific written guidance help them to take responsibility for their own learning and make improvements. The use of coloured pens in the marking policy is appreciated by pupils who find that the opportunity to respond and redraft their work enables them to improve. Pupils respond with complete focus to feedback about performances, from either staff or other pupils, and make nuanced adjustments to their physical or vocal work to effect improvements in solo or ensemble pieces.
21. In most lessons in the academic curriculum, teachers use their good subject knowledge and a variety of activities to engage, motivate and inspire the pupils, who make good progress; however, this is not consistent across all academic lessons. In these subjects, a lack of challenge and detailed explanations means that pupils are not fully engaged and motivated.
22. Within the areas of the performing and creative arts there are numerous standard and specialist courses in dance, drama, music, musical theatre, film, art and photography. The teaching of these subjects is inspiring and informed by current professional practice. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, who receive challenging tasks and are given a busy schedule of performance opportunities. Pupils respond with focus and energy, producing work of a notably high standard both in the classroom and on the stage.
23. Pupils with particular talents benefit from an extra-curricular club run on a weekly basis by senior staff where pupils of all age groups work together to enrich and extend their studies. All pupils have the opportunity to take part in project work throughout academic and vocational lessons where they develop their skills of research, communication and organisation.
24. The school provides a range of extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and after school, such as creative writing, yoga, information, communication and technology (ICT) club; and songwriting which allow pupils to develop new skills, build their confidence and develop their physical fitness.

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

25. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

26. Pupils are appreciative of the diverse community that they are part of and the opportunity this gives to learn about the lives of others. Through the well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme, assemblies and tutorials, leaders ensure pupils develop self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-respect, which are enhanced through their participation in dance, acting and musical theatre.
27. The curriculum, school policies and school activities encourage and support an ethos of mutual respect where pupils appreciate the individuality of others and feel they can be their natural selves. Pupils are kind and tolerant, and there is a clear focus on matters of equality and inclusion, evidenced through displays, pupil-run societies and the topics covered in assemblies and in the PSHE programme. Many pupils commented that the school was neither too big nor too small, and there was a tangible sense of community and belonging.
28. The school is aware of the pressures placed on their pupils through the competitive nature of performing arts and steps are taken to offer emotional support through the tutorial system. Pupils meet with their tutor three times daily and in one-to-one mentoring sessions. In addition, there are wellbeing representatives in each year group who meet regularly with senior staff with a focus on maintaining good mental health in the pupil body.
29. The recently redesigned personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationship and sex education (RSE) programmes mean that pupils of all ages explore similar issues at the same time, using age-appropriate materials that have been designed with specialist support. The assembly and PSHE programmes interlink to allow for a topic such as vaping to be introduced then explored in more detail. There is a blend of pre-planned and responsive topics so that issues which arise in the wider world can be incorporated. Pupils and parents have been consulted about the content of the RSE programme, and parents are given information about the topics to be taught termly in advance.
30. The creative aspects of the curriculum and the extra-curricular programme allow pupils to develop aesthetic and cultural understanding. Leaders are aware of the restrictions of the site and a busy curriculum and have added a library and a green roof as quiet areas for pupils to allow space for reflection. An understanding of world faiths is developed through the PSHE curriculum and pupils celebrate religious events such as Diwali through assemblies. Artwork around the school demonstrates the pupils' appreciation of the non-material aspects of life along with their response to the musical and aesthetic aspects of their involvement in the performing arts.
31. Pupils are highly physically active across all year groups. They have extensive physical activity every week, ranging from dance classes, movement lessons, yoga, drama, games or acrobatics. The school also uses a nearby sports facility. A range of healthy and balanced meals is available at lunch and pupils are able to bring in their own food if they wish to do so.
32. There are very few instances of bullying; where it does occur, there is general confidence it is dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Rigorous record-keeping and proactive tracking of trends by leaders supports individualised pastoral care with a focus on matching sanctions to restorative and reparative actions, allowing pupils to learn from mistakes and start afresh.

33. Supervision of pupils is discreet but effective, giving pupils responsibility for their behaviour in a safe environment. There is a clear code of classroom conduct and a hierarchy of sanctions displayed around the site which pupils and staff respect. Pupils behave well in common areas, where they gather in non-scheduled periods, and there are adequate measures to separate the pupils of the school and the higher education facility which is adjacent.
34. Health and safety is taken seriously by leaders. There is a clear sense of shared responsibility for health and safety matters across the school and the various committees carry out regular reviews, ably supported by the head of facilities. Records, such as fire drill logs, staff training and risk assessments are kept up to date, and an online health and safety portal is effective in recording and addressing any issues. Staff receive training in risk assessment and all activities and areas are risk assessed and mitigations for the risks identified put in place.
35. All accidents are logged thoroughly and recorded in a central, online location. Records detail how incidents have been followed up and resolved and these are regularly reviewed to look for patterns. Admissions and attendance registers are thorough and accurate.
36. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and the care of pupils who are unwell are suitable and accurate records of treatment and administration of medication are kept.

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. The leaders of the school have developed a culture of mutual respect and tolerance which is seen in the interactions between pupils and pupils and staff around the school. Inclusion and diversity are prioritised by leaders with the recent appointment of staff and pupil equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) leads. They also support a number of pupil-led societies, such as FemSoc and the lesbian, gay and bisexual transgender (LGBT) society, all overseen by a staff member. Pupils and staff go to great lengths to ensure individuals are respected for their identity and differences. The small size of the school and the many productions which involve all year groups working together further promotes the cohesive nature of the pupil body.
39. The PSHE programme includes age-appropriate lessons covering life in British society and democratic values, supported by co-curricular days such as the recent one focused on the rule of law and the annual cultural day organised by sixth-form pupils. The programme is flexible and is adapted to encompass current issues in society. For example, the school recently addressed 'cancel culture' through assemblies and the PSHE programme.
40. Financial literacy is taught through PSHE and the BTEC National Diploma courses. The sixth form enrichment programme addresses topics such as budgeting, securing affordable accommodation, taxation and nutrition, and personal safety all of which prepare pupils for adult life.
41. All year groups receive careers guidance. In the lower year groups, this is delivered as part of the PSHE curriculum and is largely skills-based. In the sixth form, pupils are allocated a personal mentor to assist with their applications to UCAS, conservatoires or specialist performing arts institutions. Careers guidance is enhanced by talks by alumni and professionals in the field of performing arts. However, the careers guidance is mainly focused on careers in the performing arts industry and gives a more limited insight of other potential future work pathways.
42. From their arrival at the school, pupils learn to accept responsibility for the standard of their performances and their behaviour. They develop skills of teamwork and leadership through the many opportunities to perform throughout the year. Formalised mentoring and coaching programmes such as the Year 12 coaching programme and positions of responsibility such as school captain and dance captain offer further opportunities to develop leadership skills.
43. The active school council is a forum for pupils to discuss ideas for improving the education experience with senior staff. Pupils point to issues where their views have been taken into account. For example, through the revision of the homework policy, which now has a more flexible approach. This allows time for the many extra-curricular activities that the pupils are involved in and for essential relaxation to promote good mental health.
44. Pupils regularly take part in community events as performers, for example singing at Christmas fairs or performing at a local primary school. They raise funds for charity through mufti days, organising bake sales and enterprise projects, showing an awareness of the importance of supporting the community.
45. Leaders ensure a balanced perspective on political or social issues, by a thorough vetting programme for visiting speakers and having staff oversight of all pupils organised societies so that the views of

pupils are heard in a positive and balanced way. Discussion and debates encourage all pupils to express their opinions and develop their understanding.

46. Pupils have a secure appreciation of what is right and wrong, developed through the PSHE programme. They understand that sanctions have to be applied when pupils break the rules and they feel that the school is, on the whole, fair and consistent in its approach to issuing sanctions.

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 procedures in the school are robust and thorough. Those leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are appropriately qualified and undergo regular training. There is effective oversight by the governing body. The designated safeguarding governor is informed of safeguarding issues and there are termly reports to the governing body. An annual audit of provision is undertaken, as required by the local authority. Reporting to external agencies is appropriate and timely, logs are meticulously kept and regularly reviewed to identify trends, including by governors.
49. The safeguarding team are aware of the vulnerabilities of children with disabilities and their needs are addressed accordingly. Leaders are highly sensitive to the contextual challenges associated with a specialist performing arts establishment. Pupils are necessarily engaged in physical contact as part of their studies, and they receive training on intimacy, consent and boundaries to ensure they are comfortable with this.
50. A comprehensive programme is in place to train all staff in matters of safeguarding, and annual updates are reinforced in staff training sessions. Records of training attendance are kept and staff understanding is checked via a questionnaire, with follow up where required.
51. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online in and out of school via the tutor system and the PSHE programme. They feel that the training and tutoring they have is practical, useful and age appropriate. There is comprehensive filtering of the internet in place monitored by those with designated safeguarding responsibilities.
52. The school undertakes all appropriate safeguarding checks on new employees and accurate records are kept. Staff and governors involved in recruitment have undergone safer recruitment training.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	ArtsEd Day School and Sixth Form
Department for Education number	313/6064
Registered charity number	311087
Address	14 Bath Road Chiswick London W4 1LY
Phone number	020 8987600
Email address	info@artsed.co.uk
Website	ArtsEd.co.uk
Proprietor	The Arts Educational Schools London
Chair	Ms Farida Mannan
Headteacher	Mr Peter Middleton
Age range	11 to 18
Number of pupils	286
Date of previous inspection	19–21 November 2019

Information about the school

54. The ArtsEd Day School and Sixth Form is an independent co-educational day school. The school was founded in 1939, amalgamating two existing schools, founded by Grace Cone and Olive Ripman, to prepare young people for professional careers in or related to the theatre. The school provides vocational training in dance, drama, musical theatre and art subjects, alongside GCSE and A-level courses and the Level 3 BTEC National Diploma. The school is part of Arts Educational Schools London, a registered charity overseen by a board of trustees and is based on the same site as the Higher Education department. A specific sub-committee oversees the school.
55. The school has identified 38 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Three pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
56. English is an additional language for two pupils.
57. The school states it seeks for every pupil to leave ArtsEd as a creative, articulate and imaginative young adult, assured of their ability to achieve their best in their chosen field. This aim is underpinned by the school's five pillars of excellence: aspiration, resilience, teamwork, self-discipline, empathy and drive. The ArtsEd curriculum endeavours to put the arts at the centre of an outstanding academic education.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

19 to 21 March 2024

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

59. 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.

60. 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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