

# School inspection report

17 to 19 March 2026

## **The Children's House School**

King Henry's Walk

Islington

London

N1 4PB

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 and governors work effectively together to ensure that they promote and prioritise pupils' wellbeing, in line with the school's values of 'kindness, curiosity and calm'. Leaders constantly reflect on how they can effect improvements to the experience of pupils. They consider the views of pupils, parents and staff to help inform school development plans. They ensure that the Standards are met consistently.
2. Governors maintain effective oversight of the school's operations through regular visits, participation in committees and professional challenge to leaders, including those with responsibility for children in the early years.
3. Pupils make good progress due to the coherence and quality of the curriculum and the expertise of well-trained teaching staff. Pupils experience a stimulating curriculum and teaching that deepens their knowledge, skills and understanding as well as their motivation to learn. However, the development of pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills is inconsistent. Appropriate adaptations to teaching and learning enable pupils of all abilities to access the curriculum and make good progress.
4. Pupils develop self-esteem and self-confidence as a result of the effective guidance given in lessons. This is supplemented by the programme of assemblies and knowledgeable assistance provided by staff to support pupils' emotional wellbeing.
5. Leaders ensure that the school site is suitable and well maintained. They prioritise matters of health and safety and fire safety, identify risks to pupils effectively and mitigate them suitably. Pupils are appropriately supervised both when on and off site. Arrangements for monitoring pupils' attendance are secure. However, at the start of the inspection, incorrect registration codes were used on a small number of occasions and afternoon attendance registers were not completed promptly. Leaders rectified these issues during the inspection.
6. Staff in the early years create a well-organised and engaging environment that successfully supports children's early development. They provide teaching and learning that builds upon individual children's interests and needs and enables them to make good progress. Children are well prepared to move on to Year 1.
7. Pupils model the respect for and understanding of people from diverse cultures, beliefs and faiths promoted in the school's aims and values. Leaders and staff successfully encourage pupils to contribute towards the lives of others both within and beyond the school community. Pupils develop a clear understanding of the place of values such as democracy and the rule of law in their own setting and within wider society. They understand the importance of distinguishing right from wrong and taking responsibility for their actions.
8. Safeguarding arrangements at the school are effective. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are appropriately trained to fulfil their responsibilities. Governors typically provide rigorous oversight of safeguarding policies and processes, including the recruitment of staff. However, when the inspection commenced, leaders did not consistently verify the identity of those supplying references in support of new staff before their work at the school commenced. Leaders rectified this before the end of the 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:

- ensure that references provided for adults who work at the school are consistently verified
- ensure that the correct registration codes are consistently used when recording pupils' attendance and that afternoon registration is always completed in a timely manner
- ensure that pupils consistently develop information and communication technology (ICT) skills so that they can apply them effectively in their learning.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Leaders are successful in promoting the school's aim to place pupils' needs at the core of decision-making. They provide an inclusive learning environment where pupils develop a sense of belonging. Pupils' wellbeing is effectively promoted.
10. Effective self-evaluation is integral to leaders' approach to strategic development. It informs the school development plan, the priorities of which are aligned with the school's aims and values. Leaders seek the views of pupils, parents and staff through forums and surveys which are used to shape the development plan.
11. Governors and leaders seek external specialist advice to help quality assure their work and liaise closely with other agencies to support pupils' wellbeing. Leaders of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) regularly utilise specialist support from the local authority.
12. Governors monitor the school well through their visits to meet with pupils and staff and effective liaison with senior leaders to develop provision. They ensure, through regular review and oversight, that policies meet statutory requirements and are effectively implemented so that the Standards are met.
13. School leaders have the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. The board of governors includes members with a range of relevant skills to effectively challenge and support the school's leadership, including those with responsibility for leadership in the early years.
14. Leaders in the early years are effective in developing a well-organised, creative and engaging environment that supports children's early development. Provision within the setting is carefully planned to meet the individual needs of the children. Leaders have secure knowledge of the early years' curriculum and expectations. They ensure effective staff deployment and consistent practice through rigorous induction, supervision and ongoing support for staff.
15. Leaders implement effective risk management arrangements, including those for premises, welfare, educational visits and safeguarding, to promote pupils' safety both on and off site. Staff receive appropriate training to be able to identify and mitigate risks to pupils' welfare effectively.
16. The school's website provides parental access to all necessary information and hard copies are available on request. Leaders provide appropriate information for parents, including through regular communication and reports that enable parents to track their child's progress and areas for development.
17. There is an effective complaints policy in place that outlines a suitable three-stage process. Leaders monitor any complaints carefully, respond promptly and keep thorough records that include any actions taken.
18. The school informs the local authority appropriately about the use of funding for pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), including financial information required as part of the annual review. Leaders notify the local authority when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times of transition.

19. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders implement an appropriate accessibility plan that is renewed every three years. They ensure that no aspects of the provision discriminate against any groups of pupils.

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

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

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

21. The appropriate and coherent curriculum that includes all the required areas of learning engages pupils' interest through topics that link themes across different subjects. This typically enables pupils to build their knowledge and skills across subjects. Teachers follow detailed schemes of work that outline expectations in each year group. They adapt and develop these schemes of work to ensure they provide appropriate challenge for the pupils.
22. Staff in the early years prioritise developing children's language and communication skills through carefully planned activities. Teachers in the early years develop children's literacy skills through a language-rich environment and the skilful use of questions to extend children's vocabulary and support their good progress. Children learn to explain their thinking in a confident and articulate way. Children develop resilience in their learning and concentrate on activities for long periods of time. They are well prepared to move into Year 1.
23. As pupils progress through the school, they learn to write effectively, using a wide range of vocabulary and literary devices. They carefully evaluate and edit their written work. Pupils demonstrate well-developed communication skills due to the many appropriate opportunities they have to work collaboratively.
24. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and science. Children in the early years gain an understanding of mathematical concepts through the use of well-chosen resources and imaginative teaching methods that are matched to children's prior attainment and build their confidence and competence. Teachers enable older pupils to apply and develop their knowledge and understanding when solving mathematical problems and undertaking scientific activities. Pupils confidently synthesise information from more than one source when undertaking independent research. ICT is used imaginatively in the early years to support children's learning. However, pupils do not consistently make good progress in their acquisition and application of computing skills.
25. Teachers are effective in enabling pupils to make good progress due to the constructive working relationships they promote, the variety of ways in which they present lesson objectives and their skilful use of questions to extend pupils' thinking. Teaching in the early years is consistently adapted to the needs and interests of individual children. As a result of these measures, pupils make good progress and attain well. Older pupils are successful in gaining places at their next school, including those with selective entry requirements.
26. Pupils who have SEND are well supported. Their progress is carefully monitored through the analysis of data and regular review meetings. Effective communication between the leader of provision for pupils who have SEND, external professionals and teachers ensures that staff apply effective learning strategies to support these pupils to make good progress.
27. Teachers have a clear understanding of how best to support pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) when required. Adaptations to teachers' questioning, additional teaching of vocabulary and the targeted use of resources such as visual cards enable these pupils to develop their understanding of language and fluency.
28. Leaders and staff implement an effective assessment framework. They use the information gathered to plan support required for pupils. Regular meetings between leaders and subject staff consider the progress and attainment of individual pupils and generate specific action to meet their needs. Staff

provide pupils with helpful verbal and written feedback. Pupils discuss this feedback with their teachers and use it to develop their work and learning further.

29. A range of recreational clubs, including botany, chess and fencing, enriches the formal curriculum. Opportunities to participate in a range of educational visits and learn from visitors to the school broaden and extend pupils' interests and skills successfully.

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

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

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

31. Pupils develop their self-esteem and self-understanding well due to the effective and consistent promotion of the school's values and the positive relationships that pupils have with one another and with staff. Pupils' positive behaviour and achievements are regularly celebrated, for instance in assemblies, and this contributes to their secure self-confidence.
32. Pupils' emotional wellbeing and mental health are carefully tracked and appropriate support is given when required. Staff listen to pupils and act on their concerns effectively. Staff skilfully use training they have received to support pupils in learning how to regulate their emotions.
33. Lessons in the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme help pupils to gain a well-developed understanding of different facets that contribute to identity and guide them in valuing diverse perspectives on issues ranging from supporting one's own sense of wellbeing to how best to protect the environment. Teachers enable pupils to articulate their ideas fluently and discuss issues with confidence, showing respect for each other's opinions.
34. The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum meets statutory requirements. Parents are consulted regularly and informed about the topics pupils are taught. Pupils learn about both positive and unhealthy relationships. Sex education, including how bodies grow and change, is taught in an age-appropriate way.
35. Pupils learn about a range of world religions and different spiritual and moral perspectives and practices. Staff also encourage pupils to develop and reflect on their connection with the natural environment. This begins in the early years when children take part in many activities outdoors, such as going on a 'bear hunt' through the local park.
36. Leaders and staff implement effective behaviour management strategies. They communicate high behavioural expectations and make effective use of appropriate rewards and sanctions, with the result that pupils' behaviour is of a high standard. A suitable anti-bullying strategy is in place. Staff teach pupils about different kinds of bullying and what to do if they are concerned. As a result, bullying incidents are few. Staff respond effectively should any behaviour or bullying incidents occur, including by encouraging pupils to reflect on their behaviour and its consequences and to find ways to restore positive relationships.
37. A calm and purposeful atmosphere pervades the early years setting. Adults foster children's positive mental health and emotional wellbeing through their nurturing, warm and supportive relationships with them. Staff plan activities to promote children's physical development, such as developing children's fine-motor skills when making 'aliens' from modelling dough, and using indoor and outdoor play equipment and specialist physical education (PE) lessons to enable children to practise and develop their gross motor skills.
38. Older pupils' physical development is supported by PE lessons and regular opportunities to participate in sporting activities and after-school clubs, such as football, Irish dancing and yoga. Pupils gain a clear understanding about the benefits of physical activity and of its impact on physical and mental wellbeing. Pupils learn about how to make healthy dietary choices.

39. The school premises are well maintained. Appropriately qualified professionals regularly and effectively check that health and safety arrangements are in order, including those related to fire safety. Leaders act promptly on recommendations made following external health and safety audits.
40. Pupils, including in the early years, are well supervised. Appropriate staff-to-child ratios are adhered to in the early years and staff are deployed effectively during breaktimes and when pupils undertake off-site activities.
41. There is an appropriate number of staff suitably trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid, and appropriate facilities for the medical care of pupils, including children in the early years. Staff support pupils who have specific medical needs effectively. For example, staff have the means to monitor diabetic pupils and all staff have ready access to medication for any pupils who suffer from asthma.
42. The school maintains suitable attendance and admission registers overall. However, at the start of the inspection, in a small number of cases, the school used incorrect codes when recording the reason for pupils' absence and did not consistently complete afternoon registration promptly. Leaders rectified these issues by the end of the inspection.

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

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

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

44. Staff promote values that underpin British society in different subjects, including philosophy lessons and assemblies focusing on democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty. Pupils learn about parliamentary democracy in citizenship lessons. They elect representatives to the school council, who debate and vote on ideas brought to the forum. Staff ensure that discussions that contain political themes or content are conducted impartially and without bias.
45. Pupils learn to respect and appreciate those with different cultures. For example, in assemblies and lessons, pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their understanding of Eid and pupils in Years 3 to 6 study and recite poetry from different cultures. Pupils' understanding of different beliefs is deepened through visits to the school by faith leaders representing several major world religions. Throughout the school, pupils listen to each other carefully and consider a variety of views. They participate in debates that promote awareness of the place of diversity in society, such as 'What would the world be like if we were all the same?'
46. The positive school ethos and debates about moral and ethical issues, such as what might constitute morally right behaviour, help pupils differentiate between right and wrong choices. Pupils are taught how communities use rules and laws to function effectively and pupils contribute towards devising classroom behaviour charters.
47. Pupils are well prepared for each stage of transition as they move through the school. Pupils joining the school are well supported by their peers and staff to settle quickly. Children in Reception transition confidently from one site to the other when they join Year 1 due to their weekly attendance at prep school assemblies, regular contact with specialist staff who teach on both sites and activities organised by Year 1 teachers in the summer term in Reception. Older pupils are effectively supported in preparing for entry to senior school through the support they receive in preparing for entrance examinations and the opportunities provided to visit potential future schools in Year 6.
48. Pupils develop their economic understanding effectively. In the early years, children regularly apply knowledge about money in numeracy and role-play activities, including visits to a local supermarket, post office and garden centre, where they use real money to purchase items. Pupils use the knowledge they gain in mathematics lessons when buying and selling food products they have made at a farmers' market held in the prep school during Harvest Festival time. This activity includes learning the rudiments of effective budgeting.
49. Leaders provide pupils with a variety of opportunities to take on positions of responsibility and to support others. Children in the early years take on the role of 'Kindness Captains'. Older pupils act as positive role models for younger pupils, both informally at playtimes and when undertaking 'buddy' activities. Pupils develop their understanding of how they can contribute positively to the lives of others in wider society, for instance by supporting community environmental projects measuring local pollution levels, contributing to the design of a local play park and promoting environmentally friendly transport.
50. Children in the early years develop an appropriate understanding of people in the local community who have roles that support others, such as the police, and learn about how to care for their teeth

during a talk by a visiting dental nurse. Older pupils learn about the institutions and people who serve British communities, for example during a visit by members of the air ambulance service. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 receive early guidance about possible future careers from visiting speakers, such as ICT entrepreneurs.

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

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

## Safeguarding

52. Leaders put in place suitable safeguarding policies and procedures in line with current statutory requirements. They foster an effective culture within the school where everyone recognises their responsibility for safeguarding pupils. Leaders ensure that records are kept securely stored in accordance with statutory guidance. Leaders in the early years promote robust safeguarding arrangements, including during handover at the beginning and end of the school day.
53. Governors are proactive in monitoring safeguarding through regular contact with the safeguarding team and visits to the school. They scrutinise reports from the safeguarding team to ensure effective and rigorous practice, including in the early years.
54. The safeguarding team provides staff with suitable training, including at induction and through regular updates. Staff know how to spot that a pupil's wellbeing may be at risk and how to report any safeguarding concerns that might arise.
55. The safeguarding team is effective in responding to concerns. To support this process, they have established close links with the local authority. This enhances their knowledge of local thresholds for reporting concerns and how best to liaise with external agencies to support pupils. The safeguarding team refers concerns to the relevant safeguarding partners when required.
56. Staff have a thorough understanding of whistleblowing procedures and how to record and report low-level concerns or allegations against staff that may arise. Pupils receive guidance on how to share any concerns they might have about their wellbeing or that of other pupils with adults at the school.
57. Leaders ensure that an appropriate internet filtering and monitoring system is in place and regularly tested. Pupils learn about how to protect themselves from potential dangers online.
58. The single central record of appointments (SCR) contains accurate details of all necessary recruitment checks carried out before staff, volunteers or governors join the school. Staff involved in recruitment receive training in safer recruitment practices. Governors oversee the recruitment process and the SCR as part of their monitoring of the school's arrangements to ensure consistently effective practice. However, when the inspection commenced, leaders had not verified references for a small number of staff recruited to the school. Leaders rectified this by the end of the inspection.

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

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	The Children's House School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	206/6383
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1113285
<b>Address</b>	The Children's House School King Henry's Walk Islington London N1 4PB
<b>Phone number</b>	020 72496273
<b>Email address</b>	administrator@childrenshouseschool.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.childrenshouseschool.co.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	The Children's House School
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Brodie Bibby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Ellie Grunewald
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	136
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 to 19 January 2023

## Information about the school

60. The Children's House School is an independent co-educational day school based in Islington, north London. The school is a registered charity overseen by a board of governors. The current chair of governors has been in post since July 2025. The school occupies two sites close to each other: a nursery in Elmore Street, educating children aged 2 to 5 years; and an upper school in King Henry's Walk, educating pupils from Reception to Year 6.
61. There are 57 children in the early years, comprising two Nursery classes and one Reception class.
62. The school has identified 15 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A very small proportion of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
63. The school has identified English as an additional language for 11 pupils.
64. The school states that its aims are to place importance on pastoral care, with the community, family and children at its core. It seeks to provide individualised learning within a broad, creative curriculum and small class sizes. The school aims to build self-confidence and self-awareness and to encourage pupils' development of a passion for lifelong learning. It aspires to instil in pupils a respect for others and for the environment and an appreciation of the wider world.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

17 to 19 March 2026

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

66. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- 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.

67. 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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