

School inspection report

4 to 6 March 2025

Coopersale Hall School

Flux's Lane

Epping

Essex

CM16 7PE

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 consistently promote pupils' wellbeing, ensuring policies are effectively implemented and reviewed. They and staff provide pupils with a supportive environment that contributes to their emotional wellbeing and security. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and enables progression in knowledge, skills and understanding.
2. The proprietor provides effective strategic oversight and accountability. They engage with stakeholders and provide leaders with challenge and support to ensure that their decisions align with the school's ethos.
3. The school promotes a culture of continuous development. Leaders actively analyse assessment data, feedback from parents and pupils, and the outcomes of risk assessments. This systematic approach to self-evaluation informs their strategic planning, including that relating to the premises, curriculum and teaching.
4. Leaders maintain the school premises effectively, including thorough regular checks, maintenance and testing of key systems. They monitor safety closely, address any health and safety concerns promptly, and ensure robust fire safety procedures.
5. Children in the early years develop independence and resilience through interactive play and social collaboration. Leaders ensure a nurturing environment that fosters emotional security and positive relationships. However, amongst staff in the early years, the use of resources to develop children's understanding of the world and development of skills in the expressive arts is not as effective as possible.
6. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and enables progression in knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils are confident, curious and make good progress, supported by feedback from teachers which enables them to reflect on their work. Teaching is effective, with lessons planned to meet the diverse needs of pupils. Teachers make effective use of typically engaging activities, ensuring accessibility for all learners.
7. Leaders and staff personalise support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Early identification of needs, adaptation of planning and use of external advisors ensure that pupils who have SEND receive effective provision to enable good progress from their starting points.
8. Pupils behave respectfully towards their peers and staff. Staff model positive interactions and lead conversations that support pupils to take responsibility for their actions.
9. The school encourages and takes measures to enable pupils to feel confident in discussing their own emotional situations. Staff provide pupils with guidance about strategies to deal with moments of stress or anxiety and other support for their emotional wellbeing.
10. Leaders support pupils' social development through structured activities that promote teamwork, communication and conflict resolution skills. Pupils show empathy and respect for diversity, engaging in thoughtful discussions about fairness and inclusion.

11. Safeguarding procedures are robust and suitable. Staff receive regular training, and leaders work closely with external agencies. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and in the wider world.

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:

- make more effective use of resources in the early years foundation stage to support children's understanding of the world and development of skills in the expressive arts.

Material change request

12. Inspectors considered the school's request for a change to the details of its registration to include an increase in capacity from 325 to 425 and an increase in age range from 2 to 13 years to 2 to 16 years.
 - Leaders have planned suitable programmes of study and selected GCSE examination syllabuses for older pupils. The intended curriculum includes appropriate personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships and sex education (RSE) content for pupils aged 13 to 16 years and is likely to meet the Standards once the proposed material change takes place.
 - The curriculum develops pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding effectively. The planned curriculum is likely to meet the needs of pupils aged 13 to 16 years.
 - Safeguarding arrangements are effective and likely to remain so once the proposed material change takes place. The safeguarding team has sufficient capacity and experience to cater for the proposed maximum number and increase in age range of pupils.
 - Leaders implement effective health and safety and risk assessment procedures. Leaders have given suitable consideration to the potential impact of having a greater number of pupils and staff in the school, and also of extending the age range of pupils. They have developed appropriate plans to mitigate any potential risks that these might bring. Health and safety and risk assessment arrangements are likely to remain effective once the proposed material change takes place.
 - Leaders have planned effectively for the continuation of suitable fire safety procedures. The building intended to accommodate the additional pupils is currently under construction. The fire strategy document commissioned prior to planning details suitable fire safety measures, and local authority building inspections note appropriate progress. The building is not completed and therefore has not

had final approval from the appropriate authorities. However, it is likely that the building will meet requirements if the works are completed to the specifications of the fire strategy.

- Leaders deploy staff effectively to ensure suitable supervision of pupils, including children in the early years. The school employs, or is in the process of employing, a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced staff to teach and supervise the proposed increased number and age range of pupils. Supervision arrangements are likely to remain effective once the proposed material change takes place.
- The school carries out all required safer recruitment checks effectively. This is also the case for new staff appointed to support the proposed increased number and age range of pupils.
- The premises and accommodation are suitably maintained and contain suitable toilet and washing facilities, as well as medical, teaching and dining facilities and outdoor space. Lighting, acoustics and the provision of water are all suitable. The plans for the building under construction indicate that the premises will contain sufficient and suitable facilities to cater for the proposed maximum number and age range of pupils once the building is completed.
- Leaders have planned effectively for the proposed increase in numbers and age range of pupils. They have planned for the new building to be ready for use from September 2025. Leaders' efficient planning and preparation indicate that it is likely that the Standards will continue to be met once the proposed material change takes place.

13. It is recommended that the requested material change be approved.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

14. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities to promote pupils' wellbeing effectively and consistently. They ensure that policies remain suitable and are implemented effectively, so that the school consistently meets the Standards.
15. The proprietor provides effective oversight and strategic direction. They hold leaders accountable for school performance through structured performance reviews and regular monitoring. Engaging with parents, staff and pupils allows them to gather feedback to inform decision-making. By offering both challenge and support, they ensure leaders have the appropriate knowledge and skills and that they make decisions that align with the school's aims and ethos and support pupils' wellbeing.
16. Leaders maintain a culture of continuous school development. Leaders systematically analyse assessment data, behaviour records, and feedback from parents and pupils to identify trends and areas for improvement. This data informs strategic planning in curriculum development, staff training and infrastructure. For example, a recent review of English teaching led to adaptations in the reading programme, improving pupils' comprehension skills across the early years and junior school.
17. Leaders take a proactive approach to risk management. They continually consider risks to pupils' wellbeing, including unintended consequences of actions, and do not consider risks unavoidable. Leaders ensure staff are suitably trained to carry out pertinent risk assessments. Staff identify potential hazards, such as those posed by daily activities including those of the youngest children, educational visits and site security. They then take appropriate actions to mitigate these.
18. In the early years, leaders maintain effective supervision of staff and support their continuous professional development. Staff receive training designed to enhance their practice, which has had a positive impact, particularly on children's progress in understanding the sounds that letters make and numeracy. Leaders ensure that staff engage in reflective practice, adapting their teaching based on ongoing professional learning.
19. Leaders ensure that the school complies with the Equality Act 2010. They implement and regularly review the accessibility plan to ensure that any pupils who have disabilities can access learning and facilities effectively. Staff receive training on promoting equality and tackling discrimination, and diversity and inclusion are embedded within the school culture.
20. Leaders collaborate effectively with external agencies to strengthen pupils' wellbeing. They act on specialist advice from experts in safeguarding and SEND.
21. Leaders respond to any parental complaints in accordance with the school's suitable published policy. The proprietor provides a suitable overview of the complaints process and collaborates with leaders to identify trends and make changes.
22. All required policies and other information about the school, including policies relating to safeguarding, curriculum and the anti-bullying strategy, are published on the school website. Parents receive regular reports on their children's progress and achievements. The school provides the local authority with the required information relating to any funded pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

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

23. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

24. Leaders plan a broad and balanced curriculum that provides pupils with a rich educational experience across all required subjects. The curriculum is designed to ensure progression and not discriminate or undermine fundamental British values such as individual liberty. Pupils demonstrate proficient linguistic skills, listening respectfully and speaking confidently. Numeracy skills are embedded across the curriculum, with teachers planning opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematical language. Practical science lessons are planned effectively to deepen pupils' understanding of concepts as well as their practical skills in the subject.
25. Children in the early years have effective communication and language skills as a result of teachers' consistent modelling and dialogue with them. However, the use of resources by staff to support children's understanding of the cultural and natural world, and expressive arts and design is not as effective as possible. Consequently, some children are not always able to follow and develop their areas of interest, which, on occasion, affects their engagement with tasks.
26. Teachers plan lessons that take into account pupils' needs. Lessons incorporate engaging activities and typically make effective use of high-quality resources, ensuring accessibility for all learners. Teachers use a range of effective teaching methods, including demonstration, progressively challenging support, and hands-on activities. They use questioning effectively to assess understanding, encourage deeper thinking and promote discussion. Teachers provide pupils with detailed and constructive feedback during lessons, either in group activity or, more commonly, through individual support. In response to this feedback, pupils edit and improve their work, applying new learning successfully. As a result, pupils make good progress. The vast majority of pupils obtain a school place of their choice, with an increasing number selecting to remain at the school in the senior section.
27. Leaders regularly evaluate the quality of teaching through lesson observations, reviews of written work and discussions with pupils. They support staff and share the most effective practice in the school, helping to sustain effective outcomes for pupils.
28. Pupils are curious and confident. They ask questions and listen to the answers, often asking further questions to clarify their thinking. Teachers encourage these questions and answer with patience and understanding, creating an environment where pupils support each other. Consequently, pupils are not afraid to make mistakes, are willing to take risks when articulating answers, and resiliently cope when getting responses incorrect.
29. Leaders use assessment data to track pupils' progress effectively. They maintain a detailed overview of each pupil's attainment and frequently review progress, setting the next steps in learning and quickly identifying potential underachievement. Teachers adapt their teaching following these reviews and plan activities to cater for emerging needs. Leaders identify potential additional learning needs and carry out or commission additional diagnoses. In addition, leaders adapt the curriculum in response to data analysis.
30. Leaders ensure effective support is provided for pupils who have SEND. They provide targeted support, including through structured literacy programmes, additional numeracy guidance and small-group tuition, to ensure that pupils make good progress. Specialist staff, including the leader of provision for pupils who have SEND, oversee personalised learning plans tailored to individual

needs. Teachers plan work to meet the needs of the individual, including through the use of modified resources and personal support. Regular communication with parents and external professionals further supports pupils' progress.

31. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive targeted English-language support through small-group or one-to-one support when appropriate. Teachers make effective use of resources and teaching methods such as visual aids, sentence starters and structured questioning to develop pupils' vocabulary and comprehension.
32. Staff provide a range of extra-curricular activities that contribute to pupils' personal development. Opportunities include music ensembles, drama productions, debating clubs and sporting activities, which enable pupils to develop skills beyond the classroom. Educational visits, such as trips to historic sites and science museums, extend classroom learning into real-world contexts.

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

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

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

34. Leaders create a culture in which pupils feel safe and supported, fostering positive relationships between pupils and staff which in turn build trust and contribute to pupils' happiness and sense of security. Staff know the children well and respond to them with respect and compassion. Through assemblies, PSHE lessons and dedicated awareness events, they actively promote mutual respect for people's protected characteristics such as race, sex and belief.
35. Pupils behave very well due to the culture of high expectations and mutual respect that leaders have established. The behaviour policy is implemented fairly and consistently, with staff modelling positive interactions. Teacher-led conversations with pupils encourage them to overcome disagreements and enable them to take responsibility for their actions and resolve issues.
36. The anti-bullying strategy is effective. Leaders and staff teach pupils about different forms of bullying and the harm they can cause. They ensure that pupils know who to approach for support should they be concerned about bullying. Initiatives such as pupil anti-bullying ambassadors reinforce a culture of peer support and, if bullying occurs, leaders take swift action to prevent re-occurrence. As a result, bullying incidents are few. Leaders maintain logs of incidents and monitor these effectively to determine if any further actions are required.
37. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is fostered through reflective practices, values-based assemblies and the teaching of a range of religions in religious education (RE). Pupils learn about faiths such as Islam, Christianity and Buddhism, and compare and contrast their beliefs and practices.
38. Leaders ensure that physical education (PE) offers a range of activities and is inclusive. It provides opportunities for all pupils to engage in physical activity and to develop skills and fitness. Younger pupils refine their motor skills through balancing exercises, climbing and manipulative tasks. Older pupils develop their skills, such as accurate passing and awareness of playing position, through structured drills and games, and develop as a result of individual feedback.
39. The RSE programme is age-appropriate and well-structured. Pupils develop their understanding of themselves and their interaction with others through learning about subjects such as respecting boundaries, puberty and body image. Leaders consult with parents about RSE content and ascertain the effectiveness of its provision through pupils' feedback. The introduction of student RSE ambassadors in the senior school has allowed pupils to engage in appropriate peer-led discussions.
40. Admission and attendance registers are maintained methodically and in line with current statutory guidance. Leaders analyse any trends and follow up any non-attendance appropriately. They inform the local authority of any pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard times. Supervision is suitable for the ages and needs of the pupils.
41. Children in the early years develop independence and self-regulation through interactive play and collaboration with their peers. Leaders carefully design the environment to promote emotional security and positive social interactions, fostering resilience from an early age. Early years staff are trained in emotion coaching techniques, helping children to develop self-awareness and effective coping strategies.

42. Leaders ensure that mental health support is available to all pupils when needed. Pupils are confident to discuss their emotional wellbeing openly. Staff are trained to identify early signs of emotional distress and provide tailored support for pupils when required. Pupils access counselling services, peer mentoring and 'mindfulness' activities to support their emotional wellbeing.
43. Leaders plan health education throughout the curriculum. Pupils are taught about nutrition, exercise and personal hygiene, enabling them to make informed lifestyle choices. Staff work closely with healthcare professionals to provide workshops on topics such as sleep hygiene and the benefits of relaxation.
44. Leaders ensure that the school premises are appropriately maintained. Methodical schedules for the school's upkeep are in place, including regular testing of gas boilers, electrical systems and items such as the kiln. Leaders closely monitor on-site security and ensure that concerns are addressed promptly. Regular health and safety reports are submitted to the proprietor, who reviews any external audit recommendations and ensures compliance with regulatory standards.
45. Fire safety procedures are robust and well-implemented. The school conducts regular fire evacuation drills to ensure pupils and staff know how to leave the buildings safely. Leaders act promptly on any recommendations from external fire safety audits, ensuring that all required procedures are met to mitigate potential risks in this area.
46. First aid arrangements are suitable, with a designated medical room and trained personnel who are always available. Staff receive regular training, and staff in the early years hold suitable paediatric first aid qualifications. Leaders monitor first aid records to evaluate the effectiveness of medical support and amend procedures when necessary.

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

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

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

48. Leaders ensure pupils, including those in the early years, are supported in their social development. Younger pupils engage in structured play activities that encourage teamwork and communication, while stories and discussions introduce concepts of fairness and kindness. Older pupils successfully apply conflict resolution strategies, helping them, with the support of staff, to navigate friendships and disagreements constructively. Staff model respectful behaviour, reinforcing the values of empathy and co-operation. As a result, pupils of all ages have well-developed social awareness and skills.
49. Pupils are respectful towards their peers and adults. They value difference and understand protected characteristics, the importance of inclusion and the negative impact of discrimination. The curriculum promotes an understanding of different lifestyles and perspectives, fostering an environment where all pupils feel valued. Pupils learn about human rights and cultural diversity in Britain and other countries. They reflect on themes such as the impact of colonialism. Staff and pupils actively challenge discriminatory language and attitudes on the very rare occasions that they arise.
50. Pupils develop an understanding of the immediate community and wider world through curriculum activities and experiences that reflect the school's ethos of inclusivity and global awareness. The 'oaktree challenge' encourages pupils to explore sustainability and international relations, deepening their understanding of social responsibility. Educational visits to historical sites, museums and local council meetings further enhance pupils' awareness. Leaders' introduction of a cultural exchange programme has enabled pupils to engage with others from different backgrounds, broadening their perspectives.
51. Leaders ensure that British values are embedded within the curriculum and school culture. Pupils develop an understanding of democracy through school council elections, where they vote on key issues affecting their school life. The rule of law is reinforced through clear behaviour policies, with staff modelling fairness and consistency in their approach. Pupils explore individual liberty in PSHE and the 'on board' programme, where they are encouraged to make informed choices and understand their rights. Assemblies and class discussions promote mutual respect and tolerance, with regular inclusion of topics that feature, for example, religious festivals and different cultural traditions.
52. Pupils demonstrate initiative and contribute positively to the school. The school council provides a platform for pupils to voice their opinions, leading to tangible changes such as adjustments to breaktime activities and lunch options. House competitions, and roles of responsibility such as prefects and reading mentors, enable pupils to develop leadership, teamwork and organisational skills.
53. Pupils distinguish right from wrong. Behaviour policies are clear and consistently applied, reinforcing the importance of honesty, integrity and fairness. Pupils explore ethical dilemmas such as the historical injustice surrounding the Windrush generation, and issues of power and corruption, through studying texts such as *Animal Farm*. Pupils are taught about the law in England, exploring legal principles through visits from legal professionals who provide real-world insights into the justice system.

54. Careers guidance is structured to meet the needs of pupils as they mature. Older pupils are aware of a range of careers as a result of watching 'job of the week' videos. The school's careers award programme recognises pupils' engagement in developing their skills such as writing curriculum vitae, understanding the local employment market and applying for apprenticeships.
55. Leaders integrate economic awareness activities into the curriculum, developing pupils' financial literacy skills. In the early years, children engage in role-playing activities such as shopping to introduce basic money-management concepts. As they progress through the school, pupils explore real-world financial scenarios, such as saving, borrowing and fair trade. Older pupils investigate global economic systems, fostering an awareness of financial decision-making and its consequences.
56. Pupils are well prepared for life in British society. They take responsibility for their actions and understand the consequences of their choices. Citizenship education is woven into PSHE lessons, ensuring pupils know their civic duties. Through school-wide initiatives such as charity drives and volunteering projects, pupils actively contribute to their local communities.

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

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

Safeguarding

58. Pupils feel safe at school. They trust the adults and know their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately. Consequently, they report their worries, either speaking to their teachers, accessing the 'listening ear' team or through 'worry boxes'.
59. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and reflect current statutory guidance. The safeguarding team collaborates effectively, shares information appropriately to inform decisions, and takes appropriate action. They maintain suitable records of safeguarding concerns and the decisions and actions taken in response to these. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities use the expertise of external safeguarding partners to support their decision-making and act on their advice.
60. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is a member of the leadership team and has sufficient authority in the school. All safeguarding team members are trained appropriately for their role and have sufficient capacity to provide pupils with timely and relevant support.
61. The proprietor is suitably trained in safeguarding matters and maintains effective oversight of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures. Regular visits to the school include listening to pupils' and parents' views and robustly scrutinising reports from leaders.
62. Leaders ensure that all necessary background checks are completed before adults start work at the school. These checks are recorded in an appropriate single central record (SCR) of appointments.
63. Staff follow the procedures for reporting low-level concerns about the conduct of adults. Leaders maintain suitable records of these concerns, review them regularly to check for trends and take appropriate action when required. Appropriate procedures to respond to any allegations against adults working with the pupils are in place.
64. Leaders ensure all staff receive safeguarding training during their induction before starting work at the school. Ongoing training is frequent and based on current guidance and the local context. Training includes pertinent themes such as online safety, responding to concerns about radicalisation and extremism or child-on-child abuse, and mental health awareness. As a result, staff are confident in identifying potential safeguarding concerns and are proactive in reporting these.
65. Pupils know how to stay safe, including when online, as a result of computing and PSHE lessons, assemblies and workshops. External speakers, such as police officers and online safety experts, provide additional guidance. Pupils and parents can access the school's digital wellbeing hub, which contains resources on mental health and online safety. Suitable systems for the filtering and monitoring of the internet are in place and tested regularly.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Coopersale Hall School
Department for Education number	881/6040
Address	Flux's Lane Epping Essex CM16 7PE
Phone number	01992 577133
Email address	info@coopersalehallschool.co.uk
Website	www.coopersalehallschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Oak Tree Schools Holdings Limited
Chair	Mr Matthew Hagger
Headteacher	Mr Paul Wilson
Age range	2 to 13
Number of pupils	266
Date of previous inspection	2 to 4 February 2022

Information about the school

67. Coopersale Hall School is an independent co-educational day school situated in Essex. It consists of the early years, prep school, and senior school for pupils in Years 7 and 8. Founded in 1989, it is a company limited by guarantee. The school forms part of the Oak Tree Schools Holdings group, which provides governance. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2024.
68. There are 81 children in the early years, comprising four Nursery and three Reception classes.
69. The school has identified 36 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
70. The school has identified English as an additional language for 28 pupils.
71. The school states its aims are to provide a secure, safe community in which each pupil achieves academically and personally. It seeks to help pupils develop a clear sense of right and wrong and to take responsibility for their actions, and to provide a broad curriculum to develop lively, enquiring minds. The school intends to encourage pupils to develop the skills they need to face the future with confidence and a positive attitude to themselves and others.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

4 to 6 March 2025

72. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

73. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the proprietor
- discussions with the 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.

74. 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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