

School inspection report

9 to 11 June 2026

Tower House School

188 Sheen Lane

East Sheen

London

SW14 8LF

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. The school provides a supportive community where pupils are known well as individuals, are provided with high-quality pastoral care and are supported to have a strong sense of belonging. Positive relationships between staff and pupils underpin daily routines, so that the school values are experienced throughout all age groups. Leaders place a high priority on pupils' wellbeing and ensure that it is reflected in the school's culture, curriculum and day-to-day practice.
2. Governors possess the knowledge, expertise and experience required to provide effective support and challenge to leaders. They undertake comprehensive oversight of school development planning and leaders' self-evaluation. Governors and leaders monitor the production and implementation of statutory policies to ensure that the requirements of the Standards are met consistently.
3. Leaders and staff provide pupils with an inclusive, supportive and ambitious education, in line with the school's aims. A wide range of activities, clubs, trips and guest speakers offers stimulating opportunities for pupils. The curriculum is appropriately designed for pupils' abilities, interests and aspirations. Teaching is well planned and engages and supports pupils in their learning, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Assessment is used carefully to identify and support pupils to learn as effectively as they should. As a result, pupils make good progress in the school.
4. Leaders in the early years provide effective oversight of a well-planned and nurturing environment which supports children's learning and development. Staff know children well and provide a balance of adult-led learning and purposeful play. The curriculum and learning environment support children's physical, social, emotional and academic development, helping them to grow in confidence and independence. As a result, children make a positive start to school life and achieve well across the areas of learning.
5. Leaders support pupils' physical health, emotional wellbeing and personal development successfully. The school is maintained to a high standard. Suitable health and safety procedures are in place, to ensure pupils are safe and well supported throughout the school day. Effective anti-bullying procedures are in place, so bullying incidents are rare. Older pupils serve as effective role models for younger pupils and support them in playing well together. Leaders have high expectations for behaviour across the school, which are typically effective in creating a harmonious learning environment. However, in some lessons, staff do not use effective or consistent approaches in response to low-level disruptive behaviour by a few pupils. When this happens, it negatively impacts some pupils' learning.
6. Pupils learn about and appreciate different cultures and beliefs. They actively celebrate differences and demonstrate kindness and empathy in their interactions with others. Well-planned citizenship learning experiences, in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lessons and other subjects, help pupils to respect British institutions and understand how they can make a positive contribution to society.
7. An effective safeguarding culture is firmly embedded across the school. Staff are well trained and act swiftly when concerns arise. Leaders respond promptly and effectively. Pupils feel safe and approach trusted adults if they have concerns about themselves or others. Safer recruitment processes are appropriately implemented.

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 staff implement effective behaviour strategies consistently so that all pupils behave and learn as well as they should.

Material change request

8. Inspectors considered the school's request for a change to the details of its registration to increase the numbers of pupils on the school's admission register from 188 to 204.
9. The school's arrangements for current pupils fulfil the requirements of the Standards and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The school has in place effective procedures for current pupils across all areas of its work, including for safeguarding, health and safety, staffing and supervision.
10. Leaders have undertaken careful planning to support the proposed expansion of the numbers of pupils on the school's admission register. They have considered appropriately the safeguarding, health and safety, first aid, staffing, supervision, safer recruitment and pastoral oversight required to support more pupils on the school's roll. Current premises and accommodation are suitable for an increased capacity. An additional double-storied building, opened in 2022, provides appropriate space for the larger proposed class sizes.
11. Leaders and managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Suitable policies, risk assessments, monitoring procedures and implementation plans are in place to support the safe and effective learning and development of more pupils. Leaders' plans demonstrate how the active promotion of pupils' wellbeing will be sustained following an increased capacity.
12. It is recommended that the requested material change be approved.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

13. Governors and leaders actively promote the school's aims and ethos. They use the school's values to support and guide their decision-making. Leaders are committed to self-evaluation and reflect regularly on the effectiveness of the school's development and operations. For example, they prioritise the wellbeing of pupils in the decisions that they make. They seek and analyse pupils' views about their wellbeing and ensure all staff understand the role they play in supporting children's welfare. They take timely and effective action, when needed, to ensure the wellbeing of pupils.
14. Early years leaders are knowledgeable about the needs of young children and provide effective oversight of the provision. They ensure that staff are suitably trained and supported to meet children's learning, development and welfare needs. Leaders regularly review the learning environment and resources to ensure they remain appropriate and engaging for children. Through effective supervision and communication, leaders ensure that staff understand children's individual needs and implement consistent approaches to support them. As a result, children benefit from a well-organised and nurturing environment in which they make a positive start to school life.
15. Governors are well-informed about the school. They analyse termly leadership reports, collaborate with school leaders about specific development areas and visit regularly to talk with staff and pupils. Governors assure themselves that leaders have good and appropriate skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They ensure that the requirements of the Standards are met consistently.
16. The school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. They have a suitable accessibility plan which is regularly reviewed. Leaders promote an inclusive environment within the school. Leaders consider the needs of those with disabilities whenever enhancements to the school premises are planned. Reasonable adjustments are proactively considered and implemented, as required.
17. Leaders work effectively with external professionals and agencies. They liaise with children's services teams when making referrals or seeking advice about the safety and wellbeing of pupils. They inform the local authority when pupils join or leave at non-standard transition points. They work closely with the local authority regarding pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), and fulfil these requirements, including the reporting requirements related to funding and finance.
18. Leaders understand and take effective action to mitigate risks to pupils. Risk assessments related to the curriculum, the site, off-site activities and pupils are detailed and thorough. Leaders ensure that risk assessments are regularly updated and there is a clear record of review and amendment. Staff undertake appropriate training regularly to maintain the safety and wellbeing of all pupils. Leaders recognise that some risks may be less immediately apparent and use a range of information, including termly wellbeing surveys, to identify emerging concerns and provide support where required. Leaders engage positively with external agencies to provide additional support for their risk management processes.
19. Leaders provide parents with all the information required by relevant legislation and regulations. A comprehensive range of policies is available on the school website and opportunities are taken, through parent meetings and handbooks, to offer further information. The school provides all pupils with an annual written report that reviews their academic progress and pastoral wellbeing.

20. There is a suitable written complaints policy in place that enables parents to raise concerns about the school. Leaders ensure that the complaints procedure is effectively implemented and follows their stated timelines and processes. Formal complaints are rare. A written log of complaints is maintained and used to help governors and leaders identify areas for improvement in the school.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. Leaders implement a broad and balanced curriculum so that pupils gain relevant knowledge and skills. Schemes of work for the wide range of subjects are detailed and demonstrate the planning for age-appropriate progression throughout the school. Curriculum planning considers the aptitudes and needs of the pupils and provides them with a thorough foundation in their learning, preparing them well for the transition to their next school at the end of Year 8.
23. Early years leaders provide a thoughtfully planned curriculum that supports children's development and learning. Staff know children well and use their individual interests to promote high engagement in their learning. For example, children develop confidence as early readers and writers through regular phonics activities and opportunities to write for different purposes. Staff provide activities such as the 'school bear' project to encourage children to practise early writing skills through diary entries, while also strengthening their speaking and listening skills. The curriculum helps children to broaden their knowledge of the world and develop their creativity through a range of well-chosen adult-led and play-based activities.
24. Teaching staff have good subject knowledge and a clear understanding of pupils' aptitudes and needs. They plan lessons carefully so that pupils engage positively in their learning and learn effectively. Teachers use a range of interesting resources and activities to stimulate pupils' curiosity and deepen their understanding. For example, in English lessons, pupils use visual stimuli from the novel *The Dark* to explore characters' thoughts and feelings. They produce independent written work, using secure sentence structures and more complex vocabulary effectively.
25. Leaders have implemented an effective assessment framework to evaluate pupils' progress and the impact of teaching across subjects and year groups. Leaders and teachers use a range of assessment information to identify pupils who require additional support and adapt provision accordingly. Leaders use this information to review and refine aspects of the curriculum. For example, leaders have used this information to refine literacy and numeracy provision, which has contributed to improvements in spelling, grammar, mental mathematics and numeracy-based problem solving. The formal and informal assessment of pupils' work allows teachers to provide targeted support and feedback. For example, the school's 'wow, now and how' feedback strategy helps pupils identify how to improve their understanding and their work.
26. As a result of a thoughtfully planned curriculum, effective teaching and the careful use of assessment information, pupils are well supported and achieve positively across the curriculum. Over time, most are enthused by their learning, apply themselves well, develop secure knowledge and skills in a range of subjects and make good progress. They are prepared for the transition to secondary school. Many achieve places at selective senior schools and gain scholarship awards.
27. Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils who have SEND are identified in a precise and timely way and shared with staff. Detailed individual learning plans (ILPs) inform staff about appropriate strategies, activities and resources. Staff provide for pupils' needs in line with this guidance, so that they access the curriculum successfully alongside their peers and learn effectively. Leaders routinely review the effectiveness of this support with pupils, parents and staff. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points.

28. Leaders assess the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) when they join the school. They monitor their progress carefully over time. Leaders provide staff with specific strategies to support pupils' linguistic needs in lessons. Where required, pupils access additional interventions. Pupils who speak EAL typically make rapid progress in developing fluency in spoken and written English and achieve well across the curriculum.
29. A good range and choice of co-curricular activities are available for pupils. A high proportion of pupils engage in the extra-curricular clubs and activities provided by school staff and external agencies. For example, pupils in the school orchestra work with staff members to practise Dvorak's *New World Symphony* for a forthcoming concert. Pupils playing brass, strings and wind instruments learn to accommodate other members of the orchestra and respond to the conductor. Baking club gives younger pupils the chance to follow a recipe and develop their physical skills in accurate food preparation work. Through drama club, pupils develop skills in improvisation. Pupils demonstrate growing self-confidence in being able to express their thoughts without time to prepare, as they respond to the actions of others. These opportunities enhance pupils' learning and development.

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. Teachers foster pupils' spiritual, moral and personal development through assemblies, religious studies and wider curriculum lessons. For example, in Year 5, pupils explore and reflect on different spiritual beliefs. Ethics discussions in theology, philosophy and religion (TPR) lessons challenge pupils to reflect on moral questions and the consequences of different actions. Leaders encourage pupils to reflect on their learning experiences and evaluate their individual strengths and areas for development. Pupils are encouraged to build their self-confidence and self-knowledge through contributing to the school community. As a result, pupils develop confidence in their own abilities and an understanding of the importance of reflection in their personal and spiritual development.
32. Leaders place a high priority on pupils' emotional wellbeing. Staff know pupils well and identify any concerns at an early stage. Positive relationships between staff and pupils ensure that pupils have trusted adults to whom they can turn for support. Leaders provide a range of opportunities for pupils to seek help and discuss concerns, including through PSHE lessons and individual pastoral support. Staff respond promptly to any issues identified and work closely with pupils and their families when additional support is needed. This contributes positively to pupils' emotional wellbeing and engagement in school life.
33. A well-planned curriculum for physical education (PE) starts with the youngest children. Timetabled sport and swimming lessons alongside daily play opportunities on climbing frames and monkey bars develop children's gross-motor skills. For pupils in Years 1 to 8, physical development and wellbeing are promoted through PE and games lessons, as well as sports clubs after school. The inclusive approach to promoting physical fitness and participation successfully develops pupils' understanding of the health benefits of exercise. Pupils develop teamwork skills through competitive fixtures and enrichment opportunities, such as the biennial Barbados cricket tour.
34. There is a carefully structured and well-taught PSHE curriculum, which includes required coverage of relationships and sex education (RSE). Pupils learn, in age-appropriate ways, about topics such as mental health, bullying, online safety and coercive control. Leaders consider carefully the approach and content of the schemes of work so that pupils secure relevant understanding at the right time. For example, pupils in Year 3 discuss how jealousy can impact their friendships, and those in Year 6 understand how relationships with people online have risks attached and can result in harmful consequences.
35. Leaders establish high expectations for behaviour. Staff promote positive behaviour through regular encouragement and recognition, particularly when pupils demonstrate the school's values. This begins in Reception, where the youngest children are taught to recognise and discuss their feelings and develop strategies to manage their emotions and behaviour. Pupils typically behave well. However, when a small number of pupils do not adhere to the school's high expectations of behaviour, some staff do not apply the school's approaches effectively, as leaders intend. As a result, this disrupts the learning and progress of some pupils.
36. Leaders ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is in place. Through lessons in PSHE and assemblies, pupils learn about the features of bullying, how it can be prevented through positive action and how it can be reported. Leaders and proprietors have established varied routes through

which such incidents can be reported. Staff respond quickly to any instances of bullying to support the individuals involved. This prompt response successfully and effectively resolves the issues.

37. Leaders maintain the school's admission and attendance register in accordance with statutory requirements. Staff follow up absences promptly. Leaders monitor patterns of attendance regularly and work closely with parents to reduce barriers to learning. Where appropriate, they work with external professionals to support pupils with concerning absence. They report to the local authority when pupils join or leave school at non-standard transition times.
38. Leaders monitor health and safety procedures carefully and take appropriate action to ensure that statutory requirements are met. For example, leaders ensure that fire safety arrangements are effective through regular evacuation drills and routine checks of equipment and procedures. Regular reviews and incident analysis support effective risk management across the school. The school site is well maintained and pupils are appropriately supervised throughout the school day.
39. Suitably trained staff administer first aid in a timely manner. All staff in the early years are trained in paediatric first aid and ensure appropriate supervision of children, including when eating. Staff keep records of first aid and medication provision, communicating clearly with parents as required. Suitable medical accommodation is available to support pupils who become injured or feel unwell.

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

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

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

41. Leaders plan a curriculum that encourages mutual trust and respect for other people, including with regard to the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010. Through PSHE lessons and wider activities, pupils develop an understanding of the importance of treating others with respect. For example, pupils learn about the negative impact of segregation on ethnic minority groups. The curriculum is enhanced by a range of visiting speakers, such as a prospective Paralympian. Pupils discuss issues of fairness and equality and develop an appreciation of the importance of respecting differences between people. As a result, pupils treat one another with respect.
42. Leaders actively promote British values. They help pupils to develop an understanding of the law and the institutions and public services that play an important role in British society. Starting in the early years, pupils across year groups benefit from visits from professionals such as doctors, dentists, the fire brigade, the police and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). Pupils in Year 6 discuss the significance of the Magna Carta in establishing the principle that the rule of law applies to all. In TPR lessons, pupils consider the responsibilities that come with personal freedom and the consequences of different choices and actions. In the senior school, pupils study the development of English law. Visiting the Houses of Parliament to observe the government in session successfully develops Year 8 pupils' understanding of the importance of the democratic process. These experiences help pupils to develop an understanding of how British society is organised and governed.
43. Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities to develop pupils' economic understanding. The curriculum introduces pupils to concepts such as money management and finance from an early age, including through mathematics and PSHE lessons. Pupils are given increasing opportunities to apply this knowledge in practical situations. For example, in Year 1 mathematics lessons, pupils learn about the values of money when shopping and are set a challenge to use coins to purchase items. Pupils in Year 4 and above are given a budget to plan and manage when on school trips. The 'Tower project' gives Year 7 pupils the opportunity to develop their own business with a budget provided by the school. Leaders also arrange opportunities for guest speakers to present ideas about business and finance. These opportunities contribute positively to pupils' economic education and growing independence.
44. Leaders prepare pupils effectively for the next stage of their education. They provide support and guidance to pupils and parents when preparing for the transition to secondary school, including preparation for entrance examinations for selective schools. The wider careers curriculum develops pupils' understanding of a range of possible future options available to them. This is supported by external providers who deliver sessions on areas such as business management as part of timetabled lessons in Year 7. Pupils work collaboratively to plan and start a business, determining products to be made and sold for a charity of their choice. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their next steps and develop an age-appropriate understanding of future education and employment opportunities.
45. Leaders support children's social development effectively in the early years. Through personal, social and emotional development, children learn to communicate with others, share their ideas and work co-operatively. Circle time provides opportunities for discussion and reasoning, while a range of collaborative activities helps children to develop confidence and positive relationships with their peers. Opportunities to perform for family members and take part in shared activities further

support their social development. As a result, children develop the social skills and confidence needed for the next stage of their education.

46. Leaders develop a culture of service within the school, so that pupils understand how they can contribute positively to others. In the early years, children take responsibility for classroom jobs and for looking after specific resources. The eco-council leads environmental initiatives within the school, improving recycling and sustainability measures, including through the creation of a whole-school 'eco-code'. The school's prefect team provides positive role models for younger pupils, supporting harmonious play and demonstrating good behaviour. Pupils also take part in fundraising for charities, including through sponsored fun runs. Leaders encourage older pupils to take an active role in selecting causes to support, such as a charity that provides artwork for hospital rooms and another that provides support for those who may be suffering isolation.

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. Leaders maintain a child-centred safeguarding culture, with policies and procedures that staff understand and implement effectively. Leaders with designated safeguarding roles have the appropriate training, experience and authority within the school to fulfil the duties of their role, in line with statutory requirements.
49. Governors assure themselves that the school's procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and effectively acted upon. Governors are suitably trained and oversee safeguarding arrangements through a range of activities, such as review of documentation, a formal annual review of the safeguarding policy, and regular visits and audits. They provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders with responsibility for safeguarding.
50. Comprehensive training is provided to all staff, including at induction when they first start at the school. Staff understand the shared responsibility for safeguarding, and this is emphasised by the regular updates and briefings about contextual risks and aspects of which to be aware. Staff are vigilant about risks to pupils and report concerns promptly.
51. Staff understand the importance of their professional conduct, as stated in their code of conduct. Staff report any concerns they have about adults in the school, including low-level concerns. Suitable records are maintained of these reports, including a separate log of self-referrals.
52. Leaders respond appropriately to any concerns raised and take effective, timely action. They maintain clear records of any issues and the action taken. Leaders maintain effective links with external agencies, including local safeguarding partners, so that they can seek timely support for pupils and families when required. Leaders work constructively with the local authority, seeking advice, as appropriate, to help meet children's needs.
53. Pupils are aware of the importance of staying safe. They are confident that any concerns they raise with trusted adults at school will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately. They understand the steps they need to take in order to stay safe online, as taught in PSHE and computing lessons. Leaders ensure that a suitable internet filtering and monitoring system is in place, including on all school devices. When alerts are received, concerns are assessed promptly, and action is taken to reduce risks for pupils. Leaders conduct regular reviews of the school's systems to evaluate their ongoing effectiveness and suitability.
54. Leaders and governors implement appropriate safer recruitment practices, reflecting current statutory requirements. Leaders complete all required suitability checks before staff start working at the school. All checks are accurately detailed on the single central record (SCR), which is regularly reviewed by leaders and governors.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Tower House School
Department for Education number	318/6009
Registered charity number	1068844
Address	Tower House School 188 Sheen Lane East Sheen London SW14 8LF
Phone number	020 8876 3323
Email address	secretary@thsboys.org.uk
Website	www.thsboys.org.uk
Proprietor	Tower House School Ltd
Chair	Mr Antony Phillips
Headteacher	Mr Neill Lunnon
Age range	4 to 13
Number of pupils	180
Date of previous inspection	13 to 15 June 2023

Information about the school

56. Tower House School is an independent day school for male pupils aged four to 13 years old. The school is situated in East Sheen, West London. The school is a charitable foundation, whose trustees also provide governance. The school consists of Reception for children in the early years, a junior school for pupils from 5 to 8 years old, and a senior school for pupils from 8 to 13 years old. The current headteacher took up his post in September 2023.
57. There are 18 children in the early years comprising one Reception class.
58. The school has identified 28 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
59. The school has identified English as an additional language for 42 pupils.
60. The school states its aims are to provide a happy, relaxed and secure environment where learning is viewed as an adventure, and every pupil arrives each day with a sense of joy, excitement, and wonder. It seeks to help each pupil find what they love and to inspire them to explore those areas with open hearts and minds.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

9 to 11 June 2026

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

62. Inspection activities included:

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