

School inspection report

2 to 4 June 2026

The Cavendish School

31 Inverness Street

London

NW1 7HB

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 have established an inclusive school community in which pupils are known well by staff and benefit from a broad range of academic, creative, sporting and leadership opportunities. Children in the early years and pupils throughout the school engage positively in school life, communicate confidently and contribute actively to their community.
2. Leaders maintain effective oversight of the school through systematic monitoring, evaluation and review. Along with governors, their decision-making promotes pupils' wellbeing. Leaders maintain suitable arrangements for safeguarding, attendance, risk management and other statutory responsibilities. They create meaningful opportunities for pupils to contribute to school life and respond appropriately to feedback from pupils, staff and parents.
3. Leaders provide a broad curriculum which places emphasis on oracy, reasoning, investigation and problem-solving. Teaching is typically effective, and pupils attain highly across a range of subjects. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities. Leaders ensure that provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. However, opportunities for challenge are not implemented consistently across all subjects and classes to ensure that pupils with higher prior attainment are routinely stretched.
4. Leaders implement effective provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL).
5. Leaders place a high priority on pupils' physical and emotional wellbeing. Effective pastoral support, clear expectations for behaviour and a well-established programme for personal development contribute to a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils understand how to maintain healthy lifestyles, build positive relationships and contribute positively to school life.
6. Leaders actively promote British values, social responsibility and respect for diversity. Pupils develop an understanding of democracy, the rule of law, economic wellbeing and their responsibilities within modern British society through a broad range of curricular and co-curricular opportunities.
7. Leaders maintain an effective safeguarding culture. Staff understand their responsibilities, act appropriately when concerns arise and work effectively with external agencies to support pupils when required.

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 opportunities for challenge are implemented consistently across all subjects, particularly for pupils with higher prior attainment, so that all pupils make the best possible progress.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders have the knowledge, skills and understanding required to fulfil their responsibilities effectively and promote pupils' wellbeing, learning and development. Through established monitoring, self-evaluation and review processes, leaders maintain oversight of the provision and identify priorities for improvement. They have established an inclusive culture in which pupils are known well, individual needs are considered carefully, and wellbeing needs inform decision-making. Positive relationships between staff and pupils, responsive pastoral support and a commitment to understanding each pupil contribute to pupils' confidence, resilience and sense of belonging.
9. Leaders maintain a comprehensive programme of self-evaluation and quality assurance. Through learning walks, lesson observations, work scrutiny, pupil progress meetings, data analysis, discussions with pupils and review of stakeholders' feedback, leaders evaluate provision accurately and identify priorities for improvement. They also use this oversight to ensure that the school's aims are reflected consistently in its provision, culture and decision-making. Leaders review the findings of these activities regularly and use them to inform strategic planning, professional development and curriculum development. As a result, leaders maintain an accurate understanding of what the school does well and where there are areas for development, and take appropriate action to improve where needed.
10. Governors provide effective support and challenge through their professional expertise, regular engagement and oversight of all aspects of school life. This oversight enables them to ensure that Standards are met consistently, and policies are understood and implemented effectively. Through meetings, monitoring activities and review of school information provided by leaders, they maintain a clear understanding of the school's provision, culture and future priorities and are able to hold leaders to account at the same time as supporting future development.
11. Leaders maintain effective communication with parents through regular reports, meetings, forums and correspondence. Policies, procedures and required information are readily accessible, including previous inspection reports. Leaders implement an effective complaints procedure and review concerns regularly. Concerns are recorded, monitored and analysed carefully, enabling leaders and governors to identify trends and respond appropriately to emerging concerns at an early stage to avoid escalation.
12. Leaders consider their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 when reviewing the provision, and planning improvements to accessibility and inclusion. They maintain and review a suitable accessibility plan and adapt the provision where required to meet pupils' needs, liaising with external agencies to further support pupils as needed. Leaders maintain suitable systems to ensure that required notifications are made to the local authority when pupils join or leave the school outside standard transition points. Although there are currently no pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), leaders understand their responsibilities should this arise.
13. Risk management is effective. Leaders maintain suitable oversight of risks relating to health and safety, contextual safeguarding, premises, educational visits and individual pupil needs through regular review of risk assessments, monitoring activities and governor scrutiny. Suitable risk assessment procedures enable leaders to identify, review and manage risks appropriately while maintaining pupils' access to a broad range of opportunities. As a result, pupils participate safely in

school life and educational activities, and leaders respond promptly to emerging risks to support pupils' wellbeing and safety.

14. Leaders ensure that the early years provision is managed effectively. Through regular supervision, professional development, review of children's progress and effective partnership with parents, leaders maintain appropriate oversight of the provision and identify priorities for development. As a result, children are supported within a caring and inclusive environment and make good progress from their starting points.

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

15. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

16. Leaders provide a broad and ambitious curriculum that reflects the school's aims and supports pupils' academic, creative, technological, physical and personal development. Subject leaders review curriculum implementation, progression and coverage regularly. Staff use curriculum planning to promote progression in knowledge, skills and understanding. They place particular emphasis on oracy, reasoning, investigation and problem-solving through, for example, reasoning activities in mathematics, independent scientific enquiry and purposeful writing opportunities in English. As a result, pupils make meaningful connections across subjects and apply their learning confidently in different contexts. For example, they are introduced to Japanese poetry, art and music as part of a topic about Japan.
17. Teachers plan lessons effectively and use modelling, questioning, discussion, practical activities and collaborative learning to promote understanding. Leaders monitor teaching regularly through lesson observations, learning walks and work scrutiny and use findings to inform professional development. Teachers use lesson time effectively, manage behaviour consistently and deploy resources purposefully, enabling pupils to remain focused and engaged in their learning. Staff demonstrate secure subject knowledge and implement the school's well-established oracy programme consistently across year groups. Pupils take on clearly defined discussion roles and explain confidently how these responsibilities support effective communication and collaborative learning. As a result, pupils articulate their ideas confidently, justify their thinking, communicate effectively using subject-specific vocabulary and participate positively in discussions across the curriculum.
18. Pupils respond positively to the opportunities available to them. They are enthusiastic learners who engage readily in lessons, work collaboratively and independently and demonstrate pride in their achievements. However, opportunities for challenge are not implemented consistently by staff across all subjects and classes. In a small number of lessons, teachers do not routinely provide appropriately demanding activities for pupils with higher prior attainment. Consequently, these pupils do not consistently make the most of available learning opportunities.
19. Leaders maintain effective oversight of assessment through moderation, pupil progress meetings and analysis of attainment information. Teachers use assessment information to identify misconceptions, adapt learning and inform next steps. Feedback is embedded across the school through the 'next steps' programme, helping pupils understand how to improve their work and build successfully on prior learning.
20. Pupils attain highly across a range of subjects and make good progress from their starting points. Despite the school's non-selective intake, pupils are successful in securing places at their preferred senior schools, including through competitive entry processes. Pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
21. Leaders place a high priority on reading and have strengthened this provision through the introduction of a systematic phonics programme and increased oversight of reading across the school. Leaders monitor reading attainment and progress carefully and have identified improvements in reading outcomes over the last three years. Staff promote reading through carefully planned opportunities within lessons and across the wider life of the school. Older and younger pupils regularly read together and benefit from opportunities to engage with a wide range

of texts through the school's library provision, developing fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading.

22. Leaders ensure effective provision for pupils who have SEND through careful identification, detailed monitoring and close communication between staff. Leaders review pupils' progress regularly and evaluate the effectiveness of support strategies. Teachers implement adaptations appropriately and support staff contribute effectively to learning. Leaders work with external professionals and agencies, including speech and language specialists and educational psychologists, and implement personalised support such as social story booklets and carefully planned preparation for residential visits. As a result, pupils who have SEND participate fully in school life, develop independence and make good progress from their starting points.
23. Leaders provide effective support for pupils who speak EAL through targeted support, curriculum adaptation and careful monitoring. Staff support pupils to access learning, communicate effectively and participate fully in school life through approaches such as the pre-teaching of vocabulary and targeted support at the start of lessons.
24. Leaders provide a wide range of activities beyond the formal curriculum, including performances, productions, sporting fixtures, residential experiences, clubs, workshops and educational visits. Participation is monitored and leaders review the provision regularly to ensure that opportunities reflect pupils' interests and needs. Pupils benefit from opportunities such as debating, science and technology activities, choir, orchestra, drama and sport, enabling them to develop new interests and talents. These opportunities enrich pupils' learning and support their wider personal development.
25. Leaders provide a well-planned early years curriculum supported by purposeful experiences and effective adult interaction. Leaders review children's progress regularly and use assessment information to adapt provision and identify next steps in learning. Staff use assessment information and ambitious vocabulary effectively. As a result, children develop particularly well in communication and language and make good progress from their starting points.

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

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

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

27. Leaders place pupils' wellbeing at the centre of school life and promote a culture characterised by positive relationships, inclusion and mutual respect. This links directly with their leading 'golden value', which is 'to treat others as you would like to be treated'. Staff know pupils well and provide effective support, which enables pupils to develop confidence, emotional awareness and resilience. Staff promote respect for others and encourage pupils to understand and value difference. They provide opportunities for reflection and discussion which encourage pupils to consider questions of fairness, responsibility and the impact of their actions on others, supporting their spiritual and moral development. Through assemblies, pupil wellbeing champions and curriculum experiences, pupils learn about different backgrounds, beliefs and experiences, develop curiosity about the wider world, reflect on perspectives beyond their own and gain an appreciation of the importance of treating others with fairness and respect. A calm and purposeful atmosphere is evident throughout the school and supports pupils' wellbeing and engagement in learning. As a result, pupils demonstrate respect for others, contribute positively to the school community and develop a real sense of belonging.
28. Leaders place a high priority on developing pupils' confidence, self-esteem and self-awareness. Through the school's well-established oracy programme, regular opportunities for discussion and a culture in which pupils are encouraged to express and justify their views, pupils develop confidence in communicating their ideas and opinions. Staff model high-quality responses and encourage pupils to reflect on their thinking and learning. As a result, pupils contribute readily to lessons, communicate thoughtfully with adults and peers and demonstrate increasing confidence when expressing their views.
29. Leaders ensure that behaviour is managed effectively through clear expectations, positive relationships and consistent support. Pupils understand the difference between bullying and occasional unkind behaviour, know how to seek help and trust staff to respond appropriately when concerns arise. Leaders record all bullying and behaviour incidents appropriately, analyse information carefully, identify trends, implement support, and provide further education for pupils where required. Behaviour and bullying information is routinely shared with governors to enable them to have an overview of particular trends or patterns. Pupils behave appropriately around the school, interact respectfully with others and understand established routines.
30. Leaders maintain a well-considered programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE). Leaders review content regularly and adapt the provision in response to pupils' needs and statutory developments. Parents are well informed through the sharing of curriculum provision and regular meetings so that they understand what will be covered and when. Staff deliver content sensitively and appropriately, enabling pupils to discuss wellbeing, relationships and personal safety with confidence and to explore wider issues through assemblies and presentations by pupils.
31. Leaders provide a broad and inclusive physical education (PE) programme which promotes participation, resilience and healthy lifestyles. Leaders review participation and provision regularly and use this information, alongside pupils' views, to adapt and develop opportunities that reflect pupils' interests and needs. Pupils are encouraged to contribute ideas for activities, which has led to, for example, the introduction of yoga. As a result, pupils participate enthusiastically in a wide range

of physical activities, develop positive attitudes towards physical activity and wellbeing and understand the importance of maintaining healthy lifestyles.

32. Health and safety arrangements are managed effectively. Leaders maintain appropriate oversight of risk assessment procedures, premises, site security, first aid, medical provision and fire safety through regular monitoring, training, audits and governor scrutiny. The premises and accommodation are well maintained and resourced to provide an environment that supports pupils' learning, wellbeing and personal development. Suitable first aid arrangements are in place, including paediatric first aid provision within the early years. Incidents and near misses are reviewed appropriately and inform ongoing improvements to practice.
33. Leaders maintain suitable arrangements for supervision throughout the school day. Staff are deployed effectively during lessons, breaktimes, educational visits and residential trips and adapt arrangements appropriately to meet individual needs.
34. Leaders maintain suitable admission and attendance registers and exercise effective oversight of attendance through careful monitoring of patterns and regular review of attendance information. Leaders and governors use this information to inform timely intervention where concerns arise. Those with overall responsibility for attendance work with families, external agencies and pupils to prevent attendance from becoming a barrier to learning and provide appropriate support where needed. Attendance levels are high, and pupils contribute positively to promoting the importance of being in school, for example through producing posters and other initiatives designed to encourage regular participation and engagement.
35. Staff in the early years support children's physical, personal and emotional development effectively through secure routines, positive relationships and planned opportunities to develop fine and gross motor skills. Children participate in daily fine motor programmes, specialist PE provision and a range of outdoor activities that develop co-ordination, balance and physical competence. Staff promote emotional wellbeing through nurturing key person relationships, opportunities to identify and discuss feelings and carefully planned responsibilities that encourage independence and self-confidence. As a result, children develop positive attitudes towards learning, manage routines successfully, show increasing independence and engage confidently in both adult-led and child-initiated activities.

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

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

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

37. Leaders actively promote respect, responsibility and contribution to society through the delivery of the curriculum, assemblies, leadership opportunities and daily interactions. Staff model kindness, empathy and tolerance and encourage pupils to consider the perspectives and experiences of others. As a result, pupils demonstrate respectful relationships and understand that individuals may hold different beliefs, experiences and viewpoints while remaining equal members of the community.
38. Leaders provide extensive opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills and take on responsibility from the youngest age. Leaders review the effectiveness of leadership opportunities through discussions with pupils and monitoring of participation. Pupils undertake a wide range of roles, including as door monitors in the early years, school council representatives from Year 1, and wellbeing champions, eco-representatives, library leaders, gym squad members and house representatives. These opportunities enable pupils to share their views and contribute meaningfully to school life and to develop confidence, independence and self-advocacy. Leaders review pupils' feedback and use it to inform aspects of school development. As a result, pupils contribute to decision-making and influence developments, including improvements to playground areas, library provision and other aspects of school life.
39. Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to contribute to the wider community through charitable initiatives, fundraising and community partnerships, including organising fundraising activities for local and national charities selected by pupils. Leaders review participation and the contribution these opportunities make to pupils' personal development. As a result, pupils understand the importance of supporting others and how their actions contribute to local, national and international causes.
40. Leaders ensure that British values are embedded throughout school life. Through democratic processes, leadership opportunities, assemblies and curriculum experiences, pupils develop an understanding of their rights and responsibilities, the importance of fairness and respect for others and the value of contributing positively to their community. Discussions prompted by current affairs and visiting speakers encourage pupils to consider different perspectives thoughtfully and engage with wider social and global issues. Leaders' emphasis on the school's values, behaviour expectations and restorative approaches enables pupils to develop a clear understanding of right and wrong and the consequences of their actions. As a result, pupils demonstrate an understanding of compromise, participation and responsible citizenship and articulate the importance of listening to others and respecting differing viewpoints.
41. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to learn about public institutions, services and wider society through visitors, curriculum experiences, community engagement and external speakers. Through engagement with community helpers, public service representatives and professionals from a range of organisations, pupils develop an understanding of how individuals and organisations contribute to society. Living and learning within a diverse London community further supports pupils' understanding of their role within modern British society.
42. Leaders promote economic wellbeing progressively through PSHE, enterprise projects, financial workshops and practical learning experiences. Leaders review this provision through curriculum

monitoring and ensure that concepts build progressively across the school. As a result, pupils develop an understanding of budgeting, financial decision-making, loans, interest and the responsible use of money and can apply this knowledge in practical contexts.

43. Leaders broaden pupils' understanding of future opportunities through 'Cavendish courageous conversations', external speakers, alumni contributions and wider curriculum experiences. Leaders review the range of opportunities regularly to ensure that pupils encounter a broad range of future pathways. Pupils gain insight into a range of professions and develop an understanding of how individuals contribute to society. As a result, pupils develop aspirations for their future and a growing awareness of pathways beyond school.
44. Staff in the early years provide opportunities for children to develop their social understanding, independence, responsibility and awareness of the wider world through opportunities to take on helping roles, meeting visitors, participating in visits and firsthand experiences. Leaders review the breadth of these opportunities and their contribution to children's personal development. Through daily routines and collaborative activities, children learn to share, take turns, co-operate with others and consider different perspectives. As a result, children develop respect for different cultures, beliefs and backgrounds, demonstrate growing independence and social understanding and develop an awareness of their role within the community.

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

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

Safeguarding

46. Leaders maintain an effective safeguarding culture in which pupils' safety is prioritised, openly discussed and subject to regular oversight. They ensure that safeguarding remains everyone's responsibility through induction, regular training, weekly safeguarding updates and ongoing professional discussion.
47. Staff demonstrate secure knowledge of safeguarding procedures, including whistleblowing and those relating to low-level concerns, the 'Prevent' duty, online safety and reporting arrangements. They understand their responsibilities and follow procedures consistently when concerns arise. Staff are alert to risk and share concerns promptly and appropriately.
48. Those with overall safeguarding responsibility maintain detailed safeguarding records and review information regularly to identify patterns, monitor risk and inform decision-making. Safeguarding meetings, audits and monitoring activities enable leaders to evaluate practice and respond appropriately to emerging concerns. Leaders work effectively with external agencies and apply local safeguarding thresholds appropriately to secure support for pupils when required.
49. Safer recruitment procedures are implemented effectively. All required checks are completed and recorded appropriately on the single central record (SCR), and leaders maintain accurate recruitment records which are subject to regular scrutiny by suitably experienced governors.
50. Governors maintain oversight of safeguarding through regular meetings, audits, safeguarding reviews and direct engagement with safeguarding leaders. This enables them to monitor safeguarding practice and hold leaders to account effectively.
51. Leaders promote online safety through education, suitable internet filtering and monitoring systems and regular discussion with pupils. A well-established mobile phone-free environment supports pupils' wellbeing, engagement and responsible use of technology.
52. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and offline and know how to seek support if they are worried.
53. Staff understand restrictive intervention procedures and recognise that physical intervention should only be used when necessary to keep a pupil or others safe. Leaders ensure that any incidents are recorded, reviewed and communicated appropriately.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	The Cavendish School
Department for Education number	202/6038
Registered charity number	312727
Address	The Cavendish School 31 Inverness Street London NW1 7HB
Phone number	020 7485 1958
Email address	secretary@cavendish-school.co.uk
Website	www.cavendishschool.co.uk
Proprietor	The Cavendish School Charitable Trust Ltd.
Co-Chairs	Mrs Alice Gotto and Mr Mark Webster
Headteacher	Mrs Taryn Lombard
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	194
Date of previous inspection	13 to 15 June 2023

Information about the school

55. The Cavendish School is an independent day school for girls. The school is a registered charity overseen by a board of governors. The school comprises three sections: the early years section, for children aged three to five years; the pre-prep section, for children aged five to seven years; and the junior section, for pupils aged eight to eleven years.
56. There are 32 children in the early years, comprising a Nursery class and a Reception class.
57. The school has identified 37 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
58. The school has identified 33 pupils who speak English as an additional language.
59. The school states that it aims to be a place where girls dare and become spirited, versatile achievers. Its ethos emphasises kindness, resilience, confidence, inclusion, diversity and the development of each pupil's voice within a nurturing preparatory environment. The school promotes high academic expectations alongside pastoral care and personal development.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

2 to 4 June 2026

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

61. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

62. 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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