

School inspection report

30 January to 1 February 2024

Mill Hill International

Milespit Hill

London

NW7 2RX

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders are strong advocates of the school aims of 'instilling values, inspiring minds'. Leaders create a strong learning culture based on evaluation and review. The school celebrates its diversity and encourages pupils to be self-aware.
2. Leaders take an integrated approach to the teaching of English as an additional language (EAL), providing both specialist teachers and training all subject teachers so they are equipped to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all. Pupils who speak EAL make rapid progress in English and attain fluency in both everyday speech and in use of subject specific terminology. Pupils who speak EAL achieve well at GCSE and their results are significantly above national averages. The teaching of English as an additional language (EAL) is a significant strength of the school.
3. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported by the learning support department who provide direct specialist support to pupils and share effective strategies with staff.
4. Pupils successfully develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects in the balanced curriculum. Effective and well-planned teaching supports pupils to make good progress from their starting points. Teachers regularly assess pupils' work and give pupils helpful feedback which helps them to improve their work.
5. The embedded school ethos encourages mutual respect for all groups of people and supports good behaviour across the school. Bullying is rare and when it occurs, leaders take swift and appropriate action in line with school policy. Effective health and safety policies and procedures are appropriately implemented and promote the wellbeing of pupils.
6. Pupils are effectively prepared for life in modern British society through the well-planned curriculum. Leaders ensure that the relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum helps pupils to understand about healthy relationships. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum effectively promotes diversity and cultural understanding.
7. Careers advice is delivered using a commercial online programme and is effective for older pupils who are considering university application. However, this programme is less relevant to younger pupils and does not fully meet their needs.
8. Leaders ensure that the boarding provision meets the needs of boarders. Boarding accommodation is well-maintained and welcoming and boarding staff effectively promote the integration of Mill Hill International pupils into the boarding houses. Boarders appreciate the opportunity they have to live and learn in an inclusive and supportive boarding community.
9. Leaders and governors understand their safeguarding responsibilities well. Suitable policies and effective procedures ensure that pupils' wellbeing and safety are promoted and that the school meets the statutory requirements. Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training as part of their induction as well as annual update training. Pupils feel safe in school and know who to talk to if they have any concerns.

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:

- review of the content of the careers programme so that it more closely matches the needs of younger pupils in the school.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders have a clear vision for the future of the school which includes a focus on sustainability and providing improved facilities.
11. Leaders clearly communicate the aims of the school to staff and pupils. The aims are effectively built into school structures and shape the school development plan, providing momentum and direction.
12. Governors offer a range of appropriate skills, which are suitably utilised for the benefit of the school. Governors ensure that policies and procedures accurately reflect current statutory guidance and are effectively implemented. In tandem with senior leaders, governors systematically evaluate the effectiveness and success of the school so that pupils' wellbeing is actively promoted and that improvements are made where necessary.
13. Leaders and governors are trained in safeguarding and discharge their responsibilities effectively. The director of safeguarding for the foundation provides effective oversight of all aspects of child protection and reports termly to the full governing body.
14. Governors' committees systematically identify risks and ensure that mitigation measures are implemented. Governors regularly review the impact of the mitigation measures when they re-evaluate risk. Health and safety procedures are effective, and the school uses specialist outside agencies where appropriate.
15. Leaders and governors fulfil their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, and there is a suitable accessibility plan in place. Leaders provide equal opportunities to all and have recently introduced an equality, diversity and inclusion committee to promote increased understanding of matters of equality.
16. Useful information about the school is available either on the website or obtainable from the school. Parents receive regular and detailed reports on their child's progress.
17. Leaders follow the appropriate school complaints policy and deal with complaints in a timely manner.
18. The school site and buildings, including boarding houses, are secure and access is strictly and effectively controlled. The school is well maintained and suitably lit and heated and so is conducive to learning.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. Leaders provide a balanced curriculum which offers pupils opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects. The school offers three distinct courses – a Year 9 course for pupils intending to study GCSEs in Years 10 and 11, a two-year GCSE course for pupils in Year 10 and an intensive one year course for pupils in Year 11 designed to prepare them for A levels at their next school.
21. Most pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL) and dedicated English lessons form an important part of the curriculum. Pupils who speak English as an additional language typically make rapid progress as a result of specialist teaching adapted to meet the needs of pupils and enabling them to access the full curriculum.
22. Pupils benefit from the input of their subject teachers who are trained to support pupils to develop their understanding and use of English and subject specific vocabulary. Oracy is promoted in every lesson with pupils encouraged to discuss in small groups and to present to the class as a whole. Consequently, pupils make good progress from their starting points in terms of their command of subject specific vocabulary and appropriate use of linguistic structures. Pupils communicate well both in writing and orally and develop self-confidence through opportunities to take part in drama productions. Numeracy skills are well developed and pupils apply these skills effectively in a range of subjects, for example, in the sciences.
23. Most teaching makes use of interactive whiteboards which are linked to pupils' tablet devices. Pupils use their devices with practised ease to make notes, revise, present to the class and to access online texts and research.
24. Pupils develop effective skills in the creative subjects and many examples of pupil artwork and design pieces are displayed around the school. Music is an option for Year 9 pupils and many pupils study an individual instrument with guitar, piano, drums and violin being popular. Talented musicians join the Mill Hill School choir, orchestra or one of the many bands.
25. Teachers are knowledgeable and lessons are well planned which helps pupils to make good progress and to attain well. Pupil achievement of the highest grades at GCSE is significantly above the national average.
26. Leaders of provision for pupils who have SEND, ensure that pupils' needs are identified in a timely manner and that individual education plans to support pupils are appropriate. Leaders ensure that strategies to enhance pupils' learning are effectively implemented so that pupils receive effective support from staff. Consequently, pupils who have SEND make good progress.
27. The detailed framework for assessment is implemented by teachers and work is regularly marked, with detailed feedback given to pupils, both orally and in writing. This feedback helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. Leaders use a detailed tracking system to monitor pupils' attainment and progress and this allows targeted support to be offered as required. All subjects offer drop-in support clinics which support pupils to deepen their understanding of a topic.
28. The extensive enrichment and co-curricular programme provides pupils with opportunities to develop skills in a range of activities including computing, community action and film club. Teamwork activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme develop pupils' leadership and

life skills. Boarders appreciate the range of activities open to them in the evenings and at weekends. They enjoy taking part in the house music and dramatic productions which happen annually.

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

29. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

30. Leaders successfully promote mutual respect and tolerance reflecting its aim to respect and celebrate the diversity of the pupil body which comes from over 30 different countries. The issues of equality and respect are discussed frequently by teachers and, as a result, pupils are respectful in their interactions with each other.
31. The PSHE programme and assemblies are effective in promoting equality and respect for all groups of people. For example, older pupils sensitively and comprehensively define equality and discrimination and are knowledgeable of the protected characteristics.
32. Pupils develop their moral understanding through the effective PSHE programme, where pupils discuss a range of moral dilemmas. The chaplain provides support to pupils of all faiths or none and the weekly chapel service provide an opportunity for reflection for all pupils.
33. Leaders provide a comprehensive health curriculum, with pupils developing a good understanding of healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. Physical education lessons and a wider selection of sports related extra-curricular activities provide suitable opportunities for pupils to take part in physical exercise.
34. The effective RSE programme supports pupils to develop their understanding of healthy relationships. Pupils are well informed and understand the importance of respect and their responsibilities to themselves and others in a healthy relationship.
35. School leaders set high expectations of pupils' behaviour and make it clear that bullying is unacceptable. As a result, pupil behaviour is good and the rare cases of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively in line with school policy. Pupils are appropriately supervised during the school day and in boarding houses.
36. The pastoral care system, which includes staff within boarding houses, is effective in supporting pupils to feel happy and secure. Pupils trust the staff to have their best interests at heart and so grow in self-esteem and confidence. Pupils are appreciative of the lengths staff go to in providing support for them, such as the lunchtime clinics.
37. Leaders ensure that the premises and accommodation, including the boarding houses are well maintained. Health and safety procedures are implemented effectively, and appropriate measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire.
38. Boarding houses are well maintained, welcoming and comfortable. Boarders have suitable storage space for their belongings, including a secure cupboard. Boarders are provided with good quality meals and the house kitchens are well stocked with snacks and boarders are provided with facilities for preparing their own food. The views of boarders are regularly sought through the boarding council, house meetings and via prefects. Boarders can easily contact staff including at night.
39. The admissions and attendance registers are correctly maintained, and staff follow up any absences appropriately, including by informing the local authority when pupils leave the school. There are suitable arrangements for pupils who become unwell, and the medical centre provides appropriate

accommodation. First aid is administered in a timely manner and staff are suitably and regularly trained.

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. Respect and tolerance are core elements of the school's ethos. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils throughout the school to learn about their own and other cultures. Leaders ensure that pupils are effectively prepared for the responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
42. The PSHE curriculum enables pupils to better understand British values and to value individual differences. For example, pupils learn about human rights through interesting and balanced discussions. Pupils speak confidently about the religious festivals celebrated by other faiths and enjoy finding out about the food and culture associated with them.
43. Pupils learn about economic education through topics such as employment rights and responsibilities and managing finances. Teachers use quizzes during tutorial time to give pupils regular feedback about their learning and this supports pupils to be knowledgeable about current affairs.
44. Pupils value the opportunities they have to take up leadership roles and to contribute positively to the school community. For example, pupils can be prefects or members of one of several school councils or boarders' committees. Pupils feel that their views are valued, for example, in the provision of all-weather table tennis tables to support pupils during leisure time.
45. Pupils have opportunities to contribute to life beyond the school through varied activities such as helping pensioners with digital skills and also sharing cookery classes with them. Pupils take part in regular fundraising activities for a range of local and national charities.
46. The school provides careers guidance through fortnightly tutor periods and is largely focused upon using an online university and careers programme. This is helpful for older pupils considering university application. However, the provision does not consistently meet the needs of younger pupils.
47. The school's values, which include responsibility are strongly embedded in school life, and leaders apply rewards and sanctions in a fair and consistent manner. This helps pupils to develop a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong.

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

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

Safeguarding

49. Leaders ensure that pupils are aware of the many ways that they can raise their concerns, including speaking to trusted staff and using an online reporting system. All staff are trained in safeguarding and there is an open and transparent culture in which staff are vigilant and prioritise pupil safety. Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, including boarders are effective.
50. When concerns arise, external agencies are consulted in an appropriate and timely manner, and the school works effectively with them. Leaders use well-managed systems to record and share any concerns raised by staff and they keep detailed records.
51. The school's child protection policy reflects the most recent statutory guidance and sets out suitable procedures for protecting pupils from harm. Leaders take appropriate measures to manage risk and to protect pupils from harm. Leaders ensure that all staff and volunteers receive suitable safeguarding training when they join the school. Safeguarding training is updated regularly so that staff are kept informed of the latest guidance.
52. Staff understand how to recognise and report a safeguarding concern, including child-on-child abuse. Staff understand child protection procedures, including those for online safety and recognise the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism.
53. Safeguarding arrangements are overseen by the foundation's director of safeguarding who reports termly to the Court of Governors. Governors conduct regular checks upon the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures, including a scrutiny of staff recruitment records and an annual review of safeguarding practice and policies. Leaders have a thorough understanding of their role in supporting pupils who are in their care.
54. The cordial and trusting relationships which exist between staff and pupils contribute to the culture where safeguarding is of paramount importance. Pupils feel safe at school, and know who to approach if they are worried or have any safeguarding concerns.
55. Leaders ensure that safer recruitment checks are carried out for all staff, volunteers and governors and that a suitable central record of appointments is kept.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Mill Hill International
Department for Education number	302/6000
Registered charity number	1064758
Address	Mill Hill International Milespit Hill London NW7 2RX
Phone number	020 38263333
Email address	office@millhimminternational.org.uk
Website	millhill.org.uk/international
Proprietor	Mill Hill School Foundation
Chair	Mr Elliot Lipton
Headmistress	Ms Sarah Bellotti
Age range	15–17
Number of pupils	139
Number of boarding pupils	109
Date of previous inspection	21–23 January 2020

Information about the school

57. Mill Hill International is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged 15 to 17 years. It is one of nine schools in the Mill Hill Education Group which between them educate pupils aged 3 to 18 years on nine separate sites, four within close proximity of each other, the other five in North London, Hertfordshire and Kent. A Court of Governors oversees all nine schools.
58. Boarders are integrated into four Mill Hill School boarding houses, one of which is for female pupils, with the other houses accommodating both male and female pupils. The site of Mill Hill International is self-contained and is a five minutes' walk from Mill Hill School.
59. The school has identified ten pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive specialist help. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
60. English is an additional language for 125 pupils, whose needs are supported by a team of specialist EAL teachers along with their classroom teachers.
61. The school states its aims are to provide a language-rich environment for excellent learning and a forward-looking curriculum, celebrating equality, diversity and inclusivity. The intention is that pupils have an enriching experience that encourages pupil voice and equips them for a global world with a sense of confidence, wellbeing and purpose.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

30 January to 1 February 2024

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

63. 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 CEO
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

64. 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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