

Inspection of The American School in London

1 Waverley Place, London NW8 0NP

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, staff and leaders have a shared understanding of the school's core values which underpin the school's work. As a result, the culture in school is of respect, kindness and doing the right thing. Pupils feel safe, part of a community and are comfortable talking to staff about any concerns they may have.

The school instils in pupils a sense of responsibility. For example, pupils know that to come unprepared for lessons is to miss out. Pupils readily take up opportunities to do voluntary community work, such as working in a soup kitchen or helping in a local primary school.

The school ensures that there is something for everyone among the huge variety of clubs and activities that leaders organise. Sports and performing arts are a key part of school life and make sure that everyone feels welcome, valued and respected. Sports teams are open to all, regardless of ability or skill, for example.

Pupils attend a wide range of outings locally, nationally and internationally. Some of these are linked to their academic work, such as a social studies visit to Hadrian's Wall or visits to galleries and museums to see artwork. Pupils in the lower school enjoy going regularly to the school's garden to explore nature and grow their own vegetables.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders, including the proprietor body, have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement identified at the previous standard inspection. They have sharpened their monitoring processes and put rigorous systems in place to ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently. Parents and carers in general appreciate all the work that the school has done to secure improvement and they value the high standard of education that their children receive.

The curriculum is exceptionally rich and broad across all phases. In Kindergarten, the school carefully plans a programme of learning that prepares children well for lower school. Pupils study core subjects, such as English, science and languages, from lower school to Grade 12. A wide range of optional courses in the secondary phase provides pupils with the chance to explore specialised topics within subjects or to try something new. In Grades 11 and 12, sixth-form students can take 'advanced placements', such as Spanish literature, psychology and calculus, and study subjects in depth. The curriculum is well designed and sequenced to ensure that pupils reach ambitious end points at each stage of their education.

Teachers have expertise in their subject areas. Staff enjoy working here and feel well supported by leaders. The school prioritises bespoke continuous development, which helps teachers to maintain and perfect their subject-specific knowledge. Teachers are skilled at checking for and addressing pupils' misconceptions. They make sure that pupils are secure in the essential knowledge they need before

moving on to more complex work. Teachers have a wealth of high-quality resources at hand which they use appropriately to support pupils' learning. They know their pupils well and tailor teaching and resources to individuals, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Specialist staff carefully plan support for pupils with SEND and work with teachers to ensure that all pupils achieve exceptionally well.

Reading is a core part of the curriculum. In Kindergarten, children start to learn to recognise sounds in words before starting formal teaching of phonics. Staff are well trained in phonics and follow a consistent approach. Weaker readers are helped to catch up quickly. Older pupils read and select texts to inform their learning and read a wide range of texts for pleasure. For example, following a poetry workshop, students in Grade 11 brought in works by their favourite poets to discuss and analyse.

Standards of behaviour are high around the school. In lessons, pupils are highly motivated to work hard and they do so without disruption. They demonstrate self-discipline and are keen to learn. Children in the Kindergarten, for example, showed perseverance when using the climbing wall. Attendance rates are high. The school supports pupils effectively to improve any issues with attendance or punctuality.

Pupils routinely work together and they support each other well. Relationships are positive and friendly. Incidents of bullying and unkindness are uncommon. Pupils are taught to be accepting of people's differences and to listen respectfully to different points of view during class discussions and debates.

Pupils take on responsibilities as members of the student council and peer mentors, or leading their own school club. Aspiring journalists contribute to the school's newspapers, 'The Scroll' and 'The Standard,' writing about topical issues and school news. Pupils are taught leadership skills to help them carry out their roles effectively. For example, sports captains are helped with strategies to build team culture and to deal with disciplinary issues. The school's extensive careers programme helps pupils to make decisions about their next steps in high school and beyond. Students in the sixth form receive personalised guidance for university applications and access to a wide-ranging programme of visiting speakers.

The school has ensured that the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 are met. The school meets all the relevant standards of the early years foundation stage.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	101168
DfE registration number	213/6215
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	10286372
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,422
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	275
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The American School in London Educational Trust
Chair	Erin Roth
Headteacher	Matthew Horvat
Annual fees (day pupils)	£32,800 to £38,000
Telephone number	020 7449 1200
Website	www.asl.org
Email address	webmaster@asl.org
Date of previous inspection	14 to 16 December 2021

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up post in July 2023.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is organised into three phases, known as divisions. These are lower school (ages four to 10, including Kindergarten for children aged four and five), middle school (ages 11 to 13) and high school (ages 14 to 18). The last two grades in high school division, grades 11 and 12, represent what is known as sixth form in the United Kingdom.
- The school is exempt from the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage.
- At the previous standard inspection in December 2021, the school's overall effectiveness was judged as requires improvement. The school was required to submit a statutory action plan which was evaluated in May 2022 by Ofsted and rejected by the Department for Education (DfE). The school had a progress monitoring inspection in October 2022. The school met all of the independent standards that were checked during that inspection.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of the trustee board, including the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art, languages, mathematics, reading and social sciences. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the curriculum in other subjects. They reviewed curriculum plans and visited lessons in a range of subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and

considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of evidence to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors considered online survey responses, including 692 free-text responses from parents, 607 responses to the survey for pupils and 253 responses from the school's staff.

Inspection team

Jude Wilson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Simon Conway	His Majesty's Inspector
Karen Jaeggi	Ofsted Inspector
Lucy Bruce	Ofsted Inspector
Nigel Clemens	Ofsted Inspector

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