

# School inspection report

18 to 20 November 2025

## **Alleyn's Oakfield**

125 – 128 Thurlow Park Road

West Dulwich

London

SE21 8HP

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'.

## Contents

<b>SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
AREAS FOR ACTION.....	4
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS .....	4
<b>SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....</b>	<b>5</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE .....	5
<b>SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....	7
<b>SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....</b>	<b>8</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....	9
<b>SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....</b>	<b>10</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY .....	11
<b>SAFEGUARDING .....</b>	<b>12</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING .....	12
<b>SCHEDULE OF UNMET STANDARDS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Section 3: Pupils’ physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Safeguarding .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<b>SCHOOL DETAILS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>INSPECTION DETAILS .....</b>	<b>17</b>

## Summary of inspection findings

1. The proprietor and the governing body have a clear plan and vision for the school. However, they have not ensured that leaders have the required knowledge to consistently fulfil all statutory responsibilities. As a result, not all the Standards are met and leaders do not consistently promote pupils' wellbeing.
2. Safeguarding records do not meet the statutory requirements of Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE). Additionally, arrangements for recording absence and reporting absences to the local authority do not meet statutory requirements.
3. Leaders promote the core values of respect, opportunity, curiosity, courage and kindness effectively through a carefully constructed curriculum that includes an effective programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE).
4. Teachers plan well-structured lessons that meet the needs of all pupils because they use assessment information effectively to adapt their teaching and ensure that every learner can access the curriculum successfully. Pupils enjoy their learning and they make good progress.
5. Pupils benefit from a wide variety of experiences to enhance their learning. Specialist teachers successfully help pupils to develop their creative and physical skills in lessons, when on trips and visits and in the extensive co-curricular programme.
6. In the early years, effective home-school communications help staff get to know the children well. Teaching staff keep children highly engaged, encourage participation, support turn-taking, and provide interesting activities that cover all areas of the curriculum. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points.
7. Health and safety policies, including those relating to fire safety and procedures, are robust and the school premises provide a safe, stimulating and suitable environment for all pupils to learn well.
8. A new behaviour policy has recently been introduced and pupils know how to behave well. However, not all teachers implement the new behaviour policy effectively in lessons and so, in some lessons, low-level disruptive behaviour can impact other pupils' learning.
9. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to engage successfully with the wider community. As a result, pupils enthusiastically take part in a variety of service activities in the local community and successfully organise charitable fundraising opportunities.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are not 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 not met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are not met.

### Areas for action

The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:

- demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school Standards are consistently met
- fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school Standards are consistently met and
- actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils

so that:

- procedures for recording pupils' absences, and reporting those that meet the criteria to the local authority, follow statutory guidance
- safeguarding records contain details of all actions taken by leaders, as required by statutory guidance.

### Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that the behaviour policy is implemented consistently across the pre-prep and prep sections of the school.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Governors, alongside school leaders, have adopted a collaborative approach to the next phase of development for the school, incorporating the views of parents, staff and pupils. Governors challenge leaders through asking questions and regularly reviewing aspects of the school during meetings and visits.
11. However, leaders do not always follow statutory guidance and governors do not always exercise effective oversight of leaders. Consequently, they do not ensure that all the Standards are met. Statutory guidance relating to attendance registers is not implemented correctly and school leaders do not report cases of persistent absence due to illness to the local authority. In some cases, safeguarding records are not comprehensive and do not contain details of all actions taken, as required by statutory guidance.
12. Leaders ensure that the aims and values of the school are clearly communicated to all stakeholders and they are central to the daily lives of pupils. These aims and values are interwoven into lesson plans and inform the expectations of conduct throughout the school. Pupils understand them and generally do their best to demonstrate kindness, curiosity and respect.
13. Leaders have devised and are implementing a suitable behaviour policy throughout the school. However, in some lessons, teachers are not implementing the policy consistently when dealing with low-level disruptive behaviour.
14. Leaders, overseen by experienced governors, identify and mitigate risks of harm through robust risk assessments. Risk assessments for specific areas, activities and equipment are consistently updated, and governors receive detailed reports to monitor the implementation of safety measures.
15. Governors and leaders have drawn up a suitable complaints policy that meets statutory guidance. This policy is well implemented and complaints are handled in a timely manner. Governors fulfil their role in the complaints process effectively, including convening a complaints panel if required.
16. Leaders liaise effectively with the local authority for any pupil in receipt of an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), including providing information related to annual reviews, funding and other relevant evidence and documentation. They report any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition points to the relevant local authority.
17. Leaders have successfully implemented an accessibility strategy to meet the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010. They promote a culture that respects differences and actively consider approaches that enable pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to access all areas of the curriculum.

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

18. **Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

19. Pupils across the school benefit from a well-balanced curriculum that enables them to acquire new knowledge across a broad and appropriate range of subjects. In the early years, leaders deliver a well-designed curriculum and plan their teaching carefully across the required areas of learning. Specialist teaching in Spanish, physical education (PE) and music encourages children to develop their communication, curiosity and imagination.
20. From Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is carefully planned to ensure progression and to provide connections across different areas of learning, allowing pupils to build on prior knowledge and develop new skills. Subject leaders work collaboratively with senior leaders to identify areas for cross-curricular development. Consequently, pupils can, for instance, link work in English with that in humanities when studying the Holocaust.
21. Teachers plan their lessons diligently and ensure that their content and delivery are appropriate to the ages and aptitudes of the pupils. Pupils participate in practical, creative and academic activities, applying their knowledge in meaningful contexts and demonstrating curiosity and imagination. Teachers use questioning skilfully, so that pupils are given opportunities to explore their ideas. As a result, pupils demonstrate a genuine desire to interrogate information, asking important questions that develop their understanding of, for instance, historical events, scientific connections or mathematical principles. Pupils' progress and confidence are further supported through positivity and praise in lessons.
22. Pupils understand how to improve their work through verbal feedback in lessons and effective marking in their books. Pupils are adept at reflecting on and responding to comments made. They understand what they need to do to improve their learning and the next steps they should take. Targets are identified for all pupils and communicated to parents through detailed and regular reports and parents' meetings.
23. In the early years, leaders plan effectively to encourage pupils to engage in meaningful play-based activities that reflect their interests, while also beginning to develop numeracy and literacy skills. Children develop understanding of number bonds and the sounds that letters make. Children make good progress and are well prepared for the transition into Year 1.
24. Leaders analyse and use assessment data effectively across all subjects to monitor the progress that pupils make, identifying individual targets and implementing purposeful support measures when required. Pupils make good progress. In Year 6, pupils are successful in achieving entry and a range of scholarships to senior schools of their choice.
25. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are assessed on entry to the school. Their language acquisition is then carefully checked and monitored to help them make progress. Leaders provide support for pupils who speak EAL across all subjects. As a result, these pupils gain confidence and make rapid progress from their starting points.
26. Leaders who oversee pupils who have SEND are well qualified to identify and support their needs. Through the implementation of carefully written individual learning plans, pupils access the curriculum fully. Some pupils receive one-to-one support and the adults working with them are involved in lesson planning to ensure their support is appropriate. Subtle, but suitable, adaptations

are made throughout the school, where needed, to ensure all pupils who have SEND can engage meaningfully in lessons. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress.

27. There is an extensive co-curricular programme of activities, including construction, book club, singing and sports clubs, which are available to all pupils. These activities provide opportunities for pupils to learn new skills and develop and refine existing ones. Pupils achieve success when participating in whole-school dramatic productions, UK Mathematics Challenge activities and local music festivals.

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

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

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

29. Leaders ensure that the PSHE curriculum is implemented effectively and that it supports pupils' self-knowledge, self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are encouraged to accept, understand and appreciate the differences of others, so that mutual respect and trust is embedded in their daily lives. The PSHE curriculum, which reflects the school's core values, ensures an age-appropriate progression of topics is covered throughout the school. Topics include 'celebrating differences', 'dreams and goals' and 'being me'. Within these, pupils explore their identity and aspirations, alongside learning about diversity and acceptance. Pupils and families are invited to share their experiences in school to further promote harmony and understanding within the school community.
30. Leaders do not ensure practice for completing attendance registers meets statutory guidance. The correct codes are not always used and information about reasons for absences is not routinely recorded in the electronic register system. Cases of persistent absence are not reported to the local authority as required.
31. Leaders deliver an age-appropriate relationships education and relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum throughout the school. Parents are appropriately consulted about its content and delivery. Pupils learn about healthy relationships and explore family, friendships and social interactions. Carefully planned lessons allow pupils to understand their changing bodies and to express their feelings. Parent workshops are provided so that close home-school links are developed to teach sensitive topics collaboratively, so that pupils understand healthy relationships.
32. Pupils behave well around the school. They are polite, enjoy their time in the playground and play well with their friends. Leaders introduced a new behaviour policy recently, but it is not being consistently applied in all lessons. As a result, low-level disruptive behaviour sometimes has an impact on the progress of other pupils. Bullying is rare and, if it happens, teachers respond swiftly and appropriately. Through anti-bullying workshops and visiting speakers, pupils learn strategies and develop their understanding so that they are better equipped to spot the signs of bullying and help to prevent it.
33. Leaders prioritise pupils' wellbeing by planning themed weeks about neurodiversity and mental health. As a result, pupils strengthen their understanding of issues that can have an impact on themselves and their peers. Leaders provide mentoring for pupils who are struggling with mental health issues, allowing them a safe space to talk. Through these initiatives, they support pupils' self-esteem and wellbeing effectively.
34. Leaders in the PE department implement a diverse, inclusive curriculum that meets the needs of pupils and incorporates and tracks perseverance, wellbeing and the importance of positive attitudes to success and loss. The PE curriculum is ambitious and pupils are actively encouraged to challenge themselves through activities such as vaulting for younger pupils and competitive sports for all pupils as they progress through the school. Leaders in this subject constantly seek ways to improve and enhance the curriculum, such as a recent audit of sporting hobbies and interests of pupils outside school. Children in the early years are provided with activities to refine their gross motor skills with specialist PE staff. Practitioners in the early years plan activities that promote children's physical development, such as digging in the outdoor play area and riding wheeled bikes to develop their gross motor skills.

35. Pupils' self-esteem is supported by the school's core values, which are consistently modelled by staff in their interactions with pupils. This positive culture encourages pupils to take pride in their achievements. They can recognise their successes and reflect on areas for improvement, showing a growing awareness of their own personal development. Staff provide encouragement and constructive feedback, fostering resilience and a positive attitude to challenges, which supports pupils' self-confidence across the curriculum.
36. There is an appropriate programme of activities for children in the early years, with a suitable balance of child- and adult-led learning. Children in the early years enjoy the opportunities provided by their teachers to run, climb and spend time playing and learning outdoors. Throughout, teachers engage in active play with children, model appropriate actions and behaviours and encourage children to explore their feelings and relationships with others.
37. Supervision throughout the school is consistently effective and appropriate staff-to-child ratios in the early years are always maintained to ensure children's safety and wellbeing. Staff demonstrate a high level of vigilance when supporting pupils to move safely between the school's two sites, carefully managing transitions and maintaining close attention. Risk assessments are routinely applied and staff are proactive in identifying and mitigating any potential hazards, ensuring that all aspects of pupils' daily routines are closely monitored to keep pupils safe.
38. Staff are suitably and regularly trained in first aid, including in paediatric first aid for those working with children in the early years, and there is a suitable space for pupils to receive first aid. There are clear and well-known procedures for administering medication for all pupils, including for children in the early years.
39. Policies to ensure the health and safety of pupils are robust, comprehensive and regularly reviewed and monitored by the governing body to ensure compliance with current legislation. The accommodation and premises are carefully maintained and are suitable for the needs of pupils, supporting both their learning and recreational activities safely and effectively. Comprehensive fire risk assessments are conducted regularly, with all potential hazards identified and addressed promptly. Fire safety procedures, including clear evacuation routes, well-maintained fire alarms, extinguishers and emergency lighting are in place and routinely checked. Staff and pupils participate in regular fire drills, allowing them to respond confidently and safely in the event of an emergency.

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

- 40. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.**

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

41. Leaders promote respect for British society, institutions and values through the PSHE curriculum, which is well developed and shows progression throughout the school. Trips and visits to places of interest, including the Royal Courts of Justice and the Houses of Parliament, underpin pupils' understanding and respect for public services and the rule of law and strengthen their ability to distinguish right from wrong.
42. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to link their learning with the wider world through real-life experiences, such as visits to the British Museum for still life drawing in art and trips to theatre productions linked to drama.
43. Pupils' financial understanding is enhanced by initiatives such as an enterprise fair, where pupils design and make their own products before holding a sale of goods. They develop their understanding of costing products from manufacture to sale to maximise profit. Topics taught in mathematics further improve financial knowledge so that pupils have a greater understanding and appreciation of the value of money.
44. Older pupils are given opportunities to pursue independent projects and research. They use their skills to support charitable work, including assembling kits for homeless people and creating dementia-friendly touch boards to support charities in their local area. Pupils are encouraged to take the initiative by organising pupil-led events, such as art exhibitions and cake sales, which raise funds for a variety of causes. These experiences help pupils to develop organisational and leadership skills, while fostering a noticeable sense of social responsibility and an understanding of how they can contribute positively to wider society.
45. Pupils are encouraged to engage with their local community and the environment on a regular basis. Activities such as visits to a local park, where pupils assist with planting seedlings, help them understand the importance of plants within the ecosystem and the wider environmental impact of their actions. These hands-on experiences allow pupils to improve outdoor spaces, develop a sense of stewardship and gain an appreciation for sustainable practices that benefit both their community and the natural world.
46. Through the PSHE curriculum, discussions led by former pupils and parents, and assemblies, pupils explore future careers and broaden their understanding of the world beyond school by listening to speakers, including a video game designer and a roboticist whose creations are used to explore Mars.
47. In the early years, pupils co-operate well with one another and engage happily in their learning. They show well-developed social skills such as child-initiated turn-taking at the construction table and in mathematics activities. The social development of children in the early years is fostered by well-qualified staff who take time to build good home-school links to ensure they know the children well.
48. Pupils are well prepared for their transition to secondary school, including through preparation for school entry examinations. Leaders ensure regular wellbeing check-ins occur with older pupils to check they are happy, confident and feel well supported for the next stage of their education.

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

**49. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

50. There are weaknesses in the quality and consistency of individual record-keeping in safeguarding files. Concerns, decision-making, contact with external agencies and information on how actions are followed up are not always recorded in sufficient detail. Arrangements do not follow statutory guidance as described in KCSIE.
51. The school's safeguarding policy is comprehensive and reflects the latest statutory guidance. Staff are well informed about contextual safeguarding issues, including risks outside the school environment, and they receive regular training that incorporates the latest updates and guidance, including the government's 'Prevent' duty. They understand how to listen to children and report any concerns they have promptly. All staff have a clear understanding of the school's internal reporting systems, as well as the staff code of conduct and whistleblowing policy. They understand how to raise concerns about any adults working in the school, including procedures for escalation if required.
52. The school has effective online safety measures in place, including comprehensive internet filtering and monitoring systems to protect pupils from inappropriate content and potential online risks. Robust procedures are followed whenever concerns are raised, ensuring that any incidents are investigated promptly and appropriate actions are taken. Pupils receive structured guidance on online safety through PSHE and computing lessons, where they learn strategies to protect their personal information, recognise potential dangers and behave responsibly online. Regular discussions and age-appropriate activities help pupils understand safe and respectful online behaviour. Pupils report feeling safe at school and demonstrate a clear understanding of how to raise concerns with trusted adults, knowing that their worries will be taken seriously and acted upon.
53. Governors and leaders ensure safer recruitment processes are robust. Recruitment checks are carried out on all staff before they begin work at the school. The single central record of checks carried out before employment commences is accurate. Staff involved in interviewing candidates are trained in safer recruitment.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 54. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.**

## Schedule of unmet Standards

### Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR <sup>1</sup> Part 8, paragraph 34(1)	The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school –
34(1)(a)	demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
34(1)(b)	fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
34(1)(c)	actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

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

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 15	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

### Safeguarding

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –
7(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
7(b)	such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
EYFS 3.9	If providers have concerns about children's safety or welfare, they must immediately notify their local authority children's social care team, in line with local reporting procedures, and, in emergencies, the police. Providers must also take into account the government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales'. All schools are required to have regard to the government's statutory guidance

<sup>1</sup> The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('ISSR')

	<p>'Keeping Children Safe in Education', and other childcare providers may also find it helpful to read this guidance.</p>
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## School details

<b>School</b>	Alleyn's Oakfield
<b>Department for Education number</b>	208/6109
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1161864
<b>Address</b>	Alleyn's Oakfield 125 – 128 Thurlow Park Road West Dulwich London SE21 8HP
<b>Phone number</b>	020 8670 4206
<b>Email address</b>	office@oakfield.dulwich.sch.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.oakfield.dulwich.sch.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Alleyn's Schools Group
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Chris Stylianou
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gemma Davies
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	217
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 to 24 November 2022

## Information about the school

55. Alleyn's Oakfield is an independent, co-educational preparatory school in West Dulwich. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and chair of governors have been appointed. The school is now part of the Alleyn's Schools Group, whose governors provide proprietorial oversight.
56. There are 41 children in the early years comprising one Nursery and two Reception classes.
57. The school has identified 61 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
58. The school has identified English as an additional language for 16 pupils.
59. The school states its aims are to enable pupils to be all they can be. Its purpose is to offer a joyful, nurturing start to a lifelong love of learning, rooted in the 'Alleyn's ROCCK' values – respect, opportunity, curiosity, courage and kindness, which are embedded across every aspect of school life and bring power and purpose to the school community. It aims to promote respect, wellbeing and diversity in a caring community where every individual can flourish; to develop curiosity, wonder, creativity and a love of learning; and to inspire ambition and intellectual rigour through teaching and learning.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

18 to 20 November 2025

60. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The on-site inspection was quality assured by a monitor.

61. 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 safeguarding governor
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

#### Independent Schools Inspectorate

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For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)