

School inspection report

17 to 19 September 2024

Meoncross School

Burnt House Lane

Stubbington

Fareham

PO14 2EF

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

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Summary of inspection findings

1. The school successfully meets its aim of providing a supportive family-like environment where pupils can thrive both personally and academically. Leaders maintain effective oversight of the school and adopt a structured approach to educational leadership, risk management, complaints handling, and communication.
2. The provision and quality of education, training, and recreation supports the development of confident, capable, and well-rounded pupils. Academic outcomes are good for pupils throughout the school, with pupils making progress over time and achieving well at GCSE.
3. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are quickly identified across all key stages. However, the action plans developed for these pupils are not always effectively implemented.
4. There is an extensive extra-curricular provision with clubs including cooking, music and sports, which are accessible to all ages.
5. Pupils are well prepared for life beyond school. Leaders provide comprehensive careers education and opportunities for pupils to contribute to both the school and the wider community.
6. Pupils demonstrate respectful relationships with adults and each other. Leaders promote the importance of inclusivity, mutual respect, and preparing pupils for active participation in British society.
7. An appropriate personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme is in place which adheres to statutory guidance and provides pupils with suitable understanding and greater self-knowledge. The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum is age-appropriate and covers all key areas.
8. Leaders ensure that there are robust policies in place which are usually effectively used. There have been minor lapses in the application of the health and safety policy in practice.
9. Safeguarding is securely managed and policies and procedures are well embedded. Staff are suitably trained in how to report and record 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 that health and safety policies are implemented rigorously and consistently
- ensure that strategies for supporting pupils who have SEND are fully established in all year groups and subject areas.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. The leadership, management, and governance of the school are well structured. They possess the relevant expertise and qualifications to ensure that the Standards are met and the requirements of the early years foundation stage framework are fulfilled.
11. Pupils' wellbeing is a central focus, with a range of strategies in place to support pupils' physical, emotional, and mental health. These programmes are informed by feedback from pupils, parents, and staff and are effective. The school's leadership team engages closely with pupils, creating a supportive environment that prioritises pupil welfare.
12. Professional development is a priority for leaders. Staff are provided with regular opportunities to enhance their skills through training and professional development. In the early years, leaders demonstrate strong subject knowledge and management skills, meeting regulatory expectations for early years education.
13. The leadership of the EYFS at the school is highly effective. There is strong governance ensuring the delivery of a well-rounded, high-quality education. Children benefit from the additional breadth of curriculum provided by specialist music and dance teachers.
14. The leadership of the provision for pupils who have SEND is generally effective. However, pupils' action plans and teachers' practice are not entirely consistent in this area.
15. The school's family-centred ethos is consistently reflected in its policies and practice. This ethos promotes inclusivity, respect, and positive relationships throughout the school community. Daily operations are closely aligned with the school's values, creating a cohesive and nurturing environment.
16. There is a comprehensive risk management framework in place that leaders review and update regularly. Risk assessments cover all areas of school life including safeguarding, health and safety, and extra-curricular activities. The leadership team identifies and mitigates risk effectively. Incident reports and audits are conducted regularly. However, oversight in this area is not always entirely secure resulting in minor lapses in the effective implementation of policy.
17. Leaders have ensured that a suitable accessibility plan is in place and that the school fulfils its duty under the Equality Act.
18. The complaints procedure is clearly defined and well communicated to the school community. Leaders ensure that complaints are addressed promptly and fairly. School records demonstrate that leaders handle complaints transparently and use feedback from issues raised to make further improvements.
19. Leaders provide relevant information to parents, pupils, and staff. Newsletters, parent portals, and regular pupil reports, keep the school community informed about key aspects. The school regularly seeks feedback from parents and staff to assess the clarity and accessibility of its communications, making improvements as necessary. This clear and open communication fosters strong relationships with the wider school community and supports the school's inclusive ethos.

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

20. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. The broad and interesting curriculum is taught effectively by well-qualified staff. Children in EYFS and pupils in year 1 and year 2 effectively build on their early numeracy and literary skills. Equally, in other subjects, such as French, they are taught by specialist teachers ensuring pupils are well prepared for the transition into the widening curriculum in the upper school. This curriculum has been broadened by the recent addition of new subjects, including food technology and psychology, allowing pupils to develop a wide range of skills, abilities and interests.
22. The quality of teaching is generally secure. Most lessons are well planned and taught so that pupils can learn and achieve well. Achievement at GCSE demonstrates that pupils make good progress over time; results in geography, performing arts and history exemplify this.
23. The school's systems for checking pupils' progress are mostly effective. The information, leaders and teachers hold, is often used in a timely way to identify and intervene when pupils need additional help. However, support for pupils who have SEND is not consistently put into place as pupils move through the school. Whilst action plans are written for pupils who have SEND, these are not consistently implemented throughout the school meaning that pupils are not always receiving the necessary support to access the full curriculum.
24. The curriculum in the early years ensures that children receive a strong start to their education. Lessons are well planned, promoting enthusiasm for learning and the development of key skills. Children are confident to move onto the next stage of their education when the time comes. Classrooms are well designed and there is creative use of the outdoor area for children to practise their skills further.
25. In the EYFS, staff demonstrate a deep understanding of the needs of pupils who have SEND. Teaching is adapted accordingly to ensure that children, regardless of their starting points, make progress. Leaders and key staff carefully monitor and discuss each child's progress to ensure individual needs are met.
26. Across all stages, fundamental British values are integrated into curriculum planning, ensuring these are actively considered and reflected in teaching.
27. The school offers a wide-ranging recreational programme. In the lower school, pupils enjoy opportunities in sports, academic disciplines, creative and performing arts, which contribute to their broader personal development. Each subject department also organises extra-curricular activities to enhance pupils' appreciation of their subjects, allowing them to explore their interests in greater depth.
28. Pupils' experience is enhanced by a well-developed programme of school trips. Previous trips have been focused on academic development such as the GCSE science live event and a visit to the Goethe institute, ecological interests such as visits to the living rainforest and the alpaca farm and sporting visits to local outdoor activity and camping centres.

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. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum is supported by appropriate policies, plans, and schemes of work that are implemented effectively. Pupils' wellbeing is prioritised through a programme of support and intervention. Teachers make curriculum adjustments to meet individual needs. This approach maintains a focus on both academic progress and mental and physical health for pupils in both the upper and lower schools.
31. The school provides opportunities for pupils to learn about equality, diversity and respect for protected characteristics. There are a variety of forums for pupils to discuss their experiences and learn about equality and diversity, such as PSHE sessions and the diversity club. The diversity club members help to raise awareness of significant topics through organising assemblies about Black history month and the contributions made by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals throughout history.
32. A well-structured PSHE and RSE programme is in place in which teachers tailor content appropriately to the age and needs of pupils. Parents are informed about the content of schemes of work, ensuring that the required topics are covered. Keeping safe is a key topic and is revisited across year groups to include safety online, first aid, relationships and healthy lifestyles. These lessons begin to help pupils to navigate a range of experiences and issues which they might encounter in their future lives.
33. The PE department fosters a culture that supports physical activity as a means of enhancing an individual's health and mental wellbeing. Pupils have access to a broad range of extra-curricular activities which encourage socialisation, the development of hobbies and physical engagement. Activities such as the outdoor learning programme and house-based competitions help to build pupils' self-esteem and mental resilience. Most pupils represent the school in a range of sports teams with many additionally participating in the local badminton, tennis, basketball and karate clubs.
34. Pupils contribute to their community especially through their involvement in raising money for charities. Pupils are proud of the impact they make through their chosen charity work.
35. Pupils enjoy the range of healthy lunch options provided by the school's in-house catering service. There are robust systems in place for managing food allergies, ensuring the health and safety of pupils.
36. The school's first aid policy is implemented effectively by a well-trained and caring team of first aid leaders, supplemented by over 30 staff members trained in emergency first aid. Additionally, all EYFS staff are trained in paediatric first aid. Medical premises provide a safe environment for pupils, and when using these facilities pupils feel safe and well cared for.
37. Fire safety requirements under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order are met, and records of regular fire drills are maintained.
38. An appropriate behaviour policy is in place and effectively implemented. There is a clear rewards process and pupils enjoy collecting 'MX reward points' and being recognised in termly celebration

assemblies. The school encourages pupils to be 'upstanders' rather than 'bystanders' in the face of inappropriate behaviour.

39. An effective anti-bullying strategy is in place within the school, with incidents logged in a central system and reviewed regularly.
40. Adequate supervision is provided throughout the school day, and attendance records are monitored carefully, with absences followed up promptly and the correct information forwarded to the local authority when pupils arrive at or leave the school at non-standard transition points.
41. Pupils in all year groups are encouraged to take on positions of responsibility, such as house captains and school council representatives. They value the opportunity to influence decisions, such as changes to the uniform policy.

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

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

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

43. There is a robust careers education programme, delivered across year groups and aligned with the Gatsby benchmarks. Careers lessons in years 7 to 11 are supplemented by activities such as assemblies, work experience opportunities, and guest speaker events. Pupils receive tailored guidance and develop the knowledge they need to make decisions for their future. Pupils begin to learn skills which will help them to navigate life in the workplace and their responsibilities as members of British society.
44. Pupils have many opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the school community. Pupils take on leadership roles such as school officers, sports leaders and activity coordinators and so learn the importance of accepting responsibility for their actions. These roles foster leadership skills and instil a sense of accountability. The school also places an emphasis on understanding and respecting the rule of law and British institutions. Opportunities for pupils to engage in democratic processes, such as the election of school council representatives and a recent mock election help to build their understanding of citizenship and governance.
45. The promotion of fundamental British values (FBV) is woven throughout the school's ethos and curriculum. Staff instil the values of democracy, respect for others, and adherence to the rule of law through assemblies, classroom discussions, and wider curricular activities such as visits to Westminster and contact with the local MP. In PSHE, pupils are encouraged to reflect on principles of right and wrong during lessons on friendship and in sessions such as those on computer safety, pupils learn about making choices, taking responsibility for their actions and demonstrating respect for others.
46. Pupils engage with economic education both explicitly via the PSHE programme, as well as when it is embedded into other activities. Through the curriculum, pupils explore issues relating to loans, gambling and cryptocurrency. In year 11, they begin to look at finance for university and student loans, giving them useful and practical preparation for their future. Through enterprise projects and competitions, pupils experience what it is like to manage a budget and develop confidence in money handling.
47. In the EYFS, children learn to make friends and build on their social development. Adults provide many exciting activities that promote children's cooperation, sharing, and empathy. Children are encouraged to engage positively with their peers. This foundation in social skills supports their understanding of responsible behaviour and respect for others, ensuring that they are well prepared to transition onto the next stage in their education.
48. The school maintains strong links with its local community, encouraging pupils to participate in local events and charitable initiatives. Projects such as community clean-up events and tree-planting schemes teach pupils about sustainability and environmental responsibility, while allowing them to make meaningful contributions to the local area. This hands-on engagement helps instil a sense of civic duty and pride in the locality, aligning with the school's broader goal of preparing pupils to be responsible citizens.

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. The school's safeguarding policy is comprehensive, regularly updated, and aligned with statutory requirements. Governors actively oversee safeguarding practices, undertaking advanced training and reviewing the implementation of policies. They meet regularly with the designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) and review safeguarding records and risk assessments to ensure that appropriate action is taken when needed.
51. Safer recruitment practices are robust. All pre-employment checks are completed appropriately and the single central record (SCR) is maintained as required. Governors and senior leaders review the SCR regularly. Recruitment, together with rigorous vetting, ensures that all personnel working with pupils meet the required safeguarding criteria.
52. The safeguarding leadership team works effectively with external safeguarding bodies and undergoes regular training to stay informed on best practice. Staff record concerns on a central system and leaders check this regularly so that they can offer help and support in a timely way for pupils who may be at risk and for issues such as bullying or discriminatory behaviour.
53. Staff receive ongoing safeguarding training, regularly updated to reflect the latest guidelines. Governors conduct periodic reviews of safeguarding practice to assure themselves that all staff maintain their vigilance in this area. Senior pupils are included in safeguarding discussions, which reflect the school's inclusive, whole-school approach.
54. The school has a well-structured digital safety curriculum, which is established across all year groups. Pupils receive regular training in online safety, and the school employs a filtering tool to monitor and restrict internet access, ensuring the safe use of technology on-site. Policies on acceptable internet use are reinforced through assemblies, PSHE lessons, and guidance materials.
55. Pupils have multiple avenues to raise safeguarding concerns, including trusted adults, peer mentors, and designated staff. Most pupils feel safe and supported, with access to clear systems for raising concerns.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Meoncross School
Department for Education number	116563
Address	Meoncross School Burnt House Lane Stubbington, Farnham Hampshire PO14 2EF
Phone number	01329 662182
Email address	enquiries@meoncross.co.uk
Website	www.meoncross.co.uk
Proprietor	Cognita Ltd
Chair	Nicola Lambros
Headteacher	Sarah Ebery
Age range	2 ½ – 16
Number of pupils	310
Date of previous inspection	07-09-2021

Information about the school

57. Meoncross School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between two and a half and sixteen years. Founded in 1953, the school was acquired by Cognita Schools Limited in 2004. The proprietors provide a team, led by a director of education, to fulfil the functions of governance.
58. The school is organised into three sections: infants which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), juniors and seniors, also referred to as lower (infants and juniors) and upper school. The headmistress has been in post since 2023.
59. The early years provision is housed in a separate building and overseen by the Head of EYFS.
60. The school has identified 59 pupils who have SEND. Two pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
61. A few pupils speak English as an additional language.
62. The school states its aims as giving everyone roots to grow and wings to fly. This means creating and maintaining a safe place where everyone can grow to be themselves and leave the school ready for a full life as an independent, empathetic, confident, collaborative, digitally literate, globally aware citizen.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

17 to 19 September 2024

63. A team of 4 inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

64. 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 head, 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.

65. 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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