

School inspection report

7 to 9 May 2025

Teesside High School

The Avenue

Eaglescliffe

Stockton-on-Tees

TS16 9AT

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 and governors implement the school's aims through a clearly articulated vision and the well-established, inclusive culture. Carefully considered strategic planning, responsive pastoral care, as well as effective curriculum design and implementation, reflect their commitment to pupils' academic success, personal development, wellbeing and global awareness.
2. Governors' effective oversight and challenge support the school's continuous improvement. This work is underpinned by strong relationships with leaders and the secure understanding of the school's priorities. Together with systematic self-evaluation, this informs strategic decisions and ensures that the Standards are met consistently.
3. Teaching is underpinned by teachers' expert subject knowledge and responsive assessment. Staff adapt learning effectively to meet pupils' individual needs, including for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils achieve well, while developing as confident, independent learners.
4. The school's successful and deeply embedded personalised approach to ensuring that pupils' academic and pastoral needs are met is a significant strength. Each child is valued as an individual. Robust tracking systems inform tailored academic pathways and wellbeing provision. In the early years foundation stage (EYFS), children's interests and developmental needs are prioritised. Older pupils benefit from, bespoke academic pathways and enrichment opportunities. As a result of robust tracking and responsive teaching, pupils access carefully considered individualised programmes, as well as timely academic and pastoral support. This approach ensures that pupils, regardless of their starting points, make sustained academic progress while flourishing socially, emotionally and personally within an inclusive and nurturing school environment.
5. In the early years, children become thoughtful and inclusive members of the school community. Fairness, problem-solving and mutual respect are promoted effectively as children learn and play well together. They develop a keen sense of emotional security and belonging in the caring and supportive environment.
6. Leaders have developed a suitable programme of physical education (PE), which includes competitive and enrichment opportunities. However, the current offer does not always fully reflect the changing context of the school's pupil cohort. The careers provision is inclusive, effectively designed and well implemented. Consequently, pupils gain the knowledge and confidence to make informed future choices.
7. Leaders promote the importance of pupils' attendance consistently. However, at the beginning of the inspection the attendance policy was not available on the school's website as required. This was rectified during the inspection.
8. Governors and leaders adopt a proactive and strategic approach to risk management. This includes robust oversight of online safety, safer recruitment and close monitoring of safeguarding trends. Leaders' work is supported by regular training, external expertise and governor scrutiny. This results in responsive and well-informed safeguarding arrangements.

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:

- further develop the sporting provision to ensure that it fully reflects the evolving interests and diverse abilities of the changing pupil cohort, so that pupils have wider opportunities to engage meaningfully in pursuing their sporting interests, while building on their existing knowledge and skills.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Leaders at all levels implement the school's aims, including in developing pupils' intellectual curiosity. The school's ethos is promoted effectively through the well-established, nurturing and inclusive culture. Pupils' academic achievement, personal development, and individual care are priorities. Strategic decisions, such as tailored curriculum design and responsive pastoral structures, reflect leaders' commitment to knowing pupils as individuals. Leaders foster a sense of community through regular whole-school events, collaborative projects across year groups and meaningful engagement with parents. They encourage pupils to express their views. The culture of wellbeing is deeply embedded. Pupils are valued, thoughtfully supported and proud of their school. They are well prepared for life beyond school.
10. Governors demonstrate a thorough understanding of the school's strengths, areas for improvement and strategic priorities. They provide well-informed support and robust challenge through regular formal and informal meetings. Their structured oversight includes engagement in key areas, such as safeguarding, provision for pupils who have SEND, curriculum and in securing positive outcomes for pupils. Governors' work is underpinned by a culture of openness, strong relationships with school leaders and the determination to continue to secure pupils' wellbeing and success.
11. Leaders and governors use their knowledge and skills effectively in fulfilling their responsibilities. They ensure the consistent implementation of school policies and procedures through careful monitoring. Policies are updated regularly in line with statutory guidance. Their systematic model of self-evaluation is well informed, for example, through ongoing reviews and audits. This comprehensive approach underpins the school's improvement plan, while ensuring that strategic planning aligns with the school's vision and statutory responsibilities. As a result, working closely together, leaders and governors make sure that the Standards are met consistently.
12. In the early years, the calm, purposeful environment promotes children's wellbeing. As a result, they feel secure, settle quickly, engage confidently in their learning and so make sustained progress.
13. Overall, pupils' needs are well understood and effectively supported. Their wellbeing is promoted through personalised pastoral care. The integrated role of the school's 'wellbeing dog' is a popular feature of the provision.
14. Leaders ensure that the required information is published on the school's website. This includes the school's aims, ethos, academic performance and essential policies, most of which are made available online. The attendance policy, however, was not published on the website at the start of the inspection. This omission was rectified during the inspection. Parents receive suitably communicated information and updates, including regular reports on their child's progress.
15. Governors and leaders meet their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. There is an appropriate accessibility plan in place, which considers access to both school accommodation and the curriculum.
16. Leaders have developed an appropriate complaints process with clear procedures. These meet statutory requirements and support the school's ethos of open communication and resolution of concerns. Leaders respond to complaints promptly and effectively. The process is regularly reviewed, with suitable oversight of this work from governors.

17. Leaders maintain well-developed and active links with external agencies, including those supporting pupils' wellbeing and preparation for next steps. Leaders report to the local authority on the provision and use of funds for pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. This ensures that pupils' needs are met swiftly and effectively. For older pupils, for example, careers guidance is enhanced through partnerships with external agencies. These arrangements support work experience placements, careers fairs and offer tailored guidance from careers professionals
18. The rigorous approach to managing risk ensures pupil's safety and wellbeing. Leaders implement effective health and safety protocols, secure site management and supportive mental health provision. Emotional risks to pupils are mitigated through trusted adult relationships, structured pastoral systems and teaching that is responsive to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils thrive as they become confident and resilient learners in the school's inclusive culture.

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. The curriculum is well designed and appropriately resourced. Programmes reflect continuity, clear progression and age-appropriate content. Pupils benefit from a rich learning experience. Their individual interests, prior knowledge and diverse learning needs are carefully considered in tailored activities and resources. This includes in the extra-curricular activities supporting pupils' overall development. The International Primary Curriculum (IPC) enhances pupils' engagement through real-world, global and local contexts. This helps pupils to build a sense of personal and collective responsibility for the environment. The breadth of choices of qualifications and subjects for older pupils reflects the school's commitment to tailoring the education to individual needs, such as in the introduction of BTEC science.
21. Leaders and teachers plan thoughtfully for pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy their meaningful, contextual activities and the contemporary links to topics. Teachers adapt plans to meet individual needs effectively using their strong subject knowledge and regular checks on pupils' learning. Teaching builds sequentially on pupils' secure prior knowledge, so they are well prepared for future learning.
22. In the early years, shared storytelling fosters collaborative learning. Children develop effective communication and language skills, empathy and imagination. These skills provide well-embedded foundations for their next steps in education and their social contribution.
23. Teachers check pupils' learning carefully. Highly effective approaches ensure that any gaps in knowledge and skills are addressed quickly. Teachers adapt their methods based on assessment outcomes to meet individual pupils' needs. Their real-time feedback gives pupils' helpful guidance on how to improve their work. This combines effectively with thoughtful questioning and peer interaction as part of the comprehensive learning process. The curriculum is modified to suit each pupils' individual requirements. This personalised approach ensures that all pupils receive appropriately challenging learning experiences that build successfully on previously taught content.
24. The school's well-embedded assessment framework ensures rigorous evaluation of pupils' progress across all subjects. Leaders' intended approaches are consistently applied. Teachers' guidance supports pupils to reflect on their own learning. Consequently, they take ownership of their progress and sustain improvements over time. These well-established approaches promote pupils' personal development as well as their academic success.
25. The robust reporting system ensures that parents are well informed. Reports are provided electronically at regular points through the school year. Detailed information highlights pupils' progress and offers strategies to boost pupils' achievement. Parent-teacher meetings supplement these reports. Regular informal parental contact further enhances communication between school and home.
26. Teachers' well-planned lessons and engaging activities motivate pupils to learn and to achieve well. Activities include, for example, group discussions, practical work and timed assessments. Teachers' effective adaptations allow pupils who have SEND to access the curriculum alongside their peers.
27. The well-embedded provision for pupils who have SEND enables them to participate confidently in their lessons and to develop independence in learning. Tailored support includes the flexible use of one-to-one guidance when required. Staff demonstrate consistent awareness of pupils' needs. They implement support plans effectively and so pupils who have SEND make good progress.

28. Pupils who speak EAL are equally well supported. The systems to identify their needs and to monitor progress are well established and effective. Support is aligned to relevant guidance. Staff receive targeted training to ensure consistent implementation of the adaptations made. Consequently, the well-considered provision for pupils who speak EAL contributes positively to their academic achievement.
29. The broad and inclusive extra-curricular programme. supports pupils' personal development and wellbeing. Activities include badminton, rounders, netball, coding, history club, craft club, dance, wellbeing champion, yoga, outdoor learning and orchestra. Pupils enjoy these opportunities to explore interests and to develop new skills. Clubs are maintained, regardless of the number of pupils attending. Specialist staff adapt provision to ensure that all pupils can participate meaningfully. Consequently, pupils develop confidence, creativity, and a deep sense of the importance of inclusion.

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

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

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

31. Leaders and teachers have a deeply embedded and successful commitment to securing individual pupils' development and wellbeing. Highly effective integrated approaches allow leaders to identify pupils' individual pastoral needs with clarity alongside their academic needs. This results in personalised academic pathways and thoughtfully constructed pastoral support. Consequently, pupils benefit from a curriculum and school experience that is closely matched to their strengths, interests and development needs. This allows them to make sustained progress in their studies, while flourishing personally, socially and emotionally.
32. Leaders promote pupils' understanding of protected characteristics, such as race, religion and sex, through the relationships and sex education (RSE) and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum. Topics, such as gender discrimination, are taught in an age-appropriate manner. The school's culture of inclusivity and individual care demonstrates respect for diversity, while ensuring that all pupils are valued, regardless of background or personal characteristics.
33. The school's culture of recognition and celebration promotes pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Thoughtfully curated displays across the school highlight individual and collective achievements. These include success in music, sport, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, the International Primary Curriculum, house events and alumni accomplishments, fostering a sense of pride and belonging across all age groups.
34. Leaders ensure that pupils develop a secure understanding of physical health needs through the PE curriculum, which includes a structured programme of activities such as netball, football and athletics. However, while these core sports provide secure foundations, the current provision does not always fully reflect the varied interests and individual abilities of pupils within the changing school context.
35. The well-structured and age-appropriate RSE and PSHE curriculum offers appropriately sequenced progression from prep to senior school. Teachers use a curriculum model in which pupils revisit key themes over time to deepen their understanding. Topics such as puberty, consent and healthy relationships are taught appropriately in a way that reflects pupils' age and stage of development. Leaders enrich the curriculum through input from external experts, including charities. Pupils' learning is assessed appropriately, for example, through quizzes, presentations and end of topic tasks. Leaders ensure that the PSHE provision is aligned with national guidance and delivered by trained staff. The curriculum is further enhanced by extra-curricular activities, including yoga, woodland walks and team sports. These help to promote pupils' wellbeing and personal growth.
36. The school's wellbeing dog is a successful part of the whole-school approach to supporting pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing. Pupils are able to reduce their anxiety and improve their readiness to learn through time spent with the wellbeing dog.
37. Effective systems support pupils' positive behaviour throughout the school. In the early years, staff are well trained to support children's emotional and behavioural needs. Leaders and teachers ensure that clear expectations of pupils' conduct are reinforced through teaching about the impact of negative behaviours, such as bullying. The school's effective anti-bullying strategy is promoted well through assemblies, PSHE lessons and anti-bullying week. When behavioural incidents occur,

leaders respond promptly and appropriately. They maintain detailed records and provide effective support to those involved.

38. The school's accommodation and facilities are maintained to a standard in which the health, safety and welfare of pupils is protected. First aid is provided by trained first aiders. All early years staff are trained in paediatric first aid. They follow robust procedures for administering and recording medication.
39. Pupils are appropriately supervised, both on the school site and on trips locally, nationally and internationally. Consequently, they benefit from the variety of experiences designed to enhance their learning.
40. Leaders have adopted statutory guidance to continue to promote pupils' regular attendance. They ensure that attendance trends and patterns are monitored and followed up by key staff. Leaders maintain an appropriate admission register. They ensure that the local authority is informed when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.
41. A well-structured and inclusive range of pupil leadership opportunities are available across the school. These allow pupils of all ages to develop responsibility, confidence and a sense of contribution to the school community. In the prep school, pupils are nominated for roles such as prefects. They may also apply for positions including digital leaders, librarians, nursery monitors and prep ambassadors. In the senior school, leadership roles are extensive and progressive, including school council membership, mentoring, prefect roles and head prefect responsibilities. The school council, led by the head boy and head girl, includes representation from each form. It operates through pupil-led committees focused on key areas such as enterprise, food, teaching and learning, and facilities. Older pupils contribute to the life of the school through roles such as performing arts and games captains and by participating in staff interviews. Pupil' views are embedded securely in school life and considered in decision-making.
42. In the early years, children's health and emotional wellbeing are priorities. Healthy eating is promoted. Snacks and lunches are carefully managed for dietary needs and safety. Emotional wellbeing is embedded in daily practice. Identified key person systems and continuing professional development (CPD) for staff ensure that children's emotional and behavioural needs are well supported. There is a culture of inclusion and individual care, with tailored support for children with specific emotional needs. Early years physical development is catered for through regular specialist PE sessions, outdoor learning and structured play using large equipment, scooters, and tricycles.

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

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

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

44. The school actively promotes the principles of respect, inclusion and social responsibility. PSHE and wider curricular subjects address diversity, social justice and moral responsibility. Pupils learn about protected characteristics. They are encouraged to reflect on these and wider social issues through assemblies, academic subjects and extra-curricular activities.
45. Pupils are taught to respect each other and to appreciate fundamental British values, such as those of individual liberty, democracy and respect. They develop appropriate social and cultural knowledge and understanding, as well as an awareness of the principles of right and wrong. Pupils' success in the school's mock trials enhances their appreciation of the justice system.
46. Collaboration and purposeful communication are central to the prep school's International Primary Curriculum. This supports pupils to build their interpersonal skills and digital citizenship. Through exploring the global origins of common products found in the rainforest, pupils develop awareness of economic and environmental interdependence. This helps pupils to lay the foundations of informed social responsibility. Personal pride and responsibility are encouraged, such as in preparing for parent exhibitions. Older pupils build relevant economic skills, for example, through the '£10 challenge'. In this enterprise initiative, pupils are allocated a small initial investment. They work collaboratively to maximise profit through legal and ethical means. Proceeds support school council-led improvements to facilities.
47. Leaders have developed a robust and inclusive programme of careers education, so that all pupils are well supported in planning for their future. Careers guidance is both aspirational and realistic. Consequently, this helps pupils to understand the full range of opportunities available to them, while aligning these with their individual strengths and ambitions. The provision is tailored to meet the needs of all pupils when transitioning to university, including through personalised support, such as care plans, for those pupils who have SEND. As a result, pupils are well informed, confident in their choices and equipped appropriately to make decisions about their next steps.
48. In the early years, children explore ideas of safety, such as constructing defences or protecting others. This promotes early moral reasoning and problem-solving. Teachers encourage all children to participate meaningfully regardless of attainment level; this contributes to equity and a sense of belonging and purpose within the learning community from an early age.
49. Leaders support pupils to develop a wider sense of societal responsibility. Pupils engage with their teachers both formally and informally to express their views when changes are needed. Pupils know their opinions are valued and acted on.

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

50. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

51. Governors and leaders place safeguarding at the heart of school life. They embed it across all policies, practices and pastoral systems. The school's culture is one in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff understand their duty to report concerns promptly. Leaders respond swiftly and effectively to issues. They model an open, transparent and carefully targeted approach to keeping pupils safe. Pupils are valued and well supported.
52. Leaders promote effective communication with both pupils and parents. They encourage pupils to report concerns in person or online. Leaders engage families appropriately in discussions about specific safeguarding concerns.
53. All staff receive thorough and ongoing safeguarding training. Regular updates are provided on safeguarding matters through bulletins and refresher sessions. Leaders attend external safeguarding forums. They supervise the work of the safeguarding team to continue to maintain high standards of professional practice. Consequently, pupils are kept safe by adults who are highly informed, alert to risks and confident in taking appropriate action when needed.
54. Leaders implement a rigorous approach to online safety. The school's robust online filtering and monitoring systems are tested half termly. Governors are involved in checking the systems' effectiveness. Leaders review emerging digital risks to ensure that policies remain current. As a result, pupils' potential access to any harmful online content is significantly reduced. This supports their safety and wellbeing in the digital environment.
55. The required safer recruitment practices are consistently applied. At least one person trained in safer recruitment is present on each appointment panel. Thorough checks are carried out at all stages. A suitable single central record (SCR) of appointments is appropriately maintained. Governors and leaders review the SCR and associated staff files during termly checks.
56. Leaders work closely with external agencies. They seek timely, expert safeguarding support and advice. Professionals offer sessions to raise awareness of safeguarding issues, such as domestic violence, for both staff and pupils.
57. Leaders monitor safeguarding concerns regularly. They identify patterns and act promptly to provide effective support. Safeguarding audits are shared with governors. Governors provide meaningful oversight and scrutiny. As a result, pupils benefit from a safeguarding system that is reflective, well managed and responsive to need.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

58. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Teesside High School
Department for Education number	808/6001
Address	Teesside High School The Avenue Eaglescliffe Stockton-on-Tees Cleveland TS16 9AT
Phone number	01642 782095
Email address	info@teessidehigh.co.uk
Website	https://www.teessidehigh.co.uk/
Proprietor	Teesside High School Limited
Chair	Mr Robert Tindle
Headteacher	Mrs Kirsty Mackenzie
Age range	2-18
Number of pupils	284
Date of previous inspection	26 to 29 April 2022

Information about the school

59. Teesside High School is an independent co-educational day school located in Eaglescliffe, Stockton-on-Tees. The school was founded in 1970 as a school for female pupils, with male pupils being admitted into the prep school in 2005 and to the senior school in 2008. The prep school includes an early years foundation stage (EYFS) setting. The school is a limited company, overseen by a board of governors.
60. The school is currently operating outside of their registration as they are educating a very small number of pupils aged between 19 and 20 years.
61. There are 23 children in the early years comprising a Nursery class and a Reception class.
62. The school has identified 46 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Four pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
63. The school has very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
64. The school states its aim is to provide an environment in which pupils achieve their academic and personal potential and become caring, confident, self-disciplined and well-balanced adults. It seeks to nurture a sense of intellectual curiosity, encourage pupils to value creativity and to help each individual develop a firmly rooted sense of justice and morality.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

7 to 9 May 2025

65. A team of 3 inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

66. 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 vice 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.

67. 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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