

School inspection report

10 to 12 June 2025

Milbourne Lodge School

43 Arbrook Lane

Esher

Surrey

KT10 9EG

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. Governors, who know the school well, play an active and effective role in both supporting and challenging the leadership team. Together, they regularly reflect on how the school could improve. Leaders manage provision in the school effectively so that the Standards are consistently met.
2. Relationships between teachers and pupils are respectful and positive. Leaders ensure that pupils feel safe, valued and supported in their learning and in the wider school environment. As a result, pupils develop into happy, confident and mutually respectful young people.
3. Leaders are ambitious for pupils' learning and development. They equip pupils with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to enable them to be successful and well prepared for the next stage of their education.
4. Leaders provide a broad and appropriate curriculum. They adapt the curriculum thoughtfully to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils. Teachers communicate high expectations. Regular feedback enables pupils to understand how to improve their work. Teachers assess pupils regularly and track their progress. As a result, pupils, including children in the early years, learn well and make good progress.
5. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. Lessons are well resourced and well planned. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are well supported.
6. In the early years, leaders ensure that children make progress in all the required areas of learning through well-planned activities. They use the information gathered to devise a curriculum which considers children's interests as well as their needs. Children explore, investigate and develop communication and language skills as they play and learn in engaging environments.
7. Typically, teachers maintain a good standard of behaviour and make appropriate use of the recently revised behaviour policy. However, in some lessons, the new procedures are not implemented consistently. In these cases, instances of low-level disruptive behaviour are not always well managed. As a result, pupils learn less effectively in these lessons.
8. Pupils understand the importance of tolerance, respect and kindness in school and in wider society as staff consistently emphasise the importance of these values and model them effectively. The school enables pupils to develop their sense of responsibility to others by carrying out a variety of leadership roles. Pupils show consideration for the needs of others and engage actively with the local community.
9. There is a positive culture of safeguarding across the school. Appropriate measures are in place to promote and secure the wellbeing and safety of pupils. Leaders have forged effective links with external agencies as sources of advice, guidance and support. Pupils confidently speak to trusted adults if they have any worries or 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 pupil behaviour is effectively and consistently managed in all lessons so that pupils can learn and achieve as well as possible.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders create a school environment in which everyone feels valued. They actively promote the school's values of courage, community, creativity and compassion. Staff share these values during assemblies as well as in planned events and lessons. As a result, pupils develop into happy, confident and mutually respectful young people.
11. Leaders are ambitious for pupils' learning and development. They equip pupils with the skills and knowledge to enable them to be successful and well prepared for the next stage of their education, in line with the school's aim to strive for excellence.
12. Governors provide effective oversight of the school and assure themselves that school leaders have the appropriate skills and knowledge to perform their duties effectively. Members of the governing board have a wide range of skills relevant to their roles. Nominated governors oversee areas of expertise and report back to the main board. Governors visit the school regularly and carry out diligent reviews of procedures and practice.
13. Leaders regularly review their areas of responsibility and devise action plans to support the further development of the school and its provision for pupils. Leaders ensure that policies and procedures are effectively implemented and monitored. They analyse teaching, learning and resource allocation through observations and learning walks to shape the provision for pupils to meet their needs. Leaders actively seek pupils' feedback to inform their decision-making through pupil surveys.
14. Leaders in the early years are knowledgeable, skilled and ambitious for children to have a positive start in their learning and development. They provide a warm, attentive and thoughtful environment that promotes the progress of children. Leaders' understanding of the needs of the children informs all aspects of the provision.
15. The school provides parents with information as required. School policies and procedures are published on the school's website or can be requested from the school office. Regular updates and newsletters keep parents well informed. Parents receive regular reports that provide them with relevant information about their child's learning, progress and attainment.
16. The school implements an appropriate policy and process for handling complaints. Leaders act swiftly when concerns arise at an informal stage. They manage formal complaints in a timely manner, with appropriate governor involvement if necessary. Leaders are accessible to parents and communicate with them regularly; this helps them to address any informal complaints promptly and effectively. Complaints are well documented, in line with the school's policy. Leaders regularly review this information to identify areas for improvement.
17. Leaders have forged effective links with external agencies as sources of advice, guidance and support. These include the local authority and children's services.
18. Leaders have a diligent attitude to assessing and mitigating risk. They ensure that the risk assessment policy is effectively implemented and that risk assessments for school premises, activities and educational visits are appropriate. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively in relation to the Equality Act 2010, including the implementation and regular review of the school's accessibility plan, which covers both physical access to the site and access to the curriculum.

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 suitably balanced and regularly reviewed to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to learn and make good progress across a wide range of subjects. In the early years, the provision is carefully adapted to meet each child's developmental stage and individual interests. Leaders invest in specialist teachers, for instance in languages, art and music, as pupils get older, to ensure that they are ready to move on to their chosen senior school.
21. The curriculum progressively develops pupils' linguistic, mathematical and scientific skills. Leaders support the youngest children in the acquisition of new language through a strong focus on reading and storytelling with book corners and reading prompts on display. As they get older, rich vocabulary continues to be taught and pupils are articulate in discussions. They debate complex topics such as whether or not social media should be banned and the role of the suffragettes in women's rights. In mathematics, children initially learn to use correct mathematical language to identify shapes, patterns and sizes. Older pupils receive regular opportunities to practise and become fluent in calculation so that they can apply their knowledge to solve challenging mathematical problems.
22. Teachers display secure subject knowledge and make effective use of high-quality resources. They plan their lessons carefully and take a thematic approach to the curriculum which develops pupils' ability to make links between different subjects. For example, in science and mathematics, pupils use their study of angles to learn about light, whilst in art and information technology, pupils create a digital magazine that showcases their understanding of design principles and digital tools.
23. Leaders and staff are ambitious for pupils' learning and achievements. They use a suitable framework for assessing and reviewing pupils' progress from Reception to Year 8. Assessment data is analysed to ensure pupils make good progress and to help provide support for any pupils who need it. Teachers provide pupils with constructive written and verbal feedback. This helps pupils understand the successful aspects of their work and identify areas that require further development. As a result, pupils learn and achieve well and are ready to move on to senior schools of their choice.
24. Staff maintain a good standard of behaviour in the school and, on the whole, teachers make appropriate use of the recently revised behaviour policy. They typically demonstrate high expectations of pupils' conduct. However, in some lessons instances of low-level disruptive behaviour are not consistently well managed by teachers. The effectiveness of pupils' learning in these lessons is reduced as a result.
25. A robust system is in place for identifying pupils who have SEND. Children's needs in the early years are identified when they join the school in liaison with parents and carers, and by observation in the setting. For older pupils, leaders use appropriate diagnostic tools and provide teachers with a range of strategies to support pupils. Information is disseminated through individual support action plans and regular communication. Teachers use this information to support pupils to access the curriculum effectively. Leaders track and monitor pupils' progress and support pupils who need extra help through the effective use of teaching assistants and in-class support.
26. Appropriate provision is implemented for pupils who speak EAL. The pupils are supported according to their individual needs; they are helped to acquire new vocabulary and develop comprehension skills. Their progress is closely monitored through specific regular assessments. Teachers are

informed of the support required and use this guidance to provide bespoke support in lessons so that these pupils make good progress from their starting points.

27. The school provides a varied programme of clubs and extra-curricular activities with a high level of participation from pupils. Pupils practise and develop their skills in areas such as judo, chess, choral singing and music technology. These activities enable pupils to broaden their skills and to pursue new passions and interests.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' 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 actively promote a culture of kindness and respect. Pupils' understanding of the importance of respectful relationships is well developed through assemblies, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and form time. Leaders and staff foster an inclusive and supportive environment that promotes pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem.
30. Leaders actively promote pupils' wellbeing through high quality pastoral care. The school's social-emotional curriculum supports pupils of different ages to understand and manage their own emotional wellbeing and to regulate their behaviour. An annual 'Be Well' day helps pupils to explore their mental health and equips them with simple strategies to support their wellbeing.
31. Relationships between pupils and adults are positive. Pupils are enthusiastic about their time at school. Teachers in the early years are effective role models. They demonstrate care and empathy through their interactions with children. Children respond well to positive praise, are confident and display high levels of self-esteem. They learn to concentrate, converse and participate in a range of activities, particularly enjoying role play opportunities such as planning a trip to the zoo.
32. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils behave well around the site. However, on occasion, the behaviour management policy is not implemented consistently by teachers and in these cases, behaviour is less well managed in lessons. Leaders have developed an effective anti-bullying strategy in line with the school's values. Any rare incidents of bullying are carefully recorded and appropriate action is taken, including support for all parties. Pupils feel confident to report an incident they may have seen or if they are feeling uncomfortable themselves. Any such incidents are dealt with promptly and appropriately.
33. A well-structured programme of PSHE lessons, including relationships and sex education (RSE), is in place. Leaders ensure that the content pupils are taught is age appropriate and suitable for pupils' needs. Teachers deliver this curriculum effectively and check pupils' understanding through discussions in class and by revisiting topics. Pupils study appropriate topics such as growing up, relationships, respect, healthy diets, online safety and anti-bullying.
34. Pupils keep physically fit and active through daily participation in physical education (PE) lessons. In the early years, children have many planned opportunities to help them develop their physical skills such as in games lessons and in the outdoor learning area. As they get older, pupils regularly participate successfully in individual and team sports, which include sporting and swimming fixtures against other schools.
35. Pupils develop their leadership skills as prefects, house captains and as representatives on committees such as the school council. They act as role models for younger pupils and communicate their ideas to school leaders. As a result, they influence the decisions leaders make such as in the acquisition of new basketball hoops and changes to lunch and match tea menus. Pupils readily volunteer for activities such as litter picking at lunchtime thus helping to care for the environment.
36. Leaders ensure there is suitable supervision in place for pupils both on the school site and during trips and outings. Staff are deployed effectively to monitor activities and suitable staff-to-pupil ratios in the early years are deployed appropriately.

37. Attendance is given a high priority, with clear and effective systems overseen by school leaders. Registers are consistently maintained, and an effective tracking system ensures prompt follow-up with families when needed, contributing to positive attendance outcomes. The school reports any pupils who join or leave at non-standard times to the local authority.
38. Leaders oversee a robust approach to health and safety, ensuring procedures are implemented effectively. All necessary checks are undertaken regularly and systematically so that the premises are well maintained and any potential health and safety issues are promptly addressed. Comprehensive fire risk assessments, routine fire evacuation drills and the diligent upkeep of fire safety equipment are all in place.
39. Appropriate procedures for the administration of first aid and medicines are carried out by suitably trained staff, including those trained in paediatric first aid. Staff are well trained and knowledgeable about the actions that they need to take in the event of an emergency. Staff training records are well maintained.

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

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

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

41. Leaders ensure that pupils are prepared for the transition to their next stage of education and life in modern society. Pupils develop a strong understanding of the rule of law and identifying right from wrong such as in Year 3 history when discussing the crime and punishment system of the Anglo Saxons. They can compare their own lives with those of people in history and they understand the unfair treatment of others.
42. Pupils develop their understanding of democracy through participation in elections for their various committees and leadership roles. Leaders ensure they are presented with a balanced view on political issues through regular lessons and assemblies on current affairs. For example, in Year 6 religious studies, they debate how the issue of immigration is handled in different parts of the world.
43. Pupils of all ages gain understanding and respect for different cultures and traditions. They participate enthusiastically in days celebrating different cultures and festivals such as Chinese New Year and Diwali which help them develop respect towards cultural diversity. In the early years, children bake home-made goods particular to their culture and bring these to school to share with others, providing opportunities to share traditions and foster mutual respect. Consequently, pupils at the school become increasingly aware of the diversity of the world around them.
44. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their initiative within the school community. Through roles as house captains and library monitors, pupils contribute enthusiastically to school life. Older pupils support younger ones, for instance by being playground pals, to ensure everyone feels involved in activities. These roles provide support for younger pupils and enhance the social development of older ones as they embrace these opportunities for responsibility. Pupils appreciate the importance of contributing to society and are enthusiastic about their support for global animal charities and for collecting Easter eggs for the local foodbank. They demonstrate a keen awareness of charitable giving, confidently organising fundraising initiatives for their chosen house charity.
45. Careers teaching is embedded in the curriculum and is enhanced with additional extra-curricular opportunities, such as during the annual careers week. Regular visits from parents and local professionals allow them to share insights into their respective professional roles. This allows pupils to start making informed choices about their next steps in education or their subject options at senior school.
46. Leaders and staff support the youngest children in the early years to develop effective social skills. Through routine, play, and a range of well-planned activities, children are taught the importance of sharing, taking turns, listening and playing co-operatively. Staff role model appropriate behaviour, kindness and courtesy. As children progress through the school, staff support them effectively to make smooth transitions.
47. Economic education is planned and taught effectively from the early years onwards. Pupils learn about financial matters through the mathematics curriculum and PSHE lessons. They learn practical skills such as paying bills and staying safe when managing money on-line and Year 8 participate in a virtual stock market investment activity. Younger children engage with hands-on role play activities that develop their understanding of money and coins when buying train tickets to go on an outing.

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

48. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

49. Safeguarding leaders ensure that the safeguarding policy is effectively implemented and they are suitably trained for their roles. They respond to safeguarding concerns effectively and act in a timely and effective way when concerns are raised. They work closely with external agencies, referring concerns when appropriate and seeking advice when needed. The safeguarding team holds weekly meetings to review all concerns, monitor trends and implement any intervention or support required. They take effective action to ensure that pupils are safeguarded and protected from harm.
50. Governors assure themselves that the school's arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are robust. They review safeguarding reports, attend regular meetings and regularly visit the school. Governors maintain effective oversight, checking that leaders prioritise the wellbeing of pupils.
51. Staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Appropriate and comprehensive safeguarding training, including at induction, ensures that staff are knowledgeable about potential safeguarding issues and how to respond to these. All staff and governors receive suitable ongoing training throughout the year, including regular updates. Staff understand the importance of professional conduct and report any concerns they have about adults in the school, including those which do not meet the harm threshold. A suitable record of these concerns is held by the head. Staff are vigilant to pupils' wellbeing, and record all concerns through the school's system, in a timely, well-organised and secure way.
52. Pupils are confident to speak to adults in school if they have any worries or concerns. They know that adults will listen and take appropriate action. Assemblies and PSHE lessons teach pupils how to stay safe, including when online. Leaders ensure that appropriate systems for filtering and monitoring online content and school devices are in place and that such systems are regularly tested.
53. Leaders conduct thorough recruitment practices on all adults before they work with pupils. All the necessary pre-appointment checks are undertaken and appropriately recorded on the school's single central record. This record is accurately maintained and regularly quality assured by leaders and governors.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Milbourne Lodge School
Department for Education number	936/6034
Address	43 Arbrog Lane Esher Surrey KT10 9EG
Phone number	01372 462737
Email address	admin@milbournelodge.co.uk
Website	www.milbournelodge.co.uk
Proprietor	Cognita Schools Limited
Chair	Mr James Carroll
Headteacher	Mrs Judith Waite
Age range	4 to 13
Number of pupils	269
Date of previous inspection	23 to 25 March 2022

Information about the school

55. Milbourne Lodge School is an independent co-educational day school for pre-prep and prep school pupils. It was founded in 1912 and is set in over eight acres of land in Esher, Surrey. The school became part of the Cognita Group of schools in July 2007. The school has a Director of Education, appointed by Cognita, who acts as a governor and works alongside the senior leadership team.
56. There are 15 children in the early years comprising one Reception class.
57. The school has identified 56 pupils as having SEND. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
58. The school has identified 29 pupils who speak EAL.
59. The school aims to provide a caring family environment which promotes kindness, tolerance, mutual support and the traditional values of politeness, good manners and sportsmanship. It seeks to equip pupils with the skills and self-confidence for the next phase of their life and to foster a spirit of learning so that pupils regard education as a lifelong process.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

10 to 12 June 2025

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

61. 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 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.

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**.

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