

# School inspection report

29 April to 1 May 2025

## **Fountain Head House School**

Church road

Saltash

Cornwall

PL12 4AE

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 proprietor, advisory governors and leaders have a clear vision for the school that is underpinned by a determination to provide pupils with high-quality education within a therapeutic and caring framework. However, the school does not meet the Standards for premises, maintenance and risk assessment in relation to health and safety.
2. Leaders and those responsible for governance do not monitor the premises systematically and consistently. Consequently, deficiencies that present risks to pupils are not always identified and rectified. Appropriate action was taken during the inspection, including the cleaning of a food preparation area, cushions, soft furnishings and toys, and the removal of a cleaning substance that did not meet COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) requirements.
3. The school maintains an up-to-date register of all pupils who are on the school roll. The local authority is informed appropriately of any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard times of transition. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance closely. Attendance is in line with national averages because leaders take prompt action if a pupil is absent. Pupils are well supervised throughout the school day. First aid and the administration of medicines are implemented diligently, taking into account the needs of the pupils. Actions detailed in the fire risk assessment have been addressed. Further action was taken during the inspection including the removal of furnishings that did not have the required fire safety label and fire-retardant treatment of stage curtains, in order to ensure that the standard for fire safety is met fully.
4. Advisory governors have supported leaders in implementing a detailed self-evaluation and school improvement plan which has underpinned a sustained focus on the curriculum, personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, and teaching and learning.
5. The curriculum is based on the national curriculum and seven areas of learning in the early years. It is carefully planned to take into account the needs and interests of the pupils, with a focus on the development of key skills in literacy and numeracy.
6. The outside play area for children in the early years and the transition area for older pupils meet requirements and are currently being developed to enhance pupils' social interaction and play.
7. Education, health and care (EHC) plans are managed well and meet statutory requirements. Comprehensive and detailed assessment and tracking enables teachers to assess pupils' progress throughout the school and to set aspirational targets. Planning and teaching are adapted effectively with the input of the therapy team, to support pupils' individual needs. Pupils are well supported in studying for a range of qualifications at the appropriate level. They make good progress from their starting points.
8. The PSHE and relationships and sex education (RSE) schemes have been adapted suitably with the advice of the therapy team. They take into account the age, stage and needs of the pupils. Staff implement a consistently positive approach to behaviour management by supporting pupils in understanding their internal and external feelings and in developing strategies for self-regulation of their responses.
9. British values are woven through PSHE and the wider curriculum. The ethos of the school promotes the principles of respect, equality and inclusion. Sensitive and caring staff enable pupils to

communicate and socialise with others using a range of tools and devices. Pupils and parents receive helpful advice when choosing examination subjects and when applying to college. Careers guidance is aspirational, realistic and based on pupils' interests. Children in the early years and pupils throughout the school are well prepared for their next steps.

10. The proprietor, leaders and staff maintain a positive culture of safeguarding which takes into account the context of the school and the individual needs of the pupils. The safeguarding team works effectively in responding promptly and appropriately to any safeguarding concerns that are raised. Although the required recruitment checks are implemented consistently, there were a small number of recording errors on the single central record (SCR). These were rectified during the inspection.

## 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 met.

### Areas for action

The proprietor must ensure that:

- the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge
- fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and
- they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils

so that:

- the school's health and safety policy and procedures are implemented consistently
- the school's premises, facilities and resources are maintained consistently to the required standard
- risk in relation to health and safety is evaluated consistently and appropriate action taken without delay.

### Recommended next steps

The proprietor and leaders should:

- ensure that continuous fire risk assessment is implemented and timely action taken when required
- develop the outdoor recreation areas to meet the needs of all pupils
- ensure that information is recorded accurately on the record of appointments.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. The proprietor is supported by a local advisory board with sub-committees for curriculum, quality and standards, finance and policy. There is a clear vision for the school that successfully combines education and care. However, leaders do not ensure sufficient monitoring of health and safety, maintenance and related risk assessments. Consequently, the Standards are not met fully and consistently.
12. Although the school has a suitable health and safety policy and the proprietor, advisory governors and staff have undertaken appropriate health and safety training, a number of health and safety issues were highlighted during the inspection.
13. Leaders, teachers, therapists and key persons work well together as a team to provide each pupil with an individual plan that supports their intellectual, personal, social and emotional needs. Consequently, pupils make good progress from their starting points and are well prepared for further education and life beyond the school.
14. The proprietor, advisory governors and leaders have a clear understanding of strategic risk and risk management in relation to safeguarding. They support and challenge leaders to produce a combined self-evaluation and school improvement plan. This has led to a sustained focus on curriculum, PSHE and teaching and learning.
15. The school's motto, 'together we grow and shine', highlights how inclusion and equality are key principles that weave through the school's ethos and values. The school has a suitable accessibility plan which in particular details ways in which pupils who have disabilities can participate in the curriculum and how the physical environment of the school can be made more accessible. The school's equality and diversity policy was amended during the inspection to make clear that physical education (PE) and sports are provided in line with the Equality Act 2010.
16. Leaders and governors liaise effectively with other agencies including local authorities who provide advice, support and professional development. Prompt and effective action taken by leaders supports pupils in attending school regularly, which has a positive impact on their academic and personal development. Leaders ensure that staff responsible for safeguarding are suitably trained and that the school's safeguarding policy and procedures are implemented consistently.
17. The required information is published on the school's website and is made available to parents. Parents receive regular newsletters and updates. In addition, parents may meet staff and share further information during regular coffee mornings. Parents receive detailed information about the progress and development of their children through yearly parental consultations and reports and annual reviews of EHC plans. The school makes appropriate returns to local authorities with regard to EHC plan provision and funding.
18. The school has a suitable complaints policy which is published on its website. The policy details the number of formal complaints received for the previous year and the required stages and timescales for action in response. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken and the outcomes of the complaint.

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

**19. 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

20. The curriculum is carefully planned to give pupils access to the required areas of learning through a therapeutic educational approach that encompasses emotional wellbeing, cognitive knowledge and functional skills. Individual plans take into account pupils' age, stage, needs and any learning gaps. Provision in the early years encompasses the seven areas of learning, taking into account the developmental stages of the children. There is a balanced focus on pupils' academic achievement as well as their personal development.
21. Examination options are effectively tailored to individual needs. Options include functional skills, ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network), City & Guilds, Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) and AQA entry-level certificates. Pupils are well supported in attaining the qualifications needed for entry to further education.
22. The curriculum is planned with an emphasis on pupils attaining secure literacy and numeracy knowledge, skills and understanding. A love of reading is successfully promoted throughout the school through pupils' access to a wide range of stories, poems and non-fiction both on-site and when visiting the local library. Reading is taught systematically, enabling pupils to build their knowledge of sounds, decoding and comprehension skills. The therapy team supports staff effectively in implementing strategies to support pupils' language development using a variety of tools and assistive technology. This enables pupils throughout the school to communicate, develop their literacy skills and access learning across the curriculum.
23. The needs of pupils, including any therapeutic needs, are evaluated comprehensively before they start school. This informs transition plans and enables the needs of pupils to be met from the start, for example, through the use of visual timetables and support with organisation and school routines. All pupils have an EHC plan. These are managed diligently, ensuring that statutory requirements are met consistently. Pupils, parents and staff contribute to plans, including the setting of meaningful targets. The needs of pupils and how to support them are detailed in 'PILS' (Pupil Individual Learning Steps). These are updated continually and are used well by staff to support pupils in attaining their targets and in accessing all aspects of school life.
24. In the early years, teachers and key persons know the children well. They quickly develop their understanding of children's specific needs, creating enabling environments based on their interests. Visuals and physical resources are used skilfully to communicate with non- and pre-verbal children, particularly when transitioning from one session to the next. This supports children effectively in developing their communication and interaction skills and in making good progress from their starting points.
25. Leaders have identified a small number of pupils whose families speak languages other than English at home, although they mainly communicate in English. Where appropriate, pupils receive individual support to develop their oral and written skills in English. Staff also work with families to celebrate pupils' heritage and develop their understanding of their home language. The school's English as an additional language (EAL) policy was updated during the inspection to state clearly that, where required, pupils receive specific support to meet any additional language needs.
26. Detailed assessments and tracking show clearly that pupils throughout the school make good progress from their starting points. Assessments are used effectively to plan for pupils' next steps in



learning. Teachers and key persons, with the support of the therapy team, adapt teaching to support pupils' learning. For example, they provide key vocabulary, ensure that content is presented in a form that pupils understand, model answers, scribe, break down learning into achievable steps and provide resources such as presentations for revision. They continually value and praise pupils' efforts, which encourages pupils to build upon their learning and to work with others.

27. Pupils gain confidence, a sense of achievement and great pride in their work. They understand their learning targets and act upon the support they receive from adults to understand and learn. Staff give clear oral and written feedback, which enables pupils to enjoy learning and to make good progress from their starting points.
28. Staff provide a range of clubs during lunchtime and Friday afternoons which are based upon pupils' interests and suggestions. These include football, film and arts and crafts. All pupils take part in some form of extra-curricular activity which supports their academic learning and personal development.

### **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. Highly effective support is in place to promote the mental health and wellbeing of pupils through the pastoral care system. Each pupil has a consistent key person who knows them well and who is aware of any changes in behaviour that may be a cause for concern. They enable pupils to communicate their needs and feelings, including through the use of assistive devices. Pupils' spiritual development is nurtured through the individual care and support they receive, which enables them to develop an understanding of themselves and an appreciation of the world around them.
31. The school does not meet the requirements for health and safety and the maintenance of the premises. The area used to prepare snacks for pupils does not meet hygiene standards, including consistent checking of the fridge contents and temperature. Cushions, soft furnishings and toys are not always sufficiently clean. Equipment that could be harmful to pupils is not always stored safely and a cleaning substance not on the COSHH list is being used.
32. Leaders ensure that classrooms in the early years are suitably equipped, with access to appropriate outdoor areas. With the support of the therapy team, children are well supported in developing the balance, gross and fine motor skills needed for learning. Sensory spaces are used skilfully by staff to support children's emotional development and regulation so that they are able to engage in activities and learning through play.
33. The PSHE curriculum includes relationships and sex education (RSE). It is well planned as a core subject, throughout the curriculum and as part of recreation times and activities. Teachers, key persons and therapists support the teaching of PSHE and RSE by adapting resources effectively to meet the needs of pupils and their stage of development.
34. The RSE curriculum enables pupils to understand the physical and emotional changes they will experience during puberty. Therapists support pupils in developing internal and external body awareness, including through the use of body maps and specific vocabulary. This develops pupils' understanding of their emotions and appropriate touching. Pupils learn about a range of topics, including respectful relationships, sexual health, boundaries and consent. Teaching is responsive, enabling staff to address any questions or issues raised by pupils in the moment.
35. There are high levels of supervision throughout the school day, with effective support from the therapy team. In terms of behaviour management, staff enable pupils to reflect on their emotions and behaviour and to work towards putting things right. They are well supported by a number of colleagues who have specific training in managing challenging behaviour, including physical intervention, which is a last resort and very rarely used.
36. The school's electronic recording system is used effectively by leaders to monitor behaviour, bullying and any concerns about a pupil's physical or mental health, or emotional wellbeing. Through social stories, staff enable pupils to discuss when behaviour becomes bullying, how this makes people feel and what they should do if this happens. Timely interventions are implemented, which leads to a calm and ordered environment where positive behaviour is the expectation.
37. Admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with statutory requirements. Pupils' attendance is in line with national averages. Leaders monitor attendance closely and follow

up any absences each day. They identify pupils whose attendance causes concern and take immediate steps to engage and support parents so that attendance rates improve. This proactive and caring approach has enabled pupils to attend school often after prolonged periods of absence. The local authority is informed appropriately of any leavers or joiners at non-standard transition times.

38. There is a suitable first aid room and medicines are stored securely and administered in line with school policy. Records in relation to the administration of medicine and accidents are suitably maintained. Fire procedures are displayed clearly. Trained fire marshals and regular fire drills ensure that staff and pupils implement the required evacuation procedures. Although the school has addressed actions required in the fire risk assessment, an unsuitable portable heater was being used, electrical items had been brought in that were not suitably tested and some curtains and furniture did not meet fire standards. Leaders addressed these issues immediately during the inspection in order to ensure that the standard for fire safety is met.

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

39. 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

40. Leaders have developed a PSHE programme which prepares pupils well for life in British society. It supports the school's aim to enable all pupils to enjoy meaningful experiences that prepare them for the next steps in their education and with the skills needed to lead fulfilling lives.
41. The therapy team supports the development of each pupil's social communication skills. Pupils are given a voice through the range of communication tools used by sensitive and caring staff who take the time to listen and respond to what pupils want to say. Consequently, pupils build positive relationships and are able to contribute to the school and the wider community.
42. Personal development is a key focus in the early years. Each child receives dedicated one-to-one support from a key person whilst the class teacher oversees the group and supports the team with their practice. Through the development of warm and caring relationships, children build trust and feel secure. This supports them in engaging with others and learning through play.
43. Care is taken to ensure that PSHE resources are adapted to enhance pupils' understanding and that balanced views are presented. Pupils are supported in considering the integrity of information from a variety of sources. Through discussion they develop an awareness as to how their opinions may be influenced, particularly by information accessed on social media.
44. A culture of respect and of valuing all people equally permeates the school. Pupils consistently demonstrate mutual respect and an understanding of the school's behavioural expectations. British values are woven throughout PSHE and the curriculum. This enables pupils to develop an understanding of equality and inclusion, and an appreciation of the differences between people including in relation to culture, religion, beliefs, gender and disability. The celebration of a range of customs and traditions throughout the school year enhances pupils' cultural understanding and their social skills.
45. Preparation for life is part of PSHE. Visiting speakers, such as the police, enhance pupils' understanding of the law and public institutions. Pupils are well supported in developing life skills, including financial management. They learn about managing money, including budgeting, making purchases, saving and debt. Pupils are keen to help others through the DofE scheme and through a range of activities and events that support their social skills and economic understanding. These include helping at a local football club and running stalls at school fairs to raise money for charities they are involved in choosing, such as the air ambulance, a local hospice and dogs for autism.
46. Pupils and parents receive helpful information and support regarding their child's qualification pathways and post-16 studies. The school uses the national benchmarks to ensure suitable careers guidance is in place. The teaching of careers is effectively integrated into the PSHE curriculum up to Year 8. From Year 9 onwards, pupils receive high-quality individual careers guidance and access to external careers advisers and local colleges. Work-related experiences enable pupils to engage with the community, for example through taking part in a project at a local theatre. This enables pupils to discuss their interests and ambitions and to realistically plan routes to achieve the qualifications and experiences they need to reach their goals.

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

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

## Safeguarding

48. The proprietor, leaders and staff work together effectively to ensure that there is a secure culture of safeguarding throughout the school. There is continual risk assessment of individual pupils and any safeguarding issues. These take into consideration the school's context and the needs of the pupils. Prompt action is taken to address any needs.
49. Regular liaison with members of the advisory board includes the review and update of safeguarding policies, staff code of conduct, safeguarding records, referrals to the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH), multi-agency referral unit (MARU), local authority designated officer (LADO), the police and other agencies. There is effective reflection on all aspects of safeguarding, with a continual focus on ensuring that lessons learnt are used to improve safeguarding practice.
50. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are given the appropriate time and resources to implement safeguarding requirements. There is effective integration of information in relation to safeguarding, special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), behaviour and wellbeing. This enables staff with responsibility for safeguarding to have a full picture of individual needs and circumstances, to manage risk and to take timely action including in relation to child-on-child abuse, discrimination and sexual harassment.
51. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are trained to the appropriate level. There is a clear understanding of the categories of abuse and the thresholds for referral to children's services, including early help. Highly effective induction and training are in place for staff and those responsible for governance. Safeguarding is on the agenda in all meetings and there is a comprehensive annual review of safeguarding in line with local authority safeguarding guidance. Staff in the early years discuss children's wellbeing during regular supervision meetings, ensuring that early intervention and support are provided as required.
52. Staff are very clear about the actions to take if they have any worries or concerns about a pupil, including in relation to the 'Prevent' duty and risks related to radicalisation. Staff diligently record any concerns about a pupil using the school's electronic system. This enables leaders with responsibility for safeguarding to continually monitor safeguarding issues, including any patterns, and to ensure that there is an appropriate response without delay.
53. Staff understand the requirements of the staff code of conduct, including in relation to e-safety and the appropriate use of social media. They understand and report any low-level concerns in relation to themselves or other staff in line with the school's safeguarding policy. Low-level concerns are suitably recorded and appropriate action is taken where required. Staff also understand the school's whistleblowing procedures and know what steps to take if needed.
54. Safer recruitment procedures are implemented consistently in order to ensure that staff and volunteers selected are suitable to work with children. Procedures include ensuring appropriate people are selected for interview and that the required pre-employment checks are carried out in a timely manner. A small number of recording errors on the single central record (SCR) of appointments were corrected during the inspection.
55. Pupils are not allowed to use mobile phones in school and staff take prompt action if their use outside of school leads to a safeguarding concern. Effective systems for filtering and monitoring the internet have been installed. Leaders receive alerts if there is any potentially unsuitable use. These

are responded to without delay and are reviewed weekly during staff briefings in order that any further action required can be implemented.

56. In PSHE and RSE, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Support from the therapy team enables pupils to develop internal and external body awareness. Pupils learn how to recognise when something is not safe. Pupils understand what is meant by a trusted adult and the importance of communicating any worries or concerns they may have. They can name people to whom they can turn including their key persons, teachers and therapists. Leaders and all members of the school community are dedicated to enabling pupils to communicate their needs and concerns and to ensuring that appropriate and prompt action is taken when required.

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

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

## 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 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.
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –
16(a)	the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
16(b)	appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
EY 3.76	Providers must ensure that they take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children in their care are not exposed to risks and must be able to demonstrate how they are managing risks. Providers must determine where it is helpful to make some written risk assessments in relation to specific issues, to inform staff practice, and to demonstrate how they are managing risks if asked by parents and/or carers or inspectors. Risk assessments should identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis, when and by whom those aspects will be checked, and how the risk will be removed or minimised.

### 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
Part 3 paragraph 11	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
Part 5 paragraph 25	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
EY 3.56	There must be an area adequately equipped to provide healthy meals, snacks and drinks for children as necessary. There must be suitable facilities for the hygienic preparation of food for children, if necessary, including suitable sterilisation equipment for babies' food.



EY 3.64	Providers must ensure that their premises, including overall floor space and outdoor spaces, are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children cared for and the activities provided on the premises. Providers must comply with requirements of health and safety legislation, including fire safety and hygiene requirements.
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## School details

<b>School</b>	Fountain Head House School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	908/6012
<b>Address</b>	Fountain Head House School Church Road Saltash Cornwall PL12 4AE
<b>Phone number</b>	01752 853891
<b>Email address</b>	info@fhhschools.com
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.fhhschool.co.uk">http://www.fhhschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Proprietor</b>	Fountain Head House School Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Julie Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Thereza de Lucca
<b>Age range</b>	4 to 16
<b>Number of pupils</b>	70
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	September 2023

## Information about the school

58. Fountain Head House School is an independent co-educational special day school. It was founded in 2021 and is overseen by a board of governors. The school supports pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including cognitive, communication and sensory needs. The school's previous inspections were a progress-monitoring inspection conducted by Ofsted in November 2022 and a material change inspection conducted by ISI in September 2023.
59. There are four children in the early years Reception class.
60. All pupils have SEND, and an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
61. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for four pupils.
62. The school states its aims are to create a welcoming school community that instils the values of generosity, resilience, openness and being healthy. It strives to provide innovative and bespoke approaches to learning which enable all pupils to enjoy meaningful experiences that prepare them for the next steps in their education and with the skills needed for fulfilling lives.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

29 April to 1 May 2025

63. A team of two 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 recreation times
- discussions with the chair of the advisory board and the advisory governor responsible for safeguarding
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to specialist learning support areas 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

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