

Michael Hall School

Kidbrooke Park, Priory Road, Forest Row, East Sussex RH18 5JA

Unique reference number (URN): 114625

Emergency inspection report:

3 February 2026

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE), which is the registration authority for independent schools. It was commissioned because of concerns raised with the DfE about safeguarding at the school.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

When we carry out emergency inspections of independent schools, we report on the school's likely compliance with part 8 of the independent school standards first. Under part 8, the proprietor is required to ensure that the school meets all of the independent school standards consistently. The standard in part 8 is intended to ensure that the quality of leadership and management at the school is sufficient for that purpose.

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards checked. Leaders have a secure understanding of the policies and procedures in relation to whistleblowing, safeguarding and safer recruitment. As a result of this work, pupils feel safe to raise concerns.

Since the previous standard inspection, leaders have prioritised developing the personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education and health education curriculum. There has also been a focus on implementing a new drugs misuse policy. Leaders have worked closely with staff, pupils and parents to ensure a shared understanding of this. The proprietor checks to make sure that this is being used appropriately.

Staff are positive about the leadership of the school. Training for staff ensures they have the information they need. As a result, they feel well supported to enact

school policies accurately.

The standards in Part 8 remain met.

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Curriculum

There is a PSHE policy with appropriate curriculum plans to support its implementation. Leaders adapt the curriculum in response to any identified themes and current issues. Leaders choose the overarching topics and support teachers in how to approach these within lessons. The curriculum is more robustly implemented in the upper school but is being delivered throughout. Leaders are continuing to develop their oversight of this.

There has been careful consideration regarding the age appropriateness of the curriculum content and awareness of the risks pupils may face outside of school. This includes online safety. Leaders have worked with parents and carers to help them understand potential external risks such as use of mobile phones and other technology. Pupils recall their learning from the curriculum. Some would like to learn about important concepts earlier in their education. Pupils develop their understanding about different types of discrimination through their PSHE lessons, wellbeing, English and year group lessons.

Older pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education through the school's careers education and plans for work experience.

The relevant standards in Part 1 remain met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Safeguarding

Since the school's standard inspection, there has been a change in the leadership of safeguarding. The safeguarding lead is well trained. The proprietor has ensured that there has been a handover for the new designated safeguarding lead. Staff are trained to understand how to raise concerns and why this is important. They recall this learning with confidence and explain what happens when they share their concerns. Record-keeping is concise and shows a clear chronology of concerns and appropriate actions. Systems in the Early Childhood area for recording concerns are not as robust as elsewhere in the school, but this does not put pupils at risk from harm. Leaders are developing this area further.

Staff have a secure understanding of the school's whistleblowing policy. They know how to raise any worries about staff and the appropriate channels to do this. Leaders make appropriate referrals to the local authority designated officer.

The curriculum helps pupils to learn about keeping themselves safe in different ways. Due to the positive relationships between staff and pupils, pupils feel able to talk to adults when they are worried about something.

The school's ethos is that any physical intervention of pupils is used as a last resort and only when there are concerns about safety. Where physical intervention has taken place, suitable records detail the circumstances and outcome, including transparent communication with the parents. Individual risk assessments where there are behaviour or safety concerns are fit for purpose. Leaders are exploring possibilities about refreshing this with an emphasis on de-escalation and removing the need for any physical intervention.

The relevant standards in Part 3 remain met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The recruitment checks made on staff, supply staff and the proprietor

Safer recruitment procedures are secure. Leaders and staff have received appropriate training and are knowledgeable about the different types of recruitment checks they need to make. When requesting references, the school uses a standard format which asks relevant questions about suitability and safeguarding. At interview, leaders ask prospective staff pertinent questions to explore their motivation to work in the school and to check their understanding and duty to safeguard children and pupils.

The single central record of these recruitment checks

The single central record reflects a culture of safeguarding and safer recruitment. It is generally well maintained. It adheres to statutory guidance and leaders ensure that this is regularly checked.

The standards in Part 4 remain met.

About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under sections 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, at the request of the registration authority for independent schools.

Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

The inspection was conducted without notice.

Inspectors spoke with the principal, designated safeguarding lead and the chair of the proprietor body during the inspection.

Lead inspector

Sara Staggs	His Majesty's Inspector
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Team inspector

Clive Dunn	His Majesty's Inspector
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Catherine Old	His Majesty's Inspector
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About this school

Proprietor	Michael Hall School Ltd
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Principal	Stuart McWilliams
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Type of school	Other Independent School
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Capacity	583
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Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age on roll	373
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Age range of pupils	2 to 19
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Gender of pupils	Mixed
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Annual fees for day pupils	£5,400 to £19,550
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Email address	contact@michaelhall.co.uk
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