

## School inspection report

14 to 16 January 2025

### **Tring Park School for the Performing Arts**

Mansion Drive

Tring

HP23 5LX

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 governing board maintains effective oversight of all aspects of the school. Governors have a clear understanding of the Standards. They scrutinise policies and procedures and hold leaders to account. Governors undertake suitable training and ensure that the school champions pupils' wellbeing.
2. Leaders have put in place a suitably broad curriculum designed so that pupils make good progress in their academic studies alongside expert tuition which supports them to become highly accomplished in the performance arts. However, leaders' oversight of the quality of assessing, tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress is underdeveloped, resulting in inconsistencies in the effectiveness of these.
3. Pupils' self-knowledge, alongside the desire to be the best that they can be, is fostered through the school's expectations of a high level of commitment to the vocational programmes and concurrent academic studies. Through this, pupils also learn self-reflection, perseverance and resilience as they grow in self-confidence. However, whilst the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme provided is suitable and seeks to reinforce such commitment and personal attributes, the ineffective quality of some delivery results in some pupils' disengagement.
4. Decisions made by boarding leaders contribute positively to pupils' welfare. Boarders benefit from the pastoral support available in the boarding houses and in the medical centre. Leaders deploy boarding staff so that there is always someone to talk to if boarders have any concerns. The school provides a supportive community within the houses and opportunities for boarders to learn from and socialise with others productively.
5. Pupils behave well throughout the school. They show consideration towards each other and to their teachers. However, the school's recently introduced behaviour policy is not always used consistently by staff throughout the school.
6. Pupils are enabled to develop their talents through the wide-ranging performing arts vocational courses provided by leaders.
7. Leaders have established an effective culture of safeguarding, including in boarding. Appropriate safeguarding policies and practices are in place. Pupils are confident that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon promptly. Safer recruitment practices are followed effectively to check the suitability of staff.

## 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:

- strengthen the oversight of assessing, tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress across all academic subjects
- ensure that the PSHE curriculum is uniformly well delivered so that pupils fully engage with all topics and learn as effectively as possible
- ensure that the recently introduced behaviour management policy is used consistently throughout the school.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. The governing body oversees, monitors and reviews the school's policies, procedures and practice effectively to ensure the wellbeing of pupils. Governors question and examine the impact of leaders' work through focused committees and on-site visits to ensure that leaders display suitable skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the school meets the Standards.
9. Leaders have recently created a new strategic development plan which is under consideration by governors. This has arisen out of focused self-evaluation of how well the school is meeting its aims. Leaders have identified a need for more direct academic management and, as a result, are beginning to address this.
10. Leaders ensure that the school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Pupils are taught to value everyone through PSHE lessons, alongside assemblies and modelling of inclusive behaviour by staff. The school has a suitable accessibility plan which is regularly updated.
11. The central importance that leaders place on pupils' wellbeing aligns with the school's aim to ensure that pupils are happy, healthy, emotionally secure, safe and cared for on a personal level. Leaders' weekly 'pupil progress and monitoring' meetings ensure appropriate support is provided for vulnerable individuals.
12. Boarding leaders regularly review boarding provision to ensure that it allows pupils to develop self-esteem and self-confidence whilst learning to live harmoniously with others in a suitable, well-equipped, comfortable environment. Boarding policies, documentation and records are clear and detailed and reflect boarding procedures that promote boarders' wellbeing effectively.
13. Leaders update all policies regularly and systematically. These are published as required on the school's website. The school supplies parents with termly reports, which include attendance records and focus on pupils' academic and vocational performance. Full reports include specific targets for improvement.
14. Leaders demonstrate a balanced approach to risk management in all areas of school life. Risk assessments include identification of potential risks and suitable control measures to reduce or remove these. Leaders monitor risk assessments regularly to ensure their continued suitability. Leaders provide staff training so that staff have a clear understanding of the importance of effective risk assessment. Dynamic risk assessments include those for individual productions on-site and theatre in education visits to local primary schools as well as overseas trips.
15. The school's complaints policy is published on its website. Leaders respond quickly and appropriately to any concerns raised and record these systematically and in detail, along with any actions taken as a result. Leaders review complaints regularly to identify any trends and report to governors on a termly basis so that any issues are addressed as necessary.
16. Safeguarding leaders liaise effectively and in a timely manner with external agencies so that any pupils affected by safeguarding issues can be supported as needed.

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

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

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Pupils make good progress across all key stages, within a curriculum that is designed to promote both academic and vocational learning. There is a broad academic curriculum on offer, which includes a suitable variety of GCSE and A-level programmes of study. This complements pupils' vocational education in the performing arts, which consists of foundation courses in performance and dance until the end of Year 11, after which specialist dance, musical theatre, acting and commercial music options are available. The curriculum and teaching are effectively planned to develop transferable skills across pupils' academic and vocational studies, such as time management, target setting and perseverance.
19. Leaders review the academic curriculum to ensure that it is well suited to the abilities and needs of pupils, such as by amending the A-level offering to promote better outcomes. The vocational curriculum is also subject to regular and systematic review to ensure that it provides a suitable pathway to potential careers in the performing arts industry. As a result, leaders continually adjust the performing arts programmes to ensure that they fit the demands of external auditions while providing a suitable education.
20. Leaders and governors scrutinise examination results against national standards. At GCSE and A level, results are above the national average. Pupils make good progress, and many pupils make rapid progress from their starting points.
21. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well and make good progress from their starting points because teaching supports their needs and encourages the use of effective study skills. Pupils benefit from personalised help through individual support plans, teaching matched to their needs and, where beneficial, learning resources such as modelled examples, colour coding and digital resources for use outside the classroom. The leader of provision for pupils who have SEND maintains effective oversight of the effectiveness and impact of support that the school provides to these pupils.
22. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are appropriately supported when required so that they make good progress in their English. Those pupils who speak EAL who need additional support for their English benefit from the use of subject-specific glossaries and frequent verbal feedback in class, as well as one-to-one teaching, as required.
23. Teaching is typically knowledgeable and effective. Teachers choose good-quality resources and use suitable techniques to progress pupils' learning. Pupils are given regular opportunities to think for themselves about a range of topics, make links with previous learning, and engage in debate. As a result, pupils show in-depth thinking and clear understanding of the subject matter that they study. For example, sixth-form pupils demonstrate knowledge about themes such as patriarchal society, senior pupils make connections with prior work to build on their understanding of quadratic equations and junior pupils demonstrate effective use of persuasive language in work such as that on sales techniques.
24. Vocational teaching supports pupils' development of confidence and specific skills through clear demonstration and encouraging critique focusing on technical points. Pupils also make good progress by learning to listen to each other's views, observing each other's performances and analysing and evaluating these for their effectiveness and impact on their audience. In musical

theatre, teaching encourages younger pupils to work collaboratively on the correct positioning of dance moves. In ballet, highly knowledgeable teaching supports older pupils to make rapid progress.

25. Leaders have established whole-school academic assessment that is carried out half-termly across all year groups. Most teaching uses assessment information effectively to assist pupils' learning and to inform academic planning. However, leaders' oversight of assessing, tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress across all academic subjects is in its infancy and so some departments are less successful at utilising assessment information to provide pupils with tailored support.
26. Vocational departments use effective formative and summative methods of assessment, culminating in evaluation of performance. Pupils have a clear understanding of their strengths and areas for development because teachers discuss and adjust pupils' individual targets with them lesson by lesson.
27. Leaders have put in place a suitable programme of activities which further develops pupils' skills in the performing arts. Boarding leaders also organise appropriate optional activities at weekends, such as visiting a local climbing centre, and pupils may also visit the local town.

### **The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the 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 put in place suitable support for pupils' health and emotional wellbeing through the school's effective pastoral structures, such as the well-run medical centre comprising nurses, counsellors and physiotherapists as well as strength and conditioning coaches. An effective first aid policy and suitable procedures for the administration of first aid and medication, when required, are in place. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance at mealtimes to produce a comprehensive overview of pupils' eating patterns that they then use to support pupils appropriately as necessary. A 'snacks and chats' club gives pupils a supportive, informal environment in which to reflect on day-to-day events with a member of the medical team.
30. Pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence are fostered throughout their time at school. In vocational lessons, constructive criticism given during the learning of new physical skills, alongside regular use of mini-tests and immediate verbal feedback in academic classes, encourages pupils to self-reflect with confidence. They learn to regard errors as a learning opportunity, while at the same time building the qualities of perseverance and resilience. Self-esteem is built carefully through classroom relationships and tasks designed to correspond to pupils' individual strengths and areas for development. The reward system includes recognition of positive attitudes and efforts as well as academic success.
31. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of different spiritual perspectives and understanding of religious practices through a curriculum which teaches pupils about a range of world faiths. Boarders also take part in a monthly service at a local church which allows them to experience worship in action.
32. The suitable PSHE curriculum develops pupils' understanding of the importance of respecting people's protected characteristics, such as their religion, sex or sexual orientation, the individual's rights and responsibilities, and issues of sustainability. The PSHE curriculum includes an age-appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE) programme. Through the latter, pupils learn about and consider a wide range of pertinent topics, such as the essence of healthy relationships, consent and protecting oneself from sexual exploitation. However, the delivery of some PSHE and RSE material does not always engage pupils well. Because of this, they do not always learn as effectively as possible during PSHE lessons.
33. The vocational curriculum requires pupils to take part in physical education (PE) daily. Thorough teaching by expert practitioners allows pupils to develop physical skills and a clear understanding of how to look after themselves physically from a young age. Pupils gain a deep understanding of body mechanics and how to apply this to performance. The teaching of strength and conditioning allows pupils to learn how to manage demanding routines. They understand how to maintain good energy levels and the importance that a healthy diet plays in ensuring this.
34. A robust anti-bullying strategy is in place. Leaders and staff take bullying seriously and deal with the rare incidents that occur quickly, proportionately and effectively. Designated anti-bullying ambassadors, assigned to each year group, lead assemblies and provide peer support sessions, furthering the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying strategy.

35. Pupils behave well in class and around the school. Relationships between them are positive and affirming. In the prep class, a charter for behaviour is in place and pupils take ownership of the process and value the expectations. Leaders and staff teach pupils the importance of mutual respect for all and reinforce this regularly in assemblies, tutor time and in the boarding houses. Pupils throughout the school recognise the importance of consideration for others and because of this, poor behaviour is rare. However, not all staff consistently apply the recently introduced behaviour policy. This is based on the principle of restorative justice, which focuses on repairing harm and building positive relationships.
36. Prefects take their responsibilities seriously. Leaders provide them with appropriate training in safeguarding matters and encourage them to act as role models for younger pupils. Leaders provide pupils of all ages with opportunities to present concerns and give feedback on aspects of school life, including through the boarding and food committees and school council. Nevertheless, pupils feel that their comments are not always considered fully or addressed in a timely fashion.
37. A suitable number of boarding staff are on duty during boarding hours to address pupils' needs and provide appropriate supervision and support. Procedures for boarding induction are well managed, ensuring a secure, positive boarding experience. Pupils feel happy and safe within the suitable boarding environment and accommodation.
38. Leaders, supported by the governing body, follow health and safety and fire safety policies and procedures, all of which meet requirements. For example, leaders ensure that regular tree surveys are carried out, as well as routine testing of electrical equipment and emergency lighting. Fire practices are carried out in line with regulatory requirements. Any issues are addressed promptly to ensure that pupils' wellbeing is upheld. The school premises are well maintained, and pupils are effectively supervised at all times through the effective deployment of staff.
39. Admissions and attendance registers are suitably maintained in line with current statutory guidance. The school informs the local authority of pupils who leave or join to the school at non-standard transition points. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance and follow up any absenteeism effectively, including by supporting pupils to attend school when difficulties occur.

### **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. Pupils learn about the importance of respect for others because leaders promote an ethos and culture that reflects the school's aims and encourages respect for all. This is clearly seen in the performing arts programmes, in which pupils are encouraging, supportive and appreciative of each other's skills and efforts. In the boarding houses, pupils are well known, listened to and valued.
42. Pupils further develop their social and cultural understanding of British values through the curriculum. Teaching fosters an understanding of the importance of democracy, free speech and the rule of law through facilitating pupils' discussion of real-world examples. PSHE lessons are designed so that pupils learn by contrasting these values with those of societies where, for example, the right to education is not a given and criticism of government can be risky. Pupils reflect on the importance of mutual respect and the harmful consequences of intolerance and prejudice in history lessons, such as through the study of the Holocaust, whilst in modern foreign languages, A-level teaching highlights the importance of individual liberty by analysing how the status of women has changed over the last century through reference to literary and cinematic portrayals.
43. Pupils are respectful of the school rules. The boarding houses and the school are places where the concepts of right and wrong are discussed and well understood. PSHE lessons promote an understanding of the importance of human rights. Pupils learn about the role of the United Nations in upholding these, alongside examples drawn from current affairs of what happens when rights are not upheld or recognised.
44. Teaching presents any discussion of political issues in a non-partisan way. For example, pupils consider how the media portrays a range of UK political parties, which are presented factually and without bias, so that pupils may form their own opinions.
45. Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are central to the ethos of the school. The PSHE curriculum enables pupils to strengthen their understanding of issues relating to race and gender, for example, and the importance of tolerance and mutual respect for all. An EDI staff-and-pupil committee considers issues and leaders act on the findings as appropriate to ensure that pupils feel safe and valued as individuals. The school takes effective steps to encourage pupils to feel accepted for who they are.
46. The PSHE curriculum develops pupils' economic knowledge and understanding effectively. Younger pupils learn about financial management and budgeting through a focus on credit and debt, including the potential dangers associated with the latter. Older pupils learn about tax and national insurance and sixth-form pupils focus on financial planning in preparation for life after school, which includes information on student loans.
47. The suitable careers guidance includes a balanced focus on academic and performing arts pathways and helps equip pupils with the interpersonal and technological literacy skills needed in the world of work. Staff provide pupils with up-to-date advice on how to prepare for higher education and work, including in the performing arts industry. Presentations from visiting professionals about life in the performing arts professions allow pupils to gain a secure understanding of the importance of determination and resilience, and the specific skills needed for success.

48. Leaders develop pupils' sense of responsibility towards others by encouraging them to support the community beyond the school. For example, pupils volunteer at locally run lunch clubs and tea dances. The oldest pupils use their vocational skills to collaborate with the 'Icandance' charity to create projects that cater for the needs of young people who have disabilities. Pupils assist with performing arts holiday courses, as well as taking theatre in education performances to local primary schools. Pupils take part in community choral celebrations.

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

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

## Safeguarding

50. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and reflect the requirements of current statutory guidance. Safeguarding is led by a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and safeguarding team which includes medical centre and boarding staff, all of whom have received appropriate training for their roles.
51. All governors and staff, including those with boarding responsibilities, undertake annual safeguarding training. Training is regularly updated as required and includes appropriate consideration of child-on-child abuse and the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism. The DSL supplements this training through regular safeguarding bulletins and staff meetings. As a result of all this, staff understand their safeguarding duties well.
52. Governors maintain effective oversight of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures. They visit regularly to seek the views of pupils, including boarders, and review safeguarding documentation and training records. Leaders report to governors termly.
53. Boarding and day pupils always have people to talk to should the need arise, including medical centre counsellors and an independent person with whom boarders are familiar. There are also arrangements for pupils to report any worries anonymously if preferred. The safeguarding team take any issues raised seriously and act appropriately to support the pupils and address concerns.
54. Leaders consult with relevant external agencies including children's services, the police and the local authority designated officer (LADO), and, when appropriate, refer concerns to them in a timely manner. Safeguarding records clearly detail the rationale for decisions and actions taken as a result of any safeguarding concerns raised. Leaders regularly review safeguarding incidents to look for emerging patterns and this informs ongoing training for staff.
55. Pupils learn how to stay safe online through PSHE lessons and assemblies which teach them how to counter possible dangers. The school's filtering and monitoring systems are effective and regularly tested. They help to safeguard online learning and activities at school and in boarding.
56. Leaders are effectively trained in safer recruitment. The school carries out all required safer recruitment checks on adults working with pupils and boarders before they commence working at the school. These checks are recorded accurately on the single central record (SCR) of appointments.

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

57. All the relevant Standards are met.

## School details

<b>School</b>	Tring Park School for the Performing Arts
<b>Department for Education number</b>	919/6041
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1040330
<b>Address</b>	Tring Park School for the Performing Arts Mansion Drive Tring Hertfordshire HP23 5LX
<b>Phone number</b>	01442 824255
<b>Email address</b>	info@tringpark.com
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.tringpark.com/">https://www.tringpark.com/</a>
<b>Proprietor</b>	The AES Tring Park School Trust
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Angela Odell
<b>Principal</b>	Mr Simon Larter-Evans
<b>Age range</b>	7 to 19
<b>Number of pupils</b>	333
<b>Number of boarding pupils</b>	197
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 October 2022

## Information about the school

58. Tring Park School for the Performing Arts is an independent co-educational day and boarding school owned and governed by the AES (Arts Educational School) Tring Park School Trust. The school is structured into four sections: prep for pupils in Years 3 to 6; junior for those in Years 7 to 9; middle for those in Years 10 and 11; and senior for those in Years 12 and 13, together with an additional 'Year 14' to enable a further year of dance study. All pupils are identified as having a special talent in dance, music, drama or musical theatre. The current principal has been in post since September 2023.
59. Boarding is available for pupils in Year 6 to Year 13. Boarders are accommodated in three single-sex houses situated on the school site.
60. The school has identified 132 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
61. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for six pupils.
62. The school states its aims are to give pupils the best possible preparation for their future careers by providing a curriculum which combines vocational training with academic study so that pupils' natural talent and creativity in dance, drama, musical theatre and music can be developed alongside their intellectual ability. It seeks to create an energetic, stimulating and supportive culture which expects commitment from pupils as they develop as individuals and performers.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

14 to 16 January 2024

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

64. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visit to the medical centre
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- 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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For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)