

Progress monitoring inspection report

13 March 2026

Susi Earnshaw Theatre School

68 High Street

Barnet

EN5 5SJ

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'.

Inspection outcome

The school does not meet all of the relevant Standards that were considered during this inspection. A schedule of unmet Standards is included at the end of the report.

Inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b), 11, 15, 16(a) and 16(b)

1. The safeguarding policy and procedures do not reflect statutory guidance. The school does not systematically promote the welfare of pupils.
2. The proprietor and leaders review the school's safeguarding policy annually. However, the latest review did not ensure that updated guidance from Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025 was incorporated into the school's safeguarding policy.
3. The school does not have a low-level concerns policy, neither as a separate policy nor referenced in the safeguarding policy and staff code of conduct. Leaders do not keep a low-level concerns log. Staff do not have a secure understanding of the nature of low-level concerns nor of the need to self-report if required.
4. Leaders do not ensure that safer recruitment procedures are in line with statutory requirements. They do not keep a systematic record of the required pre-employment checks in the relevant staff files. The single central record of appointments (SCR) does not systematically record all the required pre-employment checks.
5. Staff receive regular online safeguarding training and training at the start of the academic year relating to the school's safeguarding procedures. As a result, they know how to use the school's reporting system and understand the importance of reporting any concerns relating to pupils.
6. The proprietor ensures that leaders responsible for safeguarding receive appropriate training. Since the previous inspection, leaders now keep suitable safeguarding records securely. These document the school's response to any safeguarding concerns that arise and include a sufficiently detailed rationale for the actions and decisions taken.
7. Leaders liaise appropriately with relevant safeguarding partners, including children's services, to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are referred promptly when required and that pupils receive the support they need.
8. Leaders review and adapt pupils' safety plans relating to safeguarding concerns to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support. Leaders inform staff of the needs of any pupils considered to be at higher risk.
9. Since the previous inspection, leaders have ensured that the school's procedure for admitting visitors to the premises now includes an appropriate check of their identification.
10. Pupils know whom to approach to access any support they need or raise concerns. Staff act on any concerns swiftly, so pupils receive the support they need. Since the previous inspection, leaders have introduced additional methods of monitoring pupils' wellbeing on a weekly and termly basis. Staff follow up any concerns with individual pupils and provide appropriate support.
11. The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online. A suitable internet filtering and monitoring system is in place and tested in line with requirements.

12. The annually reviewed health and safety policy gives suitable guidance to staff. Since the previous inspection, leaders ensure that any hazardous chemicals on site are stored in locked cupboards, in line with the risk assessment. The proprietor and leaders have introduced an electronic system of recording planned health and safety checks. The proprietor reviews this regularly to support the implementation of a regular cycle of maintenance and checks. As a result, the health and safety arrangements are now effective.
13. The admission register does not record all required information electronically. Leaders do not systematically report to the local authority when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition times.
14. Leaders ensure that pupils' attendance is recorded appropriately. Leaders monitor attendance registers regularly to check for patterns of absence. They put suitable strategies in place swiftly to support any pupils whose attendance levels give cause for concern. Leaders make the attendance policy available to parents on the school's website.
15. Leaders do not draw up and effectively implement a suitable risk assessment policy that gives due regard to the risks associated with the school's specific context. Leaders have not completed all the identified actions set out in the school's action plan in relation to risk assessment. Leaders provide individual risk assessments for some of the school's activities, such as for each performance in the theatre, for trips and visits, as well as for each teaching space.
16. The school does not meet the Standards.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

ISSR paragraphs 18(2)(a) to 18(2)(d), 18(3), 21(3)(a)(i-vii) and 21(3)(b)

17. At the time of inspection, the school could not confirm that the required recruitment checks had been completed for the most recently appointed member of staff.
18. The SCR does not record any checks having been undertaken on the most recently appointed member of staff.
19. The SCR does not record prohibition of management checks for the recently appointed managers.
20. The school does not meet the Standards.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

21. The required information about the safeguarding policy is published for parents on the school's website.
22. The school meets the Standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraph 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c) and 34(2)

23. The proprietor does not exercise sufficient oversight of leaders' decision-making and their work to promote the wellbeing of pupils. The proprietor does not ensure that safeguarding arrangements reflect statutory requirements.

24. The proprietor has not ensured that leaders have implemented the school's action plan effectively to ensure that the Standards that were not met at the previous inspection are now met.
25. Leaders do not consistently demonstrate the required skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the Standards are consistently met.
26. The school does not meet the Standards.

Schedule of unmet Standards

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –
7(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
7(b)	such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 15	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 16	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –
16 (a)	the welfare of the pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of an effective written risk assessment policy; and
16 (b)	appropriate action is taken to reduce the risks that are identified.
ISSR Part 4, paragraph 18(1)	The standard in this paragraph relates to the suitability of persons appointed as members of staff at the school, other than the proprietor and supply staff.
18(2)	The standard in this paragraph is met if—
18(2)(a)	no such person is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that person is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 to that Act;
18(2)(b)	no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
18(2)(c)	the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person—
18(2)(c)(i)	the person’s identity;
18(2)(c)(ii)	the person’s medical fitness;
18(2)(c)(iii)	the person’s right to work in the United Kingdom; and
18(2)(c)(iv)	where appropriate, the person’s qualifications;
18(2)(d)	the proprietor ensures that, where relevant to any such person, an enhanced criminal record check is made in respect of that person and an enhanced criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as practicable after that person’s appointment;

	and in the light of the information from the checks referred to in paragraphs (c) to (f) the proprietor considers that the person is suitable for the position to which the person is appointed.
18(3)	The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment.
ISSR Part 4, paragraph 21(1)	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
21(3)	The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is—
21(3)(a)	in relation to each member of staff ('S') appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether—
21(3)(a)(i)	S's identity was checked;
21(3)(a)(ii)	a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act;
21(3)(a)(iii)	a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
21(3)(a)(iv)	checks were made to ensure, where appropriate, that S had the relevant qualifications;
21(3)(a)(v)	an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained in respect of S;
21(3)(a)(vi)	checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(d);
21(3)(a)(vii)	a check of S's right to work in the United Kingdom was made;
	including the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained; and
21(3)(b)	in relation to each member of staff ('S'), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.
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.

School details

School	Susi Earnshaw Theatre School
Department for Education number	302/6111
Address	Susi Earnshaw Theatre School 68 High Street Barnet Hertfordshire EN5 5SJ
Phone number	020 8441 5010
Email address	info@susiearnshaw.co.uk
Website	www.susiearnshaw.co.uk
Proprietor	Smart Art Ltd
Chair	Susi Earnshaw
Acting Headteacher	Megan McNamarra
Age range	9 to 16
Number of pupils	31
Date of previous inspection	1 to 3 July 2025

Information about the school

27. Susi Earnshaw Theatre School is a co-educational day school. It relocated to its current premises in Barnet, Hertfordshire, in 2004. The school is run by a limited company overseen by two directors. An acting headteacher was appointed in January 2026.
28. The school has identified 16 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Five pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
29. The school has identified no pupils for whom English is an additional language.
30. The school states that its aims are to provide pupils with a vocational and academic education through the performing arts, in a happy, supportive environment where pupils can thrive and develop academically, vocationally, socially and emotionally.

Purpose of the progress monitoring inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. This inspection was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection which was carried out at the request of the Department for Education. The purpose of this inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the Independent School Standards, and any other requirements that the school was judged not to comply with at its previous inspection.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

13 March 2026

31. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for one day.

32. Inspection activities included

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- tour of the school site to view storage of materials and health and safety arrangements
- discussions with a proprietor
- discussions with school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils.

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**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

For more information, please visit isi.net