

School inspection report

23 to 25 September 2025

Walhampton School

Lymington

Hampshire

SO41 5ZG

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'.

Contents

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS	3
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....	5
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS	5
SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....	6
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE	7
SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	8
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	9
SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING.....	10
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	11
SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....	12
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY	13
SAFEGUARDING	14
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING	14
SCHOOL DETAILS	15
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	16
INSPECTION DETAILS	17

Summary of inspection findings

1. Governors maintain comprehensive oversight of the school. They ensure that leaders have the necessary skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities to meet the independent school Standards consistently.
2. Leaders accurately evaluate what the school does well and identify the areas for development, with both support and challenge from governors and external agencies. Leaders implement well-informed and well-rounded improvement plans firmly linked to the school's aims and ethos.
3. Pupils benefit from a broad, inclusive and age-appropriate curriculum. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach and communicate effectively so that pupils understand how to improve their work. Teachers' lesson plans and the resources they use demonstrate consideration for pupils' aptitudes, needs and prior attainment, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils make good progress.
4. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are assessed when they join the school and support is put in place, if required. In most lessons, they are given the necessary support and adaptations to access the curriculum and make good progress. However, this support is not consistent across all subjects.
5. Leaders are ambitious for pupils' learning and achievement. By the end of Year 8, most pupils attain above average in standardised tests in science, mathematics and English compared to those taking the same tests nationally.
6. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. They facilitate reasonable adjustments to make sure that pupils with additional needs can fully access the curriculum and the school premises. These actions are regularly reviewed within a suitable accessibility plan. The school's policies and procedures are aligned with the latest statutory guidance. Regular staff training ensures these are implemented effectively. Required information is readily accessible on the school's website.
7. The school has suitable curriculums for pupils' personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE). The school's extra-curricular programme is well planned and enables pupils to explore and develop their interests.
8. Leaders actively promote pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing. Leaders implement effective behaviour and anti-bullying policies. Polite, considerate and respectful relationships between pupils and staff are commonplace. Bullying is not tolerated. The school has a robust approach to managing risks. Leaders identify risks within the school and in the local area. They have implemented appropriate measures to mitigate these risks. Health and safety arrangements, including first aid provision and fire safety, are comprehensive and comply with current regulations.
9. Leaders ensure that pupils develop a broad social and economic education and understand the valuable contribution they can make to their local community and wider society through a range of guest speakers, trips and charitable initiatives. Pupils' economic education supports their understanding of key life skills such as money management. Pupils in the older years are provided

with an age-appropriate careers education. This is delivered through the PSHE curriculum, visits from external speakers and relevant trips off site.

10. Leaders maintain a secure knowledge and understanding of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework and ensure that children are supported to meet age-related expectations. Children learn to understand and regulate their emotions, become confident communicators and develop numerical fluency. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
11. Leaders have developed an effective safeguarding culture. Staff, including those with specific safeguarding responsibilities, are appropriately trained and knowledgeable. Leaders take advice from local safeguarding partners, and make prompt referrals to them, as necessary. Pupils are confident that they can approach a trusted adult for guidance and support, when required.
12. Leaders of boarding have established a setting which is safe, welcoming and comfortable. Boarders develop independence and confidence by engaging in a wide range of activities and socialising in their free time.

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 pupils who speak EAL are supported appropriately during all lessons so that they make consistently good progress across all subjects.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

13. Governors and leaders work as a cohesive team to plan and deliver an educational experience which actively promotes pupils' wellbeing. A strategic board and committee structure supports governors' monitoring of the implementation and impact of the school's policies and procedures. Governors bring a wide range of skills and expertise to the role, such as in safeguarding and educational leadership. They visit the school regularly and offer both support and challenge to school leaders by analysing termly leadership reports and collaborating over school improvement targets. The safeguarding governor meets regularly with the safeguarding team to monitor all aspects of safeguarding diligently. Governors assure themselves that leaders have the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities, so that the Standards are met consistently and the school's aims and ethos are promoted and work well in practice.
14. Leaders regularly check that staff and pupils understand the school's policies. Leaders make sure that staff receive the latest training so that they are equipped for their roles and responsibilities. For example, the respective teams responsible for delivering the early years curriculum and relationships and sex education (RSE) have undergone training and received procedural guidance on recent statutory updates.
15. The school provides parents with a wide range of useful information. Leaders upload the latest versions of documents onto the school's website so that parents are kept up to date. Key information is readily available, including all relevant past inspection reports. Leaders provide local authorities with required information, including the use of funds for pupils who have education, health and care plans (EHC plans) and attendance data, including any pupils who leave and join the school at non-standard times of the year. Parents are well informed about their child's progress and attainment through a programme of regular and detailed reports and discussions.
16. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. The clear, detailed and up-to-date accessibility plan and individual learning plans (ILPs) for pupils who have SEND ensure that reasonable adjustments are made as necessary so that pupils can fully access the curriculum and school premises. Leaders review the curriculum and monitor lessons and activities to ensure that teaching is inclusive. Leaders also actively promote equality and diversity. The curriculum and assembly programme teach pupils to better understand, tolerate and respect a range of cultures and beliefs. In addition, leaders have established a working party of parents, staff and pupils to promote a 'sense of belonging' for all members in the school community. Initiatives include a diversification of literature in the school library and across the curriculum and a new mural in the entrance hall including a thumb print for every pupil in the school.
17. Leaders respond in a timely and strategic manner to a range of school performance data. The complaints procedure is compliant and available to parents. Leaders ensure that all parental concerns and feedback are analysed for patterns and trends. Additional parent workshops as well as regular surveys of parents', staff, pupils' and boarders' views improve leaders' understanding of community attitudes. This supports leaders to facilitate an early and proactive response. Examples of leaders' response to performance data include the introduction of a new spelling scheme in Years 3 and 4 to help improve children's spelling and the introduction of new 'grade descriptors and key performance indicators' so that pupils and their parents can better understand their child's level of attainment and progress across a range of subjects.

18. Governors and leaders have a structured approach to identifying and managing the risk of harm to pupils' wellbeing. They create effective links with external agencies such as local safeguarding partners and medical professionals. There is a robust risk management culture that influences decisions at all levels, especially in relation to safeguarding and boarding. Risk assessments are thorough and regular staff training takes place to enhance their knowledge and practice. Leaders review the risk profile of the school to check for any hidden risks or unintended consequences of their decision-making. Examples include changes to pupils' packed lunch menus in response to a low uptake following a nutritional review, and changes to the boarding routine to better integrate international boarders.
19. Leaders in the early years ensure that policies and procedures comply with the EYFS framework. The early years setting is suitably staffed and children are continuously supervised, particularly during rest, play and the start and end of the school day. Early years staff receive specific training in relation to children who have SEND, safeguarding and food hygiene. All early years staff are trained in paediatric first aid. The early years learning area and facilities are suitable for teaching young children and promote their development and independence. Children's transitions from home to school and to their next class are planned carefully, enabling them to become familiar with their new environment, feel secure and settle quickly.
20. Leaders oversee boarding provision effectively so that systems and procedures are thorough and appropriate. The induction of both new boarders and new boarding staff is supported by careful documentation and record-keeping. Boarding staff receive clear guidance and training so that pupils' boarding experience is positive and responsive to their needs.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. Subject leaders have devised an appropriate and challenging curriculum. Pupils are taught a breadth of subjects that enables them to develop linguistic, scientific, technological, aesthetic and creative skills and knowledge.
23. In English, pupils make good progress and acquire a range of literacy skills. Across all age groups, teachers provide a vocabulary-rich environment and ensure that pupils develop both technical and creative language. Pupils often read and write beyond age-related expectations and with increasing fluency and expression.
24. Pupils make good progress in mathematics. Leaders scrutinise half-termly progress grades across the mathematics department to identify any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Leaders use this information to adapt teaching plans and address any gaps or weaknesses in pupils' skills and knowledge. Recent improvements in teaching angles and a greater focus on mental arithmetic have increased the progress and attainment of pupils in Year 3. Pupils are keen learners who relish applying their skills and understanding to more complex tasks. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 design bead models in the shape of squares, hexagons and octagons, and pupils in Year 5 complete challenging calculations with decimal numbers.
25. From a young age, pupils are encouraged to use subject-specific vocabulary accurately and confidently. In science, pupils in Year 3 discuss the skeletal system, and in French, pupils in Year 7 speak confidently using the correct pronunciation. Pupils have many opportunities to design and create. Pupils in Year 2 design their own robots from recycled materials in design and technology (DT). Pupils in Year 8 work together successfully to produce a collaborative 'pop art' composition in art.
26. Teachers check closely what pupils know and can do. Across all subjects, teachers use the school's assessment system to monitor each pupil's progression of skills. For example, in sport, teachers check how pupils progress through a range of criteria from being 'fit to perform' to 'fit to lead' and then 'fit for life'. Leaders also use assessment data to identify common gaps in pupils' learning and where teaching could be better. For example, leaders recently used reading and spelling assessments to identify that the teaching of phonics needed to improve. A new phonics programme is now being taught, and teachers' assessments show that pupils are learning to read more successfully because of more effective phonics teaching. As a result of the curriculum, planning and teaching, pupils make good progress across different subjects.
27. The recently appointed head of excellence supports teaching staff to teach more complex work for those pupils who need this. Pupils access numerous events that encourage them to apply and deepen their learning. These include the science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) fair, a poetry competition and a robotics workshop.
28. Teachers use a range of methods and resources to support pupils who have SEND to learn effectively. Pupils' ILPs give details of pupils' specific learning needs and the strategies that are put in place to meet them. Leaders monitor the consistency of these strategies and how effectively these support pupils who have SEND to make good progress and achieve well. Staff, pupils and parents are encouraged to have input into the ILPs to ensure that they remain relevant and up to date. This

collaborative approach helps pupils who have SEND to develop a sense of ownership over their learning and supports their good progress.

29. Pupils who speak EAL are assessed as soon as they start at the school. Their needs are identified, and targets and bespoke support are put in place, if necessary. The head of EAL guides teaching staff so they understand how to best support pupils during lessons. In most subjects, pupils who speak EAL make good progress. This is because teachers adapt how they teach the curriculum to match pupils' individual needs and give pupils access to supportive tools and resources, such as translator pens and personalised dictionaries. However, this support is not consistent across the curriculum. In some lessons, some pupils who speak EAL struggle to access the lesson content and do not learn as well as they could.
30. The early years curriculum is broad and engaging. It is taught by well-trained staff. Children develop confidence and independence as they play and learn. Resources and activities are thoughtfully matched to children's needs and interests. Staff support children to develop their language through role-play, questioning and the introduction of subject-specific vocabulary. Children become articulate and confident communicators. They willingly share their ideas during lessons, support and encourage each other and listen well to what others have to say. The vast majority of children meet the early learning goals (ELGs) across all areas of the EYFS framework.
31. Extra-curricular provision is broad and caters for a full range of pupils' interests, from fishing to sign language. Clubs run before, during and after school and the range of academic, sporting and creative options means pupils can explore and develop interests and hobbies. There are further extra-curricular opportunities beyond the programme of clubs, with many opportunities for pupils to perform, for example, with the school choir. When pupils in Year 8 finish their time at the school, they present to a panel about a personal passion or interest. Their chosen topics range from 'life as an Afghan woman' to 'who is the greatest Tottenham Hotspur player of all time'. Through a range of strategies, leaders successfully promote pupils' recreation and interests.
32. Boarders are well supported in their academic work. Duty staff supervise boarders' studies diligently and provide effective support when needed. Each evening, boarders choose from a broad range of activities from sport to 'miniature pony club' or enjoy free time in the comfortable and well-resourced common room.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

33. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

34. Pupils participate in a range of physical activities through the physical education (PE) curriculum, competitive sports and a breadth of extra-curricular activities. This supports pupils' emotional wellbeing as well as enabling them to achieve skills and techniques in a wide range of sports. Pupils also have opportunities to explore and develop their physical abilities and self-awareness in a range of outdoor activities such as during outdoor learning sessions and when participating in residential trips during 'expedition week'. These experiences help to build pupils' self-esteem, confidence and resilience.
35. Leaders ensure that pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing are promoted through regular opportunities for moral, spiritual and cultural reflection. For example, pupils consider philosophical questions called 'thunks' in the pre-prep, care for the school's horses or bees, sing in the chapel choir and spend time with nature in and around the school's woods and lake. In addition, pupils quickly learn that their views and interests are valued. They have many opportunities to voice their suggestions and concerns which are routinely acted upon, such as the building of more accessible storage or a new topic in the history curriculum to help them better understand the current conflict in Ukraine. Pupils in need of further emotional support benefit from having daily 'check-ins' with trusted adults and accessing the new 'belonging' curriculum, which gives pupils additional opportunities to contribute to school life. As a result of leaders' deliberate actions, pupils' self-esteem, self-confidence and self-awareness grow exponentially as they progress through the school so that the oldest pupils consistently embody the school's values of kindness, curiosity and achievement.
36. Pupils are well supervised by staff. Pupils and staff share warm, respectful relationships. Pupils move around the school in a calm and considerate manner. Leaders implement appropriate behaviour and anti-bullying policies. Leaders monitor any patterns in behaviour and act to address any emerging issues. Behaviour management during lessons is consistent and effective. Any incidents of misbehaviour or bullying are dealt with robustly and appropriately and recorded in detail. Ongoing support is provided to all parties involved.
37. Staff in the early years help children to settle and to enjoy their learning. Children feel secure in their environment as a result of the caring relationships and positive attitudes modelled by staff. They learn to regulate their emotions and show empathy for others through a range of initiatives, including identifying emotions with personalised pebbles or colours and emulating role models such as 'the kindness elves'.
38. The early years curriculum regularly promotes children's physical development, not least through the daily use of the outdoor environment and facilities, including sandpits and digging beds. Leaders recently identified developing children's fine motor skills as an area for improvement and so a programme of intricate and fine motor control activities has been introduced in the children's school day. The youngest children are encouraged to eat a broad and nutritious diet. They are supported to eat independently while also being closely supervised to guard against any allergen or choking risks.
39. Leaders provide a well-planned PSHE curriculum which covers all aspects of statutory guidance. The taught curriculum is supplemented by additional PSHE days, when external speakers and providers focus on key elements of the PSHE content, such as personal finance and career choices.

40. The RSE curriculum is well delivered across year groups. The RSE content for pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 is planned appropriately and enables pupils to learn about healthy, positive relationships. This includes understanding personal boundaries and what is meant by consent. The science curriculum supports pupils' personal development by teaching them about the emotional and physical changes experienced during puberty. Parents are consulted and kept informed regarding any curriculum updates.
41. The school site is well maintained. Robust health and safety policies and procedures are in place and regularly reviewed. There are regular fire evacuation drills so staff and pupils know what routines to follow. Systematic checks and maintenance are carried out across the premises, including fire safety equipment, lighting, asbestos, the electrical system and school vehicles. Detailed records are kept, and suitable action is taken to address any issues. Appropriate systems are in place for the control of traffic and people on site. Health and safety training for staff, including in fire safety, is thorough, up to date and suitably recorded.
42. There are appropriate procedures and accommodation in place to care for pupils who are injured or become unwell. First aid is provided by suitably trained staff in a timely and competent manner. Pupils with specific medical needs are well known to staff and receive the correct care. Appropriate records are kept, including those relating to accidents and injuries and the administration of medicines.
43. An up-to-date attendance policy is available on the school website and is effectively implemented. Admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained and regularly reviewed to monitor patterns of absence. Staff are vigilant and promptly follow up on any unexplained absences. Staff understand local reporting procedures in relation to children missing education. Pupils are not removed from the school roll until leaders receive confirmation that pupils have been added to the roll of their next school. Staff are diligent in ensuring that when pupils leave the school any safeguarding information is shared appropriately with the next school.
44. Boarders' accommodation is spacious, comfortable, well maintained and risk assessed. Boarding pupils of all ages value the outdoor environment and indoor recreation spaces available to them during a rich and flexible programme of activities. Boarders are supported by an appropriate independent person and are also comfortable sharing concerns with boarding staff. Boarders' input and feedback is regularly sought and used to improve their experience. Behavioural expectations are consistent, and supervision is robust. Communication with parents is timely and clear.

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

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

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

46. Leaders ensure that the curriculum supports pupils to develop respect for other faiths and cultures and to take an interest in the wider world. The PSHE and religious education (RE) curriculums are enhanced through a programme of assemblies, guest speakers and visits, including to local places of worship and places of historical heritage such as the Mary Rose Museum. Pupils develop a deep sense of empathy and acceptance for others. Pupils show mutual respect in their daily interactions. They support one another and celebrate each other's achievements.
47. Leaders promote respect for British society and its institutions. Impartial, democratic principles are taught explicitly within the PSHE curriculum and implicitly through the wider curriculum. From an early age, pupils learn to value democracy. For example, when standing for or voting in pupil leadership positions or when selecting the school's chosen charity. Pupils also understand right from wrong because they are taught fairness, justice and the rule of law during PSHE lessons and via the school's rules and expectations.
48. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their future roles in society. From an early age, pupils are given a broad range of opportunities to lead and support their school, for example, as members of the school council, eco-committee or boarding council. They raise funds to improve outdoor equipment, including a new slide and floodlights. Pupils support the wider community through pupil-led initiatives such as organising seed and harvest collections and supporting an animal care charity through whole-school fundraising projects. These experiences help pupils learn that they can have a positive impact on the world around them, both individually and collectively.
49. Children in the early years experience a stimulating range of activities to develop their social skills. They quickly become adept at turn-taking and sharing. They have daily opportunities to work collaboratively, such as building dens or hideouts in the woods, and creating warning flags to pitch outside dinosaur caves. Children develop effective listening skills and demonstrate respect and appreciation for each other's thoughts and ideas.
50. Economic education is embedded into the curriculum. Pupils develop their understanding of financial terminology and improve their numeracy skills. In the early years, children regularly engage with money through both role-play and real-world activities, such as selling vegetables from the school's kitchen garden. Pupils in Year 6 engage in a project to turn £5 into a profit. Pupils learn about business growth, whether they are developing products such as decorative plant pots or providing a service such as car washing. During the Year 8 leavers programme, pupils learn from a financial specialist who covers a range of money matters, including budgeting and financing advertising campaigns. Such activities successfully develop pupils' economic and social awareness.
51. Pupils in Year 6 to Year 8 access an age-appropriate careers programme. Projects and initiatives include a trip to observe how a media studio operates, character profiling which links them to potential future jobs, a workshop on how to write a job application and visits from numerous inspirational guest speakers, including a triathlete and a robotics specialist.
52. Pupils appreciate the additional support and guidance they receive to prepare them for entrance examinations. Leaders' close liaison with senior schools supports a smooth transition experience for leavers. Parents and pupils discuss options open to them with staff and are well supported in

choosing their next school, including through visits, transition days and evenings with senior school leaders.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

53. The school's safeguarding policy reflects the latest statutory guidance. Staff and governors receive regular training, both in person and online, organised by the suitably qualified and experienced safeguarding team. As a result, staff and governors have a robust understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures as well as the staff code of conduct, whistleblowing policy and the process for reporting and recording low-level concerns about adults.
54. Governors have a comprehensive understanding of the school's safeguarding arrangements. The governor responsible for safeguarding meets regularly with the safeguarding team to review concerns or referrals and to ensure agreed procedures are being followed.
55. Governors and leaders ensure there are robust recruitment procedures in place that reflect the latest statutory requirements. Staff involved in interviewing candidates are trained in safer recruitment. Records of checks that are made in relation to new members of staff, governors, volunteers and contractors, including for all staff working within the boarding house, are detailed and appropriate. References are verified and risk assessments are applied whenever necessary. Governors and leaders frequently scrutinise the single central record (SCR) of appointments to ensure that the required checks are completed and recorded correctly.
56. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding readily engage with external agencies for guidance and support. Referrals to children's services, the police or other agencies are made in a timely manner. Staff develop their knowledge of concerns relating to radicalisation or extremism through 'Prevent' training.
57. Safeguarding records are carefully managed, regularly reviewed to analyse any trends and cross-referenced with the school's bullying and behaviour logs. Pupils deemed to be at risk from harm or with an identified need are closely monitored.
58. The PSHE curriculum, school assemblies and external speakers raise pupils' awareness of how to keep safe and manage risk in different situations. Pupils understand how to report any concerns they may have and appreciate the multiple channels available to them. Arrangements for the monitoring and filtering of online technology are effective, and leaders respond to any alerts promptly.
59. Boarders' safeguarding is enhanced by additional measures such as restrictions on online activity, strict controls around visitor access, robust oversight of educational guardianship and a range of external support including a readily available 'independent listener'.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Walhampton School
Department for Education number	850/6028
Registered charity number	307330
Address	Walhampton School Lymington Hampshire SO41 5ZG
Phone number	01590 613300
Email address	office@walhampton.com
Website	www.walhampton.com
Proprietor	Walhampton School Trust Limited
Chair	Mrs Victoria Speers
Headteacher	Mr Jonny Timms
Age range	2 to 13
Number of pupils	329
Number of boarding pupils	22
Date of previous inspection	30 November to 1 December 2022

Information about the school

61. Walhampton is an independent co-educational day and boarding school located in the town of Lymington, Hampshire. The school was founded in 1948 and merged with Hordle House School in 1997. The school is an educational trust overseen by a governing body.
62. Pupils from Year 3 and above may board on a flexi, weekly or full-time basis. Boarding accommodation is located on the upper floors of the main house. There are 67 children in the early years comprising three Nursery classes and two Reception classes
63. The school has identified 55 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A small proportion of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
64. The school has identified English as an additional language for 22 pupils.
65. The school states its aims are to be a radical educator that honours traditional values and the individual child, with four pillars supporting this vision: delivering a distinctive and outstanding education, prioritising community wellbeing, leading our market, and nurturing global contributors.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

23 to 25 September 2025

66. A team of 5 inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

67. 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
- 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.

68. 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**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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For more information, please visit isi.net