

# School inspection report

5 to 7 March 2024

## **Bowbrook House School**

Main Street

Peopleton

Worcestershire

WR10 2EE

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

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

## Summary of inspection findings

1. The proprietor, who is also the headteacher, and other leaders have successfully created a close-knit school environment and community within which pupils' self-esteem, self-confidence and self-knowledge flourish. Leaders successfully prioritise the development of pupils' mutual respect, self-assurance and tolerance and support pupils' wellbeing effectively.
2. Leaders make effective use of detailed analysis of pupils' assessment so that teachers meet the individual needs of pupils in their class. Pupils of all ages display positive attitudes towards learning.
3. Teaching is effective throughout the school. Teaching staff plan and deliver well-planned lessons which challenge all groups of pupils so that they make good progress. Pupils are engaged in their learning, collaborate effectively and develop effective independent learning skills.
4. Leaders effectively track and monitor instances of misbehaviour to identify trends. Leaders respond quickly and efficiently to any concerns and provide additional support to improve pupils' behaviour when needed. Pupils work within clear expectations set by leaders and their behaviour is of a high standard.
5. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to support local and national charities, some of which are chosen by pupil as a result of events within the school community. Pupils are socially responsible and through their fundraising efforts demonstrate social and economic understanding of the value of their contributions.
6. Leaders provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities through which pupils gain a broad range of skills. However, the extent of pupils' engagement in these activities is not formally monitored and pupils' access to extra-curricular activities is limited during the school day in some sections of the school.
7. Leaders ensure the safeguarding of pupils' wellbeing is effective. Safeguarding arrangements are in line with current statutory guidance. Leaders systematically check the suitability of staff before they start working at the school and record these checks appropriately.
8. The proprietor ensures that leaders have the necessary knowledge and skills. As a result, the Standards are met consistently.
9. Leaders do not always review policies systematically or as effectively as possible. Several minor adjustments needed to be made to various policies during the course of the inspection to ensure that they reflect current guidance.

## 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:

- evaluate pupils' engagement in extra-curricular activities to encourage all to take up opportunities to develop wider interests and skills
- review school policies effectively enough to ensure that they always reflect up-to-date guidance.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Pupil wellbeing is at the heart of the school's culture. The proprietor and leaders have a detailed understanding of needs of pupils and promote their wellbeing effectively. As a result, pupils have strong and supportive relationships with all staff and each other. They feel valued, listened to, and their needs are well catered for.
11. The proprietor uses a network of external professional support and advice to analyse the effectiveness of the school's provision and safeguarding arrangements. Advice offered within the school's national association, along with the sharing of effective practice and training through established networks, enables the proprietor to check that the skills and knowledge of leaders in the school are current and that they fulfil their responsibilities effectively. For example, the sharing of best practice across associations and subsequent changes to the management information system have led to effective changes in arrangements for safeguarding, communication and in monitoring trends in pupil behaviour. Leaders' review of policies is not always systematic or effective, and several minor adjustments needed to be made to various policies during the course of the inspection to ensure that they reflect the latest guidance. These included the safeguarding, complaints, anti-bullying and recruitment policies.
12. The aims and ethos of the school are understood by the school community. Staff and pupils embody these in the way they conduct themselves, respond to each other and engage with their teaching and learning. Family values permeate every aspect of school life and pupils appreciate the lengths that all staff go to in prioritising their wellbeing.
13. The school meets the requirements of equality legislation. Leaders provide regular opportunities for the whole school to meet which helps to reinforce the school's values. In so doing, they ensure that pupils from all backgrounds feel included. Pupils are tolerant of each other, accepting of their differences and open about the challenges they face and as a result, they thrive academically and socially. Leaders maintain a detailed accessibility plan and make adjustments to ensure that buildings and the curriculum are available to any pupils who are disabled.
14. Leaders take a methodical approach to assessing risk and ensure that arrangements are routinely checked and reviewed. They carefully monitor and review all risk assessments of trips in order to mitigate potential risks to pupils' wellbeing. Risk assessments identify any such potential risks effectively and set out appropriate control measures. The risk assessments include consideration of individual pupils' needs.
15. Leaders respond to complaints in a timely manner as laid out in the school's policy. Leaders log all informal concerns in addition to those dealt with at the formal stage, ensuring that patterns are identified and issues resolved promptly.
16. The school communicates regularly to parents about their children's attainment and progress through detailed, personalised reports.
17. All required information is available for all stakeholders. Prospective and current parents are provided with helpful information about the school through policies held on the school's website.

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

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

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

19. Leaders plan the curriculum effectively to develop a broad range of skills in pupils and ensure that it is well taught, with clearly articulated expectations. Teachers have good subject knowledge and classroom management skills and know their pupils well. As a result, pupils receive individualised support and challenge in all subjects and make progress. Teachers deliver well-structured lessons with a variety of tasks, which are well-resourced. Lessons are engaging and pupils enjoy learning.
20. The youngest children benefit from a bespoke curriculum that is highly tailored to their individual learning needs and interests. Older pupils have a suitable range of options for GCSE study and bespoke curriculum provision is made reflecting pupils' needs. For example, very small teaching groups and careful consideration of the most suitable courses and tier of entry ensure pupil success. GCSE results reflect very strong pupil progress from starting points. Throughout the school, teachers support and prepare pupils for the next stage of their education. For example, additional time for private study within the school day is given according to need in Year 11.
21. From a very early age, leaders encourage pupils to be independent in their learning. For example, in a Year 9 French lesson, the teacher restricted the number of vocabulary-related questions to encourage pupils to think more for themselves before seeking help. Pupils of all ages display positive attitudes towards learning and make independent decisions and choices about their learning. They are well motivated, eager to progress, display resilience and are proud of their achievements. Pupils have a positive work ethic and are actively engaged in their learning.
22. A wide range of extra-curricular activities helps pupils to develop a range of skills supporting their academic progress and health. However, physical and logistical restrictions limit opportunities for pupils to engage fully in extra-curricular activities during the school day. Leaders have partially addressed this through provision of dedicated curriculum time providing a rich variety of activities in one section of the school, enabling all pupils to develop a broad range of additional skills.
23. Leaders monitor pupils' progress closely through a clearly defined assessment framework. They use their analysis of this to identify pupils' learning needs and put effective additional support in place to address these. This enables staff to support and challenge pupils across a range of needs. Constructive and regular teacher feedback enables pupils of all abilities to identify the next steps in their learning and make progress. In the prep school, leaders use assessment to identify learning needs in groups of pupils and implement a variety of strategies to address these. Pupils have a detailed understanding of the next steps in their learning within and across subjects.
24. Staff implement reasonable adjustments in group size, course of study and classroom activity and are effective in meeting the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Specialist teachers have a detailed understanding of pupil needs and communicate effectively with pupils. As a result, pupils have a knowledge and understanding of their own needs, make progress and learn effectively.
25. Pupils develop linguistic, mathematical, technological and scientific skills. They speak, listen and write with confidence and acquire skills which support their public performances. Pupils learn and make progress in the many curricular opportunities in the expressive arts, including drama, music, and particularly art. Regular feedback and encouragement ensure that even those not naturally drawn to art as a subject, work hard and make progress. Pupils intelligently interpret possible

messages conveyed by pieces of art. For example, they recognise the emotion in pieces and are inspired by artwork, which they use in investigations to further develop their own skills.

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

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

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

27. Leaders' emphasis on promoting independent learning is embedded in classroom activity and in the curriculum in all years and positively impacts pupils' ability to make decisions and choices about their learning. The curriculum is well planned and implemented throughout.
28. In the context of the nurturing, close-knit community and environment created by leaders, pupils' self-esteem, self-confidence and self-knowledge flourish. Pupils' spiritual and moral knowledge and understanding is developed through lessons in subjects across the curriculum and regular assemblies.
29. There are clear processes to monitor and respond to behavioural concerns. Leaders effectively identify trends in negative behaviour, ensuring effective follow-up action. The anti-bullying strategy is effectively communicated and understood. Pupils understand the difference between bullying and unkindness. Where behavioural standards fall short, pastoral leaders respond promptly, fairly and effectively.
30. Arrangements for supporting physical health are effective. Pupils are highly engaged in the sporting life of the school and develop teamwork skills through a wide variety of team and individual sporting opportunities. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 netball lesson, pupils listened carefully to the teacher, ask questions to clarify their understanding of directions and display high levels of cooperation and teamwork. Leaders provide opportunities for engagement in a wide variety of sports and prioritise the participation of pupils as more important than winning. As a result, all pupils take part and their physical health is supported.
31. The close-knit community and emphasis on participation encourages pupils to put themselves in new situations outside of their 'comfort zone'. They contribute to and take a lead in a rich assembly programme in which spiritual and moral understanding are promoted and prejudice and behaviours such as racism and sexism are effectively challenged. These sessions reflect the school's ethos and further reinforce the sense of school community, actively promoting pupils' mutual respect.
32. The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum and teaching are carefully planned to be relevant to the needs of pupils and effective in promoting their safety. Schemes of work support and prepare pupils for each next stage of their personal development, for example in considering consent and identifying potential danger signs in relationships. Pupils are aware of the impact of emotions on friendships. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme includes topics relating to mental health which stimulate dialogue amongst the pupil body in and out of the classroom and help them to form positive views of themselves.
33. Pupils, including children in the early years, are provided with plenty of well-maintained space for outdoor learning and recreation. Staff are effectively deployed to ensure effective supervision.
34. Attendance and admission records are maintained appropriately, and the school notifies the local authority of pupils leaving or joining the school at non-standard times. Suitable provision is made to meet pupils' medical needs and medicines are stored securely. Fire risk assessments are carried out regularly and all recommendations are acted on in a timely manner. Leaders take their

responsibilities regarding health and safety seriously and monitor the safety of the school site effectively.

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

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

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

36. Pupils actively engage with the local community, for example through collections for local foodbanks and the harvest festival. By participating in these local projects, along with contributions to national charities such as Jeans for Genes, pupils are not only encouraged to cultivate empathy but also to contribute positively to the needs of individuals. Pupils are generous in their charitable activities. They demonstrate their commitment to social responsibility by supporting charities chosen by pupils with personal relevance to them and to the school community. Their pride in successful fundraising initiatives reflects their dedication to making a positive impact on others.
37. Leaders design the PSHE curriculum to be relevant so that pupils develop respect for institutions, the law and democracy and British values such as those of the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance. Pupil forums, such as the school council help pupils practise first-hand the principles of democratic government through being elected to represent their classmates and voting to adopt initiatives that have been discussed at meetings. Religious studies lessons give pupils clear understanding of different cultures and the impact and importance of words in displaying cultural sensitivity. Pupils can differentiate between right and wrong and take responsibility for their own actions.
38. The curriculum includes social and economic education which helps prepare pupils for their future lives. For example, in the 'Travel and Tourism' GCSE course, pupils discuss the economic impact of chain stores versus local restaurants and how taxes work in relation to local businesses. In Business Studies, pupils in Year 11 discussed ways in which different types of revenue could affect the effective running of a business. Younger pupils learn about money management through participation in termly workshops run by a high street bank.
39. Through a structured and benchmarked careers programme, pupils are well prepared for next steps. Pupils research careers of their own choosing to help them understand qualification pathways and the economic benefits of particular types of careers. Pupils are supported in their option choices, for example through talks delivered by visiting sixth formers. The school uses a broad, unbiased range of external speakers to help pupils make decisions on the directions they may take beyond Year 11. Pupils appreciate the difference that PSHE sessions make to their view of themselves in relation to their future careers.
40. Pupils of all ages undertake formal and informal roles of responsibility through which pupils learn to contribute positively to the lives of others. For example, as part of family service at lunch, older pupils help serve prep school pupils and those higher up the school volunteer to read with younger pupils. Members of the school council support each other in democratic decision-making. They are placed in positions of responsibility by their peers and communicate and act upon their wishes responsibly. For example, pupils in Year 11 are given responsibility as sports and school leaders.
41. Leaders encourage pupils to express their views and show appropriate respect and consideration towards others who hold opinions different to their own. Pupils are very open about and accepting of their differences and show appreciation of the needs of others. The house system and 'curriculum alive days' provide opportunities for pupils of all ages to work together and are effective in further promoting a sense of belonging.

42. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to contribute to whole school events, such as dramatic production. Pupils are willing contributors to these events and proud of their contributions. Pupils collaborate effectively across year groups in their play and recreation.

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

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

## Safeguarding

44. Leaders maintain a secure culture of safeguarding in the school. The proprietor has effective oversight of safeguarding and meets regularly with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and safeguarding team. The DSL and deputy DSLs are appropriately trained for their roles and identify and follow up concerns promptly. They possess a secure understanding of local safeguarding arrangements, ensuring efficient reporting of concerns.
45. Through consistent and comprehensive training, including during induction, all staff are equipped with a clear understanding of their individual safeguarding responsibilities and the school's safeguarding procedures. Staff understand how to raise any concerns about colleagues, including the headteacher should any arise.
46. Robust filtering arrangements and instant messaging to leaders in the event of alerts, ensures pupil safety online is actively monitored in school. Leaders communicate effectively with parents as a key part of a secure safeguarding culture. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They understand why access to phones and the internet is limited in school and they know how to stay safe when online.
47. Leaders carry out all required safer recruitment checks systematically before staff commence working at the school. These checks are recorded clearly in a single central record of appointments.
48. Staff members maintain a visible, vigilant and accessible presence during non-contact periods, ensuring that pupils can readily reach out to a trusted adult when needed.

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

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	Bowbrook House School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	885/6025
<b>Address</b>	Bowbrook House School Main Street Peopleton Worcestershire WR10 2EE
<b>Phone number</b>	01905 841242
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<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bowbrookhouseschool.co.uk">www.bowbrookhouseschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr Christopher Allen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Christopher Allen
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 16
<b>Number of pupils</b>	196
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 to 7 November 2019

## Information about the school

50. Bowbrook House School is an independent co-educational day school situated in a rural part of Worcestershire. Founded in 1954, it was purchased by its present proprietor, who is also the headmaster, in 2004. The school is situated within the grounds of a converted Georgian house.
51. There are 5 pupils in the early years in one class with Nursery and Reception classes combined.
52. The school has identified fifty-one pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Nine pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
53. English is an additional language for one pupil.
54. The school states its aims are to ensure that all pupils achieve their academic potential. It seeks to instil what it sees to be traditional values such as mutual respect, self-assurance and tolerance, within which pupils may develop the necessary skills for the next phase of their life.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

5 to 7 March 2024

55. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

56. 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 head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

57. 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)