

School inspection report

12 to 14 March 2024

Repton School

The Hall

Repton

DE65 6FH

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 provide effective oversight and ensure that leaders have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their responsibilities. Leaders actively promote pupils' wellbeing by ensuring this is central to self-evaluation, planning and decision making.
2. Both leaders and governors place a high priority on risk management. There are robust procedures in place to carefully monitor and review risks so as to safeguard pupils.
3. Leaders' detailed analysis and evaluation of pupils' progress identify areas where extra support is needed, and this is provided by knowledgeable and skilled teachers. Pupils value the positive relationships with their teachers and the help they receive. As a result, pupils are prepared thoroughly for public examinations and achieve well. The detailed planning to meet the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) enables them to be fully integrated into an inclusive environment, so they make good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) achieve equally well through the effective support they receive from their teachers.
4. The varied extra-curricular programme enables pupils to develop their talents and interests. Pupils are appropriately challenged and encouraged to take up new activities to complement their academic studies. This enables them to become well rounded individuals, in line with the school's aims.
5. The provision of sport is a significant strength of the school. Leaders actively promote all pupils' participation in a wide range of sports to support their physical and personal development, including their mental health. The programme includes accessible and well-planned options for pupils of all ages and abilities. Pupils develop the qualities of self-confidence, self-esteem and resilience to prepare them well for later life.
6. Boarders benefit from a sense of community and the support available in the boarding houses. They feel safe and well cared for, and as a result find boarding an enriching experience, integral to their personal development and wellbeing.
7. Behaviour is generally good, with a few cases of minor misbehaviour. Health and safety procedures and related policies are implemented effectively, and the welfare needs of pupils are met. The premises are well maintained and secure, with suitable risk assessments in place and regularly reviewed.
8. Leaders have put in place effective programmes to support pupils in their personal development. Pupils learn about the importance of wellbeing through discussion of topics such as respect, disability, race and gender identity in personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils therefore acquire a moral understanding and self-knowledge. Leaders take appropriate action when the use of unkind language is reported. Whilst pupils speak positively about relationships and sex education (RSE) overall, some older pupils lose interest in some topics because they find the content repetitive.
9. Pupils contribute positively to the local and wider community through a range of community service and charity work. This helps pupils gain an understanding of life beyond school and how they can play a role to enhance the quality of life for those who may need support.

10. The careers programme is effective in helping pupils to prepare for the next stage of their education and learn about the world of work. This ensures pupils are well placed to make the right decisions. The programme for the lower years is less broad in its content, with a more limited range of talks and specialist advice to support pupils' emerging career interests.
11. Safeguarding takes a high priority in strategic and operational planning. Extensive training for all staff and governors ensures they have a thorough knowledge of safeguarding. Both leaders and governors are responsive to the lessons emerging from any safeguarding issues. Communication with external agencies and the police is prompt and highly effective to protect pupils from harm. Pupils are taught about safeguarding and prefects undertake training, reflecting the importance leaders attach to a whole school approach in safeguarding. Pupils therefore know how to keep themselves safe, including online, and are alert to each other's needs.

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:

- improve the RSE curriculum so that older pupils are more effectively engaged and interested
- widen pupils' understanding of future career pathways in the lower years.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities successfully in pursuit of the school's aim of developing rounded, multi-faceted individuals. The wellbeing of all pupils is actively promoted and is central to planning and decision-making. Leaders actively seek the views of pupils through a range of mechanisms for pupils to air their opinions, and by being visible and knowing pupils as individuals. Leaders respond to pupils' suggestions, as in extending opportunities for more regular group meals and social events across the boarding houses. As a result, pupils feel listened to and positive about their school experience.
13. Governors know the school's strengths and areas for development well. They monitor the work of leaders systematically through sub-committees, reports and frequent visits to the school. Governors provide regular support and appropriate challenge to leaders. As a result, there have been recent improvements in teaching and learning, the quality of staff recruitment and the provision for sport and extra-curricular activities, all of which have a positive impact on pupils' development and wellbeing.
14. Leaders and governors place a high priority on self-evaluation and risk management. Safeguarding is closely monitored, including by the safeguarding governor, through the effective use of the safeguarding risk management register. This ensures that leaders are well aware of any current and emerging risks to pupils, including radicalisation and extremism, and the necessary actions needed to mitigate these. Consideration of other risks such as those associated with trips and visits is equally robust and these are carefully monitored and reviewed.
15. The leadership and management of safeguarding is thorough and robust. Extensive staff training, clear and regular consultation with external agencies, monitoring and review all contribute to an effective process to safeguard pupils. Policies and procedures are clearly communicated and consistently implemented to create a safeguarding culture where all staff take responsibility and report any concerns. Leaders and governors are reflective and review any concerns with care.
16. Leaders' detailed analysis and monitoring of progress of groups of pupils enables them to clearly identify where refined intervention is needed. Leaders work as a cohesive and reflective team to ensure all staff are aware of pupils' needs. Leaders promote equality, diversity and inclusion through the curriculum and pastoral systems to create a learning environment where pupils feel safe and share a sense of belonging.
17. Boarding is well led and managed efficiently, with effective governor oversight and a dedicated boarding governor to ensure Standards are met. Consequently, boarders speak highly about their boarding experience and how it positively contributes to their personal development and wellbeing.
18. The requirements of the Equality Act are considered appropriately in the development and ongoing review of the accessibility plan. This increases access across the curriculum and the school site, including the boarding houses. Leaders prioritise equality for all in sport by providing pupils with access to many different options and coaching expertise so that all pupils can develop their talents and achieve. Leaders ensure that no pupil is denied the opportunity to participate in team and individual sports, tours and trips, thereby developing further pupils' knowledge and skills, and promoting enjoyment.

19. The school's website provides all the required information for parents and prospective parents. This includes details of the safeguarding and behaviour policies, and the statement of boarding principles and practice. Parents receive regular reports with details of pupils' attainment and progress and how to improve further.
20. The complaints procedure is clear and easy to follow. Complaints registered at all stages are taken seriously and carefully recorded and managed in accordance with the school's policy. Regular reviews of complaints are undertaken and discussed at board level so that further ways of supporting pupils' wellbeing may be identified.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. Leaders provide a wide and varied curriculum, including aspects such as the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and BTEC subjects, which is adapted to ensure the needs of pupils are met. Schemes of work are carefully planned so that pupils develop the necessary skills and gain confidence in their learning. Leaders monitor and evaluate teaching standards by undertaking regular observations, reviewing pupils' work for progress and talking to pupils. Pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points. Pupils achieve well at GCSE and A level, with results in line with or exceeding predications based upon their starting points, because of the effective guidance and support provided by teachers.
22. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their speaking, listening and literacy skills across a range of subjects. In English, pupils successfully handle extended written tasks on complex topics such as how a mixed cultural identity might complicate the concept of home. Pupils who speak EAL receive support from trained staff to improve their English. The curriculum is adapted, and key information is shared amongst staff to promote a cohesive approach to supporting these pupils. Pupils' numeracy skills are evident in mathematics and also in the sciences, economics, business, geography and sport. Pupils develop aesthetic and creative skills as exemplified by the high-quality singing and thoughtful readings in chapel.
23. Leaders foster effective cross-curricular links through science, technology, engineering and mathematics projects and activities. Pupils demonstrate innovation and purpose, as in the engineering group's recent top national award for its biogas generator. As a result, pupils develop secure technological skills and competence in the use of digital devices, and enjoy studying these subjects.
24. Teaching is well planned and tailored towards the needs of pupils. Lessons incorporate well-structured tasks which build on previous learning and develop further pupils' understanding. Teaching does not discriminate and is supported by a varied programme of departmental activities which enable pupils to extend their knowledge and interests beyond the classroom. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is mostly good, although in a few cases there is minor misbehaviour.
25. Leaders promote positive relationships between staff and pupils so that pupils feel able to ask for support in lessons and in the boarding houses. Teachers know their subjects and pupils well and provide helpful support and feedback on how to improve. Pupils take responsibility for their studies, using self-correction and reflection to ask themselves how they can do better in their work. They greatly value and act upon feedback, which therefore contributes to their learning.
26. Assessment is thorough and systematic, enabling teachers to quickly identify areas for development and pupils to see their progress. Staff support pupils in learning to manage their study time well and through additional teaching sessions when required. Boarders are well supported in their houses by visiting teachers who provide subject expertise. Facilities and classrooms are well equipped and teachers use resources effectively to engage pupils' interest, promote thinking and develop skills. As a consequence, pupils are motivated to learn and produce work of a consistently high quality.
27. Pupils who have SEND are well supported and describe their 'personalised learning family' as an asset towards their learning. Pupils' needs are identified promptly, and individual strategies put in

place. These are effectively monitored to ensure pupils stay on track. As a result, these pupils make good progress and achieve well in their subjects.

28. The extra-curricular and recreational programmes are carefully planned to enable all pupils to develop their interests, talents and leadership skills, and to become well-rounded learners. The programmes are inclusive, diverse and often pupil led, and cover an extensive range including sports, drama, music and intellectual societies. Participation rates are high and are carefully monitored to ensure pupils have an appropriate balance of academic and other commitments. Boarders enjoy their free time and value the varied activity programme which enables them to experience something new and to socialise across the age groups. Leaders look to provide opportunities for pupils to explore their interests and aptitudes by listening and responding to suggestions from pupils.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

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

29. Leaders actively promote pupils' participation in a wide range of physical and personal development activities. Sport is central to pupils' development with an array of success at the highest levels in hockey, cricket, tennis and swimming. Pupils are helped to identify and develop their talents within a programme that includes a wide range of sport, as well as opportunities to develop coaching and umpiring skills. Leaders ensure that there is something for a wide range of interests and abilities, providing opportunities for pupils to represent the school and achieve at every level, with expert coaching provided for all. This enables pupils to develop self-confidence, self-esteem and resilience, as well as keep physically and mentally healthy.
30. An effective co-ordinated approach to supporting pupils' wellbeing in sport is implemented by leaders, teachers, specialist coaches and pastoral and medical staff. They closely monitor the impact of current provision, making adjustments in response to the needs of individual pupils. This ensures that pupils' wellbeing is always at the core of planning and strategy, as demonstrated by leaders' recent revision of females' football strategy to engage learners new to the sport and relieve the pressure of demands faced by club academy players.
31. Leaders foster a culture where both boarders and day pupils develop a strong sense of belonging, whilst supporting each other and understanding the need for mutual respect. Pupils develop self-esteem because they feel treated as equals. International boarders are quickly integrated into the house system and the many social opportunities enable them to make friends and develop confidence in their new environment.
32. Pupils have a well-developed sense of their own and other's self-awareness. This enables pupils of different faiths and none to be reflective within and outside the curriculum. Pupils' work in the creative arts displays a clear spiritual and aesthetic dimension, with meaningful links to the natural environment and different world cultures.
33. Staff implement a clear behaviour management policy, although the application of the system is inconsistent amongst some teachers. Leaders have identified the need to address issues around the inappropriate use of unkind language amongst some pupils. Appropriate action is taken if this occurs in line with the school policy. Pupils are knowledgeable about bullying and cyberbullying and know how to keep themselves safe online. Bullying is rare but if it occurs leaders act promptly to resolve any issue.
34. Pupils value the PSHE programme, which helps them to understand important issues such as health and wellbeing and respect for different groups. This links to the school aim to promote a healthy balance in pupils' lives. Effective planning ensures that the programme responds to contextual changes and pupil voice.
35. The RSE programme ensures all key areas such as consent are covered to enhance pupils' knowledge of pertinent issues. Some older pupils are not as interested in or engaged with RSE as they could be, as they find some topics repetitive. Where this happens, pupils' progress in building on previous knowledge can be limited.

36. Leaders have established a well-resourced health and wellbeing centre which offers a wide range of specialist support for pupils' physical and mental welfare. The lead nurse liaises closely with pastoral leaders to ensure individuals' needs are understood and met. Pupils feel heard through effective channels such as school and house forums, activities and suggestion boxes. There are many staff pupils can turn to for help, including the independent listener for boarders. Counsellors visit boarding houses so that pupils know who they are and feel confident in raising any concern.
37. The site and school premises are maintained to a high standard. All relevant health and safety requirements, including those related to fire safety, are clearly understood and procedures implemented effectively.
38. Admissions and attendance registers are kept appropriately, and staff are vigilant about pupil absence. All requirements for boarding are carefully documented and reviewed by leaders to ensure boarders' needs are met. Boarding accommodation is well maintained and homely, with facilities for quiet work and recreation. There is an effective prefect system which supports younger pupils. Catering arrangements ensure pupils have a healthy and nutritious diet. The site security is carefully monitored, and pupils are supervised effectively at all times.

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

All the relevant Standards are met.

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

39. Pupils embrace diversity and inclusion. Pupils learn about democracy, the British judicial system and the appeals process. This promotes pupils' cultural and social awareness and understanding of what is right and wrong, which prepares them well for life in British society. Pupils have a wide understanding of human rights in other countries. This is exemplified in older pupils' clear understanding of the impact of civil rights on African Americans and the role of the US Supreme Court.
40. Pupils participate in various societies that promote equality and inclusivity such as Feminist, Pride and LGBTQ+ societies. Leaders listen to pupils and invite suggestions. Leaders' promotion of the 'sport for all' approach encourages mutual respect and develops pupils' social skills, including trust in others. Sport is promoted as an inclusive discipline for life and provides many opportunities for all pupils to mix and work together effectively. Through sport and recreational activities, the multinational boarding environment enables pupils of different ages, traditions and faiths to mix and socialise together harmoniously, creating a family atmosphere. As a result, pupils understand the importance of getting on with others to achieve common goals.
41. Pupils understand the importance of global citizenship and their responsibilities because this is actively promoted by school leaders. Boarders raise awareness of environmental issues by undertaking recycling and energy saving initiatives. Through the curriculum pupils learn about climate change. This develops pupils' understanding of global issues, their impact on nature and actions that can be taken to reverse the damage.
42. Pupils put their well-developed leadership skills to effective use when fulfilling positions of responsibility such as school and house prefects and acting as mentors to younger pupils. The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) enable pupils to learn the value of teamwork and how to take responsibility for themselves in an unfamiliar environment under testing circumstances.
43. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to take the initiative to contribute to the local and wider community. Pupils develop a strong sense of service towards others, as in their work to support the homeless through a sponsored rough sleep. Other activities include working closely with foodbanks, volunteering at the local hospital and community café, and sports coaching for children in primary schools. This upholds the school's aim of developing all-rounders who can positively contribute to society.
44. Careers guidance provides effective support for pupils as they consider the next stage of their education and future. Leaders organise a well-planned programme of careers events to guide and help pupils, including applications to international universities. Senior pupils highly value the Future Leaders Programme, as well as their individual regular career sessions. This helps pupils to gain personal advice and be confident in making decisions through informed choices. Pupils in the lower years are given a broad introduction to careers, including through tutorials and visiting speakers, although they feel they would like to gain a better understanding of future pathways at an earlier stage.

45. Pupils acquire an economic understanding through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities such as business and economics societies. In business studies, pupils' understanding of what makes a product successful is carefully developed through teaching which skilfully links theory to practical outcomes. Pupils are therefore able to use marketing strategy and cost analysis effectively, such as in the design of a new healthy drink. Pupils develop an understanding of how to manage their own finances effectively to equip them well beyond school through talks, workshops and PSHE lessons. This includes the concepts of credit and debit and awareness of the dangers of gambling.

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

46. Leaders and governors work effectively to promote a positive, transparent safeguarding culture throughout the school. Written policies and documentation take the school's context into consideration and reflect the latest guidance. Leaders work hard to review and learn from safeguarding issues to ensure that the safeguarding of pupils is the priority.
47. Governors maintain effective oversight of safeguarding policies and their implementation through discussion with leaders, regular reports to the board and visits to the school. The chair, safeguarding and boarding governors frequently meet with leaders.
48. Pupils are confident that there are trusted adults in school and that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon. As a result, pupils feel safe and enjoy learning and their boarding environment.
49. Leaders consistently promote an awareness that 'it could happen here' and that everyone is responsible for acting on concerns, including low level concerns about adults and self-reporting of issues. Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures and confident about what to do if there is a concern about a pupil or member of staff. Where safeguarding concerns are raised, leaders liaise promptly and appropriately with external agencies, including the local authority, social services and the police as required. Induction for new staff is thorough and promotes a secure understanding of the expectations of the school and responsibilities in keeping children safe, including child-on-child abuse.
50. Leaders and governors make effective use of the risk management register to safeguard pupils by regularly reviewing risks and implementing measures to mitigate these. They recognise the particular vulnerabilities of boarders and ensure that pupils know who to contact should they have a worry. Boarding staff are alert to any concerns and act quickly to follow these up.
51. Safeguarding training for staff and governors is rigorous and systematic and includes the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders' appointment of a large, well-qualified safeguarding team means there is always somebody available for pupils or staff to speak to. Safeguarding leaders provide staff with additional guidance through the school's bulletin, which focuses on different themes such as safeguarding in sport and provides staff with the latest updates.
52. Leaders have established close working relationships with external agencies and readily seek advice to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils comes first. Detailed records show that any referrals concerning pupils or adults are made promptly, following the correct procedures.
53. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe online. A robust filtering and monitoring system ensures pupils do not access inappropriate content or harmful social media. This promotes a secure online environment to keep pupils safe.
54. Leaders implement robust procedures to ensure appropriate checks are carried out before adults begin work in the school and a record of appointments is appropriately maintained.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Repton school
Department for Education number	830/6001
Registered charity number	1093166
Address	Repton School The Hall Repton Derbyshire DE65 6FH
Phone number	01283 559200
Email address	headmaster@repton.org.uk
Website	www.repton.org.uk
Proprietor	Repton School
Chair	Mr Mark Shires
Headmaster	Mr Mark Semmence
Age range	13 to 18
Number of pupils	617
Number of boarding pupils	415
Date of previous inspection	10 October 2023

Information about the school

55. Repton School is an independent co-educational boarding and day school, set in its own grounds in the village of Repton. The school is a charitable company limited by guarantee and is administered by a board of governors which also oversees the separately registered prep school, Repton Preparatory School.
56. There are ten boarding houses, four for female and six for male pupils, located around the village.
57. Since the previous full inspection, the senior leadership team has been restructured with the creation of two new posts of deputy head safeguarding and director of safeguarding compliance.
58. The school has identified 161 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
59. English is an additional language for 75 pupils.
60. The school states its aims are to encourage a conscious equilibrium in all things, encouraging pupils to adopt a healthy balance between their studies, sport, activities of all kinds and rest, so that they can emerge as rounded, multi-faceted individuals.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

12 to 14 March 2024

61. A team of eight inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

62. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and chapel
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and the safeguarding governor
- 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
- 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

63. 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**.

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