

School inspection report

18 to 20 June 2024

The Richard Pate School

Southern Road

Leckhampton

Cheltenham

GL53 9RP

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Governors have effective procedures in place to monitor the quality of the school's provision and to ensure that leaders fulfil their responsibilities. Governors scrutinise policies routinely and visit the school regularly. They keep themselves up to date with any developing trends and take action when required.
2. Leaders demonstrate a proactive approach to school improvement. Through ongoing curriculum reviews, leaders ensure that curriculum plans and resources are adapted to maintain pupils' interest in learning and enhance their progress. Leaders are committed to achieving the school's aim to prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education. Pupils flourish as a result. Early years leaders meet with staff to discuss children's development and wellbeing.
3. Leaders provide a broad curriculum which is complemented by a comprehensive programme of extra-curricular activities. Teachers deliver effective teaching and establish purposeful relationships with pupils. This supports pupils to make good progress and understand how they learn best. Leaders' assessment framework helps teachers to track pupils' progress and cater for pupils' different needs. Teachers adjust teaching plans to provide pupils with both additional support and challenge where appropriate.
4. Children in the early years are provided with a suitable curriculum that meets their physical, personal and social needs as well as their language and communication development.
5. Leaders' programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, including relationships education, is suitable for pupils' different ages and needs. Topics such as healthy living and changing emotions help pupils to grow in self-understanding. The PSHE programme helps pupils to navigate present challenges and those they may face in their future lives. Leaders and staff apply the system of rewards and sanctions fairly. Pupils respond positively to the use of restorative conversations if their behaviour falls below expectations. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour rarely happen. Leaders' and teachers' follow up is swift and effective when incidents occur.
6. Leaders demonstrate a rigorous approach to health and safety, including the maintenance of buildings and grounds as well as oversight of first aid. Leaders carry out checks routinely. Staff are suitably trained in health and safety matters and leaders ensure that records are updated.
7. Leaders actively promote a culture of respect. This is evident in pupils' daily interactions with staff and each other. Pupils are well equipped for life in modern Britain through planned activities to learn about other cultures and different groups of people who make up society. Leaders arrange opportunities for pupils to engage with the local community so that they appreciate the importance of helping others. However, pupils have fewer opportunities to develop their awareness of financial literacy and economic wellbeing. Pupils do not build on their knowledge and understanding in these areas to prepare them sufficiently for their future lives.
8. Governors and leaders understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe from harm. Staff training is regularly updated and staff understand how to report concerns. Leaders seek advice from external agencies when needed. Safer recruitment procedures are followed and are accurately recorded. Pupils are taught how to keep safe online and feel confident that any concerns raised will be listened to and addressed. During the inspection visit, leaders were swift to address an instance when staff use of mobile phones did not meet leaders' high standards. Leaders should reassure themselves that

high standards are consistently followed by checking more thoroughly and systematically that staff understand and always apply their safeguarding training.

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:

- provide further opportunities to develop pupils' financial and economic awareness so that pupils gain a broader and deeper understanding in these areas which they can apply in their future lives
- strengthen their monitoring systems to make sure that staff understand and apply their safeguarding training so that leaders' high expectations are always upheld.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Leaders prioritise the pupils' wellbeing. They create a calm and purposeful learning environment where pupils are encouraged to aim high in their endeavours and display respectful behaviour towards each other. Leaders know pupils well and use this knowledge to adapt the school's provision to meet pupils' needs.
10. Governors collaborate closely with leaders, ensuring that leaders are well-trained and have the appropriate skills and knowledge to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. Leaders have set out a strong vision for the school's ongoing development. They monitor the effectiveness of their actions closely and seize opportunities to further enhance resourcing and curriculum planning.
11. In early years, the well-structured curriculum focusses on children's literacy, numeracy and physical development alongside the priority to develop children's positive behaviours. Leaders use a systematic framework to assess children's development so that they identify where children may be falling behind and respond to children's different needs.
12. Early years leaders create opportunities for practitioners to discuss children's ongoing development and wellbeing so that any concerns can be addressed.
13. Leaders successfully achieve the school's aim to prepare pupils for the next stage in their education. Well-planned assemblies, visits by senior school headteachers and discussions with pupils ensure that pupils understand what to expect. Pupils are supported to develop the academic and personal knowledge and skills to be well-prepared for the future.
14. Governors systematically review policies, working closely with senior leaders to ensure that procedures are understood by all parties. Regular visits to the school allow governors to monitor the effective implementation of procedures. In this way, they reassure themselves that policies are suitable and reflect the current statutory guidance.
15. The required information is provided to parents on the school's website including the school's aim, key policies and contact details. Parents receive regular reports that keep them updated on their children's progress and attainment. Leaders provide the necessary information to the local authority relating to pupils who have education, health and care plans (EHC plans). The local authority is informed when pupils leave or join the school at non-standard times.
16. Leaders work in close partnership with a range of external agencies, notably for safeguarding. They seek advice when needed and keep themselves updated on current legislation to inform their decision-making. Leaders are well-trained and knowledgeable in respect of current guidance. In this way, suitable measures are in place to protect pupils from harm.
17. Governors and leaders remain alert to identify possible risks and to reduce or resolve these promptly. Decisions are made in pupils' best interests. For example leaders have laid out measures to enhance aspects of the site's boundaries with a view to maximising pupils' welfare. Effective risk assessments are in place, including for daily activities in early years, site safety and overseas residential visits. These ensure that pupils' wellbeing and safety remain a priority.
18. A suitable system to manage any complaints is effectively implemented. Whilst few complaints reach the formal stage, follow up by senior leaders is timely and consistent when they do.

19. Leaders are committed to maximising pupils' outcomes. Subject leaders review curriculum plans to ensure that pupils are both challenged and supported through appropriate teaching activities. Subject leaders take action when improvements are needed. For example recent subject audits led to the introduction of a new science scheme, additional phonics and spelling programmes and a focus upon raising awareness of female role models.
20. Governors liaise regularly with leaders. Through routine visits, engagement with teachers and pupils and necessary updates in safeguarding, health and safety and the curriculum, governors assure themselves that effective measures are in place to protect pupils from harm.
21. Leaders and governors routinely review the accessibility plan to check that all pupils have equal opportunities and access to the school's curriculum and the physical environment. Governors and leaders fulfil their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. For example, by making necessary adaptations such as installing a lower handrail in the nursery and providing staff with training on neurodiversity.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

23. Leaders have designed a comprehensive and inclusive curriculum. This enables pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills across mathematics, science, literacy and languages as well as in creative and technological subjects. Leaders prioritise the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. They provide opportunities for pupils to perform in drama productions and regular occasions for pupils to discuss and debate with each other. Pupils build their confidence to form and articulate their views and acquire relevant skills for their future lives.
24. Pupils make good progress from their starting points. Leaders are committed to preparing pupils for the next stage of their education. Year 6 pupils routinely gain places at an extensive range of senior schools, including grammar schools, with many achieving scholarship success. By the end of the Reception year, the majority of children typically achieve their early learning goals.
25. Leaders have designed a robust assessment framework. This supports leaders and staff to analyse the impact of the curriculum and highlight pupils' strengths and development areas. Leaders and staff provide pupils with the right interventions and support when needed. Further to identifying a slight dip in pupils' spelling scores, leaders acted quickly to implement new spelling and phonics programmes to improve pupils' learning.
26. Teachers have secure subject knowledge; they plan lessons carefully and provide pupils with interesting and relevant learning activities. This inspires pupils and enables them to acquire new skills and build upon their existing knowledge and understanding. During music lessons in Year 1 pupils use their prior learning to interpret a graphic score in pictorial form and accurately clap out a beat. Teachers keep a close track of pupils' learning and adjust their teaching plans accordingly. Their high expectations encourage pupils to embrace challenge. Year 4 pupils build their subject knowledge effectively. They vary verb choices confidently to express their sporting preferences and show resilience when applying new sentence constructions. Relationships between teachers and pupils are warm and supportive. This creates a safe space for pupils to contribute their ideas. Pupils flourish as self-motivated and interested learners.
27. Pupils who have SEND make good progress from their different starting points through early identification of their needs. Leaders make effective use of assessment data to arrange targeted interventions and additional sessions when needed, such as in spelling and comprehension. Recently introduced reading and spelling support programmes and the introduction of high-quality texts are having a positive impact to promote pupils' enjoyment of reading.
28. Pupils who speak EAL are assessed upon arrival for their language fluency and understanding. Support sessions, including the pre-teaching of subject-specific vocabulary, are provided if needed. Pupils who speak EAL make good progress, notably in their communication skills.
29. Practitioners in early years create a calm and purposeful learning environment so that children develop their levels of concentration and engagement. Children are confident communicators, readily asking for help when needed. Early years staff focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills. Practitioners follow children's interests and set up meaningful role play activities, including around superheroes and building site themes. This encourages children's linguistic confidence and to experiment with new vocabulary. Children thrive as communicators, sharing conversations comfortably with adults and each other.

30. Parents and prospective parents keep up to date on pupils' academic performance from previous years through newsletters and via the school's website.
31. Pupils enjoy the breaktime activities provided for them, such as constructing a bug hotel. They benefit from the varied programme of extra-curricular activities ranging from athletics to orchestra where they learn new skills and build on existing ones.

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

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

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

33. Leaders and teachers plan their curriculum so that pupils have opportunities to engage with the outdoor environment. Pupils appreciate and learn about the natural world. In Year 4 science lessons pupils accurately identify wildflowers during woodland walks and appreciate the beauty of the birdsong.
34. Well-planned assemblies and daily wellbeing sessions offer pupils insight into the lives of powerful role models. During an assembly for Years 5 and 6, pupils discover the challenges faced by the likes of Nelson Mandela, Malala Yousafzai and Thomas Edison. This helps pupils to understand the qualities of perseverance, determination and resilience. Through opportunities to learn about the challenges of others, pupils develop their awareness of and ability to understand their own actions.
35. The well-structured PE curriculum enables pupils to learn how to keep healthy and active. They acquire new skills in various sporting disciplines, including softball, running, javelin and tennis. Pupils are keen to represent their school at fixtures and competitions. Teachers draw on their in-depth subject knowledge to model PE techniques ensuring that pupils make good progress in developing their confidence and physical proficiency.
36. Children in early years develop their strength and coordination through weekly physical development lessons and regular use of outdoor play areas and equipment, including crates and pallets, a pirate ship and woodland walks. During sports day, children enjoy displaying their skills in mini javelin, parachute and track activities. As a result of the wide range of activities, children develop the knowledge and skills to lead healthy and active lives.
37. A comprehensive programme of PSHE, including relationships and sex education (RSE), is appropriate for pupils' different ages and needs. Through detailed planning and careful teaching, pupils are taught ways to keep healthy and identify their changing emotions. Pupils develop an understanding of themselves as individuals and how to manage their feelings. Through topics on relationships, pupils learn how to form and sustain successful friendships.
38. Leaders set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They set out a clearly understood system of rewards and sanctions alongside the Golden Rules of kindness, respect, honesty, effort and responsibility. As a result, pupils are well-behaved, courteous and considerate of the needs of others. Older pupils speak positively about the value of talking any issues through with staff. Pupils understand the need to apologise for any misbehaviours and lose privileges when their behaviour falls short of leaders' expectations. Pupils' moral understanding is evident through the daily behaviour choices they make.
39. Early years practitioners form supportive relationships with children helping them to understand their behaviours and emotions. The focus on sharing and being kind helps children to be a good friend. Practitioners ensure that children acquire valuable skills for the future through an appropriate combination of enabling children's independence and intervening with guidance and support as and when needed.

40. Behaviour and bullying instances are rare and pastoral leaders react promptly and sensitively to support all parties when incidents do arise. Pupils trust that their teachers will follow up their concerns and worries when needed.
41. Pupils are closely supervised across the site and feel well cared for by their teachers at breaktimes. Pupils respect the designated physical boundaries and understand these help them to keep safe.
42. Leaders make sure that staff record and maintain admissions and attendance accurately. Leaders act quickly when pupils' attendance causes concern. They support pupils and their families to improve any attendance issues.
43. Health and safety matters are important to leaders. Facilities and buildings are well-maintained and effective measures are in place, including the regular servicing of equipment and maintenance of signage and drills to reduce the risk of fire.
44. Medical facilities are suitably equipped and medication is stored securely. Staff are well-trained so as to give appropriate care for pupils when they are injured or unwell. Record-keeping for accidents, illnesses and the administration of medicines is detailed and up to date.

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. Through the PSHE curriculum, pupils learn about the value of money and prioritising necessity over luxury. Pupils learn a range of transactional skills by running stalls on Charity Day and managing a budget during residential visits. However, opportunities for pupils to secure a broader and deeper financial understanding and economic wellbeing are less apparent. Well-planned teaching and learning in these areas will further equip pupils with the knowledge and skills to navigate the challenges in their future adult lives.
47. Leaders and teachers create a culture of mutual respect through their interactions with pupils and planned opportunities within the curriculum. Leaders do not shy away from adapting the curriculum to make sure that it is relevant and inclusive. Recent changes to help raise pupils' awareness of female role models has seen the introduction of a transport topic featuring Amelia Earhart and the study of the gender-reversed version of The Odyssey. This supports pupils to learn the importance and benefits of an inclusive society.
48. Leaders encourage pupils across the school to appreciate a range of cultures. In Reception children answer the register in various languages and enjoy visits from representatives of different faith groups, including a Buddhist monk. In Year 3 religious education lessons, pupils are well prepared to get the most from a visit to a Hindu temple by learning vocabulary linked to Hindu traditions beforehand. These relevant experiences help to raise pupils' awareness and appreciation of difference.
49. Pupils are introduced to possible future careers through cross-curricular links. For example when the roles of architects and designers are discussed in art lessons and during a design and technology (DT) workshop. Visiting speakers such as a professional rugby player and a gold medallist winner inspire pupils to work hard and achieve their best.
50. In line with the school's aim, leaders ensure that pupils feel well prepared for the next stage of their education. For example they arrange regular visits by school police officers so that pupils understand the dangers of drugs and learn strategies to manage peer pressure. This supports pupils to embark upon the next stage of their education with confidence and important knowledge.
51. Leaders actively reinforce the principles of right and wrong throughout the curriculum by providing opportunities that build pupils' skills in reasoning. Year 6 pupils explain maturely that although every child has the right to an education, food and safety, for those living in areas of conflict access to those rights can be denied. Meticulous planning and teaching provides pupils with toolkits to become skilled decision-makers.
52. Pupils embrace responsibility through various leadership roles and activities, such as buddies, school councillors and monitors. The Richard Pate Award offers pupils experiences in service, leadership and mentoring. Pupils recognise the importance of these roles and Year 6 buddies speak proudly about helping others. Pupils understand how their contributions to school life make a positive impact upon the lives and wellbeing of others.

53. Pupils understand that they live in a democratic society and welcome the many opportunities they have to vote, including for school councillors, at debate club and for the charities to support through annual fund-raising activities.
54. Pupils enjoy engaging with their local community. This includes writing letters to care home residents, carol singing and donating to local food banks.
55. Leaders in early years model appropriate behaviours so that children understand expectations for now and for later life. During a nursery transition event, Reception children welcome younger peers to their classroom, offering reassurance and friendship. Practitioners demonstrate how children can be considerate of each other's needs. For example, a group of Reception children devise a marble run track for the youngest children, sharing marbles and taking turns.
56. Leaders and teachers ensure that discussions about current affairs topics, such as human rights, are managed in an age-appropriate and sensitive way so that pupils are provided with a balanced presentation.

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

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

Safeguarding

58. Appropriate safeguarding procedures in line with the current statutory guidance are in place and reflect leaders' ongoing commitment to keep pupils safe from harm.
59. Safeguarding leaders organise suitable and comprehensive training for staff, including for those new to the school. Leaders reinforce staff awareness of topical issues through weekly updates and regular quizzes. As a result, staff feel confident to identify and respond to concerns that a pupil may be at risk of harm.
60. During the onsite inspection leaders acted promptly with follow up measures when staff use of mobile phones fell outside leaders' expectations. Leaders should reduce the risk of inadvertent lapses by checking more rigorously that staff understand and apply their safeguarding training.
61. Governors, leaders and teachers work collaboratively, drawing on their knowledge of pupils to remain vigilant to possible risk factors and any developing trends. Incidents are well managed when they do arise.
62. Record keeping of concerns raised is thorough and leaders actively engage with parents. Leaders' timely and sensitive communication allows all parties to feel supported when incidents occur.
63. Pupils have many opportunities to voice their concerns. Leaders arrange regular pupil voice meetings, mentors and drop-in sessions for pupils. The worry boxes and message envelopes in classrooms give pupils additional ways to alert staff to any worries or concerns. Pupils feel confident to share their worries with a trusted adult because they know that these will be addressed.
64. Pupils are knowledgeable about keeping safe online. They speak confidently about using secure passwords and ways to check that a website is safe. Pupils' access to inappropriate websites is minimised through leaders effective system for filtering content and monitoring any breaches. Leaders act promptly should this occur.
65. Safeguarding leaders work closely with external organisations for example through networking with other schools and liaising with local safeguarding hubs. This helps to strengthen and inform the school's safeguarding practice.
66. Those with responsibility for conducting staff suitability checks operate a robust system to ensure that arrangements are in place that safeguard pupils' welfare. An appropriate central register of staff appointments is maintained and all the required checks are carried out prior to a staff member taking up role. Governors and leaders oversee the register of staff appointments, scrutinising processes and addressing any shortcomings.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	The Richard Pate School
Department for Education number	916/6039
Registered charity number	1202002
Address	The Richard Pate School Southern Road Leckhampton Cheltenham GL53 9RP
Phone number	01242 522086
Email address	office@richardpate.co.uk
Website	https://www.richardpate.co.uk
Proprietor	Pate's Grammar School Foundation
Chair	Mr Guy Bradshaw
Headteacher	Mr Robert MacDonald
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	305
Date of previous inspection	3 to 5 March 2020

Information about the school

68. The Richard Pate School is a co-educational day school located on the outskirts of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of trustees.
69. There are 72 children in early years including a Nursery class for children aged three to four and two Reception classes.
70. The school has identified 28 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
71. There are 23 pupils who speak English as an additional language.
72. The school states its aim is to offer a high quality, varied and stimulating education, appropriate to the needs of each child so they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. It seeks to provide a secure and supportive family environment and offer a curriculum which includes excellent academic and extra-curricular experiences to develop confidence, independence and co-operative skills. The school aims to cultivate pupils' broader understanding of themselves and others, stressing the importance of manners, mutual respect and self-discipline and nurturing happy children with a love for learning.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

18 to 20 June 2024

73. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

74. 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 governors
- 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.

75. 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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