

School inspection report

23 to 25 April 2024

Warminster School

Church Street

Warminster

Wiltshire

BA12 8PJ

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. The senior leaders of the prep and senior schools work effectively together and in close collaboration with the governing board to ensure that they have a clear vision of the direction in which they wish to take the school. This is supported by an embedded culture of audit, evaluation, review and ongoing quality assurance procedures.
2. Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Pupils have confidence in their teachers and house staff and feel able to approach them with any concerns or worries.
3. The school operates a vertical system of four houses, which includes day and boarding pupils. In all of these, effective pastoral care is delivered in a range of ways that maximise pupils' integration across all year groups. Pupils show a close affinity to their allocated house, and this encourages close bonds between different age groups as well as facilitating transition from the prep to the senior school.
4. Pupils' self-awareness and social development are very secure. The behaviour of pupils as seen around the school and in lessons is of a high standard. The school's behaviour policy is clear in terms of the policy and procedures. However, teachers do not consistently apply the policy across the year groups, with the effect that some pupils are not confident that the system is fair and appropriate for all.
5. Examination results show that nearly all pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points. Leaders identify and provide effective additional support for individual pupils which improves their outcomes. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who have English as an additional language (EAL) receive appropriate focused support and, as a result of this and effective tracking mechanisms, make good progress and often exceed their target grades.
6. Boarding contributes to the success of the school. Boarders, including overseas pupils, are fully integrated into the school and play a large part in the life of the school both socially and academically. Boarders are prominent members of school clubs and societies. Overseas pupils display a keen desire to share their culture with their British counterparts, for example through leading international focused events promoting international relations.
7. Leaders have developed an effective outreach programme of extracurricular activities that engage pupils within the local community in events which offer social, cultural and leadership opportunities. This occurs through collaboration with local schools and through presenting pupils with opportunities to support local, national and international charitable organisations.

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 the school's behaviour policy and procedures are consistently implemented across the school to raise pupils' confidence that the system is fair and appropriate for all.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders have the skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities proficiently. Governors have allocated areas of responsibility which effectively cover the school's operation, including finance, safeguarding, academics, boarding and pastoral care. They support leaders appropriately to ensure ongoing development takes place through regular school visits and by offering appropriate challenges. Governors ensure, by regular review, that suitable policies are implemented effectively and that the Standards are met.
9. Leaders maintain an effective understanding of the school and evaluate the implementation of the school's development plan on a termly basis. Governors work closely with senior leaders to ensure that pupils' wellbeing is at the forefront of the school's strategic thinking.
10. Senior leaders have successfully instilled the school's values and virtues into the school culture. These values are consistently reinforced and well known to both pupils and staff, and give an overall focus to the aims and mission of the school. Leaders communicate the school aims and ethos well, and by doing so encourage pupils to work hard and demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviour.
11. Leaders in the early years are well supported by experienced and well-informed staff which results in a provision which effectively meets the early years requirements. Children in the early years are well supported both academically and pastorally and, as a result, have a positive start to their education.
12. Senior leaders in both the prep and the senior schools closely check the quality of teaching and learning. They regularly visit classrooms. There is a culture of sharing effective practice so that staff can continue to improve and develop their methodology.
13. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. An accessibility plan highlights where adjustments are made to support pupils' individual needs, such as the availability of disabled and unisex washroom facilities for pupils and increased access to classrooms through ramp and lift access, where this is possible.
14. Leaders make sure that robust safeguarding procedures are in place. There are well-established links with local support agencies, including the local authority, social services and the police, to access advice and support and to make referrals when required.
15. Leaders and managers have a comprehensive approach to managing risk. Those responsible for identifying risks and hazards have a clear understanding of their role and this receives governor input through the monitoring of health and safety by a specialist governor. Analysis of risks is used effectively to reduce the impact on pupils' academic and pastoral welfare. Suitable mitigations of risk are put in place as required. For example, robust risk assessments are in place for pupils accessing the woodland environments and for pupils taking part in potentially high-risk activities such as adventurous training, the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) or on overseas expeditions and skiing trips.
16. An appropriate range of information is published for parents on the school's comprehensive website. Parents receive regular detailed information and feedback about their child's academic progress and are informed of any targeted support provided for their child. Leaders provide the required information to the local authority with regard to any pupils whom they fund.

17. Any complaints received are taken seriously, addressed promptly and managed in line with the school's complaints policy. Detailed records are maintained appropriately and reviewed regularly by leaders and governors to inform any helpful changes in policy or practice.

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 through planning and co-ordination of teaching programmes allow pupils throughout the school to benefit from a well-planned, broad and balanced curriculum that covers a full range of linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, aesthetic and creative subjects. Strategic decisions are made to improve pupils' experience of the curriculum, such as the inclusion of the extended project qualification (EPQ) for sixth-form pupils and extensions of the extra-curricular offering for pupils in the Wednesday afternoon enrichment sessions.
20. In the early years there is an effective programme of age-related activities which develop children's spoken language and communication skills. Staff support children to become increasingly confident in using a wide range of vocabulary and word options through modelling accurate language use and explaining clearly the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent.
21. Teachers systematically check that pupils make good progress in their learning. Almost all pupils attain grades at GCSE, A Level, IB and the Cambridge Technical suite of qualifications in line with or above those predicted from their attainment at entry. Children in the early years and pupils in the prep school make good progress from their starting points, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan learning to meet pupils' needs. They provide useful feedback to pupils so that they have a clear idea of what they need to do to improve further. Teachers' availability during lunchtime drop-ins also contributes to pupils' academic development.
22. Teachers use their skilled knowledge of their subject areas to effectively plan and teach lessons, which are well-matched to the needs of the pupils. This results in well-planned teaching and individualised feedback to help pupils. Teachers routinely plan a range of activities that stimulate analytical thinking and discussion. The teaching does not discriminate against any particular group of individuals, faiths or beliefs, nor does it undermine British values such as that of mutual respect.
23. Pupils developed mathematical skills are evident, not only in mathematics lessons but also in subjects such as the sciences, geography and economics. Teachers enable pupils to successfully tackle complex problems and peer support initiatives in mathematics underscore pupils' mathematical proficiency.
24. Teachers provide effective individual and in-class support for pupils who have SEND. The learning support department identifies, tracks and monitors the specific needs of pupils who have SEND so that they can receive any support needed to progress effectively. The small number of pupils with an educational health and care (EHC) plan are well supported, with all those involved with the care of these pupils having the necessary background information and resources to support the pupils in achieving the best possible outcomes.
25. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are assessed in English proficiency, starting before entry to the school. Personalised support is put in place when needed. Regular contact between language specialists and classroom teachers informs the support that pupils receive. As a result, they make good progress in their use of English.
26. Pupils develop a broad range of knowledge, skills and understanding through participation in an extensive co-curricular programme that covers diverse activities, such as traditional sports, and adventurous training, including The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE) and the CCF,

providing for a range of interests and needs. Pupils across all year groups, including the prep school, benefit from a wide range of activities, enrichment trips and challenging opportunities, which extend their learning beyond the classroom. A number of pupils achieve both regional and national success, including two rugby squads competing at Rosslyn Park seven's and the U16 female team being placed fourth in national hockey finals.

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

27. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

28. Pupils find staff approachable and feel secure knowing that they can turn to someone if they experience problems. This is due to the high quality of relationships between pupils and staff which support the development of positive self-esteem and self-confidence. In the early years, teachers develop effective links between children and parents and celebrate children's successes, thus supporting their self-esteem. Boarders are well-supported with an effective induction process when they first join the school.
29. Senior pupils have access to medical care through a well-resourced medical centre. Suitably trained staff are available at all times during the day and night, with robust backup arrangements in case of staff absence. An equivalent facility is available on the prep school site which provides suitable support for day pupils. Appropriately trained staff in the 'wellbeing hub' supports pupils who may be experiencing anxiety or be emotionally upset. Counselling services are available for those pupils who require further support.
30. Boarding houses are well staffed and suitably equipped and provide a comfortable welcoming environment. Each house has access to appropriate common room areas and kitchenettes, House staff know the pupils well and encourage them to form positive relationships with each other, which results in a supportive and cohesive community feel in each house.
31. Pupils are able to develop and maintain their physical fitness through curricular sports and physical education, as well as through the wide range of activities on offer. Leaders encourage high levels of participation. These activities also provide pupils with a positive sense of achievement.
32. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. In the early years, staff use positive language and praise positive behaviour, supported with visual images to reflect positive pupil interactions, which together reinforce and encourage appropriate conduct. Consequently, children behave well and empathise well with each other. Pupils behave well in lessons when working with others and when moving around the school. The school's behaviour policy promotes positive behaviour strategies and rewards and sets out clear sanctions and approaches to deal with poor behaviour. However, teachers do not apply the behaviour policy consistently across the school, in particular when dealing with minor infringements. Because of this, some pupils lack confidence that the school implements its behaviour policy fairly for all pupils.
33. The anti-bullying policy is implemented effectively across both the prep and senior schools and pupils are confident to alert teachers to any bullying issues which take place. Teachers act promptly to take appropriate action on the rare occasions that bullying occurs.
34. Pupils are suitably supervised across both school sites, with staff always available should pupils need support. Required staff-to-child ratios are maintained in the early years. Boarders are well-supervised in their houses, including during the evening and overnight periods.
35. Appropriate health and safety procedures implemented well. Leaders and governors monitor health and safety arrangements to ensure that all required checks and maintenance are carried out when required. Any issues relating to health and safety raised by staff are acted upon promptly. Effective precautions are taken to reduce the risk of fire. Fire safety equipment is checked systematically, and

fire evacuation drills take place termly, including during boarding time. All staff receive regular fire safety training and periodic health and safety update training as required. As a result, pupils are provided with a well-maintained campus.

36. A suitable personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme is complemented by effective provision for relationships and sex education (RSE). Both programmes are well planned, age appropriate and adapted to meet pupils' needs at both prep and senior levels. Pupils are taught in an age-appropriate manner the importance of matters such as developing appropriate relationships, consent and what constitutes acceptable behaviour. Pupils gain a clear understanding of the importance of making appropriate choices in life and in developing healthy and positive relationships.
37. Admission and attendance registers are appropriately recorded and maintained, and parents are contacted in the event of any absence. Leaders notify the local authority of any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard times.

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

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

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

39. Leaders promote pupils' readiness for life in British society effectively. The curriculum develops pupils' understanding of the rule of law, democracy and British institutions through study of these themes. For example, in the early years, children vote for their favourite stories. Older pupils' study of citizenship includes an exploration of the criminal justice system and the role of the courts. Pupils studying politics visit the Welsh Parliament to see the democratic process in action. Talks from visiting speakers highlight the importance of supporting democratic choice. Pupils in the prep school vote for members of the school council and senior school pupils elect school prefects and have access to school councils through elected representatives.
40. Pupils in the prep and senior schools support others through charitable events and through fundraising for national charities which they select themselves. Examples include support for local food banks, cancer charities and visits to care homes.
41. Community outreach work as part of the school's own 'explore, discover, grow, engage' ('EDGE') programme helps develop pupils' sense of responsibility. For example, pupils run a drop-in support club to support senior residents' awareness of and confidence in using apps such as the NHS and parking apps. Pupils also visit care homes and a centre supporting those with dementia.
42. Leaders and staff promote positive values and appreciation of diversity effectively. The curriculum explores diversity from a range of different perspectives which combine to develop pupils' understanding and appreciation for the identities and rights of diverse groups well. For example, pupils study how the concept and application of rights has developed from the Magna Carta onwards and explore history from perspectives beyond just European. Pupils learn about disability legislation. Religion, ethics and politics (REP) lessons develop pupils' understanding and appreciation of different cultural and faith perspectives. Pupils' own initiatives, such as the lunchtime lesbian, gay and bisexual, transgender (LGBT) group, to demonstrate their respect for people's protected characteristics, such as sexual orientation and gender reassignment. Leaders and staff ensure that any discussions about political and topical issues that arise are conducted impartially and without bias.
43. Pupils are well supported to develop skills required in adulthood. For example, Pupils learn about managing bank accounts and interest, and all Year 10 pupils are involved in a practical skills carousel which develops their knowledge and skills in areas such as finance, first aid, sewing and cooking.
44. Pupils from Year 9 are provided with information to support option choices and effective careers guidance that reflects national benchmarks and is led by a specialist. This guidance ensures that pupils become aware of the range of educational and career options that are available to them. The guidance includes advice on making applications, writing personal statements, and interview techniques, as well as individualised guidance offered by their tutors. As a result, pupils are enabled to make informed decisions about their future academic and career paths. Sixth-form pupils feel well prepared for life beyond the school.

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

45. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

46. Leaders promote an effective safeguarding culture throughout the school. Leaders provide consistent support to staff and ensure that the safeguarding policies and procedures reflect current statutory guidance and are effectively implemented.
47. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is supported by a team of six deputy DSLs working across the prep and senior schools. The team meets frequently, alternating their focus between monitoring of pupils affected by safeguarding issues and strategic meetings, including case study reviews, to ensure that the approach to safeguarding is both responsive to need and strategically proactive.
48. The DSL works closely with the leaders of provision for pupils who have SEND. This collaborative approach ensures that the needs of vulnerable pupils are effectively addressed.
49. The safeguarding team are appropriately trained for their role. They engage effectively with relevant external agencies for guidance and support, as well as providing training for governors. When required, they make prompt referrals to the local authority and children's services, and the police or other agencies, when relevant.
50. Staff are well trained and regularly briefed on safeguarding matters. Staff are knowledgeable in child protection procedures. They are suitably briefed on the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism, including through training related to the 'Prevent' duty.
51. Pupils are taught how to stay safe, including when online. There is a suitable system in place to filter and monitor the use of technology.
52. Governors maintain effective oversight of the safeguarding policy and procedures. Rigorous reviews of safeguarding instances take place, and changes in any protocols are made where required. The school produces an annual safeguarding audit as requested by the local authority, and governors and senior leaders undertake an annual review of safeguarding.
53. Pupils are made aware of how to report any concerns about abuse or inappropriate behaviour that may arise in and outside school. They have a range of adults in school to whom they can speak if they need to and also use electronic and anonymous boxes for reporting any concerns or worries.
54. Senior managers are trained in safer recruitment procedures, and all required recruitment checks are carried out for staff, agency staff, volunteers and governors. A suitable and accurate central record of appointments is maintained. Leaders and nominated governing board members check the single central record of appointments regularly and ensure that any anomalies are followed up swiftly.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Warminster School
Department for Education number	865/6009
Registered charity number	1042204
Address	Warminster School Church Street Warminster Wiltshire BA12 8PJ
Phone number	01985 210101
Email address	reception@warminsterschool.or.uk
Website	www.warminsterschool.org.uk
Proprietor	Warminster School Ltd
Chair of governors	Mrs Beverley Sunderland
Headteacher	Mr Matt Williams
Age range	2 to 19
Number of pupils	529
Number of boarding pupils	132
Date of previous inspection	8 to 9 December 2021

Information about the school

56. Warminster School is an independent, co-educational day and boarding school located in the market town of Warminster. The school has charitable status and is overseen by a board of governors. The school comprises a nursery, pre-prep, prep school and senior school on adjoining sites.
57. There are five boarding houses providing co-educational accommodation for pupils up to Year 8, separate accommodation for Years 9 to 11 and co-educational accommodation for pupils in the sixth form, on both a flexible and full-time basis.
58. The school has identified 98 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Five pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
59. English is an additional language for 19 pupils.
60. The school states it aims to develop and nurture rounded individuals with a love of learning and strong moral values, within a supportive and inspiring community.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

23 to 25 April 2024

61. A team of seven 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 assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other 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
- 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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