

School inspection report

6 to 8 February 2024

Waverley Preparatory School

Waverley Way

Finchampstead

Wokingham

Berkshire

RG40 4YD

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 and leaders actively promote the wellbeing of pupils. Governors have a clear and in-depth understanding of the work of the school and regularly meet with senior leaders, staff and pupils to quality assure school provision and to ensure that standards are met and maintained.
2. The 'Waverley Way' encapsulates the school's values and pupils are clear about the behaviours and attitudes expected of them. These strongly held values permeate the school community and support leaders' planning to meet the school aims.
3. Leaders' self-evaluation and planning are effective in identifying key areas for development. However, actions to address these areas are not consistently implemented because leaders' planning does not include a suitable timeline for actions.
4. Leaders provide a suitable curriculum which covers a range of subjects and key areas of learning for children in the early years and for pupils throughout the school. Leaders maintain a suitable oversight of the quality of teaching and identify areas of the curriculum and teaching which require further review. For example, leaders identify relatively fewer opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to develop their critical and creative thinking skills and their ability to think and learn for themselves. However, planned actions are not consistently implemented within a suitable timeframe.
5. Leaders assess pupils' performance over time, which enables them to identify the degree to which pupils achieve in line with expectations based on their starting points. However, leaders' analysis of data is not consistently effective in helping leaders to identify and implement suitable support and intervention for pupils.
6. The school premises are maintained to a satisfactory standard and in accordance with appropriate health and safety guidance. Leaders maintain a comprehensive suite of risk assessments which supports the welfare and safety of pupils in school and when on trips. Appropriately trained staff provide effective first aid and suitable facilities to care for pupils needing medical attention.
7. Pupils are effectively prepared for their next steps in education by staff who know them well. Carefully planned activities in the curriculum support pupils to develop an effective understanding of British values and life in modern Britain.
8. Leaders ensure that arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and reflect the most up-to-date guidance. Induction and training for staff is thorough, regular and in line with local requirements. Safeguarding leaders maintain appropriate records of concerns when they arise. The school listens to the views of individual pupils, and safeguarding leads refer to external agencies when required. As a result, pupils feel safe in their school.

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 opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop their ability to think and learn for themselves.
- ensure that school development planning is effective so that key areas of development of the curriculum, teaching and learning are established within a clear timeline for improvement.
- use assessment data more effectively to monitor pupil progress so that suitable intervention and support for pupils is consistently implemented.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. The proprietor and board of governors provide governance and are well informed about the school's work and performance through regular reports, school visits and committee and board meetings with senior leaders. Governors regularly review the content and implementation of policies to ensure the school operates in line with current legislation. This enables governors to ensure that leaders have the skills and knowledge to carry out their roles effectively.
10. Leaders conduct regular learning walks to assess the efficacy of teaching and learning. However, leaders' action planning following assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum, teaching and pupils' performance is less effective. For example, the school's self-evaluation document highlights the need to develop independent learning and pupils' ability to think for themselves. In addition, leaders recognise the need to help pupils to understand that learning from their mistakes can lead to better learning outcomes. However, leaders' strategic planning does not address either of these areas.
11. Leaders' aim to develop pupils' critical and creative thinking is less well developed, and as a result of fewer opportunities to do so, pupils' ability to think and learn for themselves is restricted.
12. An effective programme of risk management is in place and the risk assessment policy covers practical aspects of the school's operations. Leaders produce a suite of risk assessments for buildings, trips and events which are successfully used, authorised and reviewed by staff and leaders respectively.
13. An accessibility plan ensures current and future planning and enables compliance with the Equality Act 2010 to ensure the school and its curriculum do not discriminate against individuals or groups of pupils.
14. Staff respond effectively to low-level parental concerns, and complaints which are escalated to the headteacher's attention are dealt with effectively. Parents may access a wide range of information on the school's informative website. Parents receive regular and suitable reports about pupils' progress and other useful and relevant communication from the school.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

16. Pupils develop high levels of self-understanding and self-awareness of their learning through the encouraging and supportive ethos in the school. Staff support pupils to be aware of their needs, their performance against expectations, and the progress they make in assessments. The warm and trusting relationships between pupils and their teachers support pupils to be self-motivated and interested in their work. As a result of this approach, pupils' self-esteem develops increasingly as they make progress.
17. Pupils study a wide range of subjects, with class teachers teaching most academic subjects and subject specialists teaching music, French and physical education including swimming. Pupils make good progress as a result of teachers using their detailed knowledge of pupils to plan effectively and to deliver lessons from comprehensive schemes of work.
18. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to collaborate and debate and this enhances pupils' speaking and listening skills. Staff foster a classroom environment where pupils feel comfortable sharing ideas and responding to questions. Leaders and staff promote an attitude to learning that encourages pupils to develop their resilience. This results in pupils developing a 'can do' approach to their work.
19. Teachers use effective strategies to enable pupils to apply theoretical knowledge and enhance their understanding and confidence through speaking and listening. For example, teachers develop pupils' understanding of key topic vocabulary through their effective use of questioning techniques and embedded use of digital resources.
20. Teachers adapt their resources to provide effective support to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to make good progress. Teachers build in opportunities for pupils to extend their learning through providing pupils with appropriately challenging tasks in the classroom and through opportunities to take part in national competitions such as maths challenges and creative writing competitions.
21. In the early years, teachers use questioning effectively, to extend children's language and thinking and to encourage them to talk about their experiences.
22. Leaders encourage pupils of all ages to participate in a wide variety of extra-curricular opportunities, which develop a wide range of pupils' skills. Leaders are committed to celebrating pupils' engagement and effort alongside individual and team success. For example, the 'SPARK' award (sport, performance, art, recreation, kindness in the community) recognises the commitment and effort of pupils in activities both in school and the wider community. Leaders further enrich the curriculum through a range of relevant curriculum-linked educational trips and learning experiences.
23. Leaders employ effective systems to assess pupils' performance over time. This enables leaders to identify the degree to which pupils perform in line with expectations or work at greater depth. However, leaders' analysis of this data is underdeveloped and does not always lead to appropriate interventions or developments in teaching or the curriculum. Pupils measure their successes based largely upon summative assessment outcomes. This impacts their development of wider learning skills. Leaders' self-evaluation identifies the limited role of standard assessment tests (SATs) in pupils' academic development in their school context.

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

24. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

25. The comprehensive curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education incorporates relationships and sex education (RSE) and effectively develops pupils' understanding of self within their community and in the wider world. Leaders ensure that pupils respect the diversity of the pupil body and share in their peers' celebrations of other cultures. The 'Waverley Way' encapsulates the values of the school and is embedded in pupils' attitudes.
26. From the early years, children are supported to be aware of their feelings and to recognise their emotions through discussions and the use of mirrors, books and pictures. Leaders and staff support pupils to develop strategies to manage their emotional development and provide a range of tailored support for pupils as they progress through the school.
27. Pupils interact respectfully in both lessons and during play. Leaders provide a range of opportunities for older pupils to enjoy positions of responsibility and to look after each other and their school community. For example, pupils act as peer mentors and work together as positive role models for younger pupils.
28. Pupils know right from wrong, and behave well throughout the school. Leaders and staff use a restorative approach to situations when pupils have made mistakes or errors of judgement. This helps pupils to readily accept responsibility for their own behaviour. Pupils understand the importance of mutual respect and know to whom they should go if they have friendship issues or other concerns. Leaders effectively manage any rare instances of bullying and pupils are confident that issues will be dealt with rapidly and effectively by trusted adults.
29. Leaders implement comprehensive and effective systems to manage health and safety and the prevention of fire. The premises are well maintained and support the wellbeing of pupils. Effective protocols are in place for the administration of medicines, providing first aid, and the reporting, recording and monitoring of accidents. Supervision of pupils is effective and clear playground rules are well understood by pupils and promote pupils' safety.
30. Leaders maintain a clear oversight of pupil admission arrangements, including arrangements for pupils who join and leave the school at non-standard transition points. Leaders carefully monitor records of pupil attendance and punctuality and follow up any unexplained absences through contacting parents in a timely manner and in line with school policy. Leaders further promote the safety and wellbeing of pupils through their appropriate engagement with external agencies when necessary.

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

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

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

32. Leaders develop a range of in-school activities which reflect the adult world and help pupils to understand aspects of British values such as the importance of voting. For example, pupils take part in mock elections and vote for preferred menu options. Older pupils understand what democracy means and what this looks like in British society. For example, pupils compare the laws and government in Britain with other parts of the world.
33. Pupils engage enthusiastically in opportunities to consider aspects of life in British society, such as the rule of law and how it relates to school systems. Pupils develop a tolerance and awareness of others through, for example, producing and sharing presentations about what makes them unique. Leaders effectively support pupils to understand Britain's heritage and celebrate the school's diversity through linked opportunities in the curriculum.
34. Pupils' active involvement in school council brings positive changes for the school community. For example, school rules now better reflect the school values and leaders consider pupils' views when choosing outdoor play equipment. Members of the 'green' council take part in several activities to raise awareness of environmental issues. For example, pupils organise litter picking in the local community, design and run a sustainability week and plan an innovative use of plastic milk bottles to create a community igloo.
35. Pupils consider the economic aspects of life through the PSHE programme. For example, pupils study the financial aspects of running a household such as learning how to budget and deal with utility bills. Older pupils develop their financial understanding through embedded opportunities in the curriculum. For example, pupils use mathematical skills to consider the financial aspects involved when designing a theme park.
36. Leaders develop systems to enable pupils to contribute effectively to their school community and that beyond the school gates. Pupils are proud of their charitable fundraising work and show empathy and understanding for others. For example, during harvest time, pupils donate to a local food bank.
37. Leaders support pupils' preparation for next steps through an engaging approach to target setting and preparation for senior school. A programme of visiting speakers helps pupils to understand the wider world, for example, police officers speak to Year 6 about how to keep safe in the community and online.

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

38. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

39. Leaders follow statutory guidance and ensure arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils are implemented effectively. Leaders regularly review up-to-date safeguarding guidance to ensure it is reflected in policies and procedures.
40. Safeguarding induction and training for staff, including that for the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and other members of the safeguarding team, are thorough, regular and in line with local requirements. Staff have a secure understanding of safeguarding procedures and speak confidently about how they ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils. Staff understand their responsibilities as a result of regular training and standard inclusion of anonymised safeguarding scenarios in staff meetings. Staff are confident to follow safeguarding procedures if they have safeguarding concerns and safeguarding leaders maintain appropriate records of concerns when they arise.
41. The school listens to the views of individual pupils through a range of mechanisms including the anti-bullying concerns (ABC) box and the 'Time to Talk' box where pupils can post a note if they have any concerns. Pupils are also supported by wellbeing officers who oversee aspects of pupils' wellbeing, and ensure issues are brought to the attention of the DSL where appropriate. Members of the safeguarding team understand the need to refer cases to external agencies when necessary. Leaders establish effective communication with parents in line with the detailed and up-to-date safeguarding policy.
42. Leaders ensure that appropriate safer recruitment checks are carried out on adults who work with pupils. These are accurately recorded in a single central record of appointments. A designated safeguarding governor with responsibility for this area regularly reviews the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, including recruitment checks.
43. Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils' access to the internet is suitably filtered and monitored to protect pupils from inappropriate content.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

The quality of the early years foundation stage in the registered early years provision

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

45. The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
46. Leaders and managers use their understanding of child development to implement a well-structured curriculum that meets the relevant statutory requirements and children’s needs and interests. Staff promote all areas of learning in the curriculum, and they provide a broad range of experiences, which excite children to learn.
47. Children demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Staff give them the freedom to use tools and resources to investigate freely. For instance, the youngest children enjoy using their senses to examine the textures of wood shavings and leaves as they explore them with animals in large trays. Older children use their developing fine motor skills to stir and mix paint colours with a spoon, eagerly anticipating changes to the colours.
48. Staff support children highly effectively and their personal and emotional development is promoted successfully. Children consistently demonstrate that they feel secure and happy. For example upon arrival, they are greeted by their key person and they separate from their parents with ease. They go on to freely explore their environment, showing that they have the confidence to make choices and lead their own learning.
49. Children under the age of two make outstanding progress relative to their starting points. For example, babies develop an early interest in books. They pick them up and point to the pictures excitedly as staff read to them and turn the pages. This introduces babies to some of the earliest skills for reading, which helps prepare them for their future learning.
50. Leaders and managers demonstrate a commitment to continual improvement. For instance, they complete detailed self-evaluation and use this to inform their plans for the future. Staff contribute to development plans, sharing their suggestions and ideas. This helps to promote a team approach to further developments.
51. Requirements for safeguarding and welfare have been fully met and are monitored regularly by leaders and managers. Staff fulfil their responsibility to protect children in their care diligently.

Quality of education

52. The quality of education is outstanding.
53. Staff incorporate children’s interests into their curriculum planning very effectively and this helps to promote high levels of engagement and success. For instance, staff in the baby room recognise children’s delight in playing with farm animals. They provide different ways to learn about animals to extend children’s curiosity. Babies begin to associate animals with the sounds that they make and they excitedly recognise animal toys and pictures in different places in their play environment. This promotes their early understanding of the world around them.

54. Staff provide a well-sequenced curriculum. For example, they plan precisely how to develop children's large muscle skills and ensure that there is a wide range of resources available to use to help children practise new skills when they are ready to move to the next stage. For example, children who are competent riding on balance bicycles, begin to learn how to operate bicycles with pedals. Staff have high expectations and consistently consider how to provide further challenge, which helps children demonstrate secure physical skills for their age.
55. Staff readily engage with children during routine activities and capture opportunities to develop language and social skills successfully. For instance, children hear and repeat words and phrases modelled and spoken to them and this helps to increase their vocabulary. They listen attentively to stories and nursery rhymes and join in with familiar songs. Staff make use of the opportunities during play to talk about shapes. Older children then go on to experiment with shapes and they talk about their properties as they complete complex puzzles.
56. Staff complete regular assessments and this helps them to monitor each child's progress precisely. They share observations with parents, such as using the on-line system. Parents are then able to contribute by sharing with the setting their child's significant experiences and achievements at home. Staff use this to inform their planning and this promotes an effective and consistent approach to children's learning and development.
57. Staff create a stimulating learning environment and children have plenty of opportunities to choose what to play with and how to use resources. For example, younger children enjoy exploring soft-play resources and moving blocks to climb over and along them in different ways. This helps them to learn to work collaboratively and make decisions.

Behaviour and attitudes

58. Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.
59. Children are active learners who are highly motivated to join in a range of activities. They demonstrate high levels of curiosity and enjoyment when engaged in the games that they play. For instance, the youngest children demonstrate great delight smiling and covering their eyes when playing 'peek-a-boo' with an adult.
60. Children demonstrate outstanding behaviour and show respect for one another. They respond promptly to gentle reminders from staff, such as relating to rules and boundaries. This shows that they are familiar with rules and expectations.
61. Children are beginning to understand their emotions and are supported by staff to use pictures to explain how they are feeling. This helps to develop their emotional literacy from an early age. Staff help children to regulate their behaviour, such as by encouraging them to use calm down spaces, which they have created in each room. These are used effectively and give children their own time and space when needed.
62. Staff provide children with plenty of praise and encouragement as they play. This contributes to their growing confidence to test out the skills that they are learning. For example, children persevere as they begin to operate tricycles and bicycles, navigating them around the outdoor space. Staff support the youngest babies to push themselves along and also show older children how to operate pedals.

Personal development

63. The personal development of children is outstanding.
64. The relationships that children have with adults around them are built on strong and secure attachments. The way that staff attend to children's personal care, promotes their emotional wellbeing. For instance, staff seek children's consent before they change their nappy. They use this time for quality interactions, such as singing, which helps children to feel comfortable during this routine.
65. The curriculum that staff plan helps to promote the development of children's character. Staff provide opportunities for children to develop confidence, resilience and independence through child-initiated activities, supported when necessary. For instance, when playing outdoors, staff provide appropriate levels of support as children negotiate an unusual step sequence to access the slide. Children demonstrate high levels of wellbeing and confidence. They happily engage with visitors, demonstrating the steps they use to mix colours in paint. Younger children also make eye contact with visitors, smiling and drawing them into their play. This shows how secure they feel in their environment.
66. Children learn about their diverse community. For example, they find out about many festivals from different cultures. Staff enhance the curriculum with visits and visitors, which help children to learn about different people. For instance, children enjoyed a visit from the fire service and writing and sending cards to a care home for the elderly.
67. Staff have formed highly effective partnerships with parents and they regularly welcome them in to the setting. For example, parents join for regular stay-and-play sessions and they join to celebrate events in the calendar year. This also provides opportunities for parents to talk to their child's key person, which helps them to feel fully involved in their children's learning.

Leadership and management

68. Leadership and management are outstanding.
69. The staff team share their vision to provide high-quality education and care where children feel safe, are happy and become strong, individual and capable learners. Staff consistently monitor the standards of care and curriculum to ensure that high standards are maintained across different rooms and for children of different ages.
70. Staff are very well qualified and leaders provide a range of meaningful training opportunities, which help to develop staff knowledge. Leaders monitor staff performance, such as through an extremely effective system of supervision. They also complete regular learning walks and room observations to evaluate practice. Staff have opportunities to observe each other and give feedback. This helps to promote outstanding practice among different staff and different rooms. Staff have opportunities to discuss issues, including their own wellbeing, health and workload. They report that they feel very well supported in their roles.
71. Leaders know the children very well and they ensure that systems are in place to support children with additional needs. For instance, staff use their own specialist knowledge to support children and they know how to access advice from the local authority and external agencies when required.

72. Staff at the setting have developed robust links with parents. In interviews with inspectors, parents reported that they are overwhelmingly positive about their children's experiences in nursery.
73. Governors understand their own roles and they have good oversight of the setting. They develop supportive yet challenging relationships with leaders. For example, they regularly visit the setting to see the curriculum action and to have professional discussions with leaders.

Safeguarding

74. Safeguarding is effective. All staff give high priority to safeguarding and are aware of their responsibilities to ensure that they meet the requirements for safeguarding and welfare.
75. Leaders ensure that staff safeguarding knowledge is secure. For example, staff attend annual safeguarding training and leaders test their knowledge through scenario-based questioning.
76. Safeguarding, health and safety are given the highest priority. Statutory duties are fully met, including those set out in the Equality Act 2010, those linked to safer recruitment, and the duties in relation to the Prevent strategy.

The extent to which the school meets the requirements of the early years foundation stage

77. The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006.

School details

School	Waverley Preparatory School
Department for Education number	872/6003
Registered early years number	EY430947
Address	Waverley Way Finchampstead Wokingham Berkshire RG40 4YD
Phone number	0118 973 1121
Email address	info@waverleyschool.co.uk
Website	www.waverleyschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Mr Blair Jenkins
Headteacher	Mr Guy Shore
Age range	3 months to 11 years
Number of pupils	259
Number of children in the early years registered setting	112
Date of previous inspection	25 to 28 January 2022

Information about the school

78. Waverley Preparatory School and Nursery is an independent co-educational day school situated in Wokingham. It moved to its present site in 1997. The school is overseen by the proprietor, supported by a board of governors. It comprises two sections: the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which includes Nursery and Reception, for children aged three months to 5 years; and the prep school, for pupils aged 5 to 11 years.
79. The early years section of the school comprises three Nursery classes, a Foundation class and a Reception class. There are 112 children in the early years registered setting which is for children aged under two.
80. The school has identified five nursery pupils and 28 prep school pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), two of whom have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
81. English is an additional language for 28 pupils in the EYFS and two in the prep school.
82. The school states its aims are to educate the individual. It strives for high academic achievement through what it intends as a rich and challenging curriculum. The school seeks to produce a passion for learning through the development of critical, creative thinking. It strives to prepare pupils for, and promote an appreciation of, life in modern Britain.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

6–8 February 2024

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

84. 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
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

85. 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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