

School inspection report

11 to 13 June 2024

St Peter and St Paul School

Brambling House

Hady Hill

Chesterfield

Derbyshire

S41 0EF

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. Leaders and governors actively promote the wellbeing of pupils by providing a nurturing environment. Leaders and governors ensure that the school consistently meets the Standards.
2. Children in the early years achieve well across all seven areas of learning. Staff encourage children to use a wide range of vocabulary when describing their experiences and so develop children's communication skills. Staff provide a rich range of activities and play opportunities that support children's learning.
3. The broad and balanced curriculum is enhanced by a varied programme of educational trips and visiting speakers which extends pupils' understanding about the topics they are studying. Lessons are carefully planned, resources are used well, and effective teaching methods are employed overall. As a result, pupils make consistently good progress and are successful in gaining places at local senior schools, many of which are academically selective. However, teachers do not consistently use assessment data effectively to aid planning, teaching and target setting to raise academic standards further.
4. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable teaching pupils receive motivates them to learn. Most lessons are taught at a pace which maintains pupils' interest and engagement. However, sometimes pupils who have finished particular tasks are given more of the same type of work rather than being challenged to extend their skills and knowledge further, with the result that some pupils do not always achieve as well as possible.
5. Leaders identify and assess the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) efficiently and address these appropriately. These pupils are suitably supported, both in the classroom and in one-to-one or small group sessions so that they make good progress from their starting points.
6. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are appropriately supported when required so that they make good progress in the development of their spoken and written English.
7. Leaders have established clear behavioural guidelines and procedures which are known to pupils and staff and are closely followed. Consequently, pupils are polite and helpful. There is virtually no bullying, and any such instances are dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Pupils develop their sense of responsibility to others through roles such as being prefects and sports captains or through membership of the school council or eco council. Pupils support the local community in a number of ways, including picking up litter from the neighbouring area and raising money for local charities.
8. Leaders ensure that robust safeguarding arrangements are in place.

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:

- strengthen the use of assessment data to inform teaching, planning and target setting in order to raise pupils' attainment
- ensure that teaching provides sufficient challenge to enable pupils to achieve as well as possible.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Leaders actively promote pupils' wellbeing. They have established effective links with external agencies, including safeguarding partners, with whom they consult in a timely manner to support pupils' wellbeing and safety.
10. Leaders apply their good knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the school meets the Standards. They communicate the school's ethos, articulated in the 'Guiding Star' of values as 'aiming high, being respectful, being caring, being brave and being thankful' successfully, so that it permeates school life.
11. Governors provide effective oversight of the school's provision, including through regular meetings with leaders and consideration of parental views. Governors challenge leaders about their evaluation of the school's successes and areas for development. They keep themselves well informed about all aspects of the school, including through regular committee meetings and scrutiny of documents such as the single central record of appointments.
12. Leaders monitor the implementation of policies and procedures to ensure that these are known and understood by staff and put into practice effectively. Leaders regularly seek the views of parents, pupils and staff and use the information gathered to inform school development planning.
13. Leaders are diligent in identifying potential risks to the pupils and take effective measures to reduce these risks. Risk assessments identify the nature and likelihood of potential risks and put forward suitable control measures to guard against these. Where risks are identified, leaders swiftly take steps to reduce these, such as by extending the security fencing around the school. Leaders review risk assessments regularly.
14. Leaders ensure that the school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act. The detailed accessibility plan contains appropriate measures to make the curriculum and the physical premises accessible to any pupils who have disabilities. Leaders ensure that there is no discrimination against any groups or individuals.
15. Parents are provided with all required information, which is either published on the school's website or else is available from the office. Parents receive yearly reports on their children's attainment and progress. They have opportunities to speak to staff in twice yearly consultation meetings, as well as informally throughout the school year. Parents of children in the early years are kept informed through an online reporting programme which allows them to see evidence of their children's activities almost as soon as they take place. Staff are readily available to parents for both formal and informal discussions. Leaders provide the required information relating to provision for any pupils who have education, health and care (EHC) plans to the local authority.
16. There is a suitable complaints policy. Leaders manage any concerns appropriately and in line with the policy. The proactive leadership team are highly visible within the school and are readily available to parents. As a result, the majority of issues are successfully resolved at an early stage, and before they become formal complaints.

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

17. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Leaders implement a broad and effective curriculum devised to meet the needs of pupils of different aptitudes and ages successfully. Leaders regularly review the curriculum and make changes to improve the quality of provision. A recent initiative is the introduction of 'critical thinking' lessons which aim to develop pupils' ability to hypothesise and analyse information. Schemes of work include appropriate content for each year group.
19. Teachers plan lessons well to cover the curriculum effectively. They use resources effectively to enhance pupils' learning and to maintain and stimulate their interest. As a result, pupils apply themselves diligently and responsibly and are motivated and interested learners. Teachers are knowledgeable and passionate about their subjects, and this ignites pupils' interest and enthusiasm and enables them to make good progress across the curriculum. Most teaching is tailored to pupils' needs and abilities and builds upon their prior knowledge. However, sometimes it provides pupils who have finished specific activities with a larger volume of similar work rather than challenging them to extend their skills and knowledge further than they have already done. As a result, some pupils do not always achieve as highly as they might.
20. Pupils throughout the school develop advanced linguistic, literacy and numeracy skills through the daily focus on these areas of learning. Pupils speak confidently and fluently on a range of topics. The information and communication technology (ICT) programme is taught effectively and ensures that pupils have the computing skills they need. Pupils are adept at researching topics online and producing electronic presentations of their work. Aesthetic and creative skills are developed through stimulating lessons in art and music. Pupils develop their knowledge and skills well, such as their understanding of rhythm or their ability to draw and paint in the style of different artists.
21. Children in the early years make good progress across all seven areas of learning and achieve good levels of development. They become active learners who enjoy exploring their environment and co-operating with their peers in a range of tasks. Systematic teaching about the sounds that letters make helps children develop their early reading skills swiftly. Teachers model language and encourage children to reciprocate, so enriching their communication skills and widening their vocabulary. Classroom spaces and the outdoor area provide a stimulating environment which aids children's personal, social and physical development.
22. The effective marking scheme focuses on praise and encouragement. Staff clearly highlight areas for improvement and encourage pupils to reflect upon their work and their teachers' comments. The helpful suggestions for improvement contribute to pupils' progress. However, assessment data gathered by the school is not consistently used effectively to plan and set pupils' targets in order to raise attainment.
23. Leaders of provision for pupils who have SEND identify their specific individual needs swiftly and effectively. The learning support department produces detailed individual education plans (IEP) which are shared with staff. These plans provide teachers with information about pupils' needs and how best to meet them. Pupils who have SEND, in the early years, are supported effectively by staff who know and understand their needs and use resources appropriately. As result, pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points.

24. There is a wide-ranging programme of extra-curricular activities which further enhances pupils' development across a broad spectrum of interests. Pupils who attend these sessions develop their skills in areas such as cricket, athletics, singing, drama and other creative or technical pursuits.

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

25. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

26. The curriculum supports pupils' development of spiritual and moral understanding. In religious education (RE), pupils learn about their own and other religions. Pupils are encouraged to think deeply about topics with a spiritual component and to discuss philosophical questions, such as differing views about how the world was formed.
27. Mutual respect is a key element of the school's 'Guiding Star' values and is understood and supported by all. From the early years onwards, the importance of respect for all people, regardless of their race, religion or other characteristics is regularly reinforced in PSHE lessons and in assemblies.
28. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships education programmes are thorough, and their content is carefully planned to support pupils' emotional wellbeing and educate them about healthy relationships in ways that reflect the aims and ethos of the school. Sensitive issues such as gender identity and sexual orientation are covered effectively and in age-appropriate ways. For example, pre-prep pupils consider what qualities make a family work together effectively. Pupils learn about the importance of maintaining positive mental health and of strategies they can use to help do so. Pupils learn how the use of language, such as praise and kind words or otherwise, can boost or depress others' self-esteem.
29. In the early years, staff help children to make friends quickly. Children learn how to express their views confidently and to listen to the views of others. They receive guidance about oral hygiene and healthy food choices. Staff develop caring relationships with children which support their self-confidence and enable them to feel happy secure and to trust the adults looking after them. Children grow in confidence as they successfully master skills such as riding their balance bikes and scooters round the playground.
30. Pupils develop their self-knowledge and confidence through a curriculum which offers opportunities for them to achieve. Teachers use praise and encouragement well and so build pupils' self-esteem. Marking is invariably positive in tone and highlights successful work as well as identifying areas for improvement. School assemblies celebrate the successes of individuals and teams.
31. Leaders and staff refer to the 'Guiding Star' values to successfully communicate their expectations of pupils' behaviour. Any breaches result in a period of reflection in which pupils consider what they did wrong and how to make up for it. In this way they learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Pupils are well behaved and strive to attain leaders' high expectations of them. Staff are courteous and caring, and pupils follow their example. Pupils listen politely and respectfully to each other. Leaders and staff educate pupils about the unacceptability of bullying successfully. As a result, there is very little bullying and any incidents that do occur are dealt swiftly and appropriately.
32. Governors and leaders carry out an annual health and safety audit to ensure that all equipment, including that related to fire safety, is checked and maintained as required and that effective procedures, such as regular fire evacuation drills, are in place. Records are detailed and up to date. The school premises are well maintained. Duty rotas are carefully planned to ensure that sufficient staff are deployed to supervise pupils effectively, including in the early years.

33. Admissions and attendance registers are suitably maintained. Any absences are routinely followed up. The local authority is duly informed if pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times or if there are any prolonged, unauthorised absences.
34. First aid is delivered effectively. An appropriate number of staff are trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid. Appropriate policies and procedures are closely followed and detailed records are kept of any administration of first aid or medication.
35. There is a varied programme of physical education, which contributes to the pupils physical and mental health. Pupils of both sexes learn a variety of sports skills including in football, rugby and cricket. The PSHE programme develops pupils' understanding about healthy food choices and the school provides suitably nutritious food.

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

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

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

37. Leaders consistently promote the school's values and this helps pupils to develop their social skills, including the need to show mutual respect and to be aware of each other's emotions. Pupils are guided to consider the feelings of others from an early age. In the early years, staff reinforce the importance of sharing and taking turns when children play together. Team tasks are deliberately given, for example building a train track, so that children have to co-operate and work together. Older pupils learn to include others in their games and to share play equipment and other resources. They develop their co-operation skills in sports teams, when discussing items at the school council or when singing together in the choir. Inclusion is actively promoted, and from an early age pupils take on roles of responsibility which develop their understanding of service and respect.
38. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about the society in which they live and the wider world and different countries, cultures and religions. In religious education (RE) lessons, pupils learn about key principles and ideas of major world religions. Regular 'cultural days', such as the recent Spanish day, expose pupils to the culture, languages and food of different countries.
39. Pupils learn about British values in the comprehensive PSHE lessons. They explore the necessity of the rule of law and consider what makes rules and laws fair. Pupils learn about democracy and how it operates in practice. They take part in the democratic process when electing their peers on to one of the school councils or to positions of responsibility. Pupils learn about people's rights and responsibilities towards others. The school arranges for visiting speakers to talk to the school about their work on behalf of the community, helping to develop pupils' learning about the role of the emergency services and how British law works.
40. Pupils have an active voice at school and, through forums such as the school council and eco-council, have a positive impact upon school life. For example, they have had a meaningful input into the topics covered in the 'life skills' programme and campaigned successfully to have a trim trail in the playground. Senior pupils act as prefects and sports captains, and older pupils listen to younger ones reading.
41. Pupils actively support the local community in a variety of ways. There is a regular programme of litter picking which helps keep the local area and the park tidy. Pupils sing carols at the nearby hospital. The school supports a range of local and national charities. These are chosen by the pupils, who also decide what fundraising activities they will undertake.
42. The school develops pupils' economic understanding effectively. Pupils learn about the need to budget sensibly, and why some things are more expensive than others. The youngest children learn about the value of money through their numeracy lessons. Older pupils take part in the 'enterprise' project in which they invest £10 in a scheme of their own choosing, aiming to make a profit for charity. This helps them develop their financial awareness and skills.
43. Leaders provide a range of opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills. For example, the Year 5 and 6 residential trip to an adventure centre where they take part in team-building and leadership tasks. Prefects and sports captains understand their roles and undertake them responsibly.

44. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The school holds a 'transition day' towards the end of the summer term, during which pupils spend the day in the class they will be moving into. This enables them to get to know the teachers and routines they will have in the future. Pupils moving on to senior school attend talks from staff and ex-pupils to help prepare them for the next stage in their education.

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. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and effective. The school's safeguarding policy and procedures reflect current statutory guidance. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities respond appropriately when safeguarding concerns arise. There are suitable whistleblowing procedures and staff know how to report low-level concerns or allegations against anyone working in the school. Leaders consult effectively with relevant external agencies and refer concerns to them when appropriate. Leaders maintain safeguarding records in line with requirements.
47. Governors carry out an annual review of safeguarding and provide effective and comprehensive oversight. They ensure that leaders apply safeguarding procedures and respond consistently to any concerns raised effectively. Safeguarding is a standing item at governors' meetings.
48. Leaders and staff understand the need for vigilance and accept that 'it could happen here'. Staff and leaders are suitably trained, including in the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism, and they understand the training they receive. New staff receive a thorough induction into the school's safeguarding policy and procedures, and all staff receive regular update training. The safeguarding team are appropriately trained for their role.
49. Leaders provide pupils with a range of methods to raise any concerns they may have, including talking directly to staff, or placing a note in a 'worry' box. The warm and trusting relationships pupils have with staff enable them to feel confident that any concerns they have will be listened to and acted upon. Pupils say they feel safe in their school and are confident that they have someone to talk to if they needed to raise concerns.
50. Pupils are taught to know how to keep themselves safe, both physically and online. Teaching about online safety is part of the curriculum and is regularly reinforced in assemblies and in class time. Information about safeguarding and who to talk to is clearly displayed around the school. The school has suitable systems to filter and monitor online content, which are overseen by leaders and governors.
51. Leaders ensure that all required safer recruitment checks are carried out for staff prior to commencement of employment. These checks are suitably recorded in a single central record of appointments, supported by evidence kept in staff files. Regular oversight of these records by governors ensures that safer recruitment procedures are strictly adhered to.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	St Peter and St Paul School
Department for Education number	830/6018
Registered charity number	516113
Address	St Peter and St Paul School Brambling House Hady Hill Chesterfield Derbyshire S41 0EF
Phone number	01246 278522
Email address	reception@spsp.org.uk
Website	www.stpeterpaul.co.uk
Proprietor	St Peter and St Paul School Trust
Chair	Mrs Katherine Denton
Headteacher	Mr Thomas Newton
Age range	4 to 11
Number of pupils	110
Date of previous inspection	11 to 13 February 2020

Information about the school

53. St Peter and St Paul School is an independent co-educational day school. It was founded in 1944 and moved to its present site on the outskirts of Chesterfield in 1997. The school is a charitable trust governed by a board of trustees. The current headteacher took up his appointment in January 2023.
54. The early years consists of one Reception class with 14 children.
55. The school has identified 26 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Very few pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
56. English is an additional language for very few pupils.
57. The school states its aims are to provide a traditional, high-quality, all-round education with an exciting approach to learning based on the Christian principles which underpin the school's 'Guiding Star' of values. It seeks to provide a framework that children can carry with them throughout their lives.

Inspection details

Inspection dates 11 to 13 June 2024

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

59. 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.

60. 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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