



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report
For Schools with Residential Provision**

Lucton School

February 2023

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School's Details

School	Lucton School			
DfE number	884/6007			
Early Years registration number	EY389937			
Registered charity number	518076			
Address	Lucton School Lucton Leominster HR6 9PN			
Telephone number	01568 782000			
Email address	office@luctonschool.org			
Headmaster	Mr David Bicker-Caarten			
Chair of governors	Mr Ali Khan			
Proprietor	Lucton Pierrepont School Educational Trust			
Age range	0 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	264			
	Day pupils	232	Boarders	32
	EYFS	68	Prep School Years 1 – 5	56
	Middle School Years 6 to 8	49	Senior School Years 9 to 11	74
	Sixth Form	17		
Inspection dates	1 to 2 February 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Lucton School, founded in 1708, is an independent co-educational day and boarding school. It is set in the Herefordshire countryside, north-west of Leominster. The school became part of the Alpha Group in December 2021 and is operated as a charity by the Lucton Pierrepont School Educational Trust, overseen by a board of trustees. It is divided into five sections: the Early Years Foundation Stage; the prep school for pupils in Years 1 to 5; the middle school for Years 6 to 8; the senior school for Years 9 to 11; and the sixth form. Boarding is available from the age of 7. Boarders are accommodated in Croft House. A new head has been in position since September 2022.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 Founded on Christian principles to which it still adheres, the school welcomes pupils of all faiths and none. In line with its founding principles, it aims to bring out the best in every individual, to recognise each person's unique gifts, talents and abilities and to promote a secure and happy environment in which pupils can flourish academically, socially, intellectually and physically.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Day pupils come from a range of professional, business and farming backgrounds. Boarders come from the UK and a number of countries overseas. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is broadly in line with the average for others taking the same test nationally. The school has identified 32 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 4 of whom receive support for a range of identified needs. No pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 19 pupils, 17 of whom receive additional support. The school has identified 8 pupils as being either most able or talented, and the curriculum is appropriately modified for them.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated and the school is required to take the actions specified.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the prep school, the school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 In the senior school, the school's GCSE and A-level results in the years 2019 to 2022 confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place. Boarders have access to a suitable programme of activities.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships education in the prep school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Boarders are supported to develop good relationships with fellow pupils and staff which are based on mutual trust and respect. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 13, 17 and 21 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.10 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.11 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 3, 5–12, 15, 16 and 20 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.12 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.13 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 19 and 22 are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.14 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.15 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 4, 7 and 23 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.16 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.17 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.18 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.
- 2.19 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 14 are met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.20 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.
- 2.21 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 2 are met.**

3. The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

- 3.1 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 3.2 Leaders have clear aims for the provision and ensure that staff implement the very well-designed curriculum effectively, delivering a wide range of experiences suitable to the needs of all children. Across all parts of the provision, practitioners' interactions with children are of a high quality and contribute well to their learning. The setting has addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection. The celebration of diversity has been carefully managed with the addition of appropriate resources and staff training. Parents are involved in all aspects of their child's development and feel well supported.
- 3.3 Detailed planning takes into consideration all areas of the curriculum and individual targets ensure provision supports all children, including those with SEND or medical needs. Regular assessments are carried out in a time-efficient manner to ascertain the progress children are making. These enable staff to plan enriching activities which sustain all children's interests.
- 3.4 Children are very well cared for and make good progress. Their personal and emotional development thrives within a safe environment in which they are all valued as individuals. Strong relationships with trusted adults enable children to feel safe, secure, and happy. All staff understand their responsibilities and work together to keep the children safe.
- 3.5 Senior managers ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are fully met. All staff share an understanding of this responsibility and are well trained to identify and report any concerns.
- 3.6 Leadership and management demonstrate a commitment to delivering the best care for children, and practice is evaluated routinely. The learning experiences and carefully chosen resources enhance the outcomes for children and improve their life chances.
- 3.7 The setting prepares the children for life in modern Britain. Children are encouraged to take responsibility and learn to care for and respect others. Opportunities for children to develop their understanding of diversity have been enhanced through the use of a wider range of resources and staff training.

Quality of education

- 3.8 The quality of education is outstanding.
- 3.9 The curriculum is extremely well-balanced. It provides a wide range of experiences suitable for the needs of all children. Staff treat all children as individuals, and plan for their future learning appropriately. Staff ably interpret assessment information in identifying children with specific needs, including those with SEND, EAL or medical needs, and they provide the extra assistance that enables these individuals to make good progress. For example, staff learn key words in other languages to support children.
- 3.10 Regular assessments are recorded in each child's digital learning journal and tracked against the expected levels of development for their age. These ensure that each child's progress is carefully monitored and that their needs are met effectively. These assessments are shared online and verbally with parents who, in turn, report their child's significant experiences and achievements at home, thereby actively contributing to the evaluation of progress.
- 3.11 Children are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education and feel very comfortable making the transition. They are very well supported by staff who are excellent role models and provide high quality language experiences. As a result, children become confident, independent learners and make good progress.

Behaviour and attitudes

- 3.12 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.
- 3.13 Children willingly engage in imaginative play. They demonstrate very high levels of concentration enabling them to be successful learners. They explore indoors and outdoors, demonstrating a willingness to have a go at new activities. A rich variety of resources encourages and fosters exploration and investigation, enabling children to demonstrate confidence and independence. Children can maintain their focus on activities for appropriate periods of time. For instance, young babies enjoyed painting with a variety of tools and were able to indicate when they wanted more paint and paper as necessary. A young baby played with a remote control, demonstrating imagination by making the noise of a hand-held vacuum cleaner.
- 3.14 Children understand how to develop their skills because adults consistently reinforce learning routines and model effective learning. As successful learners, they confidently access resources and include their own ideas with enthusiasm. Young children can choose and move resources with increasing control.
- 3.15 Children demonstrate excellent behaviour and show respect for one another. They respond well to gentle reminders and guidance from staff on how to share things and how to play co-operatively. The setting has a highly effective partnership with parents which successfully promotes children's attendance. Suitable procedures are in place to investigate unexpected absences.

Personal development

- 3.16 The personal development of children is outstanding.
- 3.17 The setting supports and promotes the children's emotional needs. The very warm and caring relationship between children and staff fosters a very positive culture and sense of belonging. Extremely effective care practices support children's emotional security, so that children feel happy and safe. The curriculum promotes the development of children's character and provides opportunities for them to develop confidence, resilience and independence.
- 3.18 Children are very well supported when trying new activities but are never over-challenged. Young children are encouraged by staff to take risks; for example, when exploring the meadow and woodland area. The secure outdoor garden area provides some resources for the youngest children to explore and develop their independence and physical skills but these are currently limited.
- 3.19 Any access to the digital world is well-managed. The children's safety is paramount. All welfare policies are followed by all staff and all statutory requirements are met and adhered to in a consistent manner.
- 3.20 Very carefully implemented hygiene and sleep procedures enable children to be kept safe and well. Children are very well supported to become more independent in their personal needs.
- 3.21 A healthy diet is provided each day and staff ensure that food preferences, allergy, dietary and medical needs are catered for appropriately.
- 3.22 The very well-established key person system ensures that the children are very well supported, enabling them to feel very secure and happy in their setting. The thorough transition process ensures the children move seamlessly from one stage to the next. Parents commented on how sensitively this is handled.
- 3.23 The setting prepares the children for life in Britain. Staff plan for activities to enrich the children's own life experiences. They are encouraged to take responsibility and learn to care for and respect others.

Leadership and management

- 3.24 Leadership and management are outstanding.

- 3.25 Leadership and management have a very clear vision for further development of the curriculum and care practices in the setting. All staff are encouraged to contribute their ideas and work closely together to constantly improve their practice. Staff have high expectations of what children under two can achieve, as well as a very clear understanding of the need to support all children so that they achieve the best outcomes.
- 3.26 Leaders ensure that they and practitioners receive focused and highly effective professional development. Practitioners' subject knowledge consistently builds and develops over time, and this translates into improvements in the teaching of the curriculum.
- 3.27 Staff consistently report high levels of support for any issues related to their well-being.
- 3.28 Staff treat all children as individuals, and plan for their future learning very well. Staff interpret assessment information in identifying children with specific needs including SEND/EAL and/or medical and they provide the extra support that enables these individuals to make good progress.
- 3.29 Children make a very good start to their education because staff take care to make effective partnerships with parents.
- 3.30 Arrangements to safeguard children meet all the statutory requirements. All staff undertake safeguarding training including the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. Staff recruitment checks are carried out and recorded appropriately and induction procedures are thorough. Comprehensive policies inform staff of procedures to keep children safe. Staff have received the required paediatric first aid training, and all accidents and administration of medicines are diligently recorded.

Compliance with statutory requirements

- 3.31 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.**

Recommendation for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years.

- Enable children to develop their independence and physical skills in the outdoor garden area through the increased provision and use of appropriate resources.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors and one other governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Sarah Dawson	Reporting inspector
Mr Alex Smith	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Philip Humphreys	Team inspector for boarding (Head of department, GSA school)
Miss Jane Sheppard	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Head of lower school and nursery, IAPS school)