ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

Additional inspection report

5, 11 and 12 November 2025

Marlborough College

Bath Road

Marlborough

Wiltshire

SN8 1PA

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'.

Inspection outcome

The school meets all the relevant Standards that were considered during this inspection.

Inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b), 9(a), (b), (c), 10; NMS 7.1, 7.4, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4

1. Leaders promote a positive culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff are well trained in safeguarding and understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff are alert to the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They are knowledgeable about contextual safeguarding risks including the use of social media, and risks relating to radicalisation and extremism. They are alert to the needs of pupils and work closely with parents and with external agencies to safeguard pupils and support pupils' wellbeing. Safeguarding policies and procedures reflect statutory guidance.
2. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding carry out their roles diligently and effectively. Through regular training and safeguarding updates, they ensure that staff maintain detailed knowledge of safeguarding and are confident in the school's procedures for reporting concerns. Records of safeguarding concerns are rigorously maintained and include the rationale for leaders' actions and how concerns are followed up. Safeguarding leaders work closely with external agencies, including children's services and the police, to follow up safeguarding concerns. Leaders work closely with school staff to put in place appropriate provision for vulnerable pupils which is regularly reviewed to ensure that it meets pupils' needs.
3. Safeguarding induction for new staff is detailed and rigorous. This training helps ensure that new staff are clear about what they should do to identify and report safeguarding concerns from the moment they take up their appointment.
4. Pupils know who to go to if they have any worries or concerns about their own or others' wellbeing. Staff are available to boarders during the day and throughout the night. Individual sessions and the work of the wellbeing ambassadors provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their wellbeing and access any support they may need through the school's wellbeing hub. Pupils also make use of an online reporting system to alert staff to concerns. Staff readily respond to pupils' needs and provide appropriate care and support in a timely way.
5. There is a clear code of conduct in place which is well understood by staff. Staff recognise the importance of reporting low-level concerns about adults, including self-referral, when any conduct does not meet the high expectations of professional behaviour. Leaders systematically review the log of low-level concerns and take prompt and appropriate action to address concerns, including referrals to the local authority designated officer (LADO) and the teaching regulation agency (TRA) when required. Leaders ensure that the school's policies and procedures are followed systematically in relation to any necessary disciplinary action.
6. Leaders have developed the arrangements for pupils' use of mobile phones to support pupils' safety and emotional wellbeing. Safeguarding and wellbeing leaders maintain effective oversight and work closely with boarding staff and with parents to support responsible phone use by pupils. These arrangements take account of boarders' needs to be able to have contact with parents, including managing time differences for families who are overseas. Suitable internet filtering systems are in place and are monitored.

7. Experienced and well-trained medical staff are available throughout the day and night on the school site. Medical staff liaise appropriately with staff across the school and work in partnership with local services to help ensure that boarders can access the medical and wellbeing support they need while they are at school. Leaders engage effectively with specialist services such as child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) to inform their provision and support for pupils. Specialist provision is in place to provide skilled medical support in the event of injuries while pupils participate in sports. Medical staff monitor trends and patterns in illness so that they can be well prepared for seasonal illnesses such as flu.
8. Pupils conduct themselves in a calm, friendly and purposeful way around the school site and in the boarding houses. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff are warm and respectful. Pupils interact positively with each other and develop friendships across year groups as well as within their houses. Leaders ensure that there is plenty for pupils to do to promote positive social interactions, particularly during the evenings and at weekends. Older pupils, including the wellbeing ambassadors, act as positive role models and support younger pupils when they join the school. Pupils are mindful about others' needs and considerate in their conduct in the boarding houses.
9. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. These expectations are well understood by pupils and staff. The school's behaviour policy is well communicated and implemented consistently across the school and in the boarding houses. When things go wrong, staff support pupils to reflect on their behaviour and the impact of their actions on others. Allegations of bullying are followed up promptly in line with the school's policy. Leaders understand the additional vulnerabilities of boarders and are alert to these. Incidents of bullying are rare. This is because staff across the school and in boarding are vigilant and work closely with pupils to address any concerns at an early stage.
10. Pupils understand the sanctions in place for poor behaviour. This includes sanctions relating to the misuse of alcohol or drugs, including vaping. Policies and procedures relating to the consumption of alcohol by older pupils in the sixth form are consistently applied and robustly overseen by senior staff. This reflects a positive change in culture over time. There are clear protocols in place to safeguard pupils in relation to alcohol. Pupils learn to manage alcohol responsibly and this prepares them well for independent adult life. They understand the effects of alcohol on the body and how this varies between different people.
11. Staff and boarders are clear about the school's policy in relation to sexual relationships. Pupils learn to manage peer pressure and to make responsible choices that help keep themselves and others safe. Leaders have implemented effective arrangements for the supervision of and support for pupils, including for older pupils when they visit the town to socialise at weekends.
12. The school meets the Standards.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

ISSR paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 20, 21; NMS 19.1, 19.4

13. The school's recruitment procedures are robust and carried out diligently by suitably trained and knowledgeable staff. Leaders ensure that all necessary checks are carried out prior to a member of staff joining the school, including medical checks, overseas checks and prohibition from management checks when these apply. Detailed and relevant risk assessments are in place for any staff whose disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks are delayed. Information relating to agency staff is provided ahead of their deployment at the school and appropriate identity checks and safeguarding briefings are provided before they begin their work.

14. Boarding houses are well staffed throughout the day and night. Access to the boarding houses is carefully managed. Boarders understand the arrangements in place and follow protocols for signing in and out which are implemented effectively across the boarding houses. Visitors, including maintenance personnel, are supervised appropriately when carrying out their work in the boarding houses and across the school site.

15. The school meets the Standards.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

16. The school's arrangements to safeguard pupils are clearly set out in its policy which is made available to parents on the school's website.

17. The school meets the Standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraph 34(1)(a), (b), (c), 34(2); NMS 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6

18. Leaders and governors maintain careful oversight of the school's provision. Governors bring a range of experience and knowledge to their role. They undertake appropriate safeguarding training and receive regular updates from the school's safeguarding team. Governors are diligent in their oversight of leaders' work and ensure that leaders prioritise the wellbeing and safeguarding of pupils. Governors hold leaders to account effectively and ensure that the school's policies and procedures are implemented consistently to promote the wellbeing of pupils across their school and boarding experience.

19. Leaders ensure there is continuity of provision across the school's sixteen boarding houses. There is effective co-ordination between academic, pastoral and boarding staff to ensure that provision is appropriate to support individual pupils' needs. Leaders and governors thoughtfully review the themes raised through complaints and include these in their evaluation and review of the school's provision. Regular audits and focused reviews inform leaders' strategic development of boarding, educational provision and pastoral care.

20. The school meets the Standards.

School details

School	Marlborough College
Department for Education number	865/6013
Registered charity number	309486
Address	Marlborough College Bath Road Marlborough Wiltshire SN8 1PA
Phone number	01672 892200
Email address	enquiries@marlboroughcollege.org
Website	www.marlboroughcollege.org
Proprietor	Marlborough College
Chair	Ms Heidi Venamore PSM
Headteacher	Mrs Louise Moelwyn-Hughes
Age range	13 to 18
Number of pupils	1007
Number of boarding pupils	997
Date of previous inspection	5 to 7 December 2023

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Information about the school

21. Marlborough College is an independent co-educational boarding school located in Marlborough, Wiltshire. Founded in 1843, it is an educational charity governed by a board of trustees.
22. Boarders are accommodated in sixteen houses, of which six are for male pupils and six for female pupils. Four houses accommodate male pupils in all years and female pupils in Years 12 and 13.
23. The school has identified 276 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
24. The school has identified 27 pupils for whom English is an additional language.
25. The school states that its aims are to foster ambition in all its pupils, to provide a safe, inclusive and nurturing community for all, to develop initiative and to instil a commitment to service.

Purpose of the additional inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. This inspection was an unannounced additional monitoring inspection which was carried out at the request of the Department for Education.

Inspection details

Inspection dates	5, 11 and 12 November 2025

26. One reporting inspector and an accompanying reporting inspector visited the school for one half day, at which point the inspection was paused. Inspectors returned to the school for a further one and a half days to complete the inspection.

27. Inspection activities included:

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- discussion with a member of the governing body
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff.

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**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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