ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

Material change inspection

20 May 2026

Marlborough College

Bath Road

Marlborough

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 has submitted a material change request to increase its capacity from 1025 to 1155, with the opening of a day house for up to 120 day pupils in a converted building on the school site.

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school Standards if the material change is implemented. It is recommended that the material change be approved.

Inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b), 8(a) and 8(b), 11, 12, 14 and 16

1. Leaders promote a robust safeguarding culture, which is articulated in the school's safeguarding policy and understood by staff. The policy provides suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and reflects the latest statutory guidance. Leaders and staff know their safeguarding responsibilities, are well trained and implement effective processes that protect pupils from harm. They are alert to signs of concern, including those related to potential child-on-child abuse. Leaders monitor pupils' experiences for patterns of concern to address any issues that may emerge and act swiftly when concerns are raised to ensure pupils receive the support they need.
2. Leaders have a secure understanding of the local thresholds for referral and work effectively with external safeguarding agencies to safeguard pupils. Safeguarding and pastoral concerns are systematically recorded and include the rationale for leaders' actions and how concerns are followed up.
3. Governors monitor safeguarding procedures through focused meetings with staff, discussions with pupils, reviews of safeguarding practices and safeguarding reports, ensuring effective oversight of safeguarding.
4. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are suitably knowledgeable and have the skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. New members of staff receive induction training in safeguarding to ensure that they understand the school's safeguarding arrangements. All staff and governors undertake regular safeguarding training and receive safeguarding updates, including about risks associated with extremism and radicalisation. As a result, staff are knowledgeable about the potential risks to the wellbeing of pupils and are confident in the school's procedures for reporting any concerns they have, including those relating to the conduct of adults.
5. The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils know they can raise concerns with trusted adults and understand how to share concerns anonymously using the school's online reporting system. Staff respond appropriately to these alerts in order to support pupils' wellbeing. Suitable internet filtering and monitoring systems are in place, which are tested regularly.
6. The school implements a suitable attendance policy, which reflects the latest statutory guidance. Staff are developing their understanding of this policy in relation to day pupils to ensure the Standards continue to be met if the material change is approved.
7. Leaders implement a suitable health and safety policy that promotes effective practice, in accordance with relevant health and safety legislation and guidance. Required health and safety maintenance checks are conducted routinely and systematically recorded.

8. The school's fire safety policy and procedures are supported by an appropriate external fire risk assessment for the school site, including for the day house. Leaders ensure that any recommendations are promptly acted upon. Regular fire evacuation drills ensure that staff and pupils remain confident about evacuation procedures. Appropriate fire safety equipment is in place, including emergency lighting, fire alarms and extinguishers, which are well maintained. Leaders have reviewed the current fire safety arrangements for the new day house to ensure that they will be suitable for its proposed use and the increase in the number of pupils.
9. Current supervision of pupils across the school is appropriate, as a result of the effective deployment of staff. Additional staff, including the re-deployment of house staff in the day house for male and female pupils, will ensure appropriate supervision of pupils should the proposed material change and increase in roll take place.
10. The school has a suitable risk assessment policy. Leaders regularly review risk assessments to ensure their continued effectiveness. Governors have oversight of risk management and have assessed the potential risks of the impact of the introduction of day pupils, the planned phases of the refurbishment of the day house and the increase in pupil roll to ensure the welfare of day and boarding pupils.
11. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

ISSR paragraphs 18, 19, 20 and 21

12. The school's recruitment procedures are robust and carried out diligently by suitably trained and knowledgeable staff. All required pre-employment checks are systematically undertaken and accurately recorded on the single central record of appointments (SCR) before adults commence working or volunteering at the school. The governors responsible for safeguarding visit the school each term to check the SCR in order to ensure the Standards are met consistently.
13. The school is likely to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

ISSR paragraphs 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30

14. Suitable space has been identified to accommodate the proposed increase in the number of pupils. Day pupils will be accommodated in an existing building on the school site on completion of its refurbishment. Leaders have taken appropriate steps to identify and mitigate any potential risks related to the re-purposing and refurbishment of this building for day pupils.
15. Leaders ensure that drinking water is accessible to pupils throughout the school, and that supplies of hot and cold water are adequately available in toilets and washing facilities. As part of the re-purposing of an existing building as the day house for day pupils, leaders have ensured the provision of suitable toilet and washing facilities for male and female pupils in sufficient quantity for the proposed increase in the maximum number of pupils.
16. Suitable showering and changing facilities in the boarding houses are available for boarders. As part of a planned and ongoing programme of refurbishment for the increase in roll and the introduction of day pupils, they will have access to separate male and female showers and changing rooms. These facilities will be temporary buildings, to be replaced with permanent male and female showers and changing rooms on completion of new sections of the day house. These facilities have been suitably risk assessed.

17. Appropriate first aid and medical accommodation is provided for pupils centrally in a medical centre run by suitably trained medical staff, who are available throughout the day, evening and night for all boarders. Medical staff liaise with staff across the school and work in partnership with local services to help ensure that pupils have the wellbeing support they need when they are at school. Leaders have planned to ensure that this medical provision will continue to be in place for day pupils during the day and evening.
18. Acoustics, internal and external lighting, ventilation, heating and the provision of drinking water are of a suitable standard across the site. The building plans for the accommodation of day pupils in the day house include all these provisions.
19. Boarding accommodation is well maintained and suitable. Continuity with the boarding house context has been fully considered by leaders when planning for male and female day pupils. For example, boarders have access to study space, social areas and laundry facilities within each house and this is mirrored in the plans for the new day house.
20. The school grounds provide extensive and secure outdoor space for play and physical education (PE). Additional outdoor space and gardens integral to the day house will be made available to all pupils if the material change is approved.
21. The school is likely to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

22. The school's arrangements to safeguard pupils are published on the school's website and reflect current statutory guidance.
23. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraph 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

24. Governors have the appropriate knowledge and understanding to provide effective oversight of leaders. This ensures that leaders have the knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles effectively and that the wellbeing of pupils is actively promoted so that the Standards are met consistently.
25. The governing body and school leaders have a clear rationale for the proposed material change and have thought carefully about the likely impact of the proposal. They have systematically reviewed the school's provision to identify potential risks associated with the introduction of day pupils and an increase in pupil numbers and have put suitable arrangements in place to mitigate the risks.
26. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

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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, and 11 to 12 November 2025

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Information about the school

27. Marlborough College is an independent co-educational boarding school located in Marlborough, Wiltshire. It is an educational charity governed by a board of trustees.
28. 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.
29. 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.
30. The school has identified 27 pupils for whom English is an additional language.
31. 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 material change inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection following an application made by the school to the Department for Education to make a material change to the school's provision. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about whether the school is likely to meet the Independent School Standards if the material change is implemented.

Inspection details

Inspection dates	20 May 2026

32. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for one day.

33. Inspection activities included:

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- a tour of the building site to inspect the repurposed premises and accommodation for day pupils
- discussions with the safeguarding governor and another member of the governing body
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils.

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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