

# School inspection report

23 to 25 September 2025

## **Beechwood School**

12 Pembury Road  
Royal Tunbridge Wells  
TN2 3QD

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 articulate a clear vision for the school. Leaders effectively promote pupils' learning, achievement and wellbeing.
2. The proprietor and governors have developed their role. They provide effective oversight, challenge and support to ensure that leaders promote pupils' wellbeing across all aspects of school life.
3. The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders promote a positive safeguarding culture. They ensure that staff receive the training they need so that they can confidently identify and report any concerns they may have that a pupil may be at risk of harm.
4. The curriculum is well planned across a broad range of subjects. Teaching typically enables pupils to make good progress. However, some pupils do not achieve as well in some subjects as they do in others. This is because in some subjects, teaching is not consistently well adapted to meet the needs of all pupils.
5. Leaders identify the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) at an early stage. Leaders work closely with teaching staff to ensure that pupils who have SEND have their needs met and make good progress.
6. Leaders ensure that, through the curriculum and wider school experience, pupils deepen their understanding of diverse cultures, traditions and beliefs and are respectful and tolerant of each other's identities and perspectives.
7. A suitable careers programme is in place that helps pupils make informed choices about the subjects they study and their possible future pathways.
8. The curriculum for relationships and sex education (RSE) reflects statutory requirements. Leaders consult with parents and share the content of the curriculum so that parents can be well informed about what their child is learning about relationships in school.
9. Health and safety procedures are robust and effectively implemented. Leaders ensure that pupils are well supervised at all times. Regular fire evacuation drills help ensure that staff and pupils, including boarders, know how to respond in an emergency.
10. Leaders and staff focus on the pastoral wellbeing of boarders by working to provide a 'home from home' boarding experience. Leaders ensure that boarders who are in the care of educational guardians are well supported.
11. Leaders meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. They implement a suitable accessibility plan to improve the accessibility of the school's provision for disabled pupils.
12. All required pre-employment checks are carried out before new staff are appointed to work at the school. The school carries out robust checks in relation to educational guardians and ensures that they receive appropriate safeguarding training and guidance to support the pupils in their care.

## 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:

- ensure that teaching enables pupils to achieve consistently well across all the subjects that they study.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

13. Leaders promote and maintain a positive school culture based on the school's 'IMPACT' values of integrity, manners, passion, accountability, curiosity and tenacity. They reinforce the importance and meaning of these values through assemblies, form time and in daily interactions between pupils and staff. Staff recognise pupils for demonstrating the school's values, such as through the way they apply themselves in lessons and through their conduct and attitude around the school.
14. The proprietor has developed the governance of the school. The proprietor and governors carry out regular checks on the impact of leaders' work to promote the wellbeing of pupils. Governors assure themselves that leaders apply their skills well and meet their responsibilities to ensure that the school's policies and procedures are effectively implemented so that the school meets the Standards.
15. Leaders have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and the areas that are a priority for development. Leaders have increased the regularity of communications with parents to provide more insight into the work of the school and to celebrate pupils' successes. Leaders have developed a systematic approach to ensuring that staff receive any guidance and support they need to be fully effective in their academic and pastoral roles.
16. The provision for boarding is well organised. Leaders ensure that boarding staff are genuinely focused on boarders experiencing a 'home from home'. Boarding staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They build positive, respectful relationships with boarders. Staff actively help boarders manage their wider commitments, for example, as part of the school's specialist football programme as well as their studies. Boarding staff anticipate and respond caringly to boarders' individual needs.
17. Leaders are knowledgeable about statutory requirements relating to the management of risk. Risk assessments are detailed, specific and well documented. Leaders ensure there is a shared understanding of how to manage and mitigate risk across the school. In the early years, suitable risk assessments are in place in relation to supervision and the intimate care of young children. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in circumstances and provision, or when issues have occurred.
18. The requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are met. Leaders routinely review the accessibility plan to ensure that disabled pupils can participate fully in the curriculum and the school's wider provision. Leaders also focus their work on promoting an inclusive school culture in which pupils feel valued as members of the school community while also expressing their own individuality.
19. All required information is available to parents via the school's website. This includes previous inspection reports, and school policies and procedures. The school's complaints policy sets out the arrangements for responding to parental complaints. The safeguarding and attendance policies clearly identify roles and responsibilities and explains the arrangements in place to follow up concerns with parents and with external agencies when required. Leaders ensure that parents receive relevant information and reports relating to their child's progress and attainment.
20. Leaders provide the local authority with financial information relating to the income and expenditure for pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). Leaders systematically inform the local authority when pupils leave or join the school at non-standard

transition times. They also communicate to the local authority any concerns relating to pupils' attendance.

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

**21. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. The curriculum is carefully planned to enable pupils to develop their knowledge and skills across a broad range of subjects. Detailed plans and schemes of work, which build on the guidance and expectations of the national curriculum, provide a clear structure for pupils' learning from the early years to the sixth form. The curriculum and teaching enable pupils to make good progress and achieve well. Pupils across the school, including children in the early years, are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
23. The curriculum for English is well planned to enable pupils in to develop their skills and confidence in reading and in writing. Thoughtfully selected texts form the basis of the English curriculum from Reception to Year 6 and provide a suitable context for developing pupils' reading and writing skills. By Year 5, pupils are able to demonstrate their skills in inference and deduction. They discuss the choices the author makes to depict a setting or a character, or how the author creates tension or suspense. The curriculum in the senior school helps pupils extend their knowledge of literature and literary techniques across a broad range of texts and text types. They develop the skills to think critically about literature and techniques for writing. Pupils achieve very positive outcomes in English at GCSE.
24. There is a carefully sequenced curriculum in place for mathematics from Nursery to Year 6. In the early years, children learn to count and use mathematics in their environment, identifying 'more than', 'less than', 'taller' and 'shorter' through their play. Staff are skilful in developing children's mathematical language. They help children understand the meaning of numbers by using concrete resources to help them count. Staff help children practise counting and at snack time children practise the language of sharing. In the pre-prep and prep school, lessons in mathematics are planned so that pupils develop their fluency in calculations through regular practice. Pupils revisit mathematical concepts and procedures to secure their knowledge and skills.
25. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. They give clear explanations that help address any misconceptions pupils may have. They plan lessons that help pupils build on what they already know. For example, in history, pupils carry out tasks such as reviewing what they know about the visual representation of British monarchs, before exploring in detail what they can infer from the portraits of monarchs in the Tudor period. In geography, pupils engage in activities such as reviewing what they already know about weather, including key concepts and vocabulary, before moving on to explore in detail how different aspects of weather are measured.
26. Teachers typically check pupils' understanding before moving on to new learning. Focused feedback helps pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and extend their learning. For example, pupils in Year 4 who are at the early stages of learning to play the violin are given precise guidance about how to hold the bow and the position of the bow on the strings. This enables pupils to focus their practice on the quality of the sound they are making when they improvise together with an accompaniment. In English, focused feedback in class helps pupils develop their editing skills, such as by identifying where they could improve their vocabulary choices or make effective use of repetition to emphasise how a character is feeling or to create atmosphere.
27. The provision for pupils who have SEND is overseen by the learning development team who bring a range of relevant expertise and experience to their roles. The needs of pupils who have SEND are identified at an early stage so that the appropriate support can be put in place to enable them to

make good progress. The learning development team work closely with teaching staff, pupils and parents to ensure that reasonable and appropriate adjustments are in place to meet pupils' individual needs. Teachers are well informed about the needs of pupils who have SEND and adapt their teaching appropriately. Pupils who have SEND make good progress and achieve well across the school and, in particular, at GCSE.

28. Staff carefully plan opportunities for children in the early years to develop their language and extend their vocabulary, often building on children's sensory experiences of what they can see, touch, smell and hear. Children persevere with activities because staff ensure that they are well matched to children's interests and stages of development. Children develop their listening skills through games and songs. Staff positively promote children's enjoyment of books and stories. They share books together with children, reading with animated voices and gestures that increase children's enjoyment and engagement with the text. As a result, children become eager to share their views about what might happen next or what they think of the actions of a particular character.
29. Leaders implement a systematic approach to teaching phonics from Reception to Year 2. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read make good progress as a result of effective teaching. Daily sessions help pupils practise speaking, reading and hearing the sounds that they already know and introduce them to new sounds. Teachers check that younger children are making the right mouth shape to form their sounds correctly. Pupils develop the strategies to segment and blend words which helps them with their reading and their spelling. Phonics teaching also includes practising letter formation which supports pupils' fluency in writing.
30. Pupils in the sixth form are able to choose from an extensive range of examination subjects to study. This means they can select subjects that directly relate to their interests and future aspirations. Pupils in the sixth form are supported well to develop positive habits for independent study and strategies that help them manage their own time effectively. As a result, they work hard, are highly motivated and are keen to stretch themselves to achieve higher results. They take responsibility for their learning and achievement and are well prepared for their future studies.
31. Suitable provision is in place for to support pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Staff assess pupils' English language proficiency and identify any specific support needs when pupils who speak EAL join the school. This helps specialist staff provide in-class and additional language support to enable pupils to develop their language fluency, subject-specific vocabulary and access learning confidently across the curriculum. Language staff also provide guidance to class teachers to enable them to use relevant strategies in their teaching when specialist support is not available.
32. Leaders have developed a suitable framework for assessment which enables them to identify where pupils are on track to make good progress, and also pupils who may need additional support or adaptations in lessons so that they can achieve the best possible outcomes across all the subjects that they study. The school's data shows that at GCSE some pupils achieve better outcomes in some subjects than they do in others. Leaders have used their evaluation of pupils' achievement to develop strategies such as mentoring support for pupils studying GCSEs. These strategies have begun to have a positive impact on outcomes for some pupils. Leaders work with faculty heads to develop the use of such strategies more widely. However, this work is not fully developed. In some subjects, teaching is not adapted to pupils' needs effectively enough to enable some pupils to achieve the higher grades that they are capable of. This means that some pupils do not achieve consistently well across all subjects at GCSE.

33. A well-structured programme of extra-curricular and enrichment activities is in place. Pupils have opportunities to develop their interests and skills through a variety of clubs, such as knitting and gardening, and a wide range of sports and outdoor activities. Well-planned educational visits, such as to the local museum to experience life in ancient Greece or to Stratford to explore the regeneration of east London, help bring learning to life and deepen pupils' understanding of the topics they study.

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

**34. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

35. Children in the early years learn the vocabulary that helps them express and manage their emotions. They develop empathy and show kindness towards each other, particularly if someone is upset. They learn the difference between what is right and what is wrong and say sorry when they have done something wrong.
36. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, in lessons and around the school. They reinforce these expectations clearly if pupils' behaviour does not meet these expectations. Sanctions are applied consistently. Records of behaviour incidents are clear and regularly reviewed. Leaders and staff support pupils to reflect on and take responsibility for their actions when things have gone wrong. They work with pupils to help them develop the strategies to avoid similar situations in the future. As a result, relationships between staff and pupils are positive and respectful and pupils behave well across the school.
37. Suitable procedures are in place to follow up allegations of bullying. Pupils learn about different types of bullying and the impact of bullying on people's wellbeing. This includes bullying that occurs online. Bullying is rare because staff and leaders act promptly to help pupils resolve concerns before they escalate.
38. Pupils who are part of the school's specialist football programme are well supported to manage the demands of their training and their academic studies. Coaching staff and programme leaders meet regularly with school leaders to ensure that pupils' emotional needs and academic studies are well supported alongside their training commitments and fixtures.
39. Children in the early years develop their strength, co-ordination and control through a range of physical activities and games. Children learn to balance and to control a ball. They climb, jump and run in a safe environment. As pupils move through the school, they develop their skills and proficiency across a wide range of games and sports, alongside athletics, gymnastics and dance. Pupils participate regularly in sports, fitness and mindfulness clubs. Pupils learn about the contribution of physical exercise and eating healthily to support emotional and physical wellbeing.
40. The provision for boarding includes suitable and comfortable accommodation and an environment where boarders are able to study and socialise. Pupils receive much relevant information about boarding arrangements before they begin boarding. Boarding staff encourage them to feel comfortable to speak to staff about anything they need and any worries that they might have. Boarders are clear about the routines and regulations relating to the boarding house including entry access and the rules relating to visitors. They are able to personalise rooms which have adequate storage space, a comfortable bed and provide a place where boarders feel warm and cosy. Laundry arrangements are flexible which also supports the boarders who participate in the specialist football programme and have kit that needs to be ready for matches. Boarders enjoy a wide range of activities in the evenings and at weekends. There are appropriate facilities for boarders to prepare simple meals if they are hungry. Boarders make use of the communal kitchen to share and spend time with each other.
41. The RSE programme provides pupils with accurate and clear information and develops pupils' understanding of the physical and emotional changes that occur as people grow and develop into

adults. Teachers have received relevant guidance and support to teach the RSE curriculum effectively. The curriculum is tailored appropriately to the age and stage of pupils. Pupils explore important concepts such as respect and how this relates to developing respectful relationships. In lessons, staff check pupils' understanding and provide opportunities for pupils to ask questions. Leaders recently consulted on the RSE curriculum with staff and parents to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant to the needs of pupils.

42. Leaders prioritise the teaching of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and ensure there is dedicated curriculum time to explore the subject in detail. The PSHE curriculum is designed to enable pupils to revisit themes and topics which they explore with increasing complexity as they develop in maturity and progress through the school. Pupils explore topics such as the effect of drugs on the body and the importance of healthy eating.
43. The school's medical centre is well staffed and well resourced. First aid and medical records are accurately maintained and confidential. Pupils are well looked after if they are injured or need medical treatment. Boarders are given the information they need to register with the local doctors' surgery and are supported to attend medical appointments. Staff working in the early years are suitably trained in paediatric first aid.
44. Health and safety and fire safety procedures are robust and well managed. Leaders and staff ensure that health and safety are suitable and effective, including in boarding. Regular drills, including during boarding times and sleeping hours, ensure that staff and pupils know what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation or fire. The premises are well maintained. Leaders ensure the suitable storage of cleaning materials, chemical substances and tools, including in the design technology rooms and science labs. Regular checks are carried out to ensure the safety of the water supply, electrical equipment and the maintenance of fire alarms.
45. Pupils are appropriately supervised throughout the school day. Leaders' careful planning ensures that children in the early years are well supported by suitably trained staff at all times. Staff maintain effective oversight of the school site at the start and end of the school day, at breaktimes and when pupils move between lessons, including for physical education and outdoor learning. Supervision of boarding is well organised and ensures that an appropriate number of adults are available throughout boarding hours so that boarders' practical, educational and emotional needs are well supported.
46. Effective procedures are in place to manage school admissions and the school's admissions and attendance registers are well maintained in line with current statutory guidance, including in the early years. The school takes effective measures to promote pupils' positive attendance and these are well established. Staff promptly follow up with parents if a child is not in school and a message has not been received.
47. Working with the learning development team, pupils and parents, leaders support pupils who have experienced emotionally based school non-attendance (EBSNA). This has been particularly successful in the reintegration of pupils in the senior school, with sustained improvements in attendance over time contributing to successful outcomes for pupils in their learning and achievement. Pupils who become anxious or dysregulated during the school day are able to access respite and support within the learning development department. This support is accessible to all pupils in the senior school and is well utilised to support pupils' positive mental and emotional health.

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

**48. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

49. Children in the early years learn to socialise with each other through their play and daily routines. Children learn to take turns, share resources and play well together. They also learn to take care of their environment and look after resources, ensuring that they are put away carefully so they are ready for the next person to use. Staff help children practise their social skills and use the language of politeness throughout the school day and particularly at snack times.
50. Through the PSHE curriculum, pupils learn about democracy and the rule of law and gain an understanding of the role of public institutions in British society. Pupils deepen their understanding of the role of the police to uphold the law and to help us to be safe. Regular visits to the school by the community police help reinforce this learning and enable pupils to explore in more detail aspects of the work of the police. Pupils learn about the democratic process and participate in school elections.
51. Pupils learn about individual rights and responsibilities and how the law protects people from discrimination. Pupils learn about prejudice and different types of discrimination and the harm they can cause. They reflect on the importance of the school's IMPACT values in maintaining a positive culture within school and in society. Pupils contribute positively to the wider community through their charity work and fundraising for local and national charities.
52. Pupils demonstrate tolerance and respect for different ideas, cultures and beliefs through their respectful relationships with each other in school. This is because pupils are well informed about different religions and traditions through the curriculum, through assemblies and wider school experiences that deepen pupils' social and cultural understanding. Pupils also learn about different social and cultural issues and how they have applied to different contexts through their study of subjects including religious studies, history, geography, music and art.
53. Prefects are given appropriate duties and responsibilities and are supported in their role by school leaders. The school's mentoring programme helps older pupils share their knowledge and interests with younger pupils while also developing their leadership skills.
54. Pupils' economic education is actively promoted through the curriculum and a variety of practical programmes. Pupils in Year 6 work with local business to develop their understanding of commerce and entrepreneurship as part of Young Enterprise. In the senior school, pupils explore economic factors such as inflation, taxation and recession, considering the impact of these on society through the PSHE curriculum and their studies in mathematics, business and economics. In the sixth form, pupils explore ways to manage personal finances and budgeting in preparation for living independent lives. Pupils also learn about the risks relating to gambling, and the importance of making well-informed financial decisions.
55. Leaders have put in place a well-structured careers programme for pupils from Year 7. Careers guidance offers tailored support that helps older pupils consider a range of suitable pathways, including university studies or apprenticeships, to enable them to realise their aspirations for the future. Pupils consider their subject choices and how these relate to possible future careers. In Year 12, pupils take part in workshops that help them refine their applications and develop their

interview techniques to help them prepare their applications for university study and apprenticeships.

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

**56. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

57. Leaders maintain a positive culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders with designated responsibilities for safeguarding are well informed and trained appropriately for their role. They co-ordinate their work effectively to ensure that leaders and staff are alert to pupils' needs and can provide appropriate support. The proprietor and governors maintain effective oversight of the arrangements to safeguard pupils. Leaders carry out an annual review of safeguarding and work with the local authority to review the school's safeguarding procedures.
58. Staff are vigilant. They know how to recognise the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff understand the importance of reporting any concerns they may have promptly so that leaders can take appropriate action in a timely way.
59. Safeguarding records are clear and comprehensive. Leaders are diligent in following up safeguarding concerns. They work closely with external agencies to help vulnerable pupils and their families to access the guidance and support they need.
60. Staff receive regular safeguarding training, including about the 'Prevent' duty. They are knowledgeable about local contextual risks, such as county lines, social media, and the potential risks of radicalisation. Well-developed partnerships with the local community police help leaders raise awareness of local safeguarding risks among staff and pupils through workshops and assemblies.
61. Staff are clear about the school's whistleblowing policy and the importance of reporting any low-level concerns about the conduct of adults in school, including self-referral. Leaders work closely with the local authority and seek advice appropriately.
62. Leaders and staff ensure that pupils know who to speak to in school if they are worried or have concerns. Staff respond to any concerns raised suitably and provide pupils with support.
63. An appropriate internet filtering and monitoring system is in place. Leaders receive regular reports of systems checks. They are alerted promptly to any concerns that arise in relation to the use of the school's internet. Through the curriculum, assemblies and regular discussions, pupils learn how to keep themselves and others safe when using the internet.
64. The school's recruitment procedures are robust. Thorough checks are carried out on all members of staff before they take up their employment at the school. Rigorous checks are also carried out in relation to family members of boarding staff who are resident on the school site. Leaders ensure that the single central record of appointments is accurate and well maintained.
65. Leaders work closely with accredited agencies and carry out their own rigorous checks to ensure that the arrangements for educational guardianship are suitable. Boarding staff ensure that pupils who are in the care of educational guardians are safe and well supported. Boarders know the name of the independent person and how to contact them if they have any concerns that they wish to raise with someone who is independent of the school.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

**66. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## School details

<b>School</b>	Beechwood School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	886/6011
<b>Address</b>	Beechwood School 12 Pembury Road Royal Tunbridge Wells Kent TN2 3QD
<b>Phone number</b>	01892 532747
<b>Email address</b>	info@beechwood.org.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.beechwood.org.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Alpha Schools (Holdings) Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ali Khan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Danielle Saffer
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 19
<b>Number of pupils</b>	311
<b>Number of boarding pupils</b>	18
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 to 5 November 2021

## Information about the school

67. Beechwood School is an independent co-educational boarding and day school situated in Royal Tunbridge Wells. The school consists of a pre-prep, for pupils aged 3 to 7 years, which includes the early years setting, the prep school, for pupils aged 7 to 11 years, the senior school, for pupils aged 11 to 16, and the sixth form, for pupils aged 16 to 19. The headteacher took up her role in September 2024. The proprietor is also the chair of the governing body.
68. Pupils may board from the age of 11. There is one boarding house which is located within the main school building.
69. There are 25 children in the Nursery class. There are seven children in the Reception class.
70. The school has identified 19 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Four pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
71. The school has identified ten pupils as speaking English as an additional language (EAL).
72. The school states its aims are to be a vibrant, caring school that enables all pupils to make the most of their talents. It seeks to enable pupils to develop a sense of responsibility and equip them with the values, skills and habits that will help shape their future world.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

23 to 25 September 2025

73. A team of five inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

74. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and form time
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the proprietor and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

75. 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

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For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)