

# School inspection report

Date 6 to 8 February 2024

## **Fulneck School**

Fulneck

Pudsey

Leeds

LS28 8DS

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. The governors ensure through, their careful monitoring processes, that the school's leaders create a safe environment and focus on promoting the wellbeing of pupils.
2. Leaders in the early years have high expectations of their pupils and what they can achieve, and children enjoy coming to school, where they feel safe and happy.
3. The relationship between staff and pupils is positive and is instrumental in establishing a supportive working environment, in which pupils grow in confidence and are able to make the most of their potential. Both inside and outside the classroom, pupils work well. Leaders have addressed instances of unsatisfactory behaviour.
4. The governors recognise the crucial importance of supporting pupils' individual needs and leaders have established an effective provision for pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This centres on an area of the school, called "Soteria", named after a Greek goddess of safety. Here, specialist teachers work successfully with pupils of differing needs, including pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
5. The new senior leadership team have introduced a number of new initiatives, which are already producing improvements for the learning and personal development of pupils. In conjunction with the governors, leaders have put in place measures to monitor the progress of pupils through the school and to help pupils to achieve their full potential. This has included reviewing the curriculum, seeking to provide pupils with the most appropriate learning experience. Consequently, pupils' levels of attainment are more easily understood, and teaching can focus more specifically on individual needs. These initiatives are not fully embedded and outcomes are still being evaluated.
6. The pastoral leaders are reflective and committed to providing a safe and supportive atmosphere, both for boarders and day pupils. Pupils are keen to contribute to the school community. Although prepared for the challenges of the outside world when they leave, some have a limited understanding
7. Mutual respect is evident within the school, pupils show an understanding and tolerance of difference and diversity within their community, which is made up of members from a range of nationalities and backgrounds.

## 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:

- continue the work already underway on the curriculum and monitoring of academic progress so that pupils' abilities and needs are understood more specifically, so that their examination results and other outcomes are strengthened
- ensure that pupils gain a greater awareness of the wider community beyond the school, so they develop a broader understanding and perspective on society.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. The governors undertake informed monitoring of the work of the school's leaders. They have developed a wide range of policies which leaders implement in practice, so that all pupils, both day and boarding, receive an educational experience that promotes their wellbeing. The school is a safe working environment for pupils, staff and visitors and there is a well-structured plan for the maintenance, refurbishment and development of the site.
9. Governors and senior leaders fully promote the school's aims. Their vision for the school and its future development holds the elements of kindness and hard work at its centre. This is evidenced by the curriculum, a caring pastoral system and the pupils' mutual respect. To this end, there is a continuing process of self-evaluation by governors and school leaders. The outcomes of this can be seen in the expansion of provision for pupils who have SEND.
10. The leadership team in the school is comparatively new. In the last year, they have introduced a range of initiatives which are proving effective, but these are still in their early stages, so that their full impact cannot be evaluated. Their approach centres on the desire to achieve the best outcomes for their pupils, both in their academic achievements but also as young people who are fully prepared for the outside world. This can be seen in the focus on monitoring of pupils' progress and in the development of resources for careers which reflect pupils' future needs.
11. Leaders and governors understand the importance of managing risk in its widest sense, to protect the wellbeing of pupils and staff. They appreciate that this applies across a range of areas and consequently a substantial body of risk assessments are in place. In turn, these ensure pupils and staff can work in a safe environment. The governors make effective use of external organisations to review procedures and support safe practice.
12. Leadership in the early years have high expectations for their children. They plan carefully to create an environment in which activities are well matched to children's interests and needs. Children enjoy coming to school, where they feel safe and happy and grow in confidence through positive interactions with the adults in the setting.
13. There is a clear complaints policy in place and the logs show that all stated procedures and timescales are followed appropriately. Detailed records are kept, including those relating to pupils who are boarders and children in the early years.
14. The school's leaders maintain a comprehensive website which provides all the information required, either directly or through contact with the school office. The school produces formal reports on pupils annually and also makes available an online system for parents to follow their child's progress.
15. The governors and leaders are very mindful of the need to ensure that all pupils feel equally welcome and respected in school, in line with the terms of the Equality Act. To this end, teaching does not discriminate and there is a sensitive, inclusive atmosphere in the school. There is an accessibility plan which addresses those areas where there is scope for further improvement. It is a clear document with timescales and criteria for judging success and is reviewed regularly.
16. The governors undertake a formal, annual review of safeguarding and monitor procedures with care, ensuring that the school has effective arrangements in place. Leaders work successfully with external agencies to support pupils.

**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. The curriculum covers all of the required areas. Leaders are reviewing some elements, in order to offer greater breadth, such as in technology and modern foreign languages, so that all pupils can access a programme that will help them realise their potential.
19. Over recent years, pupils in their GCSE examinations have achieved results that exceed expectations, though this is not always the case at A level. Those leaders responsible for academic development are committed to raising the levels of achievement in this area and have put in place measures to address this. They have introduced a useful system of data analysis which provides information on how groups of pupils are performing. Teachers can use this to monitor pupils' attainment and progress, but this is not yet consistent. Current assessments indicate that pupils are making better progress towards their A-level examinations.
20. Across the school staff know their pupils well. This means they can identify their needs within their curriculum areas whilst also understanding how those needs may change depending on the subject being taught. They draw upon the expertise within the school to devise tailored support strategies where needed; therefore, catering for their pupils' individual needs, which in some instances are complex.
21. Teachers deliver interesting, and at times challenging, lessons enabling pupils to make good progress in line with their individual abilities. Lessons often include a variety of well-structured tasks in a structured way. In science, practical work includes datalogging and practical demonstrations that build on previous learning and reinforced prior knowledge. In art, pupils who don't find art naturally easy are encouraged and grow in confidence with help and guidance from teachers, who employed a demonstration-style step-by-step approach. Pupils then experiment and develop their drawing skills accordingly.
22. Staff in the early years use a topic based, child-initiated approach which creates curiosity in children about their learning. Children in pre-school enjoy learning their initial phonic sounds whilst children in Reception build upon these skills, demonstrating a secure understanding of word segmentation. Clear, age-appropriate and often challenging questioning enables pupils to respond well and make good progress in these key skills. Children almost always achieve their early learning goals by the end of their Reception year.
23. Boarding staff support pupils' academic progress by providing academic support and time for the boarders to devote to their studies in their boarding house. The on-site facilities allow boarders to have suitable recreational time to support a healthy work-life balance.
24. Leaders of provision for pupils who have SEND have overseen the development of access to curriculum provision. This guidance is followed by teachers across the school, enabling pupils to learn according to their individual needs. Pupils on the SEND register who do not have EHC plans, have individual passports which can be accessed online by all staff. Consequently, pupils who have SEND are well supported in their learning. Their achievements in public examinations are above predictions based upon their starting points, reflecting their consistent progress through the school.
25. The leaders of provision for pupils who have SEND also have oversight of the provision for pupils with EAL. The majority of these pupils achieve results above the expectations based upon their

starting points. Leaders are developing specific language support as international pupils increasingly arrive who require significant support in this area of their learning.

26. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enrich pupils' learning experiences, from The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme to model-making clubs. Often pupils from different years learn together and this enhances the cohesion of the community, as well as introducing them to new skills and interests which support their wellbeing.

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

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



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

28. Leaders provide a suitable curriculum that meets the wellbeing needs of the pupils. There is a suitable range of physical activity available for pupils. Sports staff use opportunities during the lessons so that pupils understand how they benefit from physical exercise.
29. The school's leaders and staff have created an atmosphere in which pupils happily engage with each other and work effectively together, thus further enhancing their overall wellbeing and progress. The staff show a clear commitment to supporting pupils in their personal development and this is central to their work. The mutual respect between staff and pupils and pupils and pupils is a notable feature of the school and it contributes to pupils displaying high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence.
30. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) programmes are effective in promoting pupils' self-understanding. The RSE programme was introduced with parental consultation and appropriate training for staff. There are regular reviews on the suitability of this curriculum and there is effective liaison between departments to ensure that all required areas are covered. The school leaders and staff focus on ensuring that pupils appreciate the need to show respect to each other and an awareness of diversity. The PSHE curriculum helps pupils to understand how to manage their feelings and worries. They recognise that if they can cope with their anxieties then they will be able to learn more effectively. Consequently pupils develop a resilience that prepares them well for dealing with the challenges of later life.
31. Leaders had established clear expectations of behaviour for the pupils and any issues are resolved effectively. Some recent issues have been addressed and standards have improved as a result. The inspectors observed a consistent level of sensible and mature behaviour both in lessons and around school, reflecting the positive and caring approach of the school's pastoral team. Bullying is rare and if it does occur the school takes decisive and supportive action.
32. The boarding staff look after the boarders well and there are supportive staff within the medical centre for the boarders' needs. Houses are clean and well maintained. Boarders have lockable space in rooms for valuables. They have plentiful and nutritious food catering for all dietary needs. Snacks are provided in the house and boarders have a hygienic kitchen in which to prepare their own food as well. The boarding staff, who live in the house, know their charges well and as a result can support their mental health and wellbeing when the boarders require it, at pressurised times in particular.
33. Both governors and leaders recognise the importance of pupil wellbeing, introducing new procedures which enable staff to monitor each pupil's mental health. Pupils confirm they have a number of staff they can approach if they need emotional support, and they are confident they will be helped should the need arise. Teachers make allowances to help alleviate those stresses which may impact pupils who have commitments beyond the classroom or who live far from home enabling them to give of their best in all areas of school life.
34. Leaders ensure that staff responsibilities in health and safety are fulfilled effectively. Processes for monitoring these responsibilities are in place so that indoor and outdoor spaces are safe. Some

areas are in need of further improvement. The governors are aware of the difficulties with some of the buildings and have a strategic plan to ensure a comprehensive oversight, including a rolling programme of refurbishment within the site.

35. The provision for first aid for all pupils, supervision of pupils and fire safety procedures are established and effective. Similarly, the school meets its responsibilities, in terms of admission and attendance registers. Pupils who join or leave the school outside the usual transfer points are reported to the local authority. There are regular reviews of all these procedures.

### **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. Senior leaders and staff encourage pupils to show a high level of respect and tolerance towards others. During assembly, primary pupils identified the school's values of being kind and working hard and understand that these are qualities that will help them in life beyond the school. The school's leaders provide the impetus in this area, promoting the society that the school strives to be, and they are supported by a committed staff and enthusiastic and mature sixth formers, who embrace these key values.
38. The breadth of cultures and backgrounds in the pupil body, exemplified in the boarding community, help in bringing about understanding of the world at large and these differences provide opportunities for all pupils to develop a greater awareness and understanding of each other.
39. Staff in the early years have put in place rules and routines that help the pupils to learn the school's values. They know that they can help each other and work together when tidying up and can tell their teacher that they have listened carefully in assembly. They understand that they sometimes need to take turns and recognise that it is important to be kind to each other.
40. Pupils are prepared for their lives in British society being well-grounded in social and economic education, so they can contribute successfully to society. Leaders have encourage pupils to share their views, through initiatives which include the setting up of different pupil councils, charity groups and a re-invigorated house system. Senior staff guide the groups but they are led by the pupils themselves. Recently, they organised a talent contest and a Christmas bonanza event and they are looking at further cultural events for the future.
41. The PSHE curriculum covers the key elements of developing pupils' sense of responsibility towards society, the reasons for having rules and laws, the democratic nature of our government. Pupils could explain their voting rights, the structure of central and local government and how life in their country might differ to others.
42. There is a limited opportunity for significant pupil involvement in the wider community and pupils express the sense of being slightly isolated and not fully aware of the needs of the outside world. Consequently, they are not able to contribute as much as they would wish to society beyond the school gates. They feel a sense of being in a 'bubble', although the school encourages pupils to focus on their role within the school community and they do this wholeheartedly.
43. Pupils learn about basic economics in their daily lives through the PSHE curriculum, in an age-appropriate way. Pupils in the primary years look at what money is and how to make decisions on money, as well as identifying the different jobs that might be available to them. Pupils in Year 10 business studies were thinking about how to fund projects and the need to balance budgets when developing a business. Boarders are encouraged to manage their own finances giving them a sense of budgeting.
44. Governors and school leaders in the last year have developed an extensive careers provision. This starts in the primary school with sessions on different jobs and skills and then moves forward, through identifying influences on career choices and aspirations. In the senior school, the careers programme encourages pupils to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and to have an open

mind towards careers and their future. The school offers suitable advice and information for both university application and apprenticeships and employment.

### **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. The school's safeguarding policy and measures are rigorous and well-implemented. Leaders are aware of recent developments in safeguarding, recent guidance, and changes to contextual risks, including those from extremism. There is a cyber bullying and online safety policy in place, and it is a part of both the information and communication technology (ICT) and PSHE programmes. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. The governors have put in place robust systems for monitoring online activity.
47. The safeguarding team work closely with external agencies to ensure that all pupils are supported fully. Staff know how they might make a referral or raise a concern. Leaders use online systems for recording issues so that recordkeeping is detailed and comprehensive. Leaders recognise the links between effective pastoral care and safeguarding. The safeguarding team is well-resourced, including staff who have counselling training.
48. The governors maintain a careful watching brief on how safeguarding is implemented in the school. They do this through a designated governor for safeguarding, who visits the school regularly and works closely with the school's safeguarding team. In turn, this governor reports back to the whole governing body and safeguarding is on the agenda for every meeting.
49. The governors ensure that the safeguarding team receives regular and appropriate training. The designated safeguarding lead in the school provides training for all staff on induction and then keeps up their understanding through updates and the use of online resources.
50. The governors ensure that the single central record is maintained accurately, so that all recruitment checks on governors, staff and volunteers are carried out appropriately.

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

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	Fulneck School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	383/6117
<b>Registered charity number</b>	5086581
<b>Address</b>	Fulneck School Fulneck Pudsey Leeds LS28 8DS
<b>Phone number</b>	0113 257 0235
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@fulneckschool.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.fulneckschool.co.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	The British Province of The Unitas Fratrum (Moravian Church)
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Elizabeth Dawson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Devin Cassidy
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 18
<b>Number of pupils</b>	295
<b>Number of boarding pupils</b>	17
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 to 27 June 2019

## Information about the school

52. Fulneck School is a co-educational, independent day and boarding school for pupils aged between 3 and 18 years. It is divided into a pre-school, primary, senior and sixth form sections. Founded in 1753, it is located within the Moravian community of Fulneck. It is owned by the Moravian Church Trust and overseen by a local governing body.
53. There is one boarding house with male and female pupils in separate accommodation within that house. Boarders are predominantly international pupils.
54. There are 27 children in the EYFS.
55. The school has identified 69 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Of these, 20 pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has a specialised autism unit – called Soteria – and it is situated alongside the main school, offering specialised individual tuition.
56. English is an additional language for 50 pupils.
57. The school states its aims are to support and guide, ensuring individual wellbeing is of paramount importance. It seeks to challenge all our pupils to aim high and to pursue their own unique talents and interests, to inculcate strong core values, enabling the right choices and actions and to develop a healthy approach to risk, celebrate success and regard failure as deferred success.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

6 to 8 February 2024

58. A team of 4 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
- visits to the boarding house accompanied by pupils and staff
- 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

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