

# School inspection report

3 to 5 March 2026

## **Talbot Heath School**

Rothesay Road

Bournemouth

BH4 9NJ

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'.

## Contents

<b>SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS .....	5
<b>SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....</b>	<b>6</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE .....	7
<b>SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....</b>	<b>8</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....	9
<b>SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING.....</b>	<b>10</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....	11
<b>SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....</b>	<b>12</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY .....	13
<b>SAFEGUARDING .....</b>	<b>14</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING .....	14
<b>SCHOOL DETAILS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>INSPECTION DETAILS .....</b>	<b>17</b>

## Summary of inspection findings

1. Governors and school leaders holding temporary roles and responsibilities have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their duties effectively. They ensure that the school's ethos and values are known and are at the heart of the curriculum.
2. Leaders ensure that policies are suitable and are implemented so that the Standards and the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools (NMS) are met. Although all of standards are met, currently, there is inconsistent oversight of the efficiency and effectiveness of some school procedures.
3. The curriculum is broad, enabling pupils to develop their skills and understanding across a range of subjects. Pupils typically achieve well in public examinations.
4. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), so that they are supported to achieve their potential.
5. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive extra help and support during lessons and in extra sessions, as needed, to develop their language acquisition.
6. Teachers are knowledgeable. They generally plan and teach lessons well. They form positive relationships with pupils and their behaviour management of pupils during lessons is generally good. Pupils are almost always engaged, motivated to succeed and make good progress. However, in the senior school, there are occasions when planning, teaching and behaviour management are less effective. This limits the learning for some pupils.
7. Leaders ensure that the curriculum reflects the school's ethos and they give priority to pupils' physical and mental wellbeing. Leaders create a climate in which pupils are valued and grow in self-confidence.
8. There are appropriate curriculums for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE). These provide pupils with information in an age-appropriate manner. Pupils understand the expectations of the behaviour and anti-bullying policies. Leaders manage any breaches of these expectations promptly and effectively.
9. Levels of staff supervision are appropriate. Procedures for health and safety and the prevention of fire are rigorous. Premises and accommodation are suitable. Boarding accommodation is comfortable and well maintained. The most recent requirements for recording and monitoring admission and attendance are met, with the local authority contacted as necessary.
10. The curriculum supports pupils' understanding of the importance of respect and acceptance of all members of society. Pupils learn that these qualities are essential components of modern democratic British society.
11. The careers programme provides pupils with unbiased advice for the next stage of their education and lives. Pupils develop a confident understanding of financial matters during PSHE lessons and when organising fundraising events for charities, in line with the school's ethos.

12. There is a robust culture of safeguarding within the school. Training ensures that all staff understand their responsibilities and know what to do should they have safeguarding concerns around a pupil.
13. Safeguarding records are maintained carefully and stored confidentially. Measures for safe recruitment are rigorous and all required checks are completed before staff are allowed to work in the school.

## 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 met.

### Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- clarify arrangements for the oversight of administrative systems and policy implementation to ensure that all of the Standards are consistently being met
- ensure that, in the senior school, planning, teaching and management of low-level misbehaviour are consistently effective so that pupils, including those with higher prior attainment, learn successfully and make good progress.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

14. Governors are working closely with school leaders to ensure continuity and that the Standards are met during the current period of transition between headteachers and the changes to other leadership roles. Members of the temporary senior leadership team have taken on new roles and responsibilities for which they have the necessary skills. Leadership of the early years is unchanged. Leaders train and guide staff so that children learn in a warm, supportive environment where they thrive. Leadership of boarding is effective, ensuring that boarders have a positive experience in which their needs are met. Current leaders in all areas are assiduous in ensuring that policies are appropriate and are being followed, so that pupils' wellbeing continues to be actively promoted. Currently, there are unclear arrangements for overseeing and monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of some school procedures. This has an impact on a range of matters such as the accessibility of health and safety records and how information regarding pupils' academic progress is used to improve pupils' learning and achievements.
15. Leaders ensure that the school's values are publicised and well known by pupils, staff and parents. Strategic decisions are made with these in mind, so that the pupils' wellbeing and personal development are consistently supported. Leaders undertake formal evaluations of the school's success in promoting its values and they identify areas for further development. Appropriate action is taken in response leaders' findings. For example, the pastoral team has been extended and a dedicated programme introduced to better support pupils' learning skills and resilience.
16. Governors know the school well and are alert to potential risk. They manage change carefully, appointing experienced interim leaders with the skills and knowledge to identify, manage and reduce risk during the school's period of transition. Governors provide leaders with both support and challenge. They ask probing questions arising from their evaluation of the regular reports provided by school leaders. They check that all safety measures, such as those to minimise the risk of fire, are rigorous.
17. Governors exercise appropriate oversight of all safeguarding matters. They ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed so that staff are checked for suitability to work with children. Governors and leaders are assiduous in monitoring the effectiveness of the internet filtering systems, so that the likelihood of pupils encountering inappropriate material online is reduced as much as possible.
18. Links are established with other agencies such as the police, NSPCC and social services, so that additional support to promote pupils' wellbeing can be sought as necessary. Leaders provide the local authority with required information, such as relevant documentation relating to pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) and inform them when pupils leave or join the school at non-standard times.
19. All required information for parents is accessible on the school's website or directly from the school office. Parents are provided with regular written reports on their child's progress, so that they can help to support their child's learning.
20. There is a suitable complaints policy for parents and a clear process for boarders to raise their concerns about their boarding experience. Records of complaints are appropriate and any complaint

about boarding provision is clearly identified. Complaints are managed promptly, in line with the policy.

21. Leaders are meticulous in ensuring that the needs of pupils who have SEND are met. There is an appropriate accessibility plan setting out proposals for adaptations to improve pupils' access to the curriculum as well as to the site. The requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are met.

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

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

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

23. The curriculum is extensive, providing a well-rounded education that is appropriate for pupils' different needs and ambitions. The curriculum for children in the early years covers all the required areas of learning within the early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework. For older pupils, a common core of English, mathematics and sciences is extended to include a range of modern languages, physical education (PE) and classical, humanities and creative subjects.
24. Leaders and staff in the early years ensure that curriculum plans draw on children's interests and engage them in purposeful play that enables their learning. Children develop their communication skills in conversations with their teachers and each other. Their basic phonics knowledge and writing is developed by skilful teaching. Pupils in the junior school read and write with confidence and accuracy, supported by a focus on expressive arts that develops their oracy. Pupils in the senior school express themselves with assurance and maturity in both their speaking and writing.
25. Children in the early years develop their numeracy skills in teacher-led sessions and in self-led activities that encourage counting, addition and subtraction. Pupils in the junior school develop high levels of mathematical fluency. Older pupils apply their mathematical understanding confidently in other lessons such as design and technology, and business studies. The curriculum includes dedicated teaching on information and communication technology, and pupils use tablet devices confidently to research and produce work.
26. The needs of pupils who have SEND are identified and additional support with individual learning plans is put in place as needed. The learning support department ensures that teachers are aware of and utilise the specific strategies that best support individual pupils. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points.
27. Pupils who speak EAL are given appropriate support, as needed. Children in the early years are encouraged to develop their confidence in English as well as their home language, for example by using pictures that link the two. Older pupils are supported with word banks and by attending support groups, if necessary. Pupils make good progress in their understanding and use of written and spoken English.
28. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They generally plan lessons effectively, drawing on pupils' prior learning. They organise a logical sequence of activities and provide clear explanations so that pupils develop their subject understanding. Teachers establish positive relationships with pupils and generally manage classroom behaviour well. On occasion, in the senior school, irrelevant chatter goes unchecked and not all pupils listen, slowing the pace of learning.
29. Teachers typically choose a range of useful resources and teaching methods to enhance pupils' learning. For instance, most teachers use questioning well to probe and deepen pupils' thinking about the concepts behind the facts of a topic. In the senior school, the planning and teaching for some lessons are not as effective. At times, teachers' explanations are unclear and their questioning does not support pupils to further their understanding. Some activities require little active participation by pupils. This results in pupils losing focus so that their progress is slowed. In these lessons, pupils with higher prior attainment are not always appropriately challenged.
30. There are regular assessments of pupils' learning. Their progress is tracked, gaps in their understanding are identified and extra individual support is provided, if necessary. Senior leaders

gather a range of data from assessments, including the scrutiny of examination results, but this is not always used effectively. At present, there is no clear overview of what leaders and staff can assimilate from the assessment information available to support pupils' learning, for instance how to adapt the curriculum and teaching in response to variations in pupils' attainment between departments and across subjects.

31. Pupils of all ages are keen learners. They are ambitious and take pride in seeing their work improve as they respond to their teachers' feedback and the precise targets they are set. Pupils are self-motivated and approach their work responsibly. Boarders use their evening study time wisely to manage their work. Pupils of all ages make good progress. Pupils attain results in public examinations that are consistently above the national averages in most subjects.
32. The extra-curricular programme is extensive and appropriate for all ages, including pupils in the sixth form. It includes choirs, orchestras and bands, both in the junior and senior schools, alongside regular theatrical productions, in which sixth-form pupils work alongside their juniors. Pupils develop their physical and sporting skills through numerous sporting clubs. Academic ambition is encouraged in options such as debating, languages and medical societies. Off-timetable activities, such as those offered by World Book Day, encourage pupils' critical thinking and powers of deduction, for example in murder mystery challenges. Boarders access sporting and art facilities in the evenings and a broad range of trips and visits at the weekends.

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

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

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

34. Leaders have successfully created a united school community characterised by camaraderie, inclusivity and shared values. During assemblies, tutorials and PSHE lessons, pupils learn the importance of kindness and mutual respect for others, regardless of any differences of background or abilities. Boarding staff work to create a friendly, welcoming atmosphere in which boarders are valued members of the school.
35. Pupils learn the importance of non-material values such as being principled and compassionate. They study major world faiths in religious studies lessons, identifying and respecting the similarities and differences in belief. In the early years, children learn about festivals of other faiths, for example when celebrating Diwali. They learn to value creation and the natural world during activities in the outdoor woodland setting.
36. Leaders encourage pupils to develop mental courage and resilience. They have established pastoral structures to support any pupil who is feeling overwhelmed. Leaders have created a welcoming, calming space for pupils to use for a brief respite before being encouraged to return to lessons. The curriculum sets aside 'wellbeing Wednesdays', with enjoyable and relaxing activities to provide a stress-free moment in a busy week. An effective programme develops pupils' mental resilience by helping them understand how they can learn most effectively and how to deal with setbacks. As a result, pupils grow in self-knowledge and self-esteem. They are assured and self-confident, devoid of arrogance.
37. The PE curriculum encourages pupils of all ages to enjoy physical activity and to understand the importance of exercise. Children in the early years develop their gross motor skills in lessons that develop basic skills, for example in throwing and catching. Lively play with the ride-on toys and the climbing equipment in the playground helps children to develop their balance and co-ordination. The curriculum provides pupils with an extensive range of sporting opportunities aimed to inspire and motivate them. Options include fitness, yoga, pickle ball, netball, lacrosse, tag rugby and dance. Clear and encouraging coaching helps pupils to develop their skills in their chosen activities. Specialist training programmes for high-attaining swimmers and tennis players enable them to reach considerable levels of success in national events.
38. The PSHE curriculum is systematically organised so that key material is taught and built on in age-appropriate ways. In the early years, children are guided to recognise their emotions and how to manage them. They are encouraged to be kind friends and to take turns and share. Topics for older pupils include how to keep themselves safe physically and when online, and the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse. During discussions, pupils in the sixth form reflect on how to enjoy their social lives and behave responsibly and safely. Presentations from visiting speakers enrich the programme and enhance learning. Pupils' understanding is checked through regular surveys and written activities.
39. Relationships and sex education is taught within the PSHE curriculum and ensures that pupils learn about the importance of positive, safe relationships. Pupils in the junior school are taught to seek consent before hugging someone and are well prepared for the physical changes of puberty. Pupils in the senior school understand their rights and responsibilities in relationships and how to protect their sexual health.

40. There are clear behavioural policies with a focus on rewarding positive behaviour. Children in the early years set their own 'golden rules' focused on being kind. Older pupils recognise the importance of courtesy, consideration and respect for others' rights. They understand the rewards and sanctions set out in the behaviour policy. As a result, pupils' behaviour is consistently sensible, courteous and thoughtful. Pupils know that bullying is unacceptable and has no place in their school. Should misdemeanours or unkindness happen, these are dealt with swiftly, in line with the policies.
41. Staff provide appropriate levels of pupil supervision throughout the day and outside lesson times. There are always the required numbers of staff supervising children in the early years, so that children are always within sight and hearing of adults. Children are carefully supervised when eating.
42. Staff are present in the boarding house throughout the day and overnight. Boarding accommodation is clean, comfortable and welcoming. There are suitable facilities for boarders to study and to socialise. Boarders are provided with regular nutritious and appetising meals, with due attention paid to specific dietary needs.
43. Premises and accommodation are well maintained, with appropriate provision for the medical needs of day pupils and of boarders. The medical room is staffed by qualified nurses. There are suitable numbers of staff trained in first aid and in paediatric first aid. Fire regulations meet the requirements of the relevant legislation. Fire evacuation drills are carried out termly for the school and the boarding house, with at least one per year scheduled to take place when boarders are asleep, so that all pupils are confident in what to do should such an emergency arise.
44. Those responsible for the oversight of admission and attendance ensure that the most recent requirements for managing and recording these are met. Leaders inform the local authority should a pupil's attendance cause concern and they work sensitively with families to overcome any barriers to attendance.

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

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

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

46. In line with the school's aim to encourage courageous spirits and generous hearts, leaders have created a curriculum that develops pupils' awareness of their responsibilities and the rights of others. Well-chosen texts and topics encourage pupils' awareness of changes in society over time, for example in attitudes towards women. In PSHE lessons, children in the early years learn the importance of being kind to others. Older pupils discuss the negative consequences of intolerance, such as that promoted in Hitler's Germany and by present day fundamentalist organisations. Pupils learn the importance of respect for others. The curriculum helps pupils to understand that individual liberty and respect for others, regardless of differences of ethnicity, belief or ability, are fundamental values in modern British society.
47. The curriculum helps pupils to reflect on their own and other cultures, seeking similarities. They also learn about global inequalities and how these can manifest themselves, for example the difference between programmes for urban regeneration in Bristol and for overall development in Bhutan. During a week focussed on world cultures, pupils are encouraged to talk in assemblies about their cultural backgrounds and traditions. Activities such as 'sustainability week', including a tree-replanting programme, reflect leaders' commitment to developing pupils' awareness of their responsibility to protect the planet.
48. Pupils experience the power of democracy through their involvement in making decisions that affect their school life. Children in the early years create their own class rules, which include accepting responsibility for looking after their environment and toys. Older pupils put themselves forward for election as head pupils in school and boarding, showing their willingness to take responsibility and make active contributions to school life.
49. Pupils vote for members of the separate pupil councils for the junior and senior schools. These councils join termly in a school Parliament, in which pupils present school leaders with white papers arguing for changes to their school life. The Parliament has successfully advocated for changes in uniform and lunch menus. This method of hearing pupils' views, replicating those of a democratic society, has encouraged pupils' understanding of Britain's political structures. Pupils consider current affairs in PSHE lessons and tutor time and some pupils stand for election in the national Youth Parliament. Pupils are well prepared to contribute as adults to society.
50. Pupils select local and national charities to support, in addition to a well-established programme supporting a school in Rwanda. Younger pupils visit a local care home and pupils of all ages become involved in charity weeks. Pupil leaders in the sixth form take the lead in organising fundraising activities, resulting in sizeable amounts being collected for charity.
51. Pupils develop an awareness of financial matters from their early days in the school. Pupils in the junior school are paid in house points for extra efforts to be helpful. Mathematics lessons develop their monetary awareness and, in PSHE lessons, pupils learn about budgeting and managing a bank account.
52. The careers programme is well planned, in line with Gatsby benchmarks. Pupils are supported when making decisions about relevant GCSE and A-level subjects to study. Leaders arrange useful work experience for pupils in the sixth form. Careers guidance equips pupils with unbiased information on

the various routes for the next stage of the pupils' lives, including university, specialist art courses, apprenticeships and moving straight into employment.

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

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

## Safeguarding

54. Leaders ensure that there is an established culture of safeguarding in the school. Safeguarding leaders are well trained, in line with the latest statutory guidance, and aware of wider safeguarding issues such as the risks presented by extremist views. They ensure that safeguarding considerations are always borne in mind when considering pupils' pastoral wellbeing.
55. Safeguarding leaders have the appropriate status and authority for these roles. They train staff annually as required and they follow this formal training with regular updates. They check the understanding of staff with informal quizzes and action is taken to rectify any misunderstandings. Boarding staff are trained in their extra responsibilities for the safety and wellbeing of boarders. As a result, staff are confident in their understanding of their responsibilities and of the procedures to follow should they have concerns about pupils or adults working in the school.
56. Safeguarding leaders maintain well-organised records of all safeguarding concerns. Records note the issues, the actions taken and the rationale for these. These are kept securely and confidentially. Leaders have formed positive relationships with local agencies, including social services and the police. Leaders work effectively with them to provide support to pupils and families, as needed.
57. Governors and leaders are conscious of the potential risks that pupils may encounter when using the internet or social media. They have invested in robust systems for internet filtering and monitoring and receive regular reports on any breaches of the protocols established. Leaders' consistent monitoring enables them to protect pupils from unsuitable material and allows them to access online material appropriately for their learning.
58. Pupils are well educated in the need to use the internet wisely and to be wary of the possibility of misinformation or inaccurate and inflammatory material. Pupils are confident to seek help from school staff when they have worries and know that staff will do their best to help them.
59. Governors exercise appropriate oversight of safeguarding. They receive regular reports from school leaders on this and scrutinise the information carefully as they carry out the required annual check of the policy and procedures. Governors visit regularly and ensure that recruitment processes are applied rigorously to verify that all school employees are suitable to work with children. The necessary information is recorded accurately on a single central record of appointments, which is routinely checked by governors.

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

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	Talbot Heath School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	839/6007
<b>Registered charity number</b>	283708
<b>Address</b>	Rothesay Road Bournemouth Dorset BH4 9NJ
<b>Phone number</b>	01202 761881
<b>Email address</b>	office@talbotheath.org
<b>Website</b>	www.talbotheath.org
<b>Proprietor</b>	Talbot Heath Schools Trust Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Rebecca Newton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Anna Talbot
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 19
<b>Number of pupils</b>	429
<b>Number of boarding pupils</b>	15
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 to 16 March 2023

## Information about the school

61. Talbot Heath school is an independent day and boarding school for female pupils aged 2 to 19, located in the suburbs of Bournemouth, Dorset. The interim headteacher was appointed in January 2026 and the chair of governors in March 2024.
62. Pupils may board from Year 7 to Year 13. The boarding house is situated on the main school site.
63. There are 27 children in the early years provision. There is one class for each stage: Nursery, pre-school and Reception.
64. The school has identified 57 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A very small proportion of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
65. The school has identified English as an additional language for 30 pupils. Specialist support is provided for some pupils who are at the earliest stages of English acquisition and others are supported appropriately in class.
66. The school states its aims are to ensure that its pupils become self-confident and independent individuals with integrity and a zest for life and learning. It encourages pupils to be intellectually curious, to be generous in understanding their responsibility to society and to face challenges with optimistic courage.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

3 to 5 March 2026

67. A team of six inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

68. 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 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 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.

69. 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)**.

**Independent Schools Inspectorate**

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

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