

School inspection report

25 to 27 February 2025

Redmaids' High School

Westbury Road
Westbury-on-Trym
Bristol
BS9 3AW

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 demonstrate a clear commitment to promoting pupils' wellbeing and progress. In line with the school's aims and values, a secure and supportive atmosphere is maintained effectively, allowing pupils to thrive.
2. Leaders and governors ensure that policies are consistently followed through regular monitoring and relevant training. Governors provide effective oversight of school development and help ensure that the complaints policy is applied appropriately.
3. School policies are clearly accessible to parents when required, regularly reviewed and updated in accordance with national guidelines and statutory requirements. Systems are in place to ensure that policies are implemented consistently. Additional relevant information is readily available to current and prospective parents via the school's website and the school provides an annual academic report for each pupil.
4. Leaders emphasise the importance of inclusivity and respect. Pupils contribute to fostering these values, which are further reinforced through personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons, assemblies and form times. As part of the PSHE programme, relationships and sex education (RSE) is delivered effectively, enabling pupils to develop self-confidence and self-awareness.
5. The curriculum is broad and meets pupils' needs. Teaching is effective and well planned. Feedback is regular and constructive. Pupils benefit from additional support from teachers both inside and outside of normal lesson times. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well in public examinations, while those in the junior school are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
6. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan, are quickly identified, supported and monitored by leaders responsible for SEND provision. Individual education plans (IEPs) in the junior school and learner profiles (LPs) in the senior school are effectively used by teachers, ensuring that these pupils make good progress.
7. Leaders have developed policies to deter bullying and promote positive behaviour. These are implemented effectively across the school. Health and safety measures help to provide a secure physical environment. Supervision throughout the school day is appropriate. Support for pupils' physical and mental health is provided by well-trained staff and is effective.
8. A well-embedded safeguarding culture exists in both schools. Staff report concerns promptly. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities take swift action, with support from relevant external agencies.
9. Leaders have developed a wide range of partnerships that enhance pupils' understanding of their role in the world and how they can contribute to the wider community. These experiences provide pupils with real-world insights into key values such as mutual respect, individual liberty, personal responsibility and financial awareness. These partnerships also form part of a well-planned careers programme that helps pupils prepare for future opportunities. However, leaders do not currently ensure that the full range of activities from the partnership projects programme are available, without barrier, to all pupils.

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:

- review the accessibility of the partnership projects programme so that all pupils have access to the full range of activities on offer.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders and governors have a clear vision for the school, placing the wellbeing and success of pupils at the heart of all decisions. The school fosters an ethos of inclusivity and respect, aligning with its aim to be a supportive community built on happiness, aspiration and mutual support.
11. Leaders promote ambitious academic standards while fostering the development of respectful, responsible pupils who are able to engage equally well with their peers and adults alike. They prioritise pupils' wellbeing by engaging with pupils' feedback and addressing concerns in a supportive and responsive manner.
12. Governors are actively involved in the school community, seeking feedback from staff and pupils. Governors provide strategic oversight through several committees including safeguarding, compliance, education and finance. They ensure that school leaders possess the necessary expertise to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Through a structured evaluation process, governors work alongside senior leaders to identify key priorities for improvement, shaping the school development plan and driving continuous enhancements in academic provision, safeguarding and pupils' wellbeing.
13. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders ensure that education is inclusive. A comprehensive accessibility plan is in place, reviewed regularly and reflected in the provision of adjustments for pupils who have SEND. Additional requirements for pupils who have SEND are promptly identified by leaders and assessed, with individual support plans developed and monitored to promote academic progress and wellbeing.
14. Junior school leaders create a supportive and encouraging environment where staff set high standards and provide the right help for each pupil. Leaders use regular checks on progress to help guide teaching. Teachers work together to understand each pupil's needs. Leaders keep track of how lessons are taught by observing classes, reviewing work and looking at progress data to make sure that teaching methods are effective.
15. Senior leaders have developed outreach and leadership opportunities for pupils. Leaders foster engagement in community initiatives that build confidence, communication and leadership skills. The school maintains partnerships with educational institutions and employers, enriching pupils' academic and career prospects. Currently, not all pupils are able to access the full range of activities offered within the partnership projects programme.
16. Leaders ensure that policies for health and safety, site management and risk assessment are embedded in practice. Governors provide oversight which ensures that health and safety is well managed, and that staff are suitably skilled and qualified for their roles.
17. School policies are accessible to parents, reviewed regularly and updated in line with national guidelines and statutory requirements. The complaints policy is applied effectively, with leaders responding promptly to concerns and maintaining accurate records. Lessons learned from complaints inform ongoing improvements in practice.
18. Leaders ensure that parents and prospective families have access to relevant information via the school's website, including academic reports and key communications. Parents receive regular reports, with consultation evenings providing further opportunities for engagement.

19. Leaders fulfil all statutory reporting requirements, including the submission of annual reports on the use of funds for pupils with EHC plans funded by the local authority.

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

20. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. Pupils benefit from a well-structured curriculum that meets their needs and aptitudes, ensuring continuity and progression across academic subjects. Schemes of work are carefully planned, supporting pupils effectively in building upon prior knowledge. Subject leaders regularly review curriculum content to ensure it remains relevant and engaging. For example, recent adjustments in the junior school humanities curriculum introduced more of an emphasis on geography and religious studies, reflecting the school's commitment to a balanced, diverse curriculum. The option to study, for example, three different languages and two different science courses in the senior school allows pupils to follow a course of studies that prepares them better for the recently enhanced breadth of studies on offer in the sixth form.
22. Pupils consistently achieve GCSE and A-Level results that exceed national averages. Pupils make good progress in English and maths throughout the junior school. Pupils demonstrate a clear readiness for secondary education by the beginning of Year 7.
23. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge. They plan and deliver well-structured, engaging lessons that incorporate both collaborative and independent learning activities. Lessons are carefully sequenced to reinforce and extend understanding, with subject-specific vocabulary embedded to enhance fluency and comprehension across disciplines. In religious studies, pupils develop independent thinking skills while considering, for example, the role of the langar in Sikhism. In art lessons, pupils set themselves their own aspirational targets which they work towards while completing their portfolios.
24. Leaders and teachers analyse assessment data systematically to track progress and identify areas where additional support may be needed. Assessment strategies, including verbal, handwritten and digital feedback, are tailored to individual subjects to meet pupils' needs. Assessment informs target-setting, with gaps in knowledge identified quickly and additional support provided where needed.
25. Leaders support teachers in implementing effective teaching methodologies, including pupil-led learning, discussion-based activities and structured questioning, to enhance engagement and appropriately challenge pupils. Teaching is varied to meet the needs of learners. Teachers participate in regular, well-structured professional development, ensuring that their practice evolves to incorporate evidence-based strategies. A recent school-wide focus on providing appropriate challenge, evident in lessons such as PSHE, where pupils were required to justify answers, and mathematics, where pupils were considering solutions beyond the normal curriculum, has further enhanced pupils' progress.
26. Pupils who have SEND receive personalised support tailored to their needs, ensuring that their progress is closely monitored. A structured approach is in place to identify, support and track these pupils, with specialist staff providing targeted assistance. Individual education plans (IEPs) in the junior school and learner profiles (LPs) in the senior school guide teachers in using appropriate strategies. Leaders responsible for SEND oversee the implementation of these strategies carefully, offering regular support and training to staff. Teaching is adapted to meet the needs of all learners, ensuring that pupils who have SEND make progress in line with expectations.

27. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) benefit from targeted support, including curriculum adjustments such as studying one modern foreign language instead of two, allowing additional time for English support sessions. Their progress is tracked through assessments, participation in assemblies and presentations such as 'my life in Hong Kong' and 'life in Ukraine', which demonstrate growing confidence and fluency in English. Leaders regularly review the effectiveness of strategies through lesson observations and pupils' feedback, making adjustments where needed. This structured support ensures that pupils who speak EAL make progress at least in line with expectations.
28. Teachers provide precise and constructive feedback, enabling pupils to understand their achievements and areas for improvement. Pupils engage with feedback and seek additional support when necessary, utilising the many subject clinics on offer.
29. Parents receive regular reports, alongside parental consultation evenings. Reports have recently evolved to offer more detailed and nuanced feedback to support pupils' development.
30. The junior and senior school extra-curricular programmes offer a diverse range of opportunities, enabling pupils to explore new interests and further develop existing skills. Through activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) and an extensive performing arts programme, pupils collaborate, build confidence and enhance their personal development.
31. In the sixth form, pupils have access to additional qualifications, including the extended project qualification (EPQ), a course on teaching English as a foreign language, and food hygiene certificates. These are offered alongside a range of physical activities, such as hockey, visits to a local gym and bouldering, equipping pupils with valuable skills and experiences for their future.
32. The Athena extension programme provides further academic challenge, offering Olympiads and competitions that are designed for scholars but open to all pupils. Additional twilight sessions encourage pupils to extend their learning beyond the curriculum, develop a better understanding as to how academic subjects relate to each other and offer opportunities to engage with local and online academic talks and events. These initiatives ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and beyond.

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. There is an effective and comprehensive PSHE education programme, including age-appropriate RSE, tailored to meet pupils' needs. Lessons are well planned, incorporating a range of activities that foster self-awareness and encourage pupils to make informed life choices. The curriculum is enriched with carefully selected talks from external speakers. Leaders ensure that pupils are exposed to diverse perspectives by inviting pupils from local boys' and co-educational schools to key events, such as the recent 'fostering respect' conference.
35. RSE is an integral part of the PSHE programme across both the junior and senior schools. Regular monitoring through assessments, classwork and feedback forms enables leaders responsible for RSE to ensure compliance with statutory requirements while also tailoring content and teaching methods to benefit pupils. Recent initiatives have included small-group discussions, police-led sessions on 'safety for girls', and workshops on 'festival safety'. As a result, pupils develop positive relationships, gain a better understanding of self-care, and are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.
36. The religious and philosophical education department plays a key role in promoting spiritual development. Leaders and pupils organise initiatives such as 'national religion day' and regular assembly programmes. Pupils actively shape these initiatives. For example, a recent presentation on Ramadan enabled pupils to educate their peers and staff about their experiences. Fundamental British values are integrated across departments, with each subject area reflecting how these principles are embedded in teaching. An annual culture week featuring visiting speakers, art workshops and literary events nurtures empathy for people living in deprived areas in other countries, and encourages respect, ultimately fostering citizenship skills.
37. Leaders have created a kind and supportive community. Instances of bullying are rare, and when they do occur, they are addressed effectively through a well-structured anti-bullying strategy. Staff are genuinely invested in promoting pupils' wellbeing. Pupils feel safe within the school. A clear behaviour code is implemented consistently, contributing to a calm and supportive atmosphere. Staff utilise an effective system for reporting behaviour issues, with thorough records demonstrating that incidents are promptly addressed and resolved.
38. Pupils engage in physical activities through a well-structured physical education (PE) programme and an extensive co-curricular sports offering at lunchtime and after school. Specialist coaching enhances the development of skills and fosters engagement in sports across all age groups. In the junior school, Olympic-style awards recognise attributes such as friendship, teamwork and perseverance, promoting inclusivity. Senior-school pupils achieve notable success at local and national levels. Teachers emphasise participation as well as competition. This inclusive approach ensures that all pupils feel valued and motivated, fostering a positive sporting culture and promoting physical wellbeing. However, a small number of pupils in the sixth form face limitations in accessing parts of the programme due to scheduling constraints.
39. Attendance and admission policies are effectively implemented, with attendance recorded as required. Reports are submitted to the local authority when pupils join or leave at non-standard transition points. Pupils' whereabouts are monitored throughout the day. The admission register

contains all necessary data and collaboration with the local education authority has contributed to even higher attendance levels.

40. Leaders promote pupils' positive mental health and wellbeing. Both junior and senior schools have dedicated wellbeing rooms. Pupils have access to three school counsellors as well as a clinical psychologist who offers pre-booked appointments. Pupils can self-refer or be referred by staff, providing accessible mental health support.
41. The medical centre is well equipped and staffed by three qualified nurses. All consultations are recorded on the school's information system. Prescription medication is administered upon receipt of appropriate documentation and controlled drugs are securely stored and logged. Nurses provide medical information for school trips, ensuring pupils' health and safety.
42. Buildings are maintained to a high standard. Electrical, gas and water systems undergo regular checks, with action plans implemented for necessary repairs. Adequate toilet facilities, including provisions for disabled individuals, are available. Drinking water is widely accessible.
43. Teaching spaces are bright, well maintained and secure. Chemicals and hazardous equipment are locked away. Staff receive appropriate training where required. High-risk areas, such as laboratories, remain locked when unattended.
44. Play areas are available across both the junior and senior school sites, with equipment regularly inspected and maintained. Supervision before and after school and at breaktimes is appropriately managed. Sports hall changing rooms feature individual showers. High-risk areas, such as kitchens and chemical storage rooms, are securely locked to prevent unauthorised access by pupils.
45. Leaders ensure that fire risk assessments and action plans are completed appropriately. Alarms, emergency lighting, extinguishers and exits undergo regular inspections. Fire wardens receive training, and personal emergency evacuation plans are reviewed regularly. Fire drills are conducted each term, and an annual lockdown drill is performed in both the junior and senior schools, ensuring preparedness for emergency situations.

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

46. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

47. Leaders foster a community where pupils are encouraged to support others and contribute positively to society. Through partnerships with other local schools, community groups and national events, leaders provide opportunities to develop social awareness, cultural understanding and an appreciation of different perspectives. One example of this is the school's own radio station, which encourages pupils to produce their own radio shows which often feature discussions from a variety of viewpoints and affords pupils the opportunity to engage in national initiatives. Pupils benefit from a supportive environment that nurtures both academic success and personal growth.
48. Equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in school life, supported by a character education programme that promotes empathy, resilience and responsibility. These values are integrated into the curriculum, and staff responsible for PSHE ensure that the programme has a meaningful impact. This is further reinforced through a wide range of clubs, societies and school assemblies. Pupils encounter both global issues, such as Holocaust Memorial Day and World Afro Day, and topics inspired by the school community, such as life in Ukraine and Chinese New Year celebrations. Together, these initiatives help foster a school culture where pupils feel accepted and valued.
49. Pupils initiate and lead inclusion-focused clubs, such as pride club and neurodiversity club, which foster a supportive school environment. These clubs attract broad participation reinforcing the school's commitment to diversity. Visiting speakers also enrich pupils' awareness of global traditions and ethical issues.
50. A structured careers programme provides pupils with impartial and up-to-date guidance on subject choices, career pathways and essential skills. Leaders recognise that some pupils find the transition beyond school stressful. Leaders help to support pupils' mental wellbeing by helping them to set realistic yet aspirational goals, which in turn reduces anxiety. The careers programme is also integrated into assemblies, tutor time and guidance sessions, complemented by special events such as the Year 10 careers morning, where parents and alumni deliver over 20 career talks across a wide range of professions.
51. Leaders develop industry and university partnerships to enhance pupils' exposure to real-world career opportunities. Work experience, career talks and external mentoring cultivate a culture of ambition and preparedness. Recent prestigious apprenticeship successes highlight the effectiveness of the school's careers provision.
52. A school council, with representatives from each year group, meets regularly to discuss pupils' concerns and school improvements. This year, it launched a food council, allowing direct dialogue between pupils and the catering team. The council also contributed to shaping the new school values and arranged for the installation of a fish tank to support pupils' wellbeing.
53. Other committees, such as the equity commission and the culture club, are given opportunities to share their achievements at school events, helping pupils develop greater self-confidence and a proficiency in public speaking while serving their community.
54. Leaders help pupils to understand their role in the world and how they can contribute to the wider community. Links with local schools, projects, hospitals and businesses, as well as partnerships with

national and international organisations, enable pupils to broaden their horizons and develop an awareness of their responsibilities beyond school. Recent initiatives, such as ecological projects in local wildlife areas, activities with the Bristol education partnership and participation in a national film challenge, exemplify the school's commitment to fostering global and civic awareness.

55. The expansion of school partnerships helps to develop the school's ethos of charitable engagement. Tutor groups have designated charity representatives, known as 'almoners', who coordinate fundraising initiatives. Two head almoners in the sixth form lead school-wide charity efforts. Recent projects include a shoebox appeal for Bristol refugees, reinforcing the school's commitment to social responsibility. The junior school works closely with local care homes, a link school abroad, the Woodland Trust, and a local food bank. Through these experiences, pupils develop community awareness and contribute meaningfully to both the school and the wider community.
56. Pupils gain financial literacy through various initiatives. In the junior school, financial education is introduced through assemblies on saving and money management. Pupils in Year 6 also participate in off-site financial scenario training to develop practical skills. In the senior school, financial education is integrated throughout the curriculum, including sessions on the role of the Bank of England and lessons on assessing and managing financial risk.

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

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

Safeguarding

58. Safeguarding arrangements across the school are effective. Leaders ensure that policies and procedures are clearly communicated and consistently applied. A culture of vigilance and accountability is embedded throughout the school. Staff are encouraged to help pupils maintain awareness of their own safety, both in school and beyond, and to raise concerns when necessary. They follow established reporting procedures and take swift action when required.
59. Governors maintain rigorous oversight of safeguarding, ensuring that leaders possess the skills and expertise to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Governors provide support mechanisms including clear lines of communication for leaders responsible for safeguarding. A comprehensive safeguarding audit is conducted jointly by governors and school leaders, with reporting procedures, including those for low-level concerns, reinforced through staff induction and ongoing professional development.
60. Governors also undergo safeguarding training and maintain oversight through termly visits and regular meetings with key safeguarding leaders. Trends in safeguarding concerns are systematically recorded and analysed, allowing for early help where needed.
61. The single central record (SCR) is accurately maintained, and staff involved in the recruitment process are appropriately trained, ensuring that all the necessary checks are made in relation to new staff appointments.
62. Leaders responsible for safeguarding provide regular, detailed training to staff, delivered through both external and in-house programmes. Staff are particularly mindful of the heightened vulnerabilities potentially faced by pupils who have SEND, ensuring they receive tailored support and clear guidance on how to report concerns. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and senior leaders work closely with external agencies, including the police and local safeguarding board, to ensure a coordinated and proactive approach to pupils' welfare.
63. Staff responsible for safeguarding are well known to pupils and support services are well publicised. The pastoral system plays a key role in identifying and addressing wellbeing concerns, with form tutors and heads of year receiving structured support from sixth-form wellbeing ambassadors. The school has a robust approach to attendance monitoring, with pupils, staff and parents working together to maintain high levels of attendance.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Redmaids' High School
Department for Education number	801/6015
Registered charity number	1105017
Address	Westbury Road Westbury-on-Trym Bristol Avon BS9 3AW
Phone number	0117 9622641
Email address	h_randle@redmaidshigh.co.uk
Website	www.redmaidshigh.co.uk
Proprietor	Girls' Day School Trust (GDST)
Chair	Mr Andrew Hillman
Headteacher	Mr Paul Dwyer
Age range	6 to 19
Number of pupils	803
Date of previous inspection	15 March 2022

Information about the school

65. Redmaids' High School was established in 2016 following the merger of Red Maids' School and Redland High School. The school traces its origins back to 1634 and is the oldest school for female pupils in the country.
66. In September 2024, the school announced its decision to join the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), which was formalised on 1 February 2025. From this date, staff became formally employed by the Trust, with operational systems currently in the process of migration. The local governing body continues to oversee the school's day-to-day operations.
67. The school consists of a junior school, senior school and sixth form.
68. The school has identified 190 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
69. The school has identified English as an additional language for 50 pupils.
70. The school states its aims are to be an inclusive community based on happiness, aspiration and support for others.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

25 to 27 February 2025

71. A team of seven inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

72. 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 headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

73. 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.
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