

# School inspection report

14 to 16 January 2025

## **Truro School Preparatory School**

Highertown

Truro

Cornwall

TR1 3QN

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. Governors and leaders provide clear strategic direction for the school. They ensure that the views of pupils, staff and parents are included when creating and evaluating plans for further developments, leading to successful community cohesion.
2. Leaders ensure that pupils are valued and treated as individuals in order to promote a sense of belonging. Leaders facilitate effective communication with staff and parents so that they work collaboratively to promote the best interests of the pupils, academically and pastorally.
3. Leaders and governors have not met the Standards relating to the Equality Act, 2010 because female pupils cannot access the chorister programme that is available to the male pupils who attend the school. This does not promote equality.
4. Leaders provide key information for parents on their website. While attendance practice is secure, during the course of the inspection, the attendance policy required changes to ensure that it reflects the latest statutory guidance and the school's processes.
5. Teaching is effective and enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers ensure that they cater for pupils of different aptitudes and prior attainment. Support for individual pupils is particularly effective, with successful communication between staff so that they have an in-depth knowledge of the pupils and their needs.
6. Pupils behave well. They understand the importance of school rules and the need to behave responsibly. Bullying is rare but resolved appropriately and sensitively should the need arise.
7. The school site is effectively maintained with efficient procedures to identify and mitigate risks. Leaders take appropriate action with a view to enhancing safety and security where required.
8. Pupils' social skills are well developed. They display compassion and empathy towards all members of the school community and are tolerant and respectful of each other's differences.
9. Leaders have created a supportive environment for pupils so that they feel safe at school. The combination of well-trained staff, warm relationships, and effective recording and monitoring systems ensures that safeguarding remains a high priority.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are not met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are not 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 not met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

### Areas for action

The proprietor must ensure that:

- the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge
- fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and
- they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils

so that:

- teaching meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 in relation to gender equality, by providing equal opportunities for female pupils in relation to the chorister programme
- the school encourages respect for other people, as required by the Equality Act 2010, by ensuring that educational opportunities are equal for all pupils, regardless of gender.

### Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that there is sufficient oversight of policies so that they are consistently updated according to the latest guidance.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders foster warm, nurturing and positive relationships so that pupils have a genuine sense of belonging. Pupils are settled and flourishing in an environment that treats them as individuals and recognises their personal strengths.
11. Leaders mostly promote an inclusive environment by accepting that everyone is valued and has equal access to quality experiences. However, the cathedral chorister programme does not allow equal access on the basis of gender because it is only available to male pupils, with female pupils not being able to apply to be a chorister. This means that leaders and governors are not meeting the requirements of the Equality Act, 2010.
12. Leaders successfully promote the school's aims and values. They encourage pupils to reflect on being the best version of themselves and to strive to embody the school values of curiosity, confidence, compassion, creativity and courage. The aims and values are fostered through assemblies, lessons, rewards and by positive role modelling by leaders.
13. Leaders and governors work in collaboration to set the strategic direction of the school. They are proactive in evaluating strengths and carefully considering actions that will further improve the educational experiences for the pupils. This is evident in current actions such as reviewing the marking and feedback policy and promoting thinking habits for the pupils. Leaders have an open approach to listening to the views of staff, parents and pupils when making decisions about the future of the school, promoting community cohesion.
14. Leaders and governors have collated a comprehensive risk management plan that identifies how potential risks can be mitigated. Appropriate actions are taken when required to protect and enhance pupils' emotional and physical wellbeing. There is a suitable accessibility plan that outlines actions to ensure that pupils have access to the curriculum and school facilities.
15. Leaders provide detailed information on the website and parents receive regular reports on their child's progress. Leaders' actions mostly reflect the requirements of statutory guidance. The attendance policy did not contain all the required information from the latest statutory guidance and was amended during the course of the inspection.
16. Leaders liaise effectively with external agencies in the best interests of pupils' wellbeing and safety. They work in partnership with the local authority, sharing information when appropriate.
17. Leaders have compiled a suitable complaints policy that is implemented well. Leaders are accessible to parents and communicate with them regularly. This means that leaders are proactive when responding to informal complaints. Formal complaints are managed in a timely manner, with governor involvement if necessary. Leaders reflect on any lessons learned and are responsive to constructive feedback.

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

18. Standards are not consistently met in relation to meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- 19. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.**

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

20. Teaching in many areas ensures equal opportunities for all pupils, with an emphasis on tolerance and mutual respect. However, the choristers' programme is available for male pupils only. Female pupils are prohibited from accessing the same chorister programme as their male counterparts. This means that the school is not meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 as it discriminates against female pupils.
21. There is a school choir that is open to female pupils. The school choir enables pupils to develop their choral skills as well as perform in a range of venues, but it does not match the opportunities of the chorister programme. Male choristers have access to professional singing tuition, perform in regular cathedral services and concerts, attend international tours, and are involved in recording music.
22. The curriculum enables pupils to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding in many different areas. As well as providing a firm foundation of learning in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, aesthetic and creative subjects, the breadth of curriculum allows pupils to discover and pursue their own particular interests. For example, the 'Bigger Picture' and the 'Prep School Diploma' projects allow pupils to engage in creative and self-directed work which encourages them to think and learn for themselves and motivates pupils to find out more about areas that they find interesting.
23. Teachers utilise comprehensive schemes of work and secure subject knowledge to provide stimulating activities in lessons. Teaching is enhanced by a number of subject specialists, such as in music, sport and modern foreign languages. Teachers make appropriate use of resources in lessons, such as ten frames to promote understanding in mathematics and interesting texts to develop grammatical skills in English. As a result of effective teaching, pupils are engaged in their learning, work hard, behave well and make good progress.
24. Leaders and teachers analyse assessment data well to ensure that pupils are making good progress and to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. They ensure that different groups of pupils are making progress and provide additional help if required. This means that additional learning needs are swiftly identified. Detailed support plans are implemented for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
25. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are supported well, taking account of their level of need and what assistance they may require. Leaders promote effective communication in regular pupil progress meetings with the staff to ensure that teachers have an accurate knowledge of all pupils, including those who require additional support. Teachers use this knowledge to carefully plan lessons, considering the needs, aptitudes and prior attainment of pupils. Extra support or additional challenge is provided within lessons, focusing on meeting individual pupils' needs. This enables pupils to have positive learning experiences and to consistently make good progress.
26. Children in the early years experience an active and practical curriculum that focuses on learning through play and developing oral language. Staff in the early years use their knowledge of how children learn to provide stimulating activities that incorporate the children's interests, such as focusing on dinosaurs and transport. This enables high levels of motivation and contributes to enabling children to make good progress according to their starting points. There are meaningful links in the children's learning so that they develop their understanding and skills, building on their

prior knowledge. Leaders in the early years constantly review their practice to ensure that teaching has a positive impact. They are proactive in making changes that improve the children's learning further, recently focusing on the application of mathematical skills through play. There is an emphasis on staff development to ensure that new ideas are incorporated effectively in the best interests of the children.

27. The curriculum is supported by the varied extra-curricular programme in which pupils participate keenly. When attending numerous clubs, pupils extend their knowledge in areas such as sport and creative writing, and benefit from developing new skills in areas such as origami and chess.

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

28. The standards are not consistently met due to discrimination against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010.

- 29. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.**

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

30. Pastoral care is very effective in promoting pupils' positive mental health and emotional wellbeing. Pupils are well supported including through caring interactions with staff who are vigilant at spotting any potential concerns. Leaders act upon feedback from pupils relating to wellbeing, such as re-considering homework tasks as a result of data from a recent pupil wellbeing survey. Pupils have a sense of comfort and confidence that they are well cared for and that they can approach adults at any time for assistance. Staff display empathy in supporting pupils when the need arises, such as the recent implementation of a club to support children who have a sibling with medical or emotional needs. Any school support invariably involves detailed communication with families and often includes support for family members, such as a monthly coffee morning for families with children who have SEND.
31. Pupils have high levels of moral understanding and display mutual respect towards others. Regular discussion of the school motto, 'to be, rather than seem to be' is effective in helping pupils to understand the importance of integrity in the way that they lead their lives. This results in highly positive behaviour, with pupils showing genuine care and kindness towards each other. Bullying is extremely rare, and any incidents are resolved sensitively and effectively by members of staff.
32. Pupils develop emotional resilience, self-awareness, personal growth and respect for diversity through the comprehensive personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Pupils explore mindfulness and how this helps them to manage their own wellbeing. With the provision of external speakers, pupils consider how others have overcome personal challenges which enables pupils to reflect on how they can display resilience in their own lives. Children in the early years develop their personal and emotional skills in regular discussion of topics such as what makes them happy, being kind to others, and learning from mistakes by making better choices.
33. The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum equips pupils with essential life skills, including understanding relationships, making informed decisions and seeking help when needed. Parents are kept informed about the content for each year group and when they can withdraw their children from certain topics within sex education.
34. Pupils have a well-developed spiritual understanding. Religious education lessons uphold the Christian values of the school as well as promoting knowledge about different religions. Pupils' knowledge is enhanced in assemblies where they hear about important festivals for different religions. A weekly chapel service led by the chaplain enables pupils to reflect on their beliefs as they listen to music and join in with prayer. Pupils grow their understanding of their own faith as well as learning how to welcome and respect the views of those with different beliefs.
35. Pupils develop their physical health as a key part of the curriculum. The physical education programme, which also incorporates swimming and games, equips children in the early years and pupils from Years 1 to 6 with the ability to develop skills such as balance, agility, co-ordination and physical stamina.
36. Physical development is enhanced in the early years through a practical curriculum that enables children to be physically active. They play outside frequently and develop their running, jumping and climbing skills when playing in the 'enchanted garden'. Pupils throughout the school are

knowledgeable about how exercise is good for their physical and mental health and that certain foods are better for their health than others.

37. Pupils experience warm relationships with staff and have ample opportunities for recognition, praise and rewards. This helps to boost their self-esteem and to develop confidence in their own abilities. All pupils in Year 6 become monitors and develop their confidence when helping younger pupils as part of their role.
38. The recent school focus on promoting thinking habits, such as perseverance and willingness to 'have a go', enables pupils to reflect on themselves as learners and think about how they could improve. This is enhanced through quality feedback from their teachers, which pupils use well to improve their work further.
39. Pupils feel safe at school. The school premises and accommodation are managed with an eye for detail, ensuring that they are safe, secure, well maintained and suitably risk assessed. There are well-established health and safety policies and practices which are carefully considered and monitored to promote pupils' safety and wellbeing. Pupils are looked after with appropriate supervision at break times. Medical and first aid needs are effectively met, with numerous staff in receipt of first aid training, including paediatric first aid in the early years.
40. Leaders have implemented suitable arrangements in relation to the statutory requirements for admission and attendance registers. They manage any attendance issues and liaise effectively with parents and external agencies if required. Staff inform the local authority about pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard times. The attendance policy required some changes during the course of the inspection to ensure that it reflected the latest statutory guidance and school practice.

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

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

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

42. The warm ethos of the school cultivates pupils' self-awareness and appreciation for the needs of others. Leaders and staff model high levels of respect and consideration, which are then shown by pupils to each other, to the staff and to visitors. Pupils learn about the importance of positive social behaviours from an early age, from children in the early years recognising acts of kindness in their peers to Year 6 house captains and vice-captains acting as role models to younger pupils. This means that pupils display a mature understanding of right from wrong, and how they should treat others as they would like to be treated. This helps them to take responsibility for their actions and to show mutual respect.
43. Pupils display tolerance in their interactions with others. They appreciate the importance of inclusion and diversity, within school and in society in general. In PSHE lessons and carefully presented assemblies, pupils learn that everyone has the right to be heard, no matter their background or difference. Pupils value individual liberty and respect diversity.
44. Due to the lack of female involvement in the chorister programme, the school does not fully meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that particular regard is paid to protected characteristics.
45. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the need to empathise with those less fortunate than themselves. They take an active role in raising money for charities in the local community, including supporting food banks and a children's hospice. Charity events often include parental involvement, such as the recent Christmas Fayre, fostering community spirit for pupils and their families.
46. Pupils take part in age-appropriate voting and elections to develop their understanding of democracy. This includes children in the early years voting for their favourite story, to elections for representatives to eco council and school council. Pupils in Year 6 can apply to be house captains and vice-captains. They prepare and present a speech so that pupils can vote for who they think would fulfil the role most effectively. These activities help pupils to understand how democracy also operates in life beyond school. This is enhanced by a topic in Year 6 for pupils to learn about the history and structure of the Houses of Parliament, deepening their understanding of public institutions. Visiting speakers from public services such as the National Health Service help pupils to understand the vital role that this service provides.
47. Children in the early years develop their understanding of money in meaningful ways. For example, children play in the 'sound shop' where they use real coins to buy the right number of letters to spell a simple word. They also visit the sixth form café to purchase snacks, having to choose wisely to spend their given tokens. Older pupils build on this work and develop their economic literacy in PSHE lessons, including how to budget and considering if money makes people happy.

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

48. The standards are not consistently met in relation to promoting respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

**49. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.**

## Safeguarding

50. There is a robust safeguarding culture with effective communication between the safeguarding team, staff and governors. Regular training for staff and governors is up to date and promotes an understanding that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. There are appropriate measures in place to protect pupils from harm. These are reviewed frequently and changes made if required. Safeguarding is suitably overseen by governors who regularly review the school's policies and procedures.
51. Staff are vigilant in noticing and responding to concerns about pupils. Detailed records are kept which are monitored by the safeguarding team. Leaders liaise with agencies, to report and act on any concerns and to keep abreast of any local safeguarding issues.
52. Leaders have a thorough understanding of their responsibility to comply with safe recruitment principles. They apply attention to detail in maintaining an accurate record of pre-appointment checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.
53. The RSE programme addresses sensitive topics such as consent so that pupils know how to behave appropriately and respectfully towards each other in order to consider everyone's safety.
54. Pupils' safety whilst using computers and when online is considered carefully. Leaders have implemented suitable filtering and monitoring systems to promote online safety, and they check the efficacy of these systems. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online, including vigilance in protecting their passwords and being cautious about making friends online. They know to seek help should they encounter a problem or something that makes them feel uncomfortable. Online safety is prioritised in computing and PSHE lessons, as well as through visiting speakers and communication with parents.

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

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

## Schedule of unmet Standards

### Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

The following standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR <sup>1</sup> Part 8, paragraph 34(1)	The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school –
34(1)(a)	demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
34(1)(b)	fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
34(1)(c)	actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

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

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 1, paragraph 3	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school –
3(j)	does not discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the Equality Act, 2010.

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

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 2, paragraph 5	The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor –
5(b)	ensures that principles are actively promoted which –
5(b)(vi)	encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act.

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<sup>1</sup> The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('ISSR')

## School details

<b>School</b>	Truro School Preparatory School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	908/6086
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1142794
<b>Address</b>	Truro School Preparatory School Highertown Truro Cornwall TR1 3QN
<b>Phone number</b>	01872 272616
<b>Email address</b>	prepenquiries@truroschoo.com
<b>Website</b>	www.truroschoo.com
<b>Proprietor</b>	Methodist Independent Schools Trust
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Richard Thomas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Robert Morse
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	275
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 March 2022

## Information about the school

56. Truro School Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day school situated in Cornwall. The school is part of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust, with authority of governance being devolved to a local governing body which also oversees the senior school. Since the previous inspection, governors appointed a new headteacher in April 2023.
57. There are 46 children in the early years, organised into one Nursery class and two Reception classes.
58. The school has identified 64 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are no pupils in the school who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
59. English is an additional language for four pupils.
60. The school states its aim is to be a welcoming community in which children and adults can flourish, thrive and be happy.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

14 to 16 January 2025

61. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

62. 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
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

63. 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)