

School inspection report

11 to 13 March 2025

Wimbledon Common Preparatory School

113 Ridgway

Wimbledon

London

SW19 4TA

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 embed the school's ethos and values throughout all aspects of school life. They foster an inclusive and stimulating environment where pupils feel valued, motivated and well-supported. A robust focus on pastoral care supports pupils' emotional, social and academic needs. Governors provide strategic oversight, contributing to policy, recruitment and school development. Leaders ensure compliance with statutory requirements, proactively identifying and mitigating risks while promoting inclusion and accessibility. Effective communication with parents strengthens the homeschool partnership, with leaders responding appropriately to concerns and regularly refining practice to enhance the pupil experience.
- 2. Leaders provide a well-structured and engaging curriculum that develops pupils' knowledge and skills across all subjects. Staff benefit from high-quality professional development, equipping them to deliver a challenging and engaging curriculum. Teaching is tailored to meet diverse needs through varied strategies which promote critical thinking, collaboration and respect. A comprehensive assessment framework ensures learning remains responsive, with targeted support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those learning English as an additional language.
- 3. In the Early Years, high-quality interactions, structured language development and a dynamic foundation in understanding the sounds that letters make, prepare children effectively for future learning. This supports accelerated progress in communication, literacy and social development in the early years preparing children well for transition into Year 1.
- 4. Pupils' personal development is fostered through a broad extra-curricular programme, opportunities for pupil leadership and real-world learning experiences. Positive relationships between staff and pupils foster a culture of respect, with structured initiatives ensuring pupils can seek help when needed. Pupils behave well and respond readily to strategies promoting pupil leadership opportunities where they are encouraged to use their initiative, and understand accountability and decision making. Pupils learn about healthy living, emotional resilience and positive relationships in the physical education curriculum. Opportunities for outdoor play and healthy nutrition education reinforce pupils' understanding of wellbeing. In the Early Years, structured emotional and physical development programmes build pupils' confidence and resilience.
- 5. Leaders provide effective support for pupils' wellbeing by providing embedded opportunities across the curriculum and in daily school life for pupils to be self-aware and to be resilient. A well-structured pastoral system, combined with targeted academic and pastoral support creates an inclusive environment where pupils confidently seek help and take ownership of their learning. Pupils and their parents understand the importance of the school's approach. Leaders' holistic approach to wellbeing through the school's highly effective pastoral care and commitment to fostering self-awareness in pupils is a significant strength of the school.
- 6. Leaders and staff actively promote pupils' understanding of cultural diversity, promoting respect and appreciation for different faiths, languages and cultural traditions. The curriculum embeds principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. Leaders encourage pupils to engage in discussions on social justice, ethical issues and human rights across the curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to contribute to charitable causes, however, they have relatively limited opportunities to contribute positively to society more widely.

- 7. Pupils develop economic awareness through age-appropriate financial literacy activities, preparing them well to make informed decisions about how to use money in everyday life. In the early years, social and cultural understanding is nurtured through collaborative play, turn-taking activities and celebrations of global traditions. Leaders carefully manage and support pupils at each transition point, ensuring they move confidently through their educational journey.
- 8. Safeguarding is embedded in the school's culture, with leaders prioritising pupil welfare through clear policies, rigorous training and vigilant monitoring. Leaders use regular safeguarding audits and feedback from staff, parents and pupils to refine policies and enhance training, delivering a responsive and effective approach. Staff use secure systems to track and manage any safeguarding concerns. Governors provide strategic oversight, ensuring compliance with statutory safeguarding guidance. Effective early intervention strategies further enhance the school's safeguarding approach.

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:

• offer opportunities to enable pupils to contribute positively to society more widely.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

- 9. Leaders ensure that the school's ethos and values are embedded, creating a stimulating environment where pupils feel happy, motivated and supported. Leaders maintain a sustained focus on pastoral care, safety, inclusivity and academic progress. The leadership team's active presence, including their engagement with pupils, parents and staff, reinforces the school's values.
- 10. Leaders ensure that policies and procedures meet statutory requirements and are effectively implemented. Behaviour expectations are clear and consistently applied within a well-structured pastoral system. Pupils understand and acknowledge the fairness of behaviour management strategies. Leaders listen and reflect upon the voices of parents, staff and pupils, taking action, when necessary, as part of their strategy for continuous improvement.
- 11. Pupils across the ability range access targeted emotional, social and academic support so that they make good progress in an inclusive and respectful environment. Pupils confidently seek help when needed and develop positive and trusting relationships with staff.
- 12. Governors are well-informed and are actively engaged in the school's strategic direction. Governors maintain an effective oversight of education, safeguarding and operational management. Governors' strategic involvement with the school, through visits, policy scrutiny and staff and pupil engagement, supports their oversight and quality assurance of the Standards. Governors contribute to recruitment, policy review and school development, supporting the school to play an active and positive role within the wider community.
- 13. Leaders provide a comprehensive programme of professional development for staff. This ensures that staff are equipped to deliver a broad and challenging curriculum whilst supporting the wellbeing needs of pupils. Across the school, pupils use personalised 'toolboxes' to support their emotional, social and academic development. Leaders regularly review and adapt the curriculum so that it remains challenging and relevant to pupils.
- 14. Dedicated training enables staff to understand the underlying reasons for a range of pupil behaviour. This helps staff to be able to apply effective support strategies for pupils in an inclusive learning environment. The requirements of the Equality Act (2010) are met.
- 15. A regularly reviewed accessibility plan ensures that reasonable adjustments are made to curriculum, resources and premises as required. This ensures that pupils receive appropriate support to meet their needs and can access the full curriculum.
- 16. Leaders identify and mitigate risks effectively. For example, risk assessments are systematically reviewed, covering on-site and off-site activities, extra-curricular engagements and safeguarding considerations. Staff receive training in risk management, ensuring proactive measures are in place across the curriculum to support pupils and the school community.
- 17. Leaders ensure that all required information is accessible to parents. Leaders provide updates through the school website and through direct communication. Parents receive regular updates on their children's progress through detailed reports and parent meetings. Leaders maintain an effective home-school partnership, collaborating with parents to enhance learning and development, fostering trust and transparency. The school's complaints policy is clear and effectively implemented, with leaders responding promptly to parental concerns in line with the

school policy. Leaders keep detailed records of concerns, resolutions and reflections which supports positive parental engagement.

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

- 19. Leaders provide a broad, cohesive curriculum which develops pupils' knowledge and skills effectively. Regular review and evaluation ensure the curriculum remains engaging, challenging and responsive to pupils' needs. The curriculum extends beyond national requirements, incorporating enrichment opportunities that align with the school's values. The pastoral and academic provisions work in tandem, supporting pupils to achieve their full potential.
- 20. Pupils strengthen their critical thinking and reasoning while deepening their understanding of democratic processes by for example, participating in pupil councils and debates. Pupils explore the importance of rules and fairness in school and society, and develop responsibility in making informed, independent choices. Cross-curricular planning allows pupils to apply learning across subjects. For example, the curriculum is structured to reinforce connections between historical studies and English writing and geographical data is used in mathematical analysis.
- 21. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use varied teaching methods to foster pupil engagement and to meet pupils' needs. Regular assessment and analysis of pupil progress inform teaching adaptations which supports learning gaps to be swiftly addressed. Pupils make good progress because of teachers' use of targeted questioning, structured feedback at an appropriate level and the provision of suitably challenging work. Pupils with higher prior attainment access appropriate extended learning opportunities. Through educational visits and enrichment projects, pupils apply learning in real-world contexts. These include history-based museum trips and practical outdoor fieldwork.
- 22. Leaders work in partnership with external specialists, including educational psychologists and therapists, to assess, review and refine provision for pupils who have SEND. Provision for pupils who have SEND is tailored to meet pupils' needs and is well-structured. Leaders review SEND provision through ongoing assessment data, specialist SEND staff input and feedback, so that targeted refinements are made to teaching. This ensures that pupils receive effective support. Teachers adapt resources by for example, scaffolding written tasks, using visual prompts and structured questioning, to support pupils' accessibility to the curriculum.
- 23. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive targeted support through a structured language development programme. Teachers explicitly introduce key vocabulary and model language structures through guided discussion, visual aids and peer interaction. Pupils develop independence in communication by applying newly acquired language skills in structured conversations, group activities and in written tasks. The high-quality support provided to pupils who speak English as an additional language supports pupils to access learning confidently and to make good progress.
- 24. Leaders use a structured assessment framework to track pupils' progress and attainment. Data is systematically analysed to identify trends and to refine curriculum planning. Teachers use this insight to adjust lesson complexity, re-teach concepts or provide additional consolidation activities.
- 25. Provision in the early years is effective in developing children's communication, language and literacy skills. Teachers use high-quality interactions to extend vocabulary, model language structures and embed rich dialogue across learning activities. Early literacy skills are well developed, and a high proportion of children perform beyond early learning goals expectations at the end of the

- Reception year. Teachers in the early years provide effective support to children, developing their confidence, emotional security and self-awareness, and laying clear foundations for future learning and wellbeing.
- 26. A systematic programme in the early years supports children's understanding of the sounds that letters make and underpins early reading. Storytelling, rhymes and structured talk reinforce comprehension and fluency. Role-play areas encourage children to explore different perspectives, fostering respect and understanding for others in a developmentally appropriate way. Purposeful small-group discussions enhance children's confidence and expressive language skills. Children in the early years are well-prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

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

- 28. Leaders foster a calm, inclusive school environment where pupils are valued and supported. Positive relationships between staff and pupils underpin a respectful culture and provides pupils with trusted adults for support. Initiatives such as the 'worry monster' and 'worry box' enable pupils to record and submit their worries, either named or anonymously. This process gives pupils confidence to share their concerns, and they trust that adults in school will act to support them.
- 29. Pupils understand the behaviour policy and respond well to leaders' high expectations. Sanctions, are applied fairly and effectively, encouraging personal responsibility from pupils. Unkind behaviour is addressed promptly, ensuring pupils feel listened to and supported. This contributes to a calm and emotionally secure environment for pupils. Bullying is rare, with 'life skills' lessons teaching pupils about the impact of unkindness and initiatives such as Anti-Bullying week reinforcing expectations. Leaders maintain thorough behaviour and bullying records, analysing trends to address areas of concern or repeated behaviours and to inform improvements to provision.
- 30. Leaders actively support pupils' emotional wellbeing by putting into place an effective pastoral system. Staff monitor pupils throughout the day, enabling timely interventions where needed. Staff teach pupils about the range of emotions and explain that all groups of people experience emotions such as sad, angry, happy or tired. As a result, pupils are able to articulate their feelings confidently and are able to select how they are feeling from a range of emotion pictures. Staff use this information to see how pupils are feeling and then support them as needed, giving pupils strategies to manage this emotion. For example, pupils can use a calm corner to sit in, or a toolbox of objects which help pupils to manage particular emotions. This supports pupils to gradually learn to self-regulate their emotions so that it does not impact their educational development and so that they are calm and ready to learn.
- 31. Additional support is provided for pupils through access to a school counsellor and personalised support groups. Pupils who engage in this tailored support develop improved communication skills enabling them to engage more confidently in classroom activities and to begin to problem-solve independently. This targeted emotional support also enables pupils to manage anxiety and sustain focus, helping them to access their learning more effectively. 'Gratitude' initiatives and 'mindfulness' activities further reinforce emotional resilience. For example, a school wide initiative encourages pupils to pause and reflect on positive moments and consider what they are grateful for during daily school activities.
- 32. Leaders promote healthy living through the bespoke 'learning for life' programme where pupils learn about the importance of nutrition in health, emotional regulation and healthy relationships. Physical education, regular movement breaks during the school day and swimming lessons develop pupils' fitness, coordination and teamwork.
- 33. Pupils are well supported during out of lesson times by effective breaktime and lunchtime staff supervision. Pupils have access to well-designed outdoor spaces, including large climbing equipment and balance bikes. This enhances pupils' physical development, providing opportunities for them to climb, ride and balance. Pupils understand the importance of a balanced diet and are encouraged to try new foods at mealtimes. Leaders ensure that food allergies and intolerances are carefully managed in accordance with the school policy and statutory regulations.

- 34. Structured discussions and assemblies are delivered by staff to reinforce the importance of mutual respect and personal boundaries in healthy relationships, with teachers modelling positive interactions. Leaders refine the 'learning for life' programme regularly to reflect the school's inclusive ethos. Pupils' spiritual and moral understanding is developed through assemblies where pupils listen to and appreciate a variety of musical genres and artwork, and hear stories to reinforce values of kindness, inclusion and emotional wellbeing.
- 35. Pupils develop perseverance, resilience and collaboration through activities that encourage independent problem-solving, such as building circuits with scaffolded teacher input and coding using colour sequences. Pupils work together, continually improving their coding skills and developing their ability to overcome challenges, realising that their increased efforts are invariably rewarded.
- 36. Leaders prioritise pupil safety through a strategic approach to risk management. Leaders use a comprehensive system to identify risk and employ appropriate strategies to mitigate the risk. Regular health and safety audits and collaboration with external specialists ensure that school provision meets statutory regulations. Emergency procedures, including fire drills, are well understood and regularly practised with staff providing support and reassurance to pupils who may be anxious about emergency evacuation processes.
- 37. Attendance and admissions procedures comply with statutory requirements. Leaders actively monitor patterns of absence and provide targeted support to families where needed. The local authority is notified of pupils joining or leaving the school at non-standard transition points.
- 38. Staff in the early years support children to develop emotional resilience and physical confidence in a nurturing environment. Children's physical development is enhanced through a range of fine and gross motor activities, for example, the outdoor learning area provides a wealth of opportunities for children to explore and develop their learning through play. The indoor area is carefully structured with teacher-led and child-led activities to develop fine motor control through opportunities for construction, manipulation, cutting and writing skills. Early years staff are well-trained in paediatric first aid and procedures for managing medical needs, including allergies, are well-established and effectively implemented.
- 39. The school's wellbeing initiatives have a positive impact on pupils' emotional and physical development. A structured curriculum and targeted support are provided by staff so that pupils feel confident, supported and prepared to manage challenges. The combination of academic and pastoral support with accompanying structured wellbeing programmes helps pupils to develop resilience and independence. Staff, pupils and parents recognise the school's commitment to inclusion, kindness and emotional wellbeing.

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

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

- 41. Leaders and staff actively promote pupils' cultural awareness through teaching pupils about the importance of being respectful of all groups of people including those who have different faiths, languages and cultures. Thoughtfully planned activities are delivered by adults, such as bilingual storytelling through the 'mystery reader' initiative which introduces pupils to stories from different cultural backgrounds in a language other than English with supporting translation afterwards. Teachers extend pupils' understanding of cultural diversity further by providing opportunities to later engage in meaningful discussions about human rights and fairness at an appropriate level.
- 42. Staff deliver a curriculum which helps to prepare pupils for life in British society by explicitly teaching about equality and inclusion. Whole-school staff training has strengthened staff knowledge and understanding so they are able to confidently deliver a diverse curriculum within their subject area.
- 43. Pupils apply democratic principles by, for example, voting for pupils in elections for positions of responsibility and also in voting for the school's chosen charity. Through their roles of responsibility, pupils organise events to raise funds for local organisations such as supporting horse riders with disabilities and by running a book sale to raise funds. However, engagement with society beyond local charity work is limited and leaders do not currently provide pupils with opportunities to contribute to society more widely.
- 44. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills as they take on elected roles as school council members, house captains and class ambassadors. Each of these positions that pupils hold, gives pupil leaders the chance to represent the voice of their peers in decision-making events within the school. Older pupils take on responsibilities such as supporting and mentoring younger children. They also accompany staff in a 'safety spy' role to check the play area in order to ensure that it is suitable for play. This embeds pupils' understanding of safety in daily school life.
- 45. Leaders develop pupils' moral understanding through discussions on social justice and ethical issues. In humanities, pupils explore historical perspectives, such as comparing the views of Samuel Pepys and the Mayor of London during the Great Fire. Environmental topics such as deforestation and urban development are used by teachers to challenge pupils to consider the ethical impact of human actions. Pupils take responsibility for their school environment by for example, engaging in initiatives such as playground tidying and litter-picking on the local common.
- 46. Staff model mutual respect and tolerance, reinforcing these values through providing collaborative learning opportunities for pupils. Pupils listen to and value each other's contributions, resolving any disagreements quickly and respectfully. Communal singing, performances and school trip opportunities led by staff, further strengthen social cohesion. At breaktimes, staff model positive social behaviours, encouraging polite conversation and participation in new experiences.
- 47. Pupils develop their economic awareness as they progress through the school. Younger pupils explore money through role-play, for example running a classroom shop where they handle coins and learn to count out correct amounts. Older pupils build financial literacy through learning that money can be represented in many ways and are introduced to coins and notes before learning that money can be represented by a debit card which can be used digitally. Teachers introduce pupils to financial decision-making in 'learning for life' lessons. Pupils learn how to save and budget, for

- example, pupils create a budget when planning charity fundraising events. This helps pupils to begin to link their financial awareness to real life situations.
- 48. In the early years, leaders support children's social development through activities that promote collaboration and respect. Role-play, class discussions and turn-taking games help children develop cooperative skills. Tools such as sand timers are used to encourage fair play and turn-taking as children begin to understand that they need to give each other equal time with an activity and wait until the sand timer runs out before it is their turn.
- 49. Children have a staggered start in Reception, gradually building to full time which enables teachers to give younger children individual attention and support as they settle into school routines. Parents are actively involved and guided by staff and school leaders on how best to support their child. As pupils move through the school, structured handovers between year group staff ensure both academic and pastoral continuity. Receiving teachers across the school are fully informed of pupils' individual needs, which helps to ease pupils' transition to their new class. Leaders maintain suitable links with destination schools and allow for pupil visits and meetings between relevant staff so that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

Safeguarding

- 51. Leaders employ clear and efficient systems to identify and manage safeguarding concerns. Staff remain vigilant to local and contextual risks which supports timely action with multi-agency involvement when needed. Those with safeguarding responsibility provide responsive support for pupils, ensuring concerns are recorded, monitored and actioned through a secure platform. A detailed overview of pupils' needs allows staff to provide effective and targeted support. Pupils feel safe and know whom to approach with concerns.
- 52. Safeguarding governors offer appropriate support to those with designated safeguarding responsibility in school and have oversight of regular safeguarding reviews and policy updates to ensure compliance with statutory regulations.
- 53. Digital safeguarding procedures are well embedded, with clear filtering and monitoring procedures in place which support pupils to work online in school safely. Effective safeguarding procedures extend across all age groups, including in the early years.
- 54. Staff receive regular safeguarding training in line with statutory safeguarding guidance. In addition, staff receive weekly safeguarding updates with scenario-based questions to embed their understanding. Staff attend online child protection courses which enhances their confidence in managing concerns. Those with designated early years safeguarding responsibility lead weekly safeguarding meetings and monitoring activities.
- 55. Leaders maintain a detailed log of any low-level concerns around staff behaviours which are promptly addressed through staff training or referrals to the local authority designated officer as required. Staff fully understand and implement the expected staff code of conduct.
- 56. Leaders follow rigorous safer recruitment procedures. The single central record (SCR) is carefully maintained and regularly reviewed by senior leaders with governor oversight.
- 57. Communication with external agencies, including the local authority designated officer (LADO) and safeguarding partners, is well established. Timely referrals and regular meetings ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive the necessary support.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

School details

School Wimbledon Common Preparatory School

Department for Education number 315/6062

Registered charity number 310024

Address Wimbledon Common Preparatory School

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Proprietor Corporation of King's College School

Chair Lord Deighton KBE

Headteacher Mr Andrew Forbes

Age range 4 to 7

Number of pupils 163

Date of previous inspection 1 to 4 March 2022

Information about the school

- 59. Wimbledon Common Preparatory School is an independent Pre-Prep that caters to children aged 4 to 7. They accept pupils into Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and there are typically three or four forms in each year group, feeding into a variety of Prep schools across London, including King's College School, Wimbledon. They are part of the Corporation of King's College School. They cater for the 7+ process whilst keeping a child centred approach at the forefront of their pastoral care.
- 60. There are 61 children in the early years, comprising 4 classes.
- 61. The school has identified 5 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- 62. The school has identified English as an additional language for 5 pupils.
- 63. The school states its aims are to provide a safe and stimulating environment where children thrive. They aim to implement a stimulating curriculum that fosters curiosity and independence as well as to build strong home-school partnerships, encourage community involvement and nurture respectful, caring individuals.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

March 11 to 13 2025

- 64. A team of 3 inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.
- 65. 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 a representative for 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.
- 66. 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.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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