

# School inspection report

3 to 5 December 2024

## Windlesham House School

London Road

Washington

Pulborough

RH20 4AY

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 make sure that leaders at Windlesham House School have the necessary skills and experience to carry out their roles effectively. Leaders identify key areas for development that link to fulfilling the school's aims. Leaders' self-evaluation processes ensure that the Standards are consistently met and the wellbeing of pupils is actively promoted.
2. The curriculum is extensive, creative and challenging. It is delivered through well-planned lessons and activities. Pupils' progress is regularly monitored and additional support provided for those who need it. Leaders identify pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly and make sure they are given the right help. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and are at the early stages of English acquisition also receive the support they need to learn successfully. Consequently, pupils make good progress over time.
3. Throughout the school the majority of pupils attain above the national averages in standardised tests. The progress pupils make alongside the support and guidance given by teaching staff enables pupils to move onto their first-choice schools with many pupils achieving academic and sporting scholarships.
4. Leaders have established a programme of co-curricular opportunities that enables pupils to develop their interests through a broad and diverse range of activities and clubs. Specialist teachers and external coaches offer a wealth of different pursuits such as Padi diving and clay pigeon shooting. Pupils thrive personally and socially because of the programme provided. They broaden their experiences and discover new talents through their participation in the activities and clubs on offer. This is a significant strength of the school.
5. Leaders have high expectations of how pupils should behave. Leaders monitor pupils' behaviour and have developed strategies to manage any poor behaviour should it happen. Most pupils understand what is expected of them. However in a small number of lessons teachers do not address low-level disruptive behaviour and this limits pupils' learning.
6. Leaders promote respect and inclusivity. The curriculum is planned to provide opportunities for pupils to explore issues relating to moral dilemmas, democracy and being a good citizen. Relationships between pupils are positive and in line with the school's aim of having a kind, generous heart.
7. The curriculums for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships and sex education (RSE) include relevant content that enables pupils to understand important issues to support their emotional and physical wellbeing.
8. Children in the early years enjoy learning in a nurturing and positive environment. Adults make effective use of the facilities on offer, including the school's extensive grounds. This enhances children's experiences. They make good progress in all areas of learning.
9. Leaders of boarding have established a welcoming and inclusive setting. Pupils are happy and well supported in the boarding houses. There are opportunities for pupils to share their thoughts and ideas with boarding leaders. Pupils are encouraged to shape and strengthen their boarding experience.

10. The curriculum supports pupils' economic education. Through the school's unique diploma and futures programme pupils acquire insight into business planning, finance and marketing. Pupils learn the necessary skills to design and develop various products. Pupils contribute to the wider community by selling these products to raise money for local charities.
11. Safeguarding arrangements are robust. Staff are suitably trained and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Governors maintain an effective oversight of the school's safeguarding procedures. They make sure that the school's policies and systems are carried out effectively.

## 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:

- ensure that the behaviour policy and systems are understood and applied consistently by all staff, so that pupils are always guided and supported to behave well during lessons.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. Governors and leaders have a clear vision for the school and they communicate the school's aims effectively. Leaders at all levels understand their responsibilities and strive to promote pupils' wellbeing. Governors monitor all aspects of the school's work. This contributes positively to pupils' outcomes and ensures that all Standards are met.
13. Governors make sure that leaders have the appropriate skills and knowledge to lead the school well. The governor sub-committees meet regularly to evaluate the impact of leaders' actions. The safeguarding governor monitors all aspects of safeguarding diligently.
14. Leaders and governors work collaboratively and consult more widely drawing upon external expertise and audits for different areas of the school's work. The school's strategic plan identifies areas for improvement. Leaders act swiftly to make the necessary changes to enhance the quality of education for pupils.
15. Leaders maintain an effective oversight of the boarding provision. Policies, systems and procedures are well documented, understood and used. The induction of new boarders and boarding staff is comprehensive and supported by careful record keeping. Boarding staff receive the necessary training and guidance to ensure that they carry out their duties effectively so that the boarding experience for pupils is positive and enjoyable.
16. Early years provision is effective. Leaders provide a stimulating curriculum that is taught in a well-maintained environment. Learning is tailored to children's individual needs and there is suitable supervision in place to keep children safe and happy.
17. All necessary information is provided to parents. This includes reports on their child's progress, policies and information to understand how the school is managed and how pupils are kept safe. Leaders check the impact of policies and make any necessary adjustments. Parents are fully informed of any developments in the school's provision in line with the school's ethos of working in collaboration with the wider community. Leaders provide the required information to the local authority. For instance, when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition points and reporting any attendance concerns. Leaders also provide annual accounts of income and expenditure where a pupil is wholly or partly funded by a local authority.
18. Leaders work with external agencies to ensure the wellbeing and safety of pupils. This includes working with the local authority support services. Clear communication between leaders and external agencies ensures that pupils who need specialist external support receive it.
19. Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the contextual risk of the school. This includes the open site. Leaders evaluate risk, maintain detailed records and mitigate against risk effectively. Staff know pupils well and this enables them to identify risks that are particular to pupils' individual circumstances. These measures ensure that pupils in the school are kept safe and well cared for.
20. The school's complaints policy is clear to understand and follow. Leaders keep detailed records of the few complaints received and are very aware of their responsibility to reflect on what can be learned from any complaints raised.

21. Leaders and staff promote the principles of equality, respect and fair treatment. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The school has an appropriate accessibility plan which ensures that the school curriculum and facilities are accessible to all members of the school community. Governors and leaders regularly review the accessibility plan. They make changes to the school site and adapt how the curriculum is taught if required.
22. Governors and leaders work closely to ensure the wellbeing and progress of the pupils in their care. The governing body meet regularly and individual members visit the site frequently to assess provision and to support and challenge school leaders.

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

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

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

24. Leaders have developed a broad and well-structured curriculum. Leaders frequently review the curriculum to ensure that it is relevant and prepare pupils sufficiently for the next stage of their education and their future lives. Coverage of all required curriculum areas is planned thoroughly. A wide range of educational visits extends and deepens pupils' learning across the curriculum. For example Year 8 pupils attend an immersive writing course in Whitby which strengthens their understanding of gothic literature through an inspiring and creative setting.
25. Pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 follow a comprehensive diploma and futures programme. The programme develops pupils' life skills such as understanding finance, marketing, cooking and public speaking. Substantial schemes of work within the diploma are designed to go beyond set examination specifications to develop pupils' understanding of research and more complex ideas. The programme equips pupils with the important skills needed for their future life choices.
26. Lessons across the school are well planned. Lesson planning takes into account pupils' aptitudes and builds on their prior learning. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods to meet pupils' different needs. The introduction of the flexible classroom space, when used well, promotes pupils' progress. The flexible classrooms allow pupils to explore and understand their preferred way of learning. Teachers are quick to provide extra help for pupils when needed.
27. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Specialist teaching in the pre-prep enables pupils to make good progress in lessons. Leaders have provided teachers with the necessary facilities and equipment so that lessons are interesting and engaging for pupils.
28. Boarders feel well supported in their academic work. Key members of the boarding staff supervise the homework of boarders and pupils are helped with their studies when required. Boarders' art work is widely displayed throughout the houses and this inspires pupils to work hard and achieve further success.
29. Staff and leaders in the early years provide well-planned creative lessons. Children make good progress particularly in the important areas of communication and language, physical and personal, social and emotional development. Teachers encourage children to participate in small group activities where children match different letters to sounds and sound out words. Teachers model descriptive language and rich vocabulary which supports children's language development. Teachers plan and teach activities that help children to secure their knowledge and understanding of numbers, shape and space.
30. Teachers evaluate pupils' work regularly through assessments and testing. The school's assessment framework is supported by the careful marking of pupils' work. This helps pupils to understand how to improve and take the next steps in their learning. Leaders carefully track pupils' progress and identify when additional support is required. Pupils typically make good progress. Pupils across the school generally achieve higher scores than national averages.
31. Leaders place great emphasis on supporting pupils who have SEND. Pupils who need it are given tailored support and teachers adapt their teaching approaches to make sure that pupils learn effectively. Pupils who have SEND make good progress from their different starting points.



32. Pupils who speak EAL are quickly identified and receive appropriate support to increase their skills in spoken and written English. This support helps them to settle quickly into school life and enables them to fully access the curriculum.
33. The pre-prep and prep schools offer an extensive range of age-appropriate co-curricular and recreational activities. Teachers deliver clubs linked to their own expertise and interests. This offer is varied and inclusive. Clubs such as knitting and NFL Flag football are popular with pupils, alongside horse riding, golf and clay pigeon shooting. Pupils quickly find activities that spark their interest and that they enjoy. Pupils are keen to excel further in these activities, and when available, pupils go on to represent their county or country. Equally some pupils readily take part but prefer not to compete with their peers. Leaders keep a close eye on pupils' participation in the extensive clubs and activities on offer to ensure that all pupils take a full and active part.

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

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

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

35. Leaders across the school promote respect and understanding. Cultural differences are celebrated through assemblies, PSHE and theology philosophy and religion (TPR) lessons. Pupils appreciate the diversity within the school community and can recognise and appreciate differences between each other. Pupils feel supported through a well-structured 'circle of care', that provides clear access to help when needed.
36. The RSE curriculum is planned and taught appropriately. From Year 6, RSE is taught by a specialist teacher. The curriculum enables the youngest children to begin to understand themselves physically, emotionally, and mentally. Older pupils are taught important concepts such as healthy relationships and consent.
37. Throughout the school there is a focus on pupils' wellbeing. Pupils are encouraged to talk to adults and to each other about their strengths and areas for development. This encourages pupils to be reflective and develop confidence. Consequently, pupils are comfortable to participate in activities such as public speaking and solo performances when they play instruments in music lessons. Pupils enjoy the wellbeing room and appreciate that this is a safe space to reflect and share their thoughts.
38. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is supported through the school's programme of assemblies, chapel services and readings alongside issues discussed in TPR lessons. Outdoor learning is an important part of the curriculum, particularly for the younger pupils in the pre-prep. Pupils in all year groups have opportunities to explore and appreciate their natural surroundings in the school's rural setting.
39. Leaders promote positive behaviours through the school's ethos of kindness and respect. The behaviour policy sets out clear expectations for pupils and staff to understand and follow. Leaders monitor pupils' behaviour through weekly meetings with the pastoral team. Pupils are given additional guidance and support when necessary. Generally, pupils behave well around the school and during lessons. In a small number of lessons some pupils do not listen attentively to the teacher nor do they engage effectively in independent or group work. At times, their negative behaviour limits their own progress and that of others.
40. Pupils' physical and emotional wellbeing is greatly enhanced by the school's broad and well-designed physical education (PE) curriculum and programme. Pupils participate in competitive sport activities alongside a wide-ranging co-curricular provision. In the early years, the physical education programme focuses on developing children's gross and fine motor skills. Across the school, the extensive co-curricular activities develop pupils' emotional wellbeing through opportunities to participate in both competitive challenges and activities such as clay moulding and arts and crafts.
41. The anti-bullying policy is widely understood and incidents of bullying are rare. When incidents are reported they are managed effectively with ongoing support for all parties involved. Records are well maintained and leaders look for trends and patterns in behaviours to try to mitigate against incidents reoccurring.
42. Health and safety arrangements across the school are robust. Leaders and governors ensure that all policies and practices are completed effectively ensuring pupils' safety. The school's contextual risks,

including the open site, are considered and actions put in place to reduce risks. This includes the use of CCTV and other security measures. Record keeping is accurate and timely including for fire safety. Leaders commission audits from external specialists where necessary to ensure the school is compliant and safe.

43. Boarders complete a thorough induction programme and are aware of the boarding house expectations and rules right from the start. Pupils settle quickly and know how to access help if they need to. Accommodation for boarders is comfortable, spacious and well maintained. Boarders have access to the school's outdoor spaces and value the wide recreational programme of activities. Boarders feel safe and secure in the boarding houses. There is a supportive team of staff who listen to boarders' concerns when raised. Pupils understand they have ownership of their houses and appreciate the opportunities they have to be involved in decision making.
44. Leaders ensure that pupils' wellbeing and safety are prioritised. Supervision of pupils throughout the day and evening is carefully planned and appropriate. This includes during break times and afterschool activities. Supervision of boarders is equally well organised. A large number of staff contribute every evening to pupils' full and positive boarding experience.
45. Admissions and attendance registers follow the latest requirements. Leaders regularly track pupils' attendance and act when necessary. Any absences are quickly followed up and addressed as appropriate.
46. Well-trained staff support and care for pupils who are sick or injured. Early years staff are suitably trained in paediatric first aid. The well-resourced medical centre is supervised and available throughout the day and evening. First aid and medical records are maintained as appropriate and the procedures for the administration of medicine are robust.

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

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

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

48. Pupils learn to value and contribute to life in modern British society through assemblies, the curriculum and the diploma and futures programme. Pupils understand that they live in a democratic society. They experience democratic processes through the election of house captains and team captains. Through TPR lessons, pupils gain an understanding about the laws of different societies. They learn that the liberties and freedoms in British society is not always reflected elsewhere across the globe.
49. Pupils are encouraged to act responsibly and they take pride in doing so. Collaborative projects like whole-school mosaics further enhance pupils' ability to work in teams and contribute to shared goals. Pupils demonstrate respect for others, exemplified by their adherence to the school rules and their polite interactions.
50. Diversity is celebrated throughout the school, including neurodiversity. Pupils embrace and enjoy learning about the traditions and cultures of others. Boarders respect different cultures and beliefs. They share these happily with each other.
51. Pupils are encouraged to find out about and support local causes. They raise money for various charities. Through these opportunities pupils learn the importance of responding to the needs of others. School-based responsibilities include the role of eco warriors, who support the school to follow ecofriendly practices. Such experiences develop pupils' understanding and positive response towards the environment alongside a greater understanding of their social responsibilities.
52. Leaders support pupils to consider their future education with discussions that start in Year 5. The school provides future career fairs that give pupils opportunities to discuss their options with visiting school leaders. This helps pupils to make informed choices for life beyond Windlesham House school. Pupils are encouraged to explore a diverse range of options with guidance from the well-informed teachers and careers staff. Pupils gain a good understanding of possible career opportunities through in-house and external events with guest speakers. The vast majority of pupils gain places at their first-choice institutions.
53. In the early years and pre- prep the youngest pupils experience visits from nurses and firefighters. They gain an understanding of the different roles people have in society. Children explore the different jobs that people have, through role play and interactive talks. Themes such as '*people who help us*' introduce pupils to the value of community roles and teamwork.
54. The school prepares pupils for future life through a well-planned and delivered diploma and futures programme. Within the programme pupils learn the skills of cooking on a budget, setting up bank accounts, understanding interest rates and how to set up a business. Pupils use entrepreneurial skills when they develop products to sell at the school's Christmas market. They learn the skills of design, marketing and accounting as they work through this process.
55. In the early years and pre- prep, pupils learn about money through role play activities such as buying gifts and shop keeping. Pupils develop their social skills through opportunities to solve problems both independently and as part of a group. Staff model positive social behaviour to the youngest pupils and teach the importance of sharing and taking turns.

56. Pupils are taught right from wrong through the school's behaviour policy. Leaders and staff model how to make the right choices. This is shared further during assemblies. In the early years teachers discuss right from wrong when reading stories to children that involve conflict and require a resolution. Through the PSHE curriculum pupils learn about human rights and how these may differ across the globe, giving pupils opportunities to discuss and reflect on moral dilemmas.

**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. The school's arrangements for safeguarding and the promotion of pupils' wellbeing are effective. Governors oversee and monitor safeguarding through the work of the nominated safeguarding governor who meets regularly with the school leaders to check that the school's systems are followed and to support school leaders in their decision-making process. Policies and procedures are in place to minimise risk, and safeguarding records are comprehensive.
59. The safeguarding policy is detailed and updated regularly to reflect the latest statutory guidance.
60. All staff receive timely and comprehensive safeguarding training. Staff are confident about the actions they must take if they have any concerns about a pupil. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies receive the required training so they know how to take effective action when managing safeguarding incidents. Records are detailed and well maintained, and leaders look for any trends and patterns. Leaders work with external agencies and safeguarding partners and refer concerns quickly.
61. Pupils including children in the early years know who they can turn to for help if they have any worries or concerns. Notices are displayed around the school to remind pupils of this.
62. There are well-developed systems in the boarding houses to ensure pupils feel safe and secure. Boarders have two independent listeners they can contact if they have a concern. Boarders are given appropriate access to their phones at agreed times during the week. Boarding staff are suitably trained in all safeguarding matters.
63. An appropriate filtering system is in place to prevent pupils and adults accessing inappropriate information when using the school's internet. Leaders act swiftly if any issues are identified either during the school day or out of school hours.
64. Pupils are taught how to stay safe online through targeted teaching and regular updates. Pupils understand the potential dangers of using the internet and of sharing personal information and data when online.
65. Safer recruitment procedures are well understood and accurately followed. Personnel files are detailed and well maintained. Staff trained in safer recruitment are involved in all appointments, as required. The record of staff appointments includes all the necessary checks and is up to date.

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

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

## School details

|                                        |                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>School</b>                          | Windlesham House School                                                        |
| <b>Department for Education number</b> | 938/6028                                                                       |
| <b>Registered charity number</b>       | 307046                                                                         |
| <b>Address</b>                         | Windlesham House School<br>Washington<br>Pulborough<br>West Sussex<br>RH20 4AY |
| <b>Phone number</b>                    | 01903 874700                                                                   |
| <b>Email address</b>                   | whsoffice@windlesham.com                                                       |
| <b>Website</b>                         | windlesham.com                                                                 |
| <b>Chair</b>                           | Martina Asmar                                                                  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                     | Ben Evans                                                                      |
| <b>Age range</b>                       | 4 to 13                                                                        |
| <b>Number of pupils</b>                | 318                                                                            |
| <b>Number of boarding pupils</b>       | 124                                                                            |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>     | 3 to 5 November 2021                                                           |

## Information about the school

67. Windlesham House School is an independent, co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between 4 and 13. Originally founded on the Isle of Wight in 1837, it was established on its present site in West Sussex in 1934. The school operates as a charitable trust, overseen by a board of governors. The present head was appointed in September 2020.
68. The early years provision consists of 20 children in one Reception class. In the pre- prep pupils range from ages 4 to 7 and in the prep from ages 8 to 13.
69. The school has identified 62 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
70. English is an additional language for 50 pupils.
71. The school aims to provide educational excellence through the provision of effective and inspiring teaching, encouraging enthusiasm for learning and enabling each pupil to achieve their potential.



## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

December 3 to 5 2024

72. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

73. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

74. 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)