

School inspection report

27 to 29 January 2026

Packwood Haugh School

School Road

Ruyton-XI-Towns

Shrewsbury

Shropshire

SY4 1HX

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

Contents

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS	3
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....	5
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS	5
SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....	6
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE	7
SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	8
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	9
SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING.....	10
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	11
SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....	12
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY	13
SAFEGUARDING	14
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING	15
SCHOOL DETAILS	16
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	17
INSPECTION DETAILS	18

Summary of inspection findings

1. Governors provide rigorous strategic oversight and maintain a clear understanding of the school's priorities. They draw effectively on their expertise in safeguarding, education and compliance to challenge and support leaders. As a result, leaders demonstrate secure knowledge of the Standards and work proactively to ensure these are met.
2. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's areas of success and areas for improvement. Their planning is informed by detailed self-evaluation and is closely aligned with the school's aims. This is evident in the positive developments in behaviour routines, curriculum design and pastoral systems.
3. Pupils benefit from a broad, inclusive curriculum that reflects the school's contextual needs. Teachers use assessment effectively and typically plan lessons well to support pupils' learning. Pupils make good progress as a result. In some cases, teachers do not consistently adapt their lessons to meet the needs of a range of pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL). In these lessons, pupils do not always make as much progress as they could.
4. Statutory policies and procedures reflect current guidance, and staff training ensures these are understood and implemented. Leaders ensure that parents and external agencies have access to clear and timely information.
5. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum is well structured and age appropriate. Pupils develop confidence, resilience and independence through the curriculum and a wide range of co-curricular opportunities.
6. Pupils feel safe and well supported. Behaviour expectations are applied consistently so that pupils are respectful in their interactions with others. Bullying is rare and managed promptly.
7. Leaders implement risk assessments to manage and mitigate a variety of risks. Application of some risk assessments is not consistent, and maintenance requirements are not always managed strategically.
8. At the start of the inspection, not all drinking water supplies were labelled clearly. This was rectified during the course of the inspection.
9. Pupils develop awareness of their social responsibilities and the wider world through the curriculum, enrichment, community engagement and careers education.
10. Children in the early years benefit from a nurturing environment that promotes communication, emotional regulation and early literacy and numeracy. They are well prepared for the next stage of education.
11. Safeguarding is effective. Leaders work well with external agencies, ensure staff receive relevant training and maintain thorough recruitment procedures. Pupils understand how to seek help and are confident doing so.

12. Boarding provision is secure, well organised and supportive. Boarders benefit from the community ethos and opportunities available to them.

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 teaching consistently meets the range of different pupils' needs so that pupils make further progress
- ensure that risk assessments are implemented consistently and that maintenance requirements are managed strategically
- ensure that all cold-water supplies are always clearly marked to show their suitability for drinking.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

13. Governors and leaders work as a cohesive team to plan and implement a strategy that prioritises pupils' wellbeing. An efficient governing body structure enables governors to monitor whether policies are implemented effectively and that Standards are met. They visit the school regularly to evaluate key aspects of provision. Governors analyse termly leadership reports and challenge leaders constructively, particularly around behaviour, site security and recruitment. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding meet regularly with the safeguarding team, ensuring diligent oversight of safeguarding procedures.
14. The school's values of tenacity, respect and humility are known collectively as the 'Packwood Way'. These values are linked to the 'Big Tree Attributes' that help to make pupils more effective learners, such as imagination, teamwork and resourcefulness. Leaders ensure these values and attributes are embedded throughout different aspects of school life. This includes the rewards system, house competitions, direct links within lesson planning and assemblies. As a result, they are well known to pupils and have become part of everyday language and expectations across the school and boarding house. Leaders ensure that this language maintains a consistently high profile so that pupils understand and strive to demonstrate these characteristics.
15. The school provides parents with a wide range of accessible information. Leaders ensure that up-to-date documents, including previous inspection reports, are available on the school's website. Parents receive regular updates about their child's progress through detailed written reports and in-person meetings. Leaders work effectively with local authorities regarding attendance information, including for pupils who join or leave at non-standard times. Robust systems support communication with external professionals, such as those involved in the education, health and care plan (EHC plan) annual review process.
16. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. The accessibility plan and individual education plans (IEPs) outline appropriate and reasonable adjustments to support pupils' needs. Leaders promote equality and diversity throughout the curriculum and via assemblies, enabling pupils to develop respect for a wide range of cultures and beliefs.
17. Leaders implement a clear complaints procedure, which operates across three stages. Leaders manage complaints appropriately and within published timescales.
18. Governors and leaders consider a variety of risks and how these can be managed and mitigated. Leaders ensure that risk assessments and audits are in place for areas and activities that present higher levels of risk. These documents are detailed and shared with staff. However, implementation is not consistently secure. For example, procedures relating to site security, such as the management of gates, are not always followed, and leaders do not yet have a fully strategic approach to tracking the completion of recommendations from health and safety audits.
19. Leaders in the early years implement policies and procedures that meet early years statutory guidance. Staffing levels are appropriate, so children are well supervised during rest, play and transition times. A sufficient number of early years staff hold paediatric first aid qualifications. The provision offers a suitable environment that promotes development and independence. Transitions from home to school and between classes are well planned, helping children settle quickly and feel secure.

20. Leaders oversee boarding effectively. Systems and procedures meet the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools, and documentation supports the induction of new boarders and new boarding staff. Boarding staff receive clear guidance and training, enabling them to provide responsive support that contributes to boarders' positive experiences and sense of belonging.

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

21. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. Leaders provide a broad and balanced curriculum that prepares pupils for the next stage of their education and meets their contextual needs. The curriculum contains subjects that nurture creative, aesthetic and technological development alongside core areas such as mathematics, English and science. Leaders review and adapt the curriculum to promote deeper knowledge and understanding, increasing links between history, geography and theology, philosophy and religion (TPR) to enhance cross-curricular learning and focus on enquiry-based learning. The expansion of the science curriculum to include engineering and technology supports pupils' understanding of the natural and business worlds and aligns with the broader careers programme.
23. Leaders assess and track pupils' progress frequently, using attainment information to identify individual needs and future support requirements. They analyse data for different groups of pupils and adapt the curriculum or teaching approaches in response. Leaders refine the assessment systems so that they can gain clear oversight of pupils' progress across subjects. Continual teacher assessment and precise feedback help pupils understand how to improve, contributing to good progress.
24. Teachers manage classroom behaviour effectively, supported by the school's consistent routines and revised lesson start structures. Their subject knowledge, effective methodology and appropriate use of resources ensure lesson activities are purposeful and relevant. As a result, pupils maintain attention and remain engaged throughout lessons, deepening their understanding.
25. The learning support team identifies and supports pupils who have SEND. Leaders and the learning support team analyse data from assessments so that they can create individual learning plans and provide targeted one-to-one or small-group support. Teachers receive guidance on strategies to meet a range of learning needs across subjects. Teachers typically adapt their lessons to match pupils' needs, such as using writing frames or targeted adult support. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress overall. However, variability in classroom practice means that, in some lessons, teaching does not fully address pupils' needs. In these cases, pupils who have SEND do not make as much progress as they could.
26. Pupils who speak EAL are assessed so that their needs can be identified and appropriate targets established. Leaders provide guidance to staff to ensure pupils receive effective support. Pupils who speak EAL make good progress because teachers usually adapt their teaching and provide supportive tools, such as subject-specific vocabulary banks, to aid understanding. However, this practice is not consistent across all lessons. In some lessons, pupils who speak EAL are not always supported to access learning effectively, which means that they do not make as much progress as they could.
27. In the early years, the curriculum is designed to help children develop confidence and independence in their learning. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to match resources and activities to children's interests and stages of development. Teachers support children's literacy and numeracy skills through well-chosen tasks, structured role play and the introduction of subject-specific vocabulary. Children are encouraged to share their ideas and collaborate, becoming articulate and confident communicators. As a result, most children meet the early learning goals across the areas of learning, which enables them to make a successful transition to Year 1.

28. Boarders have access to a wide range of evening and weekend activities. Evening clubs cater for a variety of interests including dance, design, model making and athletics. Weekend trips encourage boarders to try new activities from quad biking to dry slope skiing. In addition, special events throughout the year, from the autumn conker competition to the spring silent disco, build a sense of community. As a result, boarders enjoy the boarding experience, discover new hobbies and enhance friendships as they move through the academic years.
29. Leaders structure the timetable and co-curricular programme to enable pupils to explore areas of personal interest and develop a wide range of skills, promoting inclusion and breadth of opportunity. The 'Packwood Award' provides a comprehensive programme of outdoor and life skills taught through experiential learning. Through activities such as camp craft, cookery and leadership challenges, pupils develop confidence, independence and self-awareness. Opportunities to engage in structured debate on topical, social and philosophical issues increase pupils' oracy and enhance the school's focus on enquiry-based learning.

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

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

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

31. Leaders implement a well-structured physical education (PE) curriculum. Planning is informed by pupils' prior attainment, enabling teachers to introduce progressively more challenging skill development and tailored activities. For example, weighted balls and increasingly demanding exercises are introduced as pupils move through the school. Leaders promote a clear 'sport for all' ethos, ensuring pupils experience both competitive and recreational opportunities across a broad range of activities. Alongside well-established team sports, pupils explore individual interests such as swimming, badminton and mountain biking, reflecting the school's broader commitment to inclusive physical development. Boarding staff support pupils with sporting potential by accompanying them to county-level training or advanced sessions at senior schools.
32. Leaders promote pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence through structured opportunities for reflection and personal growth. The 'Packwood Way' and the 'Big Tree Attributes' are well understood by pupils because they are referenced consistently in assemblies, house events and lessons. Themes such as resilience, kindness and respect are reinforced systematically so that pupils display these attributes in their work and interactions with others.
33. Pupils benefit from a variety of opportunities for spiritual and reflective moments, including visits to the local church, mindfulness sessions and time spent in the school's natural environment. These activities ensure pupils feel connected with nature and their community and give them perspective on their place in the world.
34. Leaders ensure pupils feel supported through multiple mechanisms for raising concerns. These include trusted adults, dedicated tutor sessions and the use of 'worry boxes' or 'worry monsters' to post their concerns in writing. Staff respond promptly to concerns and provide tailored mentoring, supporting pupils' emotional wellbeing.
35. Leaders ensure behaviour expectations are clear and consistently applied. Anti-bullying and behaviour policies are implemented effectively, and incidents of bullying are rare. When concerns arise, leaders act quickly and support pupils to reflect on their actions. Leaders analyse behaviour patterns and respond appropriately to emerging needs. Recent training for staff on expectations for how lessons should start, along with supervised sessions in the sports hall during breaktimes, has improved consistency and reduced behavioural incidents. Pupils who require additional support receive structured guidance and coaching. Records indicate sustained improvement over time for these pupils.
36. There are effective arrangements in place to supervise pupils throughout the school day. Staff are vigilant during arrival and departure, ensuring pupils move safely around the site. At breaktimes, staff monitor pupils' welfare closely. During lunchtimes and boarding meals, staff sit with pupils, supporting warm relationships and modelling positive eating routines. These interactions help staff better understand pupils' needs in informal settings and contribute to pupils' wellbeing.
37. In the early years, the curriculum and environment promote children's physical wellbeing effectively. Children use the well-resourced outdoor environment daily, developing co-ordination and confidence through physical exploration. Planned activities help develop gross and fine motor skills.

Children are encouraged to eat a broad and nutritious diet and are supported to develop independence when eating. Staff maintain suitable ratios, including when children are eating.

38. Leaders provide a well-planned programme for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) that meets statutory guidance. Pupils receive age-appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE), enabling them to understand healthy, positive relationships. Teaching includes learning about consent and the emotional and physical changes associated with puberty. Online safety and personal wellbeing are integrated throughout the curriculum. Leaders consult parents appropriately and keep them informed of any updates to the RSE curriculum.
39. Leaders with responsibility for site maintenance carry out routine checks across the premises, including for fire safety equipment, lighting and school vehicles. Site risk assessments are detailed and specific, offering clear guidance to staff. There are regular fire evacuation drills. As a result, staff and pupils understand how to respond to a fire. Health and safety training for staff, including in fire safety, is relevant, up to date and suitably recorded. These measures contribute effectively to pupils' safety and welfare.
40. At the start of the inspection, not all cold-water supplies had been clearly marked to show whether they were suitable for drinking or not. Suitable signage was installed before the end of the inspection.
41. Leaders ensure suitable arrangements are in place to care for pupils who become unwell or injured. First aid is administered promptly by trained staff, including early years staff who hold paediatric first aid qualifications. Pupils with specific medical needs are well supported by staff, with appropriate measures in place. Medicines are stored securely, administered safely and recorded accurately. Parents are informed of medical matters in a timely and appropriate manner.
42. Admission and attendance registers comply with statutory requirements and are reviewed regularly. Staff follow up unexplained absences promptly and understand local procedures relating to any absence concerns.
43. Boarding accommodation is spacious, comfortable and well maintained. Risk assessments support effective operation of boarding areas. Boarders have access to a wide range of indoor and outdoor recreation spaces. They are well supported by boarding staff and have access to an independent person should they wish to raise a concern. Boarders' feedback is gathered regularly and used to refine provision. Behaviour expectations for boarders are clear and supported by robust supervision. Communication with parents is timely and informative. Boarders are offered a balanced and varied diet during the evenings and weekends. They often celebrate cultural events by sampling a range of cuisines.

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

44. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

45. Leaders prioritise the development of pupils' cultural understanding and ensure this remains a consistent feature of the curriculum. Across PSHE, theology, philosophy and religion (TPR), history and geography, pupils learn about a wide range of cultures, beliefs and worldviews, building awareness of society beyond their immediate experience. Opportunities to broaden cultural understanding extend into the co-curricular programme. Pupils take part in visits to different places of worship and engage in celebrations such as Holi, Lunar New Year and Burns Night. These experiences complement the school's wider aims linked to the 'Packwood Way' and help pupils develop respect, curiosity and an appreciation for diversity.
46. Pupils learn about the protections offered by the Equality Act 2010 and understand the importance of respecting all people. Leaders ensure this understanding is reinforced across the curriculum, such as when exploring gender stereotypes in literature, learning about female artists and creative leaders, or studying influential scientists from diverse backgrounds. Assemblies and form-time discussions enhance pupils' awareness of fairness, discrimination and the impact of prejudice on individuals and communities. Pupils also explore these issues through structured debates, including topics such as racism and misogyny in modern society. Practical experiences such as blind cricket and wheelchair basketball further support pupils in developing empathy, perspective and social awareness.
47. Pupils develop their sense of social responsibility from an early age. Leaders ensure pupils have meaningful opportunities to influence school life, such as contributing to the food council, leading chapel readings as Year 8 heads of school or supporting the technical elements of drama productions as part of the school's technical team. Pupils are also encouraged to engage with the local community in purposeful ways. For example, before organising a collection of goods, pupils visit the local foodbank to understand the level of need and identify the most valuable items. These opportunities enable pupils to recognise the positive impact their actions can have and help them develop as responsible, active citizens.
48. Leaders promote respect for British society and its institutions through the curriculum and wider school life. Democratic principles are taught explicitly within PSHE and reinforced through lessons across subjects. For example, pupils learn about autocratic systems when studying *Animal Farm* in English and explore the origins of parliamentary democracy in history. Pupils learn about fairness, justice and the rule of law through PSHE and through the routines and expectations established by leaders. Visits from the police liaison officer help pupils understand law and order in context. British values also form part of themed whole-school assemblies, where pupils learn that these principles are interconnected and equally important.
49. Children in the early years experience a stimulating range of activities that promote the development of their social skills. Indoor and outdoor environments are carefully designed to encourage role play, collaboration, creativity and early financial awareness through buying, selling and trading within imaginative play settings. These activities help children develop effective listening skills and demonstrate respect for each other's ideas. Close partnerships with parents support children during their transition to Year 1 and help ensure that early social development is nurtured consistently.

50. Pupils learn about the economy, money and business as part of a well-planned PSHE curriculum. They explore themes such as managing a budget, distinguishing between essential and non-essential expenditure, the concept of fair trade and the environmental impact of global economic activity. Older pupils further develop their understanding of macroeconomics, including tax, gross domestic product and fiscal rules. These activities develop pupils' financial literacy and numeracy skills.
51. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 access an age-appropriate careers programme. This includes workshops and talks from guest speakers, such as technology specialists and an entrepreneur working within agricultural innovation. As a result, pupils develop an awareness of a broad spectrum of future opportunities and interests.
52. Pupils benefit from the support and guidance they receive as they prepare for transition to senior schools. Teaching, scholarship groups and structured workshops provide pupils with interview practice, opportunities for critical thinking and exposure to inspirational speakers. Close liaison with senior schools supports a smooth transition process, with staff from partner schools delivering workshops and pupils visiting prospective schools to experience facilities and meet staff. The timetabled 'moving up' programme, introduced from Year 3 onwards, helps pupils understand transition points and build confidence as they prepare for the next year at school.
53. Boarding staff promote an open, inclusive and supportive culture within the boarding community. Pupils benefit from social and cultural opportunities such as learning Scottish dancing and participating in shared celebrations. Staff also provide thoughtful, non-partisan support to international boarders, including those arriving from regions experiencing conflict. This helps ensure all boarders feel welcomed, valued and well supported.

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

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

Safeguarding

55. Leaders ensure that the school's safeguarding policy reflects the most recent statutory guidance and that it is embedded effectively across the school. Safeguarding is a central feature of induction for new staff, during which leaders emphasise statutory responsibilities and procedures that are specific to the school. All staff, governors and supply teachers complete appropriate training. Any missed training is followed up promptly to ensure everyone understands their duty to safeguard pupils. As a result, staff are alert to the different aspects of child protection, including risks associated with online activity, extremist influences and radicalisation.
56. Governors have a thorough understanding of the school's safeguarding arrangements, including awareness of specific contextual risks. Governors oversee the annual review of the safeguarding policy and meet regularly with safeguarding leaders. These meetings provide appropriate challenge and support and ensure that any concerns or referrals are evaluated carefully. Governors monitor whether local reporting thresholds and procedures are followed consistently and effectively.
57. Staff record concerns using the school's electronic management system. Safeguarding leaders review records regularly to identify any patterns or trends and cross-reference these with behaviour and bullying logs. Pupils identified as being at risk or having emerging needs are monitored closely, ensuring timely support. Records demonstrate that safeguarding practices are systematic, well organised and responsive to pupils' individual circumstances.
58. Staff demonstrate confidence in raising concerns about other adults and in making self-disclosures when appropriate. This ensures even minor worries are logged and reviewed. Staff understand their responsibilities under the school's code of conduct and are alert to situations where pupils may be more vulnerable, such as when working one-to-one or when boarding staff are supporting pupils outside usual classroom routines. This contributes to a culture of openness and professional accountability.
59. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding maintain proactive relationships with local agencies and seek guidance when required. They are clear about when to make referrals concerning staff conduct, early help needs, child-on-child abuse, children missing education or concerns relating to extremism. Referrals to children's services, the police or other relevant agencies are made promptly. Staff receive training in the 'Prevent' duty and demonstrate secure knowledge of how and when to report concerns relating to radicalisation or extremist behaviour.
60. Safeguarding leaders maintain effective oversight of pupils' internet activity through a robust internet filtering and monitoring system that is checked regularly. Weekly reports enable leaders to identify any concerning trends or inappropriate activity so that they can follow up incidents swiftly. This system supports leaders' wider work on digital safety and contributes effectively to pupils' protection online.
61. The PSHE curriculum, alongside assemblies and sessions led by external visitors, supports pupils' understanding of how to stay safe and manage risk. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, online behaviour, consent, peer influence and how to seek help. They know how to report concerns and value the multiple channels available to them, such as speaking to trusted adults or using worry boxes. This ensures pupils feel confident in seeking support when they need it.

62. Governors and leaders ensure safe recruitment procedures align fully with statutory requirements. Staff involved in recruitment receive appropriate training so that the necessary checks are completed for all new staff, governors, volunteers and contractors, including those working in the boarding provision. References are followed up and risk assessments completed where appropriate. Leaders and governors scrutinise the single central record of appointments regularly to ensure that recruitment procedures are followed consistently and systematically.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

63. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Packwood Haugh School
Department for Education number	893/6006
Registered charity number	528413
Address	Packwood Haugh School Ruyton-XI-Towns Shrewsbury Shropshire SY4 1HX
Phone number	01939 260217
Email address	admissions@packwood.school
Website	https://packwood.school
Proprietor	Governing Body of Shrewsbury School
Chair	Mr James Pitt
Headteacher	Mr William Goldsmith
Age range	4 to 13
Number of pupils	187
Number of boarding pupils	45
Date of previous inspection	14 to 16 March 2023

Information about the school

64. Packwood Haugh School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school situated on a rural site near Shrewsbury, Shropshire. The school is a registered charity, overseen by a board of governors, and is part of the Shrewsbury School Family. Since the previous inspection, a new chair of the board was appointed in August 2023 and a new headteacher was appointed in September 2024.
65. Pupils from Year 3 and above may board on a flexi, weekly or full-time basis. Boarding accommodation is located on the upper floors of the main house.
66. There are currently nine children in the early years in one Reception class.
67. The school has identified 37 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small proportion of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
68. The school has identified English as an additional language for 16 pupils.
69. The school states its aims are to develop a school community that is inclusive, rigorous and dynamic, built on the ethos of a family-focused boarding community and based on the values of tenacity, respect and humility. The school states that leaders are committed to small class sizes, maintaining an outstanding and caring team of staff and offering a wide breadth of opportunity.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

27 to 29 January 2026

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

71. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods
- observation of a sample of co-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to 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.

72. 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**.

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