

# School inspection report

17 to 19 June 2025

## **Warwick Preparatory School**

Bridge Field

Banbury Road

Warwick

CV34 6PL

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 have an informed oversight of all areas of school life and they visit the school regularly. They ensure that leaders fulfil their responsibilities in meeting the regulatory requirements. Governors support leaders in meeting the needs of all pupils in line with the school's aims and ethos of prioritising the wellbeing and happiness of every member of the school community.
2. Leaders ensure that there is a suitable curriculum which enables pupils throughout the school to develop their skills and understanding across the required range of areas. Through regular lesson observations and continuing professional development, leaders systematically monitor the teaching and learning in the school. Effective teaching is enriched by the use of subject specialists, access to the wider Foundation's resources and facilities, and an extensive extra-curricular programme. As a result, pupils learn and achieve well.
3. Leaders have developed clear and ambitious strategic plans, based on self-evaluation, to provide further opportunities to fulfil the school's aims to foster a love of learning, curiosity and independent thinking. Initiatives such as the 'Skills for Life' portfolio for pupils in Year 6, the development of critical thinking skills and the common vocabulary for learning, are embedded in daily teaching and learning.
4. The comprehensive personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme, which includes provision for relationships and sex education (RSE), supports pupils' personal growth and development well. Pupils learn to show respect for each other and other cultures. Leaders encourage pupils to take on positions of responsibility, fostering a commitment to support others in need. As a result, pupils develop a keen sense of pride in their community.
5. Leaders implement effective risk management arrangements, including those for premises, pastoral care and safeguarding, to ensure there is a secure environment for pupils. Well-judged measures are in place to reduce or eliminate risk, both in school and on educational visits. Formal reviews of risk assessments following activities are not always completed and, as a result, opportunities to learn and improve practice are missed.
6. The school has a secure safeguarding culture, with robust policies and procedures in place. Pupils are heard and supported. Staff understand what is required of them in order to safeguard pupils and designated safeguarding leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Safeguarding records are kept appropriately. The consolidation of pastoral records is in the process of being completed.
7. The early years provision is a significant strength of the school. Leaders and teachers in this area have a particularly deep understanding of how children's skills, knowledge and understanding develop, as a result of focused staff training. Teachers utilise this training to ensure that activities are well chosen to promote each child's development and there is a rich environment, with a wide range of resources to support learning. Consequently, children progress particularly well and flourish in the early years.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

## Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- review risk assessments more consistently after educational visits in order to learn lessons or improve practice
- complete the consolidation of pastoral records for ease of access.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Governors and leaders communicate the ethos of the school effectively and promote the importance of the school's aims and values. Governors visit the school regularly, receive regular reports from leaders, review documentation and scrutinise annual surveys from parents, staff and pupils. They meet with different groups of pupils on a termly basis, focusing on different aspects of their lived experiences. This work informs governors' understanding of the effectiveness of leaders' actions and the appropriateness of school policies and procedures in prioritising pupils' wellbeing.
9. In addition to the school's pupil council and annual surveys, effective self-evaluation is integral to leaders' approach to strategic development. It informs the development plan, the priorities of which are aligned with the school's aims and values. The teaching of critical thinking skills, and understanding of the process of learning, are designed to further enhance pupils' personal development and preparation for later life. These recent initiatives are embedded into lessons and wider activities.
10. Governors and leaders seek external specialist guidance to quality assure their work, and liaise closely with other agencies to assure themselves that the Standards are met consistently. Leaders maintain effective links with external agencies. They seek advice from other professionals and local safeguarding partners where needed. Leaders have established effective relationships with the wider community, including the other schools in the Foundation and the local church.
11. Leaders ensure that all required information about the school's policies and procedures is provided or made available to relevant people, including parents, through the school's website or parental portal. Reports to parents about their child's attainment and progress are regular, detailed and informative. Leaders provide the relevant local authority with the required information relating to pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan, including that related to funding.
12. An up-to-date, regularly reviewed accessibility plan is in place, ensuring that leaders meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Wide corridors and doors, and lifts make the specialised rooms accessible, and staff provide information in various formats to support the learning of all pupils.
13. The implementation of the risk assessment policy is effective. Potential risks are considered, including those on educational visits and in using more specialised provision, such as science laboratories and outdoor provision. Policies provide staff with clear direction and are followed well. Arrangements for reviewing risk assessments are not always applied consistently by leaders after every trip and, as a result, opportunities to improve practice are missed.
14. There is a comprehensive complaints policy which is regularly reviewed and available on the school's website. Leaders take parental concerns and complaints seriously. They respond in a timely and appropriate manner. Records of complaints are maintained effectively and used to review practice and learning points and to determine future actions, in line with the school's policy.

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

15. **All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

16. The curriculum is broad, balanced and effectively planned to meet the needs of pupils. Starting with the youngest children, schemes of work provide teachers with details about the content, concepts and skills that pupils need to learn. Leaders have planned carefully to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and communication, as well as providing a range of physical, creative and artistic opportunities, such as creative writing competitions. Scientific and technological understanding are effectively delivered through science, information technology and design technology lessons, enriched with engaging, cross-curricular experiences such as science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) projects. Leaders have adopted a common vocabulary for learning which supports both staff and pupils and includes skills of critical thinking and 'sticky' questions, which are thought-provoking and aimed to stimulate discussion. This results in pupils being able to extend their thinking and take control of the next steps in their learning. Pupils know how to ask questions of themselves after they have reflected and reviewed their knowledge, thus promoting active participation in learning.
17. Leaders monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning through a range of activities, including lesson observations, learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' books and assessment of results. They support their colleagues through activities such as paired teaching and modelling good practice, which enables teachers to extend their knowledge and skills and improve practice.
18. Leaders in the early years provide effective training that enhances practitioners' skills. This results in consistent support and well-planned provision throughout the early years foundation stage (EYFS) and contributes to good progress, as children benefit from appropriate levels of support and challenge. Practitioners plan and provide a wide range of topic- and creative play-based activities that promote the development of communication, language, early reading and writing skills through high-quality interactions. Children also build their understanding of number, shape and space through carefully selected games that encourage counting and problem-solving through a thematic approach. Teaching and support staff are adept at meeting individual needs, using assessment effectively to identify where additional support is required. This targeted and responsive approach ensures that, by the end of Reception, children are well prepared for a successful transition into Year 1.
19. Lesson planning demonstrates a clear structure and progression across subjects, with cross-curricular links enhancing depth and coherence. For example, the 'Commonwealth soldiers' project integrates history, French and a Normandy battlefields trip. Evidence of considering alternative methods of delivery is included in planning to support pupils' needs, such as step-by-step tasks and use of models in mathematics that use practical equipment and diagrams. These measures support a culture of high-quality teaching. In geography, pupils develop analytical skills by comparing environments and justifying their preferences, while English lessons reinforce literary terminology through engaging activities, such as linking video and text analysis. Teachers use modelling and probing questions effectively to develop deeper understanding. Pupils retain knowledge and demonstrate an understanding of cross-subject links.
20. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified and well supported to help them make progress. They receive targeted help in spelling, reading and writing, as appropriate. The availability of individual lessons and structured sessions at different times of the

day reflects a firm commitment to providing focused strategies and is embedded in the school culture.

21. Teaching is adapted for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL), which supports their access to the curriculum. This includes simplified language, visual aids and varied levels of help. Adapted teaching and curriculum mapping help to support pupils' emotional wellbeing and confidence in learning.
22. Leaders and managers demonstrate a clear structure for monitoring pupils' progress through standardised assessments and teacher judgements. There is a systematic approach to data analysis. Baseline data, standardised scores and teacher assessments support a robust understanding of pupils' attainment and progress. This informs teaching and learning strategies across subjects. Analysis of assessment considers pupils' attainment and progress and ensures that the needs of different groups of pupils are addressed. This feeds into targeted support and informs future planning, showing a responsive and reflective leadership culture.
23. Pupils' positive learning behaviour and attitudes reflect embedded high expectations. They settle to work quickly and respond appropriately to quiet reminders when needed. They are enthusiastic learners, responding with excitement to new experiences, such as learning how to make a stop-motion film of a Lego figure. Pupils are keen to do well. Teachers hold high expectations for the quality of work produced by pupils. Pupils respond with self-motivation and consistent effort. They discuss ideas and concepts in pairs and small groups, remaining focused on the task they are undertaking. Pupils make good progress and demonstrate sound understanding through structured tasks, peer discussion and redrafting. Opportunities for self-analysis help pupils to have a firm grasp of their skills and abilities, and meaningful feedback assists pupils with their progress.
24. The extra-curricular activity programme is varied and offers a wide range of experiences for pupils of all abilities. Opportunities increase as the pupils move up through the school. The student council has an input into the clubs available, and the school has endeavoured to provide inclusive opportunities, such as the debating club, choir or music groups which are available to musicians of all abilities. Sporting fixtures from Year 3, such as hockey, football, netball and swimming give pupils skills and expertise, as well as leadership development opportunities. Through the programme of activities, educational visits and residential trips, pupils develop and learn new skills and interests.

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

25. **All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

26. The school has implemented a well-structured programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, which effectively incorporates the statutory requirements of relationships and sex education (RSE). Parents are appropriately engaged through invitations to review the educational materials relevant to their child's learning in relation to puberty and health education. Certain aspects of the programme are delivered through the science curriculum, ensuring that pupils are well prepared for the changes associated with adolescence and gain a secure understanding of the human life cycle.
27. The PSHE curriculum is suitably resourced and delivered effectively by well-trained practitioners who demonstrate a clear understanding of the needs of their pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils acquire knowledge and understanding across a broad range of topics, including personal safety, mental health and wellbeing. Age-appropriate teaching fosters respect for individuals with different characteristics.
28. Leaders respond thoughtfully to pupils' views and demonstrate a proactive approach to the inclusion of all pupils. The integration of emotional literacy into the curriculum contributes notably to pupils' wellbeing. Pupils communicate with confidence and display mutual respect and empathy. Opportunities for peer critique and self-assessment are embedded, fostering reflective practice, self-awareness and the development of positive self-esteem. A variety of activities, such as mindful art and scenario-based PSHE, as well as structured routines, support the development of emotional regulation, empathy and social skills.
29. Pupils develop a secure understanding of spiritual life through the study of religions, enabling them to respect and appreciate cultural and religious diversity. This is further enhanced through a well-considered assembly programme that broadens pupils' awareness of different belief systems and celebrates both religious and secular identities within contemporary British society. Outdoor education lessons are used purposefully to cultivate pupils' appreciation of the natural world and its inherent beauty.
30. Pupils benefit from a well-structured physical education curriculum. Healthy eating is promoted through structured discussion about lunchtime choices in form time. A well-designed programme of activities for pupils in the early years is in place to support their physical development. Outdoor play areas are thoughtfully designed to meet developmental needs. Staff demonstrate a high level of attentiveness to environmental safety, including encouraging hydration, seeking shade and using sun protection. Consequently, pupils begin to develop an understanding of healthy lifestyle choices.
31. The school has established a proactive and effective anti-bullying strategy, incorporating initiatives such as 'Anti-Bullying Week' and 'Odd Socks Day'. The school's ethos, centred on kindness and respect, underpins pupils' moral development and promotes positive behavioural choices. Staff reinforce expectations consistently and effectively across the school. Pupils are courteous and confident in their interactions with visitors, demonstrating good manners and calm movement around the school. Behavioural incidents, which are infrequent, are managed promptly and effectively. Pupils are provided with structured opportunities to reflect on their actions in relation to the school's values and expectations.



32. A wide range of leadership opportunities is offered to pupils, including representation in areas such as the creative arts, critical thinking and the eco council. These roles enable pupils to influence school life and instil in them a sense of responsibility towards their community.
33. Through skills gained from effective training, teaching and support staff provide positive interactions to support children in the early years to develop their emotional regulation. Vocabulary development is actively encouraged using familiar characters, enabling children to articulate their thoughts and feelings effectively. Staff foster children's confidence to express their views, and encourage respectful listening, promoting mutual respect and positive social engagement. Through consistent use of praise and clear guidance, children are supported in understanding and adopting appropriate behaviours and routines.
34. Supervision arrangements across the school are robust and ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. Clearly defined supervision rotas ensure appropriate staff-to-pupil ratios, particularly within the early years, and take into account relevant qualifications. Staff are vigilant in their responsibilities, particularly at the end of the school day and following after-school activities, where procedures for dismissal are thorough and effective.
35. The school promotes a culture of regular attendance as integral to pupils' wellbeing and personal development. The attendance register is maintained in full accordance with regulations. The local authority is appropriately informed when pupils leave or join the school outside standard transition points. Leaders and teaching staff demonstrate an acute awareness of the importance of maintaining accurate attendance records, recognising their role in safeguarding and in identifying emerging concerns. Effective systems are in place to analyse attendance data for trends that may signal the need for investigation.
36. The school premises are well-maintained, and all regulatory requirements relating to health and safety are met. A comprehensive health and safety management system is in place, with responsibilities appropriately delegated to competent and qualified staff. The system is rigorously monitored by senior leaders and governors, ensuring high standards of implementation and oversight.
37. Medical provision at the school is suitable and compliant with statutory requirements. Medicines are securely stored, and appropriate facilities are available for rest, recuperation or isolation as needed. Systems for the administration and monitoring of medication are thorough and allow for effective oversight by senior leaders. Parents are promptly and appropriately informed of any injuries sustained. An adequate number of staff are trained in first aid, with all early years staff holding paediatric first aid qualifications.

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

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

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

39. Pupils develop an understanding of fundamental British values and the school's ethos through assemblies and the PSHE education programme. Assemblies are purposefully designed to explore key themes, such as the rule of law and mutual respect, and are delivered in an engaging and impactful manner. PSHE lessons promote diversity and inclusion, supported by structured initiatives such as visiting speakers and whole-school events such as Diwali celebrations, which enhance pupils' understanding of respect and cultural awareness. In addition, the 'Think Equal' programme is taught to the youngest children, so that they learn how to value others.
40. Pupils' economic understanding is effectively developed across the curriculum, particularly within mathematics and PSHE. Their learning is enriched by dedicated events such as 'Money Sense' week, the Year 6 enterprise fair, and a budgeting and saving experience in Year 2. Pupils in Year 1 explore the concept of value through practical tasks, for example by calculating the cost of fractional portions of an apple, thereby deepening their financial literacy in an age-appropriate context.
41. Leaders ensure that pupils acquire social and cultural understanding through the well-structured PSHE curriculum and a robust programme of RSE, which fosters an awareness of positive relationships. This provision is complemented by external workshops such as the 'Loudmouth' programme in Year 6, which supports pupils' understanding of peer influence and online safety. The school promotes altruism through initiatives such as 'Little Acts of Kindness' week, supported by pupil wellbeing ambassadors. Pupils' connection to their local community is enhanced through visits to care homes and charitable engagement. The impact of these experiences is evident in pupil-led fundraising efforts, which are regularly recognised in the school newsletter.
42. Leaders foster pupils' development as active and informed members of the school and wider community. A balanced approach is taken to political and social themes. Through class councils, pupils are afforded meaningful opportunities to express their views, propose ideas and engage in democratic processes. Pupils are eager to assume positions of responsibility, including serving as council representatives. They demonstrate initiative in submitting bids to the parents' association for resources they believe will benefit the school community.
43. Leaders provide effective support to ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Transition activities are embedded into the summer term, enabling pupils to familiarise themselves with their future classes and, for new entrants, to integrate into the school. All pupils engage in visits to their receiving schools and meet their prospective form teachers. Tailored action plans are created for more vulnerable pupils, facilitating a supported and confident transition to secondary education.
44. Leaders actively promote careers education throughout the school. Pupils' awareness of different career pathways is broadened through visits from external professionals, including firefighters and engineers. In the early years, children engage in imaginative play using role-specific props and explore using the topics 'people who help us' and 'dreams and goals', to lay the foundations for future aspirations.
45. Leaders have implemented a comprehensive 'Skills for Life' programme culminating in a Year 6 portfolio, which equips pupils with knowledge and attributes related to citizenship, creativity,

resilience and practical competencies, such as research and presentation skills. This initiative fosters self-assurance and prepares pupils for future challenges. Collaborative learning, critical thinking and social responsibility are embedded within the curriculum. Project-based tasks allow pupils to reflect on their learning and revise their approaches accordingly. Teaching across subjects includes opportunities for ethical discussion, global awareness, and identity exploration, contributing to pupils' readiness for life in modern British society.

46. Children's social development in the early years is thoughtfully and consistently nurtured by well-trained staff. Practitioners successfully model and teach fundamental social behaviours, including turn-taking, sharing, attentive listening and co-operative play. The school's core values, which include kindness and respect, are introduced from the outset, alongside an emphasis on understanding difference. Routines and expectations are clearly established, supporting the development of independence and personal responsibility. As a result, children engage positively with peers and adults, forming respectful relationships within a secure and supportive environment.

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

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

## Safeguarding

48. The school demonstrates a secure and embedded safeguarding culture that prioritises both physical and emotional wellbeing. Governors regularly review the school's safeguarding policies and practices. They visit regularly, meet with pastoral and safeguarding teams and review documentation, including the annual safeguarding audit. Leaders meet regularly with the safeguarding governor to discuss issues, analyse trends and review how the school should respond to any concerns. Governors thus ensure that leaders take effective action to safeguard pupils.
49. Leaders ensure that any safeguarding concerns are acted upon promptly. Leaders work closely with one another, and with external agencies when needed, such as children's services, to ensure that pupils receive timely and effective support.
50. The designated safeguarding leads are well trained and implement appropriate safeguarding practices, which are up to date and reflect statutory guidance. Safeguarding records are kept appropriately. Work is ongoing to complete the consolidation of pastoral records.
51. Leaders ensure that adults working with pupils receive appropriate safeguarding training, including new staff who join the school. Staff receive regular update reminders, and their knowledge and understanding are regularly assessed. Staff recognise and report any safeguarding issues, including whistleblowing. They show an understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and definitions and understand higher risks involving vulnerable groups such as those pupils who have SEND. Staff know the processes for reporting concerns for both pupils and staff. Staff receive training on issues such as domestic abuse, training for the 'Prevent' duty and identifying risks such as radicalisation.
52. Safeguarding concepts such as consent and privacy are taught through the PSHE curriculum, with an emphasis on the 'Protective Behaviours' framework. Staff are readily available, and pupils are confident in approaching or contacting adults if they have concerns. Pupils also use the 'tell me' boxes, which gives them an alternative method of contacting adults. They feel safe at school and know how to stay safe online. Suitable monitoring and filtering of online activity and school devices are in place and any issues are dealt with quickly and appropriately.
53. Leaders undertake appropriate recruitment checks on adults before they come into contact with pupils, including online searches. They record these on a single central record (SCR) appropriately. Leaders and staff who undertake these checks are well trained in safer recruitment practices. Effective practice regarding risk assessments for staff are in place, when necessary. Governors monitoring the school's arrangements ensure consistent and effective practice. As a result, they are assured of the accuracy of the record-keeping.

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

**All the relevant Standards are met.**

## School details

<b>School</b>	Warwick Preparatory School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	937/6019
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1088057
<b>Address</b>	Warwick Preparatory School Bridge Field Banbury Road Warwick CV34 6PL
<b>Phone number</b>	01926 491545
<b>Email address</b>	WPS-Info@warwickschools.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.warwickprep.com">www.warwickprep.com</a>
<b>Proprietor</b>	Warwick Independent Schools Foundation
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Sally Austin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Hellen Dodsworth
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	498
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 to 13 May 2022

## Information about the school

54. Warwick Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day school situated on the outskirts of Warwick. It is adjacent to King's High School and Warwick School, two of the other schools that form part of the Warwick Schools Foundation, whose directors administer all four schools in the Foundation. Warwick Preparatory School comprises the pre-prep, including the early years foundation stage (EYFS), for male and female pupils aged 3 to 7 years, and the prep, for female pupils aged 7 to 11 years.
55. There are 141 children in the early years, comprising three Nursery classes of children in their pre-school year, aged three and four, and four Reception classes.
56. The school has identified 66 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
57. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for 26 pupils.
58. The school states its aims are to: foster a love of learning, curiosity, independent thinking; support the community and demonstrate a commitment to social responsibility; promote the character development of every pupil to enable them to be resilient, building confidence, integrity and courage; prioritise the wellbeing and happiness of every member of the school community; provide a stimulating and inspiring school experience, where pupils can explore and develop their interests and skills to ensure they are future-ready.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

17 to 19 June 2025

59. A team of five inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

60. Inspection activities included:

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

61. 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)