

School inspection report

21 to 23 April 2026

The Mount School (York)

Dalton Terrace

York

YO24 4DD

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

Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders design and implement a curriculum that is carefully planned to meet pupils' needs. In the prep school, the thematic 'explore, discover, create' curriculum promotes independent thinking and confidence through regular opportunities to present and share work. Across the school, leaders broaden academic pathways by extending GCSE language options. This includes enabling more pupils to become 'dual linguists' and introducing new A-level subjects, such as business and economics.
2. Leaders ensure that provision in the early years is well planned and adapted to meet children's individual needs, including through targeted support and effective development of communication and language. This ensures that children make good progress.
3. Leaders maintain effective oversight of teaching and learning through regular monitoring and collaboration with middle leaders. As a result, pupils benefit from improvements to the curriculum and teaching practice.
4. Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified, documented and regularly reviewed with parents. They use assessment information to inform targeted support and monitor progress. Teaching is adapted effectively, enabling pupils to make good progress.
5. Leaders ensure that pupils' physical, mental and emotional wellbeing is actively promoted within a supportive environment. Pupils demonstrate well-developed self-knowledge, self-confidence and self-esteem, within the caring school community. Clear expectations for behaviour, effective safeguarding procedures and suitable training for staff contribute to a calm and respectful culture in which pupils engage positively in school life.
6. Pupils behave well at school. Staff generally discourage mobile phone use during the school day to support positive behaviour. However, this approach is applied inconsistently across year groups and, at the start of the inspection, was not set out clearly in the behaviour policy.
7. Leaders are proactive in promoting the importance of attendance and are effective at working with pupils and their families if there are any attendance concerns. At the start of the inspection, the attendance policy did not fully reflect the school's practice, particularly in terms of codes used for absences. This was resolved during the inspection.
8. Leaders promote pupils' personal development through the curriculum and wider provision, underpinned by the school's Quaker values. Opportunities for leadership, sharing views and participation in a broad range of activities enable pupils to develop a sense of responsibility and respect for others, and to contribute positively to the school community. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of difference and inclusion, and their knowledge of British values is developing.
9. Leaders offer effective careers guidance for older pupils, including one-to-one mentoring. This helps pupils to understand their next steps and choose future education and career routes confidently. However, guidance for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is less developed and does not consistently enable pupils to connect GCSE option choices with longer-term career pathways.

10. Leaders ensure that boarding provision is well organised and supports pupils' wellbeing. Clear routines, supervision and communication enable boarders to feel safe, supported and part of a cohesive community. Boarding arrangements meet the required National Minimum Standards for boarding schools (NMS).
11. Leaders establish an effective safeguarding culture, with suitable oversight from governors. Staff report concerns confidently and act promptly, supported by clear recording systems and a secure understanding of local thresholds. Leaders analyse information across safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and wellbeing, to identify patterns and take appropriate action.
12. Leaders promote reporting routes for pupils, including through 'nutcrackers' who are trained sixth-form pupils who act as mentors to younger pupils and contribute towards a culture of care and safeguarding awareness. Leaders respond to emerging risks, including those linked to artificial intelligence. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including online.

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 sets out clear expectations for mobile phone use and that these are implemented consistently across all year groups, so that pupils' behaviour and welfare needs are supported effectively
- ensure that careers provision in Years 7, 8 and 9 is enhanced to provide appropriate guidance for pupils when making choices about GCSE options
- ensure that the attendance policy accurately reflects current guidance, particularly with regard to the correct use of attendance codes, so that policy and practice are aligned.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

13. Leaders successfully fulfil the school's aims by creating a community in which pupils respect others, strive to achieve their best and contribute positively to the wider community.
14. Leaders have the knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, ensuring that the Standards are met consistently. They implement and review systems regularly, addressing any actions promptly. Leaders promote staff development through structured supervision meetings, mentoring and targeted training, enabling staff to develop their practice and support pupils' learning effectively.
15. Leaders actively promote pupils' wellbeing. The appointment of sixth-form wellbeing leaders, who lead on initiatives such as the development and dissemination of 'five ways of wellbeing', underline leaders' commitment to promoting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of pupils.
16. Leaders ensure that key policies are implemented effectively and understood by staff and pupils. At the start of the inspection, the attendance and behaviour policies had not been updated to reflect latest guidance and the school's practice. This was rectified by the end of inspection.
17. Leaders ensure that all required information is made available and provided to parents in line with statutory requirements. They provide comprehensive and regular reporting, including through an online system in the prep school that gives parents up-to-date information about the planned curriculum and their children's progress.
18. Leaders ensure that complaints are managed through a three-stage procedure with defined timescales. Leaders respond appropriately to the circumstances of individual cases and keep records relating to how complaints are managed.
19. Leaders identify, assess and manage risks effectively, including those arising from the school's context. Leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of contextual risks, including those relating to pupils' mental health, and ensure that these are reflected in risk assessments, training and safeguarding procedures.
20. Leaders maintain effective links with external agencies, including the local authority and children's services, to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support when required. They inform the local authority about pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard times. They liaise with the local authority as part of the annual review for education, health and care plans (EHC plans) and provide information about any associated finances.
21. Leaders fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 through a comprehensive accessibility plan that addresses access to the curriculum, the physical environment and the provision of information. They improve access to learning by ensuring staff are informed of pupils' additional needs, adapting teaching plans and providing ongoing training so that pupils, including those who have SEND, can access the curriculum effectively.
22. Leaders with responsibility for early years provide effective oversight of provision, safeguarding and children's development. They ensure that the early years environment is well managed and meets statutory requirements.

23. Leaders maintain effective oversight of teaching and learning through regular monitoring, including lesson visits, scrutiny of pupils' work and collaboration with middle leaders, to ensure the quality of curriculum, teaching and assessment. This informs leaders' evaluation of provision and supports appropriate adaptations to the curriculum, including the sharing of teaching practice and improvements to assessment preparation.
24. Leaders ensure that boarding provision is effectively managed and supports boarding pupils' wellbeing. Governance includes regular, structured oversight through visits to speak to boarding pupils and staff. As a result, they gain first-hand insight into boarding provision and boarders' experiences and use this to inform improvements. Leaders provide organised systems to support boarding pupils' physical, emotional and social wellbeing.
25. Governors provide effective oversight of the school, including safeguarding, risk management and regulatory compliance. They receive appropriate training, review key logs and visit the school to speak to staff and pupils, to gauge pupils' experiences and challenge leaders' decision-making.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

27. Leaders design and implement a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum that provides pupils with appropriate academic and co-curricular experiences in all required areas. Subject leaders plan the curriculum well to support pupils, developing their knowledge, skills and understanding.
28. In the early years, leaders provide a curriculum that prioritises communication and language through well-planned provision, effective adult modelling and targeted support. Teachers guide pupils in selecting reading books that are appropriate to their needs and provide suitable challenge, informed by their knowledge of individual pupils. Children develop their speaking and listening skills, communicate confidently and make good progress.
29. In the prep school, pupils in Years 1 to 6 follow a thematic 'explore, discover, create' curriculum that promotes independent thinking and confidence. Leaders broaden academic pathways by extending GCSE language options to enable more pupils to become 'dual linguists', and by introducing new A levels, such as business and economics. Leaders enhance pupils' learning through a well-planned programme of trips and activities, including a range of weekend trips for boarders that cater to diverse interests. Pupils acquire knowledge and develop skills across a wide range of subjects and engage positively with a curriculum that is appropriate to their ages, aptitudes and needs.
30. Leaders ensure that speaking, listening and literacy are developed effectively. A structured literacy approach in the prep school supports pupils to read and write independently for a variety of audiences and purposes. Whole-class reading books in English are linked to Quaker values. Leaders develop pupils' wider understanding of language through a structured programme that deepens their understanding of languages, such as Latin and Greek, and makes connections with English, as well as introducing other less common forms of communication, such as whistling and facial expression.
31. In mathematics, teachers align planning and teaching to cater for different needs to keep pupils engaged. Teachers use effective methods to promote deeper learning, such as collaborative activities that promote discussion and reasoning for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge.
32. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, use appropriate methods, manage behaviour well and make use of a variety of resources. They provide opportunities for pupils to think, discuss and apply their learning, enabling them to develop increasing independence. Teachers assess pupils' work and use this information to inform planning and address pupils' misconceptions. They use assessment information to adapt teaching so that the different learning needs of pupils are met. Pupils respond routinely to written and verbal feedback, reflecting on and refining their work. As a result, pupils make good progress, acquire knowledge and deepen understanding.
33. Leaders promote effective links between school and boarding to support boarders' academic development. Boarders attend supervised prep sessions led by academic staff and complete work in designated study areas within the boarding house, where staff provide guidance as needed. As a result, boarders receive appropriate academic support beyond the school day.
34. Leaders provide a framework to evaluate pupils' work and performance regularly and thoroughly. They establish pupils' starting points using a range of baseline assessments and track attainment through regular assessment points. Leaders monitor progress across the school, identify pupils who require additional support and implement appropriate strategies for support. Leaders demonstrate

an awareness of the progress made by different groups of pupils, with scope to further improve the consistency of analysis in relation to pupils' starting points.

35. Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils who have SEND are accurately identified through structured assessment, clearly documented and regularly reviewed in communication with parents. Leaders use assessment information to inform targeted support and monitor progress. Teachers demonstrate a secure understanding of how to support pupils who have SEND, adapting their teaching to address specific barriers to learning. This structured provision, which includes targeted support sessions and one-to-one lessons, enables pupils who have SEND to make good progress.
36. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are identified through appropriate assessment. Teachers provide targeted support to develop pupils' English language skills, enabling them to access the curriculum and make good progress.
37. Leaders implement a broad co-curricular programme that promotes pupils' social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional development. They monitor participation and seek pupils' views to ensure the provision is balanced. Activities include use of the woodland learning environment in the early years and a range of sporting, creative and academic clubs in the prep and senior school. In the sixth form, pupils develop practical life skills, such as cookery, that support their transition beyond school. Leaders provide boarders with a suitable programme of recreational activities, including weekend trips and social events to support their wellbeing and social development.

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

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

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

39. Leaders embed the school's ethos and Quaker values across the curriculum and wider school life, contributing to a respectful and supportive environment. Leaders implement personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and the tutor programme in a way that promotes British values, alongside a culture of kindness, respect and inclusion for members of the community.
40. Leaders ensure that pupils develop spiritual and moral understanding, including through periods of silent reflection in Quaker-style meetings, which provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their recent experiences and consider their intentions for the week ahead.
41. Leaders effectively promote pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Leaders adapt whole-school meetings to provide alternative ways for pupils to contribute, such as sharing written thoughts. This helps pupils to develop the confidence to share their ideas. In lessons, pupils collaborate and present to peers. In music, drama, sport and activities such as the Model United Nations (MUN), pupils articulate their views and engage confidently in discussion.
42. Leaders promote pupils' physical health through effective PSHE lessons, additional activities and events. For pupils in Years 1 and 2, a visit from a dentist supports their oral health, and a bicycle safety course in the prep school gives pupils useful lessons in road safety.
43. Leaders provide a broad physical education (PE) programme that includes games, dance, gymnastics and, in the prep school, weekly swimming lessons. PE teachers plan lessons well, with clear progression of knowledge and skills. They pay appropriate attention to personal safety and encourage pupils to reflect on their performance. Sports leadership in Years 5 and 6 enables pupils to lead activities for younger pupils. In Years 12 and 13, PE options promote independence and habits that support active lifestyles beyond school. Pupils are physically confident and enjoy regular physical activity.
44. Leaders ensure that relationships and sex education (RSE) is taught in line with statutory guidance. The RSE policy and provision are subject to consultation with parents, who engage positively. Sixth-form pupils deepen their understanding through sessions with appropriately qualified staff, and life and ethics lessons. Pupils demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of relationships, consent and personal safety.
45. Leaders promote good behaviour through clear and consistently applied expectations. Pupils understand the school's rewards and sanctions system. This contributes to a calm and purposeful atmosphere in lessons and around the school. Typically, staff enforce the school's expectation of pupils' not using their mobile phones during the school day in order to promote positive behaviour. During the inspection, leaders acted promptly to clarify this expectation within the behaviour policy so that it is more clearly articulated and applied consistently across year groups.
46. Leaders address bullying effectively. Bullying logs are monitored and reviewed regularly, with oversight from leaders and governors. Leaders enable pupils to distinguish the difference between bullying and occasional friendship difficulties. Bullying is rare and staff resolve concerns quickly, including by helping pupils to reflect on their actions and repair relationships.

47. Leaders oversee health and safety through suitable systems, regular audits and policy reviews, supported by governor oversight. Leaders reflect on incidents and make appropriate adjustments to maintain site safety. Leaders engage external specialists where required, including for fire safety, legionella control and equipment testing, to ensure compliance and reduce risk. Leaders maintain the premises well to provide a suitable environment for pupils.
48. Leaders manage medical provision and first aid effectively. They have clear procedures and secure record-keeping. Staff are suitably trained so that they can support pupils' medical needs.
49. Staff supervise pupils across the school day. In boarding, rotas ensure that pupils are appropriately supervised, including during mealtimes, with additional oversight from catering staff. Leaders maintain appropriate ratios in the early years, including when children are eating and drinking.
50. Leaders ensure that admission and attendance registers meet statutory requirements. Leaders are proactive about improving attendance through identifying patterns and working with parents and external agencies where concerns arise. At the start of the inspection, the policy did not fully reflect practice, but this was rectified during the course of the inspection.
51. Leaders ensure that boarding provision meets required NMS and supports boarding pupils' physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. They ensure that policies and procedures are implemented consistently and understood by boarding staff and pupils. Staff care for boarders through clear routines, supervision and pastoral care. Leaders work with external agencies where required, including in relation to guardianship arrangements, to promote boarders' welfare.
52. Leaders ensure that children in the early years experience an appropriate programme of activities to promote their development, including opportunities for outdoor learning in a woodland setting led by trained staff. Leaders in the early years promote pupils' physical development with a range of activities such as 'mini athletics'.

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

53. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

54. Leaders enable pupils to be well prepared for life in British society. They ensure that pupils understand how a democracy operates, including its systems, rules and institutions. Weekly silent meetings enable pupils to reflect on Quaker values such as equality, peace and social justice, which mirror British values.
55. Form tutors use regular news quizzes to develop pupils' understanding of current affairs and respect for public institutions. This is supported by visitors to school, such as a magistrate, to deepen pupils' understanding of law and justice. Leaders provide opportunities, such as membership of the school council and participation in MUN activities, so that pupils develop their understanding of democratic processes and public speaking through debate, resolution writing and voting. In addition, whole-school council meetings, where decisions are reached through discussion and recommendation, develop pupils' patience, active listening and understanding of compromise. In this way, pupils contribute to decision-making within their school community and develop useful skills for life beyond school.
56. Leaders ensure that pupils develop an informed understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion, including respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs. The PSHE curriculum includes structured coverage of how the law protects people from discrimination. The assembly and tutor programmes reinforce pupils' understanding of respect and tolerance. In the prep school, global thinking lessons develop pupils' understanding of different cultures and faiths. In the early years, planned opportunities, such as contributions from parents representing a range of faiths and beliefs, broaden children's cultural awareness. As a result, pupils show informed respect for different faiths and cultures and engage thoughtfully with different perspectives.
57. Leaders provide pupils with a range of leadership opportunities that promote the Quaker values of equality and shared leadership. Roles such as the school and food councils, the sixth-form 'college leadership team', including boarding representation, house captains and anti-bullying ambassadors, enable pupils to take an active role in school life. In the prep school, pupils take on age-appropriate responsibilities, such as the 'buddy programme' for pupils in Year 6 and Reception. As a result, pupils develop responsibility and engage in decision-making.
58. Leaders provide a range of whole-school events and support pupil-led initiatives so that pupils engage with the local community and charities. This includes sponsored activities to support charities such as York Against Cancer, supporting local food banks and raising awareness of environmental causes such as polar bear conservation. These opportunities enable pupils to develop an understanding of social responsibility through fundraising.
59. Leaders ensure that pupils develop their economic understanding. In the prep school, for example, PSHE lessons enable pupils to explore practical topics such as handling money and issues linked to spending, borrowing and debt. Pupils consider the distinction between want and need in everyday choices, helping them to make informed decisions about their use of resources. Sixth-form pupils deepen their understanding of moral and ethical issues through twice-weekly life and ethics lessons, and develop practical skills such as budgeting, which enhance their economic awareness.

60. Leaders provide comprehensive careers guidance for older pupils, supported by one-to-one mentoring that enables pupils to make informed decisions about their next steps. As a result, older pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of future pathways and make well-informed choices about their onward education and careers. However, careers provision for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is less well developed and does not consistently provide appropriate guidance to help pupils link suitable GCSE option choices to future career pathways.

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

61. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

62. Leaders promote a robust safeguarding culture in which concerns are raised routinely and patterns identified over time. Regular review across safeguarding, behaviour, wellbeing and attendance enables leaders to take appropriate action where required. Safeguarding is effectively monitored and challenged by governors, who regularly review practice and scrutinise leaders' decision-making.
63. Safeguarding leaders have appropriate training and receive regular updates. They provide ongoing safeguarding training for staff that reflects the school's contextual risks, including online behaviour, mental health and artificial intelligence. This supports staff in recognising and responding to concerns appropriately in practice.
64. Leaders encourage a culture of reporting, with staff confident and proactive in raising concerns about pupils or adults, including low-level concerns relating to staff. Records are comprehensive and secure, and leaders act promptly where necessary. Staff recognise safeguarding risks, act without hesitation and escalate concerns appropriately. Leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of local safeguarding thresholds and apply these consistently when determining next steps.
65. Leaders ensure that safeguarding concerns are referred to external agencies, including the local authority, promptly and in line with statutory guidance. Leaders seek advice from external agencies where appropriate and maintain effective engagement to secure support for pupils.
66. Leaders use a peer support system, including trained sixth-form mentors known as 'nutcrackers', to reinforce a culture of care and awareness of safeguarding among pupils. Pupils speak to a range of adults and recognise that any member of staff is approachable. As a result, pupils demonstrate confidence in reporting concerns and show age-appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
67. Systems for filtering and monitoring internet use are effective, regularly tested, overseen by leaders and governors, and followed up appropriately. The PSHE curriculum teaches pupils about online safety. Pupils understand the benefits of having a mobile phone-free policy, recognising the positive impact that this has on their social development. Leaders involve pupils in evaluating emerging safeguarding risks, including those linked to artificial intelligence, and adapt provision in response. As a result, pupils understand how to stay safe online, recognising and managing digital risks appropriately.
68. Safer recruitment procedures are followed consistently, and leaders are appropriately trained in safer recruitment. All required checks are completed and accurately recorded on the single central record of appointments (SCR).

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	The Mount School (York)
Department for Education number	816/6003
Registered charity number	513646
Address	Dalton Terrace York North Yorkshire YO24 4DD
Phone number	01904 667500
Email address	office@mountschoolyork.co.uk
Website	www.mountschoolyork.co.uk
Proprietor	The Mount School Estates (York) Ltd
Chair	Mr Greg Willmott
Headteacher	Miss Anna Wilby
Age range	2 to 18
Number of pupils	228
Number of boarding pupils	28
Date of previous inspection	7 to 8 June 2023

Information about the school

70. The Mount School (York) is an independent day and boarding school in York, North Yorkshire. Provision is currently co-educational in Pre-school to Year 1, with female-only education from Year 2 to Year 13. The school is a registered charity overseen by a governing body of appointed trustees. It comprises four sections: the pre-school, for children aged 2 to 5 years; the prep school, for pupils aged 5 to 11 years; the senior school, for pupils aged 11 to 16 years; and the sixth form, for pupils aged 16 to 18 years.
71. There is one boarding house situated in the main building. Pupils can board as weekly, full or flexi-boarders.
72. There are 29 children in the early years comprising one Pre-school class and one Reception class.
73. The school has identified 39 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
74. The school has identified English as an additional language for 27 pupils.
75. The school states that its aims are to promote and nurture simplicity, truth, equality, peace, social justice and sustainability, based on the Quaker testimonies, and to centre its approach on creating an inclusive and supportive environment. It seeks to inspire pupils to strive for personal excellence and to grow into confident, self-aware and compassionate young people who are empowered to think independently, follow their passions and make a positive contribution to the world.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

21 to 23 April 2026

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

77. 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 the chair
- 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 the boarding house accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

78. 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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For more information, please visit isi.net