

School inspection report

27 to 29 February 2024

Boundary Oak School

Roche Court

Fareham

Hampshire

PO17 5BL

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. Directors have a clear understanding of what leaders need to do to improve the school's work. They are skilled in supporting and holding leaders to account for the school's effectiveness. They work closely with leaders to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the Standards are met.
2. Leaders provide a rich curriculum programme both within and outside the classroom. Pupils benefit from the varied opportunities on offer to develop their self-confidence and to acquire new skills and interests.
3. Effective teaching ensures that pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning. Teachers provide interesting activities that pupils enjoy and that inspire them to learn. However, some teaching is less effective, within and between some departments, particularly regarding feedback that helps pupils improve their work. Occasionally, the pace of pupils' learning slows when activities are not always suitably challenging and do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding.
4. Teaching in the early years is effective and has a positive impact on children's wellbeing, helping them to learn new knowledge and skills and develop self-confidence and self-esteem.
5. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress because of the effective personalised support they receive from teachers and support staff. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive nurturing support that gives them the confidence and knowledge of English to access all areas of the curriculum.
6. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of human, social and economic matters. They have many opportunities to put their economic knowledge into practice. For example, by learning how banks work and the importance of making sound financial decisions.
7. The school site, including boarding accommodation, is maintained to a suitable standard that meets health and safety requirements. Well-appointed medical rooms provide appropriate accommodation for the care of pupils who feel unwell or are injured. The health and welfare needs of boarders are met effectively. They appreciate the care and support they receive from boarding staff.
8. Careful planning of breaktimes and lunchtimes ensure that pupils are supervised appropriately. Suitable risk assessment guidance ensures that risks which may affect pupils' welfare, health and safety are identified and mitigated.
9. An appropriately trained safeguarding team ensures that staff follow the correct procedures that help to keep pupils safe.

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:

- strengthen the quality of teaching so that it is highly effective across and within subjects, by ensuring that all teachers provide pupils with high-quality feedback that helps them to improve their work and develop their understanding, and well-chosen activities that enable pupils to think deeply.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. The new proprietor is having a positive impact on the school's organisation. Directors have begun to use the expertise within the group of schools to improve teaching. Leaders have appropriate knowledge and skills and undertake their roles and responsibilities effectively. Directors check carefully that leaders are doing all they can to achieve the school's aims and ethos.
11. Directors visit the school regularly, provide support and engage in monitoring activities. These visits help directors check that leaders implement policies and practice effectively. They ask challenging questions of leaders and focus well on continual development and improvement. This has resulted in the timely and effective implementation of new initiatives in curriculum planning and teaching. Effective partnership working between directors and leaders has ensured that the Standards are met consistently, and the wellbeing of the pupils is actively promoted.
12. Leaders make themselves readily available to pupils, parents and staff. They respond appropriately to any concerns that are raised. There is a suitable three-stage complaints procedure, and leaders respond to complaints within the published timeframes.
13. Parents and prospective parents are provided with all the required information about the policies and procedures, which are published on the school's website. Parents receive regular updates and appropriate reports regarding their child's progress and attainment across all subjects. For those pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan, leaders provide local authorities with the required information about how the school spends the funding it receives.
14. Subject leadership has been strengthened. This has enabled leaders to have a more effective overview of their curriculum areas and outcomes for pupils. This has been achieved through observations of lessons, coaching for individual teachers, and additional time allocated for curriculum development activities in some subject areas.
15. Appropriate risk assessments are in place. Leaders draw on the expertise of external agencies to ensure that robust systems for health and safety systems and external visits are in place to identify, manage and mitigate risks. A suitable accessibility plan is in place which ensures that appropriate premises adaptations are made so that pupils can access all subjects across the school site.
16. Directors and leaders have ensured that equality of opportunity is promoted rigorously across the school. The well-considered personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) programmes adhere to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Pupils appreciate and understand each other's differences which helps to create a respectful and harmonious community.
17. Leaders in the early years have designed and implemented a curriculum that is carefully adapted to meet children's needs. They promote children's safety and wellbeing effectively through collaborative working between staff.
18. Leaders of boarding are suitably trained and ensure that boarders' physical, emotional and mental wellbeing needs are well catered for. In addition to their boarding responsibilities, all boarding staff work in other areas of the school and are, therefore, highly visible and available to pupils. This arrangement enables effective communication between the boarding team and academic staff when any issues arise.

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

19. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

19. Leaders have established a stimulating and well-balanced curriculum that covers all the required areas of study. It is suitably adapted to meet pupils' needs so that they develop a range of skills, knowledge and understanding across all subjects. Pupils develop useful life skills through subjects such as outdoor learning and digital skills. This experience enables pupils to achieve well.
20. In Year 11, pupils complete GCSE courses in a range of academic subjects and equivalent vocational courses. In 2023, almost all pupils achieved a minimum of grade 4 in five or more subjects, including English and mathematics. Pupils achieved well in computer science, design technology, English, geography and music in comparison to their starting points. Comparison of pupils' attainment in a range of qualifications shows a trend of increasing success over the last three years.
21. In the early years, children are provided with many opportunities to develop their language and communication skills, for example, by using specific vocabulary such as 'height' and 'age' when making comparisons about each other. Children practise their physical skills and explore their environment. They develop their curiosity through creative play activities such as investigating natural outdoor objects with magnifying pots.
22. The curriculum in the early years is well balanced and is adapted to meet children's needs. Careful planning and high-quality teaching in the early years supports children's learning well, particularly with their reading. Children acquire their phonics knowledge that enables them to swiftly establish their early reading skills. Staff have detailed knowledge of every child and their individual needs and interests. Children's skills are developed through well-crafted topic work that encourages children to work and communicate together.
23. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking, listening and literacy skills across a range of subjects. For example, teachers encourage pupils to hone their communication and written skills while practising their answers to sample examination questions in geography. In modern foreign languages, pupils use a range of interesting vocabulary when speaking and in their writing. Pupils are articulate and speak with confidence, expressing their views clearly.
24. An effective assessment system is in place to check pupils' progress. Leaders use a range of standardised tests to identify when pupils may need additional support. Staff use this information, together with their detailed knowledge of pupils' aptitudes and enthusiasms, to provide support sessions, where necessary, to help them catch up.
25. Curriculum leaders are knowledgeable and passionate about their subjects. Overall, they plan interesting activities, and give pupils suitable tasks to do, that help them to make good progress. Teachers provide pupils with constructive and insightful feedback which impacts positively on their future learning outcomes. However, this practice is inconsistent within and between some departments. At times, pupils do not receive the feedback they need to develop their understanding and to improve their work. In some instances, pupils are given work to do that is too restrictive and does not encourage them to think deeply. Where this is the case, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
26. Pupils who speak EAL receive extra individual lessons to improve their speaking and understanding skills in English. Pupils quickly become confident as their English skills improve and they have full access to the curriculum. Pupils who speak EAL make good progress and achieve well.

27. Provision for pupils who have SEND is effective. Early assessment means that pupils' needs are identified quickly. The learning support team uses this information effectively to implement a range of personalised support that helps pupils to keep up with their peers. Teachers use a range of stimulating resources to enable pupils to access the curriculum.
28. Pupils enjoy a wide range of co-curricular and recreational activities. Pupils engage in a variety of activities, including cooking, cross country, Irish dancing and tag rugby. Participation in these activities enables pupils of all ages to explore and acquire new interests and skills, and develop self-confidence. Leaders check participation rates carefully to ensure all groups of pupils are attending regularly and gaining the most from the experiences on offer.

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

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

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

30. The PSHE and RSE programmes form a strong focus within the curriculum. They support the school's aims by encouraging pupils to act responsibly and respectfully. Relationships between pupils and their friends, as well as with staff, are positive and help to create a calm and nurturing community. Pupils are polite and thoughtful and display positive attitudes to their studies. They appreciate difference and acknowledge that not everyone thinks the same and everyone is entitled to a point of view. Older pupils appreciate and understand the importance of consent, maintaining appropriate social boundaries and keeping safe in personal relationships.
31. A comprehensive programme of sport and recreation forms a central part of pupils' lives. Pupils understand that participation in games and physical pursuits will support their personal fitness, mental health and emotional wellbeing. Pupils are actively encouraged to discover new sports and interests. This helps pupils gain self-confidence and self-esteem, and to develop useful strategies to manage and recover from disappointments.
32. Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils and implement the behaviour management policy effectively. Around the school site and in lessons pupils are well-behaved, mutually respectful of each other, polite and kind. Relationships are positive across the school and bullying is rare. Detailed records of behaviour and bullying incidents are maintained. Pastoral staff monitor these effectively to spot any negative trends and address them swiftly. For example, through effective interventions the small number of minor behaviour incidents have been further reduced.
33. Pupils learn from an early age that their actions have consequences. In the early years, staff use praise effectively and encourage children to express their feelings. This builds their self-knowledge and helps them to develop their social and communication skills, such as when they greet visitors and invite them to participate in their activities. In the boarding house, leaders provide a calm space where pupils can relax, feel at home and participate in a range of social events.
34. Throughout the school day pupils are supervised appropriately, including at break and lunchtimes. At the beginning and end of the day, comprehensive arrangements are in place for the safe pick-up and drop-off of pupils.
35. The school buildings, including boarding accommodation, are safe and appropriately maintained. Effective oversight of the school's physical environment informs maintenance and development plans and ensures that the site is kept safe. Systematic procedures are in place, including thorough checks by external professionals in relation to legionella, fire, electrical testing, asbestos, vehicles and tree safety. Suitable health and safety procedures are in place and are implemented effectively.
36. Pupils' physical and mental health are well catered for. Pupils have access to medical care, both day and night, from qualified staff in well-resourced treatment rooms. Staff ensure that medical logs are completed, stored and shared with other members of staff, as appropriate. Pupils also have access to the school counsellor to support their mental health and wellbeing.
37. Effective systems are in place to ensure that information is gathered, in full, for the admissions of pupils from overseas who attend the school as boarders. Attendance and admissions registers are suitably maintained in accordance with requirements. When pupils join or leave the school at non-

standard times, staff report this to the local authority. Regular analysis of data ensures that any concerns about pupils' attendance are picked-up swiftly.

38. The school provides several ways for pupils to have a voice, and to raise any concerns or ideas they might have, such as through the school council or the suggestion boxes. For example, lunchtime arrangements have been improved with the introduction of grab and go so that pupils can efficiently get something to eat at lunchtime.

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

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

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

40. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of human, social and economic matters. Pupils learn financial literacy through studying budgeting, how banks and loans work, and the importance of making prudent financial decisions. Pupils have many opportunities to put this economic knowledge into practice. For example, pupils make and sell products such as jars of honey, produced by the school's own bees, and homemade soup and pesto from produce harvested from the school garden. Participation in projects such as these enable pupils to gain a greater understanding of the relationship between developing a product and the profit it can make. This also helps pupils prepare for adult life in British society.
41. Pupils willingly take on positions of responsibility, such as heads of school, prefects and anti-bullying ambassadors, which prepare them well for life beyond school. Pupils learn ways in which to influence and improve the wellbeing of others and contribute to the smooth running of the school.
42. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. They are aware of the importance of setting a good example and the positives gained from doing what is expected of them.
43. Pupils learn the importance of the law in modern society. Pupils gain an understanding of fundamental British values for example, by studying legislation concerning consent and equalities and by visiting the Houses of Parliament.
44. Pupils listen to one another and are understanding, tolerant and respectful of differences between people. Pupils fully appreciate that not everyone thinks or acts as they do, and everybody is entitled to a point of view. Pupils develop an appreciation and understanding of the diversity of cultures, traditions and values other than their own by, for example, reading literature and through their art and music lessons.
45. Pupils receive suitable careers guidance and express different areas of interest for their future employment. Pupils readily use a specialist online careers platform to help identify their strengths in order to make informed decisions about their next steps and potential career paths. They are confident in identifying future areas for their own development, such as with further support with interview techniques. In Year 11, pupils leave to take up a variety of courses at school and college, with some taking up apprenticeships.
46. Pupils support a range of local charities and initiatives, which they choose democratically. They have raised funds for a local hospice for children and young adults, national cancer charities and World Homeless Day. In the local community, pupils leave 'little acts of kindness' gifts for local people, such as flowers and notes, and regularly undertake 'clean ups' on local beaches. Pupils develop understanding and appreciation of the local area by undertaking trips to places of interest.
47. Opportunities within the curriculum enable pupils to develop a wider knowledge and understanding of the world and its inequalities, for example, by studying the continent of Africa and *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. Pupils understand not to judge people based on stereotypes, such as race, faith or sexuality.

48. Through carefully planned activities, children in the early years learn a range of communication and social skills. By practising these skills, interacting with staff, visitors and their friends, children learn how to co-operate, work and play together effectively.

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

49. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

50. Safeguarding is given a high profile within the school. Pupils throughout the school are helped to keep safe by the effective implementation of policies and procedures. Leaders understand the needs of boarders and have established clear mechanisms for pupils to seek assistance.
51. Staff receive regular and detailed training and have a secure understanding of the staff code of conduct. Staff report any concerns about pupils promptly using the school's internal digital system to record and communicate appropriate information. Records are detailed, well maintained and monitored by safeguarding leaders to ensure appropriate responses and identify any concerning trends.
52. Safeguarding leaders are well qualified and knowledgeable about their roles. They work effectively with external agencies, including neighbouring local authorities. This enables them to draw on the specialist advice of other professionals to help keep pupils safe. They understand well the contextual vulnerabilities of the school's rural setting.
53. Directors understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare. They are actively involved in regular safeguarding reviews and auditing of the processes and procedures surrounding safer recruitment and the training of staff.
54. The PSHE and RSE programmes of study ensure that pupils are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to stay safe. Pupils are taught from a young age how to safely navigate their way through their use of online platforms to help them stay safe while online. Suitable filtering and monitoring processes are in place to help ensure school systems are secure.
55. Records of recruitment and pre-employment checks are meticulously kept. Staff are fastidious in carrying out these checks in a timely and robust manner.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Boundary Oak School
Department for Education number	850/6047
Address	Boundary Oak School Roche Court Fareham Hants PO17 5BL
Phone number	01329 280955
Email address	office@boundaryoak.co.uk
Website	www.boundaryoakschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Globeducate
Chair	Mr James Polansky
Headteacher	Mrs Sophie Savage
Age range	2 to 16
Number of pupils	475
Number of boarding pupils	23
Date of previous inspection	6 July 2023

Information about the school

57. Boundary Oak School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school in Fareham, Hampshire. The school comprises four sections: an early years and reception department for children aged 2 to 5 years; a pre-preparatory department for pupils aged 5 to 8 years; a preparatory department for pupils aged 8 to 11 years; and a senior department for pupils aged 11 to 16 years. In September 2023, the school came under the ownership of Globeducate, an international group of schools. The chair and board of directors provide the governance of the school.
58. Boarding provision is provided in one co-educational boarding house for pupils aged from 11 to 16 years.
59. There are currently 39 children in the early years.
60. The school has identified 57 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
61. English is an additional language for 12 pupils.
62. The school states its aims are for pupils to be happy and successful through the ethic of growth and excellence. It recognises that everyone is different, and that each member of the school community is valued as an individual. The school encourages every pupil to follow their passions, develop a love of learning and turn the seven values for life into habits.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

27 to 29 February 2024

63. A team of six inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

64. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons
- observation of registration periods and a sample of co-curricular activities
- discussions with the CEO and the chair of directors
- discussions with the headmistress, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils and examination of samples of pupils' work, some in conjunction with department leaders
- visits to the boarding house, learning support area, libraries and facilities for physical education
- examination of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

65. 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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