

# School inspection report

26 to 28 November 2024

## **Fairfield Prep School**

Leicester Road  
Loughborough  
Leicestershire  
LE11 2AE

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. Leaders promote the school's aims and ethos by maintaining a nurturing and inclusive environment where pupils are valued and supported to achieve their potential. Pupils are known and understood by staff and leaders, fostering a powerful sense of belonging and community. Governors maintain effective oversight of the implementation of policies and procedures.
2. Leaders put in place a broad curriculum that meets the needs of the pupils. Teachers enable pupils to make good progress through a range of activities in lessons. However, in some lessons, opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding through thinking and learning for themselves are less evident.
3. Teachers make effective use of the assessment framework to monitor pupils' progress. Staff identify the actions needed to support individual pupils in a timely manner and provide targeted feedback to help pupils make progress.
4. Pupils are successful in meeting leaders' high expectations of their behaviour towards others. They respond positively to the guidance they receive in lessons and the example set by adults in the school. Pupils communicate thoughtfully and demonstrate respect towards others, developing valuable life skills for the future. Leaders prioritise pupils' health and welfare. They maintain effective oversight of facilities, first aid and pastoral care.
5. Leaders enable pupils to develop their social and cultural understanding through a curriculum that promotes recognition and respect for diverse belief systems. Pupils build positive relationships, develop empathy through charitable activities, and understand the significance of tolerance and respect in the wider society. They engage actively with democratic principles, linking them to broader political systems, whilst enhancing their debating skills and economic understanding through real-life applications.
6. Leaders foster a strong culture of safeguarding. They ensure that policies and procedures meet statutory requirements and provide comprehensive staff training. Leaders undertake suitable recruitment checks and maintain a record of these as required, although verification checks of references are not currently recorded. Leaders make pupils aware of trusted adults with whom they can share their concerns.

## 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:

- put in place systems for recording the verification of all references for new staff appointments
- ensure that opportunities for pupils to think and learn for themselves are provided consistently in lessons in order to extend their skills and knowledge.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

7. Governors provide effective oversight and monitoring of senior leaders to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities. Governors provide challenge and support to ensure leaders are applying the Standards across the school. This includes regular visits and support for staff in ensuring the active promotion of pupils' wellbeing.
8. Leaders ensure policies are implemented effectively and consistently by establishing clear procedures and monitoring these regularly. They ensure policies align with relevant legislation and reflect current guidance, maintaining a rigorous review process. Leaders provide regular information and training for staff, so that they understand their roles and responsibilities in policy implementation. Leaders make pupils aware of how the policies have an impact on them, fostering a culture of accountability and awareness throughout the school.
9. Leaders and managers continually evaluate provision. They undertake this rigorously through observations around the site, lesson observations, learning walks, data analysis, appraisals and staff supervisions in the early years. During this process they observe, assess and record before discussing with staff throughout the school how to improve further.
10. Leaders and governors act promptly when parents raise concerns, and they implement the complaints procedure efficiently. They keep detailed files which are stored confidentially. Complaints are dealt with, and outcomes are clearly explained, showing resolution for all parties.
11. Leaders maintain regular contact with a range of outside agencies to support the education and wellbeing of pupils. They have a thorough understanding of the support that is available to them and so are able to access early and appropriate help for pupils when needed.
12. Leaders provide relevant information to parents on the school's website and through weekly communications. Academic progress and attainment are reported to parents throughout the year through mid-year reports, parent consultations, profile reports in the early years and a final written report. Parents are invited to attend information sessions to learn about how staff use assessment data and how the core subjects are taught.
13. Leaders manage risk effectively by implementing comprehensive risk assessment and management strategies. They equip staff with the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to anticipate and address potential hazards within the school. Leaders and managers demonstrate a clear understanding of safeguarding practices and statutory guidance when identifying, managing and reducing risks. They ensure pupils' health needs are met through policies and procedures that promote physical and emotional wellbeing, fostering a safe and supportive environment. Leaders adopt a vigilant approach to identifying risks relating to online safety or emerging mental health concerns, putting preventative measures in place to protect pupils.
14. Leaders maintain a suitable accessibility plan which is reviewed every three years. This provides detailed information about how the school aims to improve physical access and ensure that inclusion and equal opportunities are in place to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

**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. Leaders have put in place a detailed curriculum and schemes of work that are broad and balanced, encompassing linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, aesthetic and creative subjects. Teachers take pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs into account and plan well to enable pupils to make good progress.
17. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they communicate effectively so that pupils are interested in their work and deepen their understanding. They manage class time well and use quality resources to beneficial effect to support pupils. Teachers make effective use of technology to plan activities that enable pupils to extend their learning.
18. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop strong mathematical understanding and application. Pupils consolidate their learning by applying their knowledge and skills to real-life problems, which helps to equip them for the future. Pupils develop good literacy skills throughout the school, benefiting from a structured approach that integrates reading, writing, speaking and listening across the curriculum. Teachers employ targeted strategies such as focused reading times, creative writing and opportunities to develop comprehension and expression. Pupils acquire a secure scientific knowledge as a result of a curriculum that offers experience of practical application of scientific processes and methodology to deepen their understanding.
19. Teachers use assessment information to plan activities that are suited to pupils' needs and prior attainment. They make effective use of a good range of resources to support pupils' learning, and employ a range of effective strategies, such as targeted questioning and tasks based on pupils' prior knowledge and attainment. Staff follow school policies and procedures and as a result pupils demonstrate focused attention in lessons and positive behaviour.
20. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to engage in creative thinking, independent learning and meaningful discussions, which enable them to deepen their skills, knowledge and understanding. However, the use of these strategies is not consistent across the school.
21. Leaders track pupils' progress throughout their time in the school, providing parents with regular reports on attainment, effort and development. Teachers provide clear and targeted verbal feedback during and at the end of lessons, as well as written feedback following lessons. Pupils are given time to respond in written form in order to strengthen their understanding, and this is reflected in the progress made.
22. Early years leaders provide opportunities for children to engage in carefully planned activities that reflect their interests. The curriculum enables children to develop their exploration, investigation and decision-making skills in all areas of learning. Staff in the early years are highly skilled and have a strong understanding of how to prepare engaging and effective lessons using a combination of child- and teacher-led activities so that children make good progress in all areas.
23. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support which is tailored to their individual needs so that they progress well from their starting points. Pupils benefit from support in areas such as speech and language development, behaviour management and reading.

24. Teachers adapt questioning and resources effectively to meet the individual needs of pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive additional support in the form of visual resources and accessible texts to enable them to access the curriculum at an appropriate level.
25. Leaders maintain a diverse range of lunchtime and after-school activities which further enriches pupils' educational experiences. These enable pupils to extend their skills in a range of subjects and to develop new interests and talents, particularly in the upper prep.

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

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



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

27. Pupils demonstrate high levels of mutual respect, embracing diversity regardless of background, difference or disability. This inclusive culture is underpinned by the school's ethos and curriculum, which places a strong emphasis on relationships and respect.
28. The core values of respect and politeness are actively promoted by staff in the early years as children begin to form early friendships and learn to understand their emotions. Pupils across the school develop high levels of self-esteem and confidence in an environment where they are valued and cared for. They show empathy for others around them, particularly those with specific needs whom they support readily.
29. Leaders provide a suitable relationships education programme, delivered through personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons and assemblies. Teachers provide opportunities for open discussion and debate, particularly around what is and what is not a healthy relationship.
30. Leaders provide extensive opportunities for physical education (PE) and sport, supported by expert teaching and a generous allocation of time. Pupils develop skills across a wide range of sporting activities, participating successfully in matches against other schools and developing an understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and teamwork. Pupils are provided with further opportunities to participate in a range of sporting activities at lunchtimes and after school to promote healthy and active participation and develop their skills. Pupils understand the importance of a balanced diet and of keeping hydrated throughout the day. They are supported in maintaining this by the healthy options provided at lunch times.
31. Leaders provide children in the early years with a wide range of opportunities to explore and play outdoors in well-resourced and age-appropriate areas. Staff make effective use of the dedicated outdoor space to promote and extend children's personal, emotional and physical development. Children's fine motor skills are well developed, so that they manipulate pencils, scissors and craft materials competently.
32. Leaders promote a calm and respectful environment where pupils adhere well to behaviour policies and procedures. They ensure that the behaviour policy is applied consistently across the school so that pupils understand the school rules and follow direction from their teachers. Pupils routinely meet leaders' high expectations of their behaviour, respecting each other within a learning environment that is focused and productive. Behaviour outside the classroom is equally positive, supported by high levels of supervision during lessons and breaktimes.
33. Leaders implement comprehensive systems for monitoring and addressing behaviour and bullying trends. They identify the causes of behaviours and provide education and support to prevent escalation. Pupils are well supported by staff and have access to age-appropriate pastoral care systems through which to express concerns. These platforms are used frequently throughout the day and receive prompt responses and interaction from adults to help pupils resolve their concerns.
34. Leaders and managers monitor attendance closely. They follow up unexplained absences promptly, collaborating effectively with class teachers to monitor trends. Admissions procedures follow

statutory guidance, and information about pupils leaving or joining at non-standard times is provided to the local authority.

35. Leaders and managers ensure that the premises and accommodation are well maintained. They prioritise health, safety and welfare through comprehensive training and a systematic risk-management process. Leaders undertake regular checks and reviews of procedures so that health and safety measures are rigorously implemented.
36. First aid, welfare and wellbeing are supported by effective processes and appropriately trained staff, including a full-time nurse, a part-time counsellor and dedicated facilities located centrally within the school.

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

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

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

38. Leaders ensure that the school's aims and ethos are embedded across all aspects of the curriculum and pupils' experiences. Pupils have a clear understanding of the significance of the 'golden rule' to treat others as they wish to be treated, understanding its relevance both within and beyond the school environment. These principles are reflected in the politeness and courtesy displayed by pupils across the school, forming the foundation of pupils' strong moral codes and values.
39. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop an economic awareness through PSHE and mathematics lessons. Teachers plan lessons that enable pupils to gain a practical understanding of financial literacy, including concepts such as saving, debt and responsible money management. Pupils apply this knowledge to real-world scenarios, learning to solve problems which help to prepare them for life in British society.
40. Adults throughout the school actively promote fundamental British values through assemblies, PSHE lessons and external visits. Pupils understand democratic principles through activities such as voting for school representatives and visiting courts. They demonstrate a keen awareness of democracy and its application in modern governance. Pupils appreciate the importance of balanced perspectives through debating and are well informed about the parliamentary system. This understanding is reinforced through the visits to courts and other civic spaces. Leaders ensure that visiting speakers provide balanced, non-partisan views, promoting critical engagement with differing perspectives.
41. Staff foster a strong moral compass in pupils, ensuring that they can differentiate right from wrong and encouraging them to take responsibility for their actions. This is evident in pupils' mutually respectful interactions, fair play and constructive relationships with peers. Teachers actively promote these values through engaging lessons and by modelling positive behaviours. This begins in the early years, where children learn to share with their friends and play fairly together.
42. Leaders have introduced careers guidance for older pupils which provides insights into a range of career pathways. Pupils have an emerging understanding of different careers and of what they need to do to follow their chosen paths, such as through appropriate subject choices. This supports pupils in understanding the opportunities available to them and preparing for their future lives.
43. Those with responsibility for early years provide a rich and stimulating environment, so that children are confident in their surroundings to explore and develop their learning. Staff provide carefully planned activities and opportunities for children to work collaboratively and independently.
44. Leaders have established a curriculum that provides opportunities for pupils to learn about and engage with a wide range of cultures, traditions and faiths. Pupils develop empathy, respect and an appreciation of the diverse cultures and faiths that make up their community through assemblies, educational trips and religious education (RE) lessons.
45. Pupils take on responsibilities within their classrooms, which grow as they progress through the school. Older pupils take on leadership roles such as house captains, school councillors, sports captains and eco-council members.

46. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to organise events to support local and national charities. As a result, pupils actively contribute to the community, raising funds and awareness for charities and supporting local initiatives through the school council. This provides pupils with meaningful opportunities to develop responsibility and take pride in their contribution to the school and the wider community.

**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. Leaders maintain policies and procedures that are in line with statutory guidance for safeguarding and safer recruitment. They implement a comprehensive system for reporting safeguarding incidents. Staff record any concerns or changes of behaviour among pupils. These are acted upon promptly by those with designated safeguarding responsibilities so that concerns are dealt with effectively. Pupils feel safe in school, understanding the support network that is available to them through speaking to their trusted adults should they have any concerns.
49. Leaders provide comprehensive staff induction, training and regular updates. Staff and governors undertake continuing professional development and scenario-based assessments to ensure that they have a thorough understanding of all areas of safeguarding.
50. Leaders undertake the necessary checks on adults before they begin work at the school. Records of these checks are recorded systematically on a single central record of appointments. Leaders verify the references provided by previous employers, but these are not currently recorded.
51. Leaders oversee the implementation of an online policy which educates pupils about how to stay safe online and how to report any areas of concern. Pupils have a detailed understanding of how to stay safe online. Leaders maintain an effective internet filtering system and monitor this diligently to keep pupils safe when they are using the internet in school. An image-taking policy is followed closely by the whole community in order to protect pupils.
52. Staff have a clear understanding of the staff code of conduct and know how and when to report concerns about other adults. Leaders have suitable systems in place for the reporting and management of concerns around staff behaviours. Concerns are recorded in detail and investigated promptly, with actions put in place and support given to staff where necessary through further training. Leaders seek and act on advice from external agencies when appropriate.
53. Safeguarding leaders identify and mitigate risk effectively, including through regular liaison with the local authority safeguarding teams and monitoring local concerns. When potential risks are identified, suitable measures to mitigate these are put in place.
54. Leaders understand their duty to work in partnership with the local authority and with other agencies to safeguard pupils and protect them from harm. They make timely referrals and keep detailed records of incidents and outcomes. Leaders follow guidance from professionals for investigation where necessary.

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

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	Fairfield Prep School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	855/6000
<b>Address</b>	Leicester Road Loughborough Leicestershire LE11 2AE
<b>Phone number</b>	01509 215172
<b>Email address</b>	fairfield.office@lsf.org
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lsf.org/fairfield/">www.lsf.org/fairfield/</a>
<b>Proprietor</b>	Loughborough Schools Foundation
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Roger Harrison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Andrew Earnshaw
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	448
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 November to 3 December 2021

## Information about the school

56. Fairfield Prep School is a co-educational day school situated on the outskirts of Loughborough. It is part of the Loughborough Schools Foundation (LSF) and is overseen by the Foundation's board of governors. The school comprises of two sections: the pre-prep, for pupils aged three to seven years; and the upper prep, for pupils aged seven to eleven years.
57. The school has identified 25 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.
58. English is an additional language for 34 pupils.
59. The school states its aims are to offer a broad and balanced education, excellent academic, sporting and musical opportunities and effective pastoral care. It strives to encourage an enquiring mind, and to develop academic excellence and well-educated citizens who are fully aware of their social responsibilities. The school seeks to develop good manners, selflessness and respect for others.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

26 to 28 November 2024

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

61. 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 and other 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 (PE)
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

62. 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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