

School inspection report

24 to 26 February 2026

Willington School

Worcester Road

Wimbledon

London

SW19 7QQ

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. The school provides a purposeful community in which pupils are known well as individuals. Leaders and governors articulate a vision rooted in kindness, respect, humility and honesty. Consistent routines and shared expectations support effective learning across the school. Pupils settle quickly, engage confidently and develop increasing independence.
2. Leaders and governors fulfil their responsibilities. They work collectively to ensure that they fulfil their statutory obligations. They have effective oversight over a range of monitoring information, assessment data, policies and records. Systems for all areas of the school's work are well established and embedded, including safeguarding oversight, safer recruitment checks and review of health and safety systems. Pupils' wellbeing and progress remain central to their strategic decision-making.
3. Leaders ensure a broad, balanced and inclusive curriculum from the early years to Year 6 that supports academic, creative and personal development. Teachers use assessment information effectively to identify who needs more help and to support those who are ready to apply learning in more complex ways. They adapt learning to meet pupils' needs. Pupils typically make good progress from their starting points and are prepared well for senior school transition.
4. Staff promote pupils' physical and emotional wellbeing. They support pupils through a range of structured pastoral systems, regular wellbeing check-ins and a well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) programme.
5. Behaviour is typically respectful and pupils understand expectations. However, leaders' analysis of low-level behavioural concerns is not yet sufficiently systematic across the school to identify trends and patterns with precision. As a result, they do not yet have a clear enough overview of where further targeted action would be most effective. At breaktime, activities are not sufficiently organised to enable older pupils to access a full range of activities and opportunities as well as younger pupils do.
6. Pupils develop social responsibility, independence and leadership skills. They willingly take on age-appropriate roles and responsibilities and have opportunities to contribute to school life and the wider community. They respect the importance of valuing difference and have a secure understanding of democracy, fairness and responsibility within modern British society.
7. Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders maintain a vigilant safeguarding culture. Staff understand their responsibilities and training is regular and appropriate. Leaders ensure that they take timely action, keep suitable records and engage with external agencies when required.

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 consistency of recording and analysis of low-level behavioural concerns across the school so that patterns and trends are identified with precision and inform timely and targeted action
- ensure that they further develop breaktime arrangements so that older pupils can access a full range of activities and opportunities, as well as younger pupils do.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders model the school's values in their daily interactions with pupils, staff and parents. They have established a positive culture where they work collectively with staff to prioritise pupils' progress and wellbeing. Through a programme of monitoring, including lesson visits, learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' work and professional dialogue, leaders monitor provision across the school. Leaders' strategic planning and staff training prioritise the most important next steps and ensure that staff are well trained to deliver leaders' intended vision.
9. Leaders use coherent arrangements to monitor pupils' attainment and progress. Assessment information is reviewed regularly to evaluate pupils' progress from starting points. Leaders make timely adjustments to provision where needed. Leaders maintain clear oversight of pupils who need extra help and ensure that provision is co-ordinated effectively. Communication between staff, parents and external professionals supports inclusion and progress. Progress, participation and wellbeing information are reviewed to evaluate the effectiveness of provision and to inform whole-school development.
10. Governors provide consistent and informed oversight and challenge to leaders. They review a range of information about how well leaders undertake their roles and responsibilities, including information related to health and safety, safeguarding, recruitment checks and policy implementation. Governors routinely visit the school, talk with pupils and staff and ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of pupils. They ensure that the requirements of the Standards are met.
11. Leaders fulfil duties under the Equality Act 2010 and promote inclusion across the school. An accessibility plan is in place and reviewed on a planned cycle. Leaders make reasonable adjustments to curriculum delivery, resources and premises where required, such as the provision of hearing loops and visual supports.
12. Leaders understand and fulfil their responsibilities for pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). They provide required information to external agencies, such as the local authority, including information related to funding and finance. Communication with external agencies supports co-ordinated provision where required.
13. Leaders maintain suitable admission and attendance registers and ensure that records are accurate and up to date. Attendance is monitored closely by an array of leaders with clearly defined roles and well-established monitoring systems. Pupils' absence is followed up promptly. Leaders work appropriately with the local authority, including providing information when pupils join or leave at non-standard transition points.
14. Leaders communicate with parents about their children's achievement and progress through regular reports and meetings. They ensure that they provide parents and external agencies with required information, including a range of policies available through the school's website. A clear complaints procedure with defined stages is implemented consistently. Records are maintained appropriately and reviewed for any learning points. Governors' oversight ensures appropriateness and accountability in the school's complaints process.
15. Leaders identify, assess and manage risk effectively. They ensure that staff are knowledgeable and skilled in undertaking their roles and responsibilities. Leaders maintain oversight and manage risks

related to the school site, the curriculum, educational visits and specialist provision through a range of activities including site checks, incident review and maintenance logs. Risk assessments are reviewed on a planned cycle and in response to incidents and emerging risks. Leaders review processes to ensure risks are reduced and managed effectively. For example, following trips and visits, leaders ensure that staff review carefully and apply any learning to subsequent risk assessments.

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

16. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

17. Leaders and staff have designed a broad, ambitious and age-appropriate curriculum. Subject leaders oversee the sequencing of the curriculum, checking that knowledge and skills build cumulatively over time. The curriculum is planned to help pupils make purposeful links between subjects. Leaders routinely review the curriculum to ensure that it is of a high quality. For example, leaders have recently improved the construction and design curriculum so that it provides a greater range of practical problem-solving opportunities. Leaders continue to review its impact as it becomes established across the school.
18. Teachers use their subject knowledge to plan lessons, explain new concepts and deliver learning in manageable steps. They use questioning, discussion and practical tasks to check pupils' understanding and deepen their thinking. When misconceptions arise, teachers adjust explanations promptly and provide appropriate support. Teachers ensure that they help pupils to recall and articulate what they know and apply this to their new learning. Teachers use assessment to identify what pupils know and can do. They adapt lessons to support pupils and provide effective guidance and feedback. Pupils respond thoughtfully to teachers' guidance, which helps them to improve their understanding.
19. Discussions enable pupils to rehearse vocabulary and refine ideas before using them independently. For example, in mathematics, pupils articulate their reasoning aloud before attempting complex sums. Teachers' approach allows pupils to apply their learning with increasing independence and complexity. They also support pupils to apply their learning across subjects. For example, in the construction and design curriculum, younger pupils use descriptive language when model-building and explore ideas such as shape and pattern in mathematics. Older pupils in Year 5 build models inspired by descriptive work in poetry lessons.
20. Leaders review a range of assessment information. They ensure that pupils who require additional support receive timely support and intervention. They ensure that, over time, pupils are faring well and making the progress of which they are capable. Pupils build knowledge securely, apply learning with increasing confidence across subjects and make good progress.
21. Staff support pupils, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), through adaptive teaching, visual prompts, structured guidance and targeted adult support. Leaders identify pupils' needs and maintain a detailed register of the support in place. Leaders model strategies for staff to make sure that they are confident to support pupils in lessons. External specialist advice is sought, including regular on-site access to speech and language and occupational therapy. Leaders implement specialist advice and recommendations consistently and effectively.
22. Staff support pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) through targeted vocabulary rehearsal, visual cues, translation of materials and planned speaking opportunities before writing. In the early years, signing, picture cards and visual timetables support comprehension and encourage participation. As a result, pupils who speak EAL access the curriculum effectively and make good progress alongside their peers.
23. In the early years, staff plan purposeful, language-rich experiences. Skilled questioning and extended discussion support children's expressive communication and language skills. Adults introduce ambitious vocabulary and encourage children to justify opinions. Targeted phonics intervention

secures children's early reading development and they apply vocabulary confidently in play and storytelling. Leaders and staff use a range of assessment information to ensure that they track and check on how children are faring. They act adeptly when any children need additional help. Children are well prepared for transition to Year 1.

24. Leaders enrich learning through a wide-ranging programme of clubs, sport, creative activities and residential experiences. Arts Week and a broad range of clubs extend learning into practical contexts. Pupils' participation in fixtures promotes resilience and belonging. Enrichment provision is extensive, with high participation across the school, and contributes to pupils' confidence, teamwork and independence beyond the classroom.

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. Leaders have embedded a shared philosophy that prioritises pupils' mental wealth and emotional wellbeing. Staff promote pupils' emotional wellbeing through consistent routines, visible adult presence and pastoral systems. Regular one-to-one wellbeing check-ins with pupils enable staff to identify concerns in a timely way. Strategies and resources such as targeted emotional support, movement breaks, quiet spaces such as the library and a dedicated construction and problem-solving area help pupils to have time and space to reflect and understand their feelings. Communication between leaders and staff ensures emerging needs are shared promptly. Pupils report any concerns that they have, including to a range of trusted adults or through the use of worry boxes.
27. Staff teach a well-planned, age-appropriate PSHE and RSE programme aligned with statutory guidance. Pupils develop understanding of friendships, discrimination, personal boundaries and healthy relationships progressively from the early years onwards. Pupils' moral development is built cumulatively, beginning with story-based reflection in the early years and extending to structured ethical discussion and philosophy debates in older year groups. Assemblies delivered by leaders reinforce kindness and inclusion and provide structured opportunities for pupils to consider characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010, including disability, race and religion or belief. As a result, pupils demonstrate increasing maturity in articulating the impact of their behaviour on others and in engaging in respectful disagreement.
28. Staff typically apply behaviour expectations consistently. Restorative approaches used by leaders enable pupils to reflect on their behaviour and resolve disputes. Leaders review behaviour information and respond appropriately, for example by taking action to reduce playtime low-level accidents. However, a small number of pupils occasionally lose concentration in lessons or display low-level disruptive behaviour. While some analysis of low-level behavioural concerns takes place, this is not yet sufficiently consistent across the school to enable leaders to identify patterns and trends with precision and ensure that targeted action is consistently informed.
29. Leaders prioritise the importance of attendance through the appointment of an attendance champion, regular communication with families and the review of attendance information. Leaders implement appropriate support where pupils' needs and health require adjustments. Attendance and admissions registers are completed accurately in line with statutory requirements. Leaders work with relevant external agencies, including the local authority, to support pupils when they need it.
30. Leaders ensure that physical education (PE) and wider sport provision are planned and taught effectively. Teachers model techniques accurately, provide corrective feedback and enable pupils to refine movements step by step before applying skills in team contexts. Pupils practise drills that develop co-ordination and stamina and learn to manage both success and disappointment constructively. Staff enable inclusive participation and build confidence among pupils of all abilities. Wide-ranging pupil participation in fixtures and house competitions promotes belonging and resilience. Pupils value the breadth of sport and have positive attitudes towards physical activity.
31. In the early years, daily opportunities for children's physical development are embedded across indoor and outdoor environments. Children use climbing equipment, balancing resources and ride-on apparatus to strengthen co-ordination and control. Fine motor skills are developed through

carefully planned activities such as mark-making and manipulation of small tools. Staff model safe movement, provide reassurance and use consistent routines to support emotional regulation. Children develop increasing independence, resilience and sustained focus appropriate to their age.

32. Leaders maintain highly effective oversight of health and safety, including risk assessments, maintenance logs and incident records. Fire drills and lockdown procedures are practised routinely. Site security, medical provision and first aid procedures, including paediatric first aid in early years, are implemented consistently. Hazards are identified promptly and risks reduced so that provision supports pupils' welfare. Supervision arrangements are appropriate and routinely reviewed. However, the organisation of the outdoor space does not always ensure that all pupils can access a balanced range of activities. Certain areas are regularly occupied by particular activities, which limits opportunities for some older pupils to participate in a wider variety of play.

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

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

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

34. Staff promote respectful relationships and pupils' social development through curriculum teaching, assemblies and daily routines. Teachers reinforce the school's values of kindness, respect, humility and honesty in their interactions with pupils. International days celebrate cultural diversity through shared traditions and family involvement. Residential visits and outdoor learning opportunities develop pupils' independence and collaboration beyond the classroom. Pupils are courteous and empathetic in daily exchanges.
35. In the early years, staff support children's social development in a range of ways. Adults teach children to negotiate, share and resolve minor disagreements with increasing independence. Teachers use story-based reflection, such as discussing whether Goldilocks should have entered someone else's home, to introduce ideas about boundaries and consequences. Early years leaders monitor observation records and team discussions to ensure that provision supports children's social and moral development appropriately. As pupils get older, teachers extend this learning through philosophy and PSHE discussions that require pupils to justify opinions and disagree respectfully.
36. Staff support pupils to take on roles and responsibilities. Younger pupils enthusiastically take on classroom responsibilities allocated by their teachers. Older pupils take on roles as prefects, house captains and school council representatives. Leaders organise voting processes and formal presentation of ideas so that pupils experience democratic decision-making directly. School council representatives contribute to discussions that influence playground development and environmental initiatives. Leaders ensure that pupils' contributions inform decision-making and communicate actions to the school community.
37. Teachers promote understanding of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law through curriculum content and daily practice. Staff organise mock trials and teach pupils about civil and criminal law so that pupils understand how justice operates. Leaders invite visiting speakers and facilitate engagement with public services to broaden pupils' awareness of institutions within modern Britain. Senior leaders conduct lesson visits and review curriculum plans to ensure that staff deliver these themes in a balanced and impartial manner.
38. Pupils are knowledgeable about the concepts of fairness and collective responsibility. Teachers use discussion of bullying and moral dilemmas to help pupils reflect on right and wrong. Staff use news-based conversations to broaden pupils' understanding of environmental issues and civic responsibility. Pupils make positive contributions to the community. Staff encourage pupils to contribute to the wider community through charitable initiatives, including foodbank collections, preparation of care packages and visits to care homes.
39. Teachers develop pupils' economic awareness. Staff introduce practical money use in mathematics lessons and everyday routines for younger pupils. Leaders organise enterprise activities that require older pupils to plan, budget and evaluate decisions. For example, in Year 6, teachers guide pupils in organising the summer fete, where pupils manage budgets, produce marketing materials and oversee accounts. Through this experience, pupils apply mathematical knowledge, consider financial risk and reflect on responsibility. Leaders organise visiting speakers to introduce pupils to possible future pathways.

40. Leaders manage transition between phases carefully. Staff share information with parents, arrange meetings with new teachers and clarify expectations in advance. Teachers provide older pupils with preparation and guidance for senior school entry. Pupils demonstrate confidence and readiness for the next stage of education.

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

41. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

42. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities maintain clear oversight of all areas of safeguarding. They maintain thorough oversight of training records, safeguarding files and reporting systems. They review records regularly and in detail to identify patterns, evaluate response times and determine next steps in line with national and local guidance. Behaviour, attendance and online safety information is triangulated to inform decisions. The safeguarding team meets regularly to review concerns and monitor follow-up actions so that risks are actively reduced.
43. Leaders liaise effectively with external agencies, including the local authority designated officer, health professionals and other relevant services to secure appropriate support for pupils and families. Referrals and follow-up actions are recorded carefully, demonstrating co-ordinated and timely engagement where thresholds are met.
44. Staff receive annual training in line with statutory guidance, including in the 'Prevent' duty, alongside regular refreshers. Safeguarding is reinforced through staff meetings and embedded in daily routines. Staff follow reporting expectations and follow up promptly when concerns arise.
45. Leaders implement safer recruitment procedures appropriately. Required pre-employment checks are completed before adults commence employment and recorded accurately on the single central register. Governors undertake regular scrutiny of recruitment processes, review anonymised safeguarding information and receive training to support informed oversight and challenge.
46. Staff promote online safety through curriculum lessons and precise guidance related to the appropriate use of technology. Internet filtering and monitoring systems are overseen by leaders and alerts are reviewed promptly. Controlled mobile phone arrangements reduce risk.
47. Leaders ensure that pupils' safeguarding education is further supported through PSHE, assemblies and pastoral systems. The school's approaches reinforce a preventative, child-centred culture in which staff are vigilant and share responsibility for pupils' safety and wellbeing across the school. Pupils understand how to report concerns, identify trusted adults and use the procedures that are followed when issues arise.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Willington School
Department for Education number	315/6080
Registered charity number	312733
Address	Willington School Worcester Road Wimbledon SW19 7QQ
Phone number	020 8944 7020
Email address	headmaster@willingtonschool.co.uk
Website	www.willingtonschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Willington School Foundation Limited
Chair	Ms Arlene Faith Pengelly and Mr Christopher Bates
Headteacher	Mr Keith Brown
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	224
Date of previous inspection	7 to 9 March 2023

Information about the school

49. Willington School is an independent day school for pupils between the ages of three and 11. Originally a boys' school, it became co-educational in September 2020. The school is a registered charity overseen by a board of trustees who also take on roles as governors. The school comprises three sections: the early years foundation stage, for children aged three to five; pre-prep, for pupils aged five to seven; and prep, for pupils aged seven to eleven.
50. There are 55 children in the early years, comprising one Nursery class and two Reception classes.
51. The school has identified 40 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
52. The school has identified English as an additional language for 19 pupils.
53. The school states that its aims are to provide a broad education where kindness, honesty, respect and humility are core. It aims to develop confident young people who are proud of their learning, contribute positively to society and strive to achieve their full potential, all within a nurturing environment.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

24 to 26 February 2026

54. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

55. 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
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

56. 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.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

For more information, please visit isi.net