

# School inspection report

11 to 13 March 2025

# **Tudor Hall School**

Wykham Park

Banbury

Oxfordshire

**OX16 9UR** 

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 have the skills and knowledge to promote pupils' wellbeing in their decision making. They ensure that each pupil in the school is known and supported as an individual. In line with the school's aims, they take a wide-ranging approach to supporting pupils' wellbeing and prioritise it in their leadership of all aspects of the school's provision.
- 2. The governing body knows the school well and has the experience and strategic understanding to exercise effective oversight of how the school meets the Standards.
- 3. Leaders of boarding have established a nurturing setting where pupils feel valued and safe. They form positive relationships with each other, helped by staff provision of supportive routines and a suitable range of activities.
- 4. Boarders are accommodated in houses dedicated to particular year groups. Most of the accommodation is suitable and well maintained, but there is variation in the quality of boarding facilities and accommodation.
- 5. Leaders have designed a broad curriculum which offers pupils a wide range of subjects for both GCSE and A level. The curriculum allows for flexibility in combining subjects, in line with the school's aim to support each individual pupil's learning needs.
- 6. Teachers have secure levels of subject knowledge, and the majority of lessons are effectively planned and delivered. However, in some lessons there is not the level of challenge required to facilitate good progress for all pupils.
- 7. Leaders have established a school culture built on positive relationships between staff and pupils which provides consistent support for pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing. This includes access to counsellors and peer mentoring.
- 8. The school's health and safety management is robust. External agencies undertake critical checks as required, including those for water, asbestos and fire risk. Fire risk assessments are conducted frequently with hazards identified and mitigation measures outlined. Staff with responsibility in this area respond guickly to any health and safety need.
- 9. Teaching of the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme is effective and helps pupils to have a good understanding of the elements which make up an individual's identity. Pupils are alert to the aspects which make people different from one another and are respectful of each other's differences. They understand the laws underpinning their protection.
- 10. Leaders have established a robust culture of safeguarding across the school. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the safeguarding team are experienced and well qualified so that they are themselves able to train others. They take a broad perspective on the safeguarding of pupils at the school, incorporating an understanding of contextual factors and making connections across many aspects of pupils' experience so that their wellbeing is fully supported.

### 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:

- embed recent initiatives to ensure consistency of challenge in lessons for all subjects
- develop the oldest boarding accommodation to ensure pupils of all ages can benefit from appropriate communal spaces.

### Material change request

- 11. Inspectors considered the school's request for a change to the details of its registration to include an extension of the age range of pupils to include pupils aged nine and ten for the academic year 2025 to 2026. The school's request seeks to ensure continuity of education for pupils from the current Year 5 who attend Carrdus School following the announcement that it will close at the end of the academic year 2024 to 2025. Only a small number of pupils will be affected and there is no request to increase overall capacity at the school.
- Leaders have planned for continuity of provision across the curriculum. Year 6 pupils will follow the existing schemes of work for their age group in a separate class for most subjects. Age-appropriate programmes will be followed for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships education. Leaders have planned lessons in other subjects where the pupils will be taught with Year 7 pupils to foster integration. A two-year plan recognises how aspects of the curriculum will need to be modified in this group of subjects for the following academic year in order that all pupils avoid content being repeated. Planned developments to the extra-curricular programme will make available a mix of individual lessons and joint activities with older pupils including music, dance, drama, art and sport. Plans are in place to introduce outdoor learning to the curriculum for Year 6. Leaders have planned teaching by members of staff who have training and experience in delivering lessons to primary-aged pupils.
- The school has identified suitable boarding accommodation for the pupils. A well-maintained and appropriately situated room in the boarding house for years 7 and 8 has been selected. There is dedicated outdoor space for recreation for younger pupils. Leaders have risk assessed the material change request and planned mitigation strategies for having younger pupils on site. These include

protocols for supervision and transition around the site such as accompanying the pupils to and from the main school buildings at the start and end of the day. Curriculum planning seeks to minimise movement around the site and between rooms.

- The school has robust systems in place for the safeguarding of pupils. The safeguarding policy is suitable and implemented effectively. It is made available on the school's website. Leaders have planned an appropriate induction programme for the Year 6 pupils. This will involve familiarisation days in the summer term and opportunities to experience the full boarding provision in advance of joining the senior school.
- 12. It is recommended that the requested material change be approved.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

- 13. In line with the strategic vision for the pupils, leaders have established a close community in the school. Pupils mix across the age groups in the vertical house system for competitions and activities. This complements the boarding houses arranged by year group for both boarding and day pupils. Pupils feel that they are known by their teachers. Leaders use frequent surveys to gauge pupils' wellbeing and respond promptly to the results. Pupils know that there are many adults who are accessible to them should they need support, including tutors, house staff, teachers and school leaders.
- 14. Leaders are reflective about the changing needs of the school. Suitable structures for self-evaluation are in place at all levels of the school's management and governance that reflect leaders' understanding of the school and which effectively identify areas for modification. A school development plan is reviewed on a termly basis and amended in the light of responses from staff and other stakeholders. Leaders review changes that have been made such as those to the structure of the school day which have been welcomed on the basis that the changes have had a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing.
- 15. Boarding provision is effectively managed with clear processes for matters such as induction and guardianship oversight. Leaders of boarding are responsive to pupils' feedback via councils and house meetings.
- 16. The academic leadership team ensures robust tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress through a data system. Staff are enabled to collaborate effectively and tailor their support to individual learning needs, including those for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities [SEND] and those who speak English as an additional language.
- 17. Leaders have a good understanding of risk. Risk is assessed strategically as appropriate to the school's context, and mitigation strategies are reviewed regularly. Risk assessments are in place for activities within school, for the site and for visits beyond school. In addition, risk assessments are drawn up for pupils with a particular vulnerability. A designated governor with responsibility for risk reviews the risk register and assessments on a termly basis. Leaders ensure action is taken promptly whenever a need is identified.
- 18. The school's leadership ensures effective action to maintain pupils' safety, implementing clear and thorough safety checks and maintaining high standards of record-keeping for health and safety. When specialist knowledge is needed, external agencies are engaged to audit the school's provision. Well-established lines of communication report the progress of issues, with updates consistently provided to the facilities manager and his team.
- 19. Leaders ensure that the local authority is fully informed about the management of the education health and care plan (EHC plan) which it funds, with all necessary documentation being supplied.
- 20. A suitable accessibility plan is in place. The accessibility provision is externally audited to ensure premises are sufficient and suitable for the broad and balanced curriculum and that this curriculum is accessible for all pupils. In this way the school fulfils its duty under the Equality Act, 2010.
- 21. The school ensures transparency by making its policies available on its website or upon request.

  Policies are managed appropriately and subject to effective governor oversight. They are updated in

- line with changes to statutory guidance. Detailed annual reports inform parents of their child's progress.
- 22. A suitable complaints policy is in place. All complaints including those settled informally are recorded centrally with suitable time scales indicating that the policy is implemented appropriately. Trends are monitored and action taken as required.
- 23. Governors have the understanding and experience to ensure that the school meets the Standards. They monitor the workings of the executive effectively, challenging these as necessary. The structure of governance committees is such that governors are well informed and have a detailed understanding of the work of the school. In addition to receiving a range of termly reports, governors visit the school to consult leaders and to hold meetings with staff and pupils.

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

# Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

- 25. Leaders have designed a broad and well-resourced curriculum in which academic study is complemented by enrichment opportunities. A wide range of subjects is offered including textiles, history of art, and four modern languages.
- 26. Teachers offer detailed feedback on pupils' work and adapt this guidance in response to particular needs so that pupils understand how to make progress. Leaders gather pupils' views on the curriculum on a half-termly basis and make modifications in response. This process has led to modifications in practice such as the introduction of further training for pupils to build their skills and confidence in using online learning platforms.
- 27. Teachers help pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning. The provision of structured study time, alongside informal academic support from tutors, reinforces a culture of self-motivation and intellectual engagement. The supportive relationships between pupils and teachers facilitate purposeful working environments. Independent learning is encouraged and the required skills developed, such as in the sixth-form boarding environment where pupils make use of designated study spaces such as the "think tank".
- 28. Leaders ensure that an appropriate structure for assessment and tracking is in place. Teachers use the data on pupils' progress to shape future planning and identify areas for greater support. Teachers share the data with pupils and explain how it can help each pupil understand what they need to do next. Pupils' GCSE results show that they make good progress from their starting points. At A level, pupils' attainment illustrates that they make good progress, but the school has identified results for the sixth form as an area for further development.
- 29. Pupils make good progress in essay-based subjects owing to secure levels of subject knowledge and planning from teachers. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and science as a result of clear explanations and appropriate levels of guidance from teachers who help them grow in confidence as a result of their support. Pupils make good progress as linguists owing to the subject expertise of teachers and well-targeted support for individuals. Teachers' planning and guidance enable pupils to make progress in aesthetic and creative education across a range of disciplines. Work in this area also allows pupils to make connections across cultures, as seen in textiles and art.
- 30. Teachers share their subject expertise in ways which make pupils keen to develop their own. Lessons are well planned in the main and effectively delivered. However, in some lessons, engagement is prioritised over challenge and pupils do not always have the opportunity to think and learn for themselves, which has a negative impact on the progress that they are able to make in these subjects. Having identified this need for further challenge for pupils, including those with higher prior attainment, the school has introduced a programme to promote academic performance, but this is not fully embedded as yet.
- 31. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified promptly. Specialist staff share strategies with teachers effectively through training meetings and published advice in the Tudor Teacher publication which notes teaching and learning strategies. Pupils who have SEND contribute to their own "pupil passport" which informs their teachers about suitable support. Teachers use the identified strategies with consistency and this helps pupils who have SEND to make good progress.

- 32. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress owing to support from specialist teachers both in and out of lessons. Tailored reading lists are drawn up and online induction is provided. This is complemented by peer support and reinforced through the use of appropriate devices such as translators.
- 33. There is an extensive programme of activities for pupils ranging across the arts and including cookery and dog walking so that pupils enhance their range of skills and understanding. The extracurricular provision includes opportunities for further cultural exposure in subject linked trips, including frequent visits to London museums.

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

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

- 35. Leaders have established a culture where support for the health and emotional wellbeing of pupils is prioritised. House based activities such as meditation and Pilates sessions and tea parties in the conservatory contribute to pupils developing a successful repertoire of strategies to manage stress.
- 36. The relationships and sex education (RSE) programme is effective and ensures pupils are informed in age appropriate ways about key issues including consent and the basis of healthy relationships. Parents are consulted about the programme and made aware of their right to withdraw a pupil. The use of class codes of conduct by teachers ensures that subjects are addressed in a respectful manner.
- 37. Programmes for the pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education are effective. Pupils learn about a range of topics including alcohol and substance misuse and online safety. Lessons in the 'impact' and 'roses' programmes for the younger secondary pupils and then the 'perspectives' programme for the sixth form are effective in mixing theory and the moral position underlying a decision with topical references to the world beyond school.
- 38. Pupils behave well and are supportive of one another. A clear system of rewards and sanctions is in place and understood by pupils. Rewards such as the green roses for extra-curricular achievements and the pink roses for academic achievement recognise. The behaviour policy is appropriate and outlines how specialist staff contribute to decisions about sanctions, such as for a pupil who has SEND.
- 39. Incidents of bullying are rare and acted upon quickly by the school. Pupils raise concerns as needed. Leaders deal with any instances of unpleasantness well. Pupils know to whom they can turn should they have a concern. Boarders are alerted to the availability of the independent person for boarding and have access to contact details for external agencies.
- 40. Leaders encourage pupils to be physically healthy through the extensive sports provision which includes less familiar sports such as fencing and lacrosse. Teachers emphasise engagement and guiding pupils in finding the right sport for them. The physical education (PE) programme is effective in developing pupils' resilience when they lose and appreciating how sport can help with managing stress.
- 41. Pupils are offered a good range of healthy food and education around food choices. Pupils, including boarders, learn about the benefits of sleep. House structures are adjusted to promote this so that pupils appreciate the importance of balancing rest and activity.
- 42. Leaders ensure that the premises and accommodation are maintained to an appropriate standard. Outdoor spaces provide ample opportunities for recreation and play including dedicated areas for the younger pupils. Boarding accommodation is well maintained and suitable overall. One house does require development such as in its public areas to ensure parity across the boarding experience.
- 43. Leaders have shaped provision to develop the pupils' spiritual understanding. Pupils initiate events in response to this, such as leading a week of prayer for peace. Effective lessons in religious studies

- and guidance from staff from a range of backgrounds ensure that pupils gain an appreciation of different faiths.
- 44. Suitable space is provided should a pupil be unwell with qualified staff available to meet needs including sports injuries, mental health concerns and common illnesses. Medication systems are suitably controlled and properly documented. Staff are trained in first aid, in diabetes management and in emergency procedures. Training is ongoing and regularly updated.
- 45. Regular fire drills are scheduled at various times of day including early morning and late evening to ensure that all borders are familiar with protocols. Measures are reviewed and dates documented.
- 46. The boarding environment supports pupils' emotional wellbeing effectively with structured routines, accessible pastoral support and a culture that promotes independence alongside a well-developed sense of community. Pupils have access to open areas within boarding houses which help them to build friendships and warm relationships in a cohesive community. Easy access to a garden allows younger boarders to enjoy being outside with their peers to play on the swings or gather around the fire pit.
- 47. Suitable attendance and admission registers are kept. Weekly attendance meetings monitor attendance closely, identifying any patterns and designing strategies to promote good attendance. The school informs the local authority when a pupil leaves or joins at a non-standard time. Records are stored appropriately in line with statutory guidance.

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

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

- 49. Leaders promote opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles through forums such as the school council, the academic council and the sixth-form committee. These activities allow pupils to take responsibility and lead school-wide activities including assemblies. Pupils use the opportunities afforded to them by leaders to contribute to the community such as by setting up an equity diversity and inclusion (EDI) group which allows pupils to share ideas and to contribute positively to the school's culture of inclusion.
- 50. Pupils show an understanding and appreciation of diversity and readily celebrate each other's cultures. Lessons in the 'impact' programme provide a forum for the sharing of experiences and the celebration of contrasting backgrounds which help to foster a sense of inclusive community.
- 51. Leaders develop pupils' sense of right and wrong through lessons in the 'roses' programme and the 'perspectives' programme for the sixth form in which real-life scenarios are discussed. Lessons in the 'aim higher' programme develop pupils' understanding of key global issues including diversity and democracy. Speakers from outside school widen the pupils' perspective. Leaders ensure there is protection against political bias with speakers' materials being scrutinised in advance and careful monitoring of each event.
- 52. Pupils develop their understanding of British values through leaders providing opportunities to experience the workings of democracy such as in mock elections, in votes for student forums and through participation in the model United Nations. Leaders monitor where these values and institutions are taught across the curriculum such as in history and physical education (PE) where the rule of law and the importance of sports etiquette and rules are discussed.
- 53. Boarding life provides pupils with a structured but flexible environment where they can develop abilities for teamwork and a sense of responsibility through their shared living experiences. The expectation that pupils take on tasks such as weekly clean-up rotas, mentoring younger pupils and managing their own schedules equips them with essential skills for independent living and future social and professional environments whilst also contributing to the school community.
- 54. Effective careers education is provided to pupils of all ages and its effectiveness reviewed termly via surveys. Individualised guidance helps older pupils progress with confidence to the next stage of their career, be this higher education, apprenticeship or directly into employment. The school harnesses the skills of the parent body and the alumnae to promote a broad understanding of the options open to pupils via network dinners, mentoring and the provision of work experience such that pupils are well informed when coming to choose their destination after school. The school fosters the development of key social and economic skills across its range of academic subjects including psychology and textiles in which real world applications are integrated into academic study. Pupils engage with professional industries and develop presentation, analytical, and communication skills to support their future careers. The 'aim higher' programme within the curriculum helps to prepare pupils for life beyond school with lessons on mathematics for life, on the language of the 21st century in English, debates and discussions of moral issues in religious studies and sport for all.

- 55. Economic education is threaded effectively throughout the curriculum. This begins with younger pupils learning about the use of credit cards and issues involved with saving. Older pupils work as baristas in the school's 'cafe 6' and learn about the details of a pay slip. The Tudor enterprise scheme allows pupils to gain an effective understanding of entrepreneurship.
- 56. In line with the school's motto 'I have that I may give' pupils engage in a range of charitable activities. They develop their global understanding with annual trips to India and South Africa alongside programmes in this country where pupils can put their skills to use for the benefit of the community in working with underprivileged children. Pupils contribute through volunteering in a range of settings including care homes, supporting 'dementia active' initiatives and music events for local primary schools.

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

# **Safeguarding**

- 58. Staff safeguarding training is appropriate and updated to respond to changes in statutory guidance. Staff are alert to a range of indicators for safeguarding and should there be a concern they respond quickly. There is a clear culture of challenge within the school and staff are confident in addressing anyone who might be on site unaccompanied or without an appropriate lanyard. Staff understand the importance of early help and sharing low-level concerns.
- 59. The safeguarding team works well with external agencies including the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has been into school to provide training. Staff with particular responsibility for safeguarding have a clear understanding of local thresholds and the school takes advice as appropriate.
- 60. A clear and appropriate safeguarding policy is in place. It is revised frequently and reflects any changes to statutory guidance. It provides relevant contact details for a range of agencies and is available on the school's website.
- 61. Appropriate records for safeguarding are kept. In addition to the effective use of an online system leaders keep detailed classified records of each concern. They monitor trends and review cases and outcomes regularly to strengthen their practice.
- 62. Any instances of a child missing education are promptly addressed and the local authority notified. The management of attendance reflects recent changes to statutory guidance and the updated policy has been shared with parents.
- 63. Pupils know who to contact if they have a concern. They know how to report concerns anonymously such that they feel safe and supported in school. Pupils in leadership roles such as prefects or the head girl team receive safeguarding training and play an active part in reinforcing the school's safeguarding policies.
- 64. Lessons for computing help pupils know how to stay safe online. The school's arrangements for filtering and monitoring are effective. Leaders receive alerts should anyone attempt to access inappropriate material. The system is subject to rigorous weekly testing with records kept.
- 65. A single central record of recruitment checks is maintained effectively. All online checks are recorded in detail and all necessary checks are completed before a member of staff begins work or an adult resides at the school, with references verified. Staff who have completed safer recruitment training are involved in all appointments.
- 66. Oversight of the school's procedures by the designated governor for safeguarding is effective and detailed. They have a detailed knowledge of the school's safeguarding structures and take measures to assure themselves that leaders have the necessary knowledge and skills to manage safeguarding effectively.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

### **School details**

School Tudor Hall School

**Department for Education number** 931/6001

Registered charity number 1042783

Address Tudor Hall School

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**Proprietor** Tudor Hall School Ltd.

Chair Mrs Alison Darling

**Headteacher** Ms Julie Lodrick

Age range 11 to 18

Number of pupils 276

Number of boarding pupils 195

**Date of previous inspection** 25 January 2022

### Information about the school

- 68. Tudor Hall School is a boarding and day school for female pupils located near Banbury in Oxfordshire. Founded in 1850 it moved to its present site in 1946. The school is a registered charity overseen by board of governors. Since the last inspection a new bursar, a new chair of governors and a new deputy head academic have been appointed. The houses for boarders in Years 7 and 8 merged in September 2024.
- 69. There are six boarding houses, all located on the main school site. The houses are arranged by year group with pupils in the two youngest years being accommodated in a shared house.
- 70. The school has identified 108 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 plan (EHC plan).
- 71. The school has identified English as an additional language for 40 pupils.
- 72. The school states its aims are to develop its pupils as individuals with regard to the whole person, their intellectual, creative and physical potential, their emotional and spiritual development. It seeks to encourage pupils to use their talents for the benefit of the community around them in the spirit of the school's motto, "habeo ut dem" ("I have that I may give").

## **Inspection details**

### **Inspection dates**

11 to 13 March 2025

- 73. A team of 6 inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.
- 74. Inspection activities included:
  - observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
  - observation of registration periods
  - 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
  - visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
  - scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
  - scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.
- 75. 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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