

School inspection report

2 to 4 December 2025

Heywood Preparatory School

The Priory
Priory Street
Corsham
SN13 0AP

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 prioritise pupils' academic achievement, creativity and individual growth. The proprietor's oversight of the school's leadership is both supportive and challenging. Leaders demonstrate the skills and knowledge required to ensure that all Standards are met.
2. Pupils experience a rich and varied curriculum that combines academic rigour with creative and practical experiences. They achieve well across all subjects. Teachers match work to pupils' prior attainment and provide structured guidance and regular feedback, ensuring their progress and confidence. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide-ranging programme of activities that support pupils' physical health and emotional wellbeing.
3. Leaders have implemented robust processes to promote the health and safety of pupils, although the seating for early years children at lunchtime did not ensure consistently safer eating. This was rectified during the inspection.
4. Moral and social development is reinforced through discussions on right and wrong and the integration of school values into daily routines. Religious education (RE), including visits to places of worship, broaden cultural understanding, and topics that form part of the humanities and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculums deepen awareness of global and ethical issues.
5. Leaders have established robust safeguarding procedures. Staff are trained regularly so that they are able to recognise and act upon any causes for concern relating to both pupils and adults. Staff with responsibilities for safeguarding ensure that record-keeping, including with regard to the safer recruitment of staff, is comprehensive and reviewed regularly to form an effective part of promoting pupils' wellbeing.
6. The individualised learning programme is a significant strength of the school. It enables pupils to make further progress in their learning alongside supporting their emotional and social wellbeing. This varied and bespoke curriculum takes prior attainment into account, supports pupils' needs and allows them to follow their interests. As a result, pupils gain confidence as they develop high-level skills.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure protocols relating to eating arrangements in the early years are consistently implemented.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

7. The proprietor ensures that leaders have the skills and knowledge to consistently meet the Standards. The school is part of a group of schools that work collaboratively across many areas of provision. This means that leaders at all levels benefit from a professional support network, which assists them in implementing the school's aims and ethos more effectively. The proprietor is fully involved in the school's comprehensive self-evaluation processes. Leaders use their analysis of the progress of pupils both academically and socially to adapt the curriculum and pastoral support systems where necessary.
8. Leaders have designed a curriculum and associated activities that fully promote pupils' wellbeing. They support staff to translate the school's aims and ethos into practice. The application of the individualised learning programme and science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) curriculum incorporates multiple disciplines and enables pupils to make progress in and across many areas. Cross-curricular planning fully supports all pupils in gaining higher level thinking skills and forming links in their learning across different areas. Teaching from subject specialists in music, modern foreign languages and physical education (PE) enhances the opportunities for pupils to make progress.
9. Leaders in the early years implement the early years framework effectively so that children's wellbeing is promoted. Comprehensive policies and record-keeping are in place in order to ensure a consistent approach across the setting. This enables children to understand routines and expectations. Leaders liaise effectively with other settings to learn from the successful practice of others and the local authority in relation to the early learning goals (ELGs), to the benefit of the children.
10. Leaders work effectively with the local authority and other agencies when necessary. As part of this collaboration, leaders complete an annual review for pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) to ensure that appropriate provision is in place. Leaders report pupils joining or leaving the school at non-standard transition points to the local authority, in line with statutory guidance.
11. Leaders have effective oversight of risk management. Risk assessment is thorough. An annual review process involves all staff to ensure that the understanding of risk management is shared, and policy is fully implemented across all areas of school life. There is a clear process for evaluating and mitigating risks for pupils going off site for sporting activities and other educational trips, and staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities.
12. The school's website, alongside various publications, provides comprehensive information to parents of current and prospective pupils about policies and procedures. Staff provide regular feedback on academic progress, which includes data analysis and written comments from teachers.
13. The written complaints policy is in line with statutory requirements. A complaints log is kept, including details of resolution dates and stages.
14. There is a comprehensive accessibility plan in place that is in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The plan includes actions to improve access to the premises, the curriculum and information. It is regularly reviewed to meet evolving needs.

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. The curriculum has been imaginatively designed to support pupils' progress with their ages and aptitudes in mind. This includes innovative approaches in the STEAM curriculum, in which computer-aided art develops pupils' knowledge and skills, from basic design elements in Year 3 to complex engineering projects in Years 5 and 6, some of which lead to success in international competitions. Specialist teaching in many subject areas enhances experiences and outcomes for pupils. The curriculum and its implementation are inclusive and promote values of tolerance and understanding.
17. The individualised learning programme in Years 2 to 6 is a cornerstone of the school's curriculum provision, offering bespoke strategies and enrichment that extend pupils' skills and passions. These daily sessions range from academic boosters in mathematics, English and phonics to creative and confidence-building opportunities such as persuasive writing workshops, advanced music ensembles and emotional support. The programme is successful in providing pupils with the opportunity to pursue interests and overcome challenges. Pre-teaching of content to pupils who display a subject-specific lack of confidence is built into the programme. Staff ensure that pupils access a range of activities across any one week and many of these opportunities are arranged across year groups. Sessions are agile and responsive, addressing needs dynamically, whether for extension, targeted support or wellbeing, ensuring that every pupil can thrive.
18. Pupils make rapid progress throughout the school as a result of the support of highly knowledgeable and committed teachers. Teaching across the curriculum is well structured and generally effective, with clear routines in place that promote focus and engagement. Teachers in the early years use play-based approaches with visual timetables and stimulating resources, while older pupils benefit from the integration of technology in all subject areas. The teaching of creative subjects encourages technical skills development, such as the layering of online art to enable subsequent 3D printing or the creation of an accurate online scale model of the school. However, in some skills-based lessons there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to deepen their contextual understanding.
19. Leaders use data effectively to make informed decisions about academic priorities and to track pupils' progress. A recent change to assessment routines to introduce more frequent data points without impinging on learning, alongside national benchmarking, allows for regular review of pupils' outcomes and enables focused medium-term planning for individual pupils.
20. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is inclusive and well managed, with clear processes for support including for those who have EHC plans. Appropriate adjustments are made for pupils who have additional needs, such as sensory tools or one-to-one support, and leaders ensure careful oversight of individual plans.
21. In the early years, the curriculum is planned to promote wellbeing alongside progress towards the ELGs. Children's needs in the development of communication and language skills are consistently met through effective modelling by staff and shared story reading. This is tracked using the school's appropriate academic monitoring systems. Reassurance when making mistakes and positive reinforcement promote resilience. Adaptations to address the needs of early years children who have SEND ensure accessibility for all.
22. The needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are supported throughout the school. Effective identification of needs, the use of word banks and the deployment of individual

adult support, along with consistent and regular review of attainment, are central in enabling pupils who speak EAL to make progress in line with their peers.

23. Beyond the classroom, pupils benefit from a rich variety of co-curricular activities that broaden their experiences and nurture talents. Opportunities include 'Lego league', rock bands, art enrichment, journalism and cookery, and sports such as football, tennis and judo. Music provision is extensive, with instrumental tuition available for all pupils. The majority of pupils take part in ensembles.

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

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

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

25. Leaders have designed a curriculum that promotes emotional resilience and self-esteem, addressing sensitive issues such as body image and racial discrimination with thoughtful planning. An understanding of differences between people is embedded across the curriculum and the school's culture. Pupils learn respect for all people and can confidently and respectfully recognise and celebrate differences. Assemblies and form time include communal opportunities for reflection on moral questions, with which pupils engage thoughtfully. Pupils gain spiritual experience through an appreciation of music, art and nature and engagement in religious festivals.
26. Pupils, including children in the early years, have regular PSHE lessons that encourage reflection on physical and mental development through themes such as valuing difference, relationships, rights and respect, 'being your best', growing and changing, and keeping safe. Staff are well trained in confident delivery of content in relationships education and know how to use the correct vocabulary to ensure inclusivity.
27. The school prioritises mental health through structured initiatives such as mindfulness, yoga and singing for wellbeing. Emotional literacy sessions provide regulation support, and a dedicated space is available for pupils to access pastoral guidance. Partnership activities with external experts and charities enhance pupils' understanding of anxiety and difference. Regular surveys of pupils' wellbeing allow leaders to analyse the impact of the individualised learning programme on pupils' emotional health and attitudes to learning. Pupils are actively engaged in this process and respond positively to the feedback received, celebrating their successes, and in turn further developing their confidence. The outcome of surveys is used to implement support programmes that enable pupils to manage friendships successfully or to use a quiet place to talk to someone about any worries.
28. Physical health is promoted throughout the school, including in the early years, as a result of a PE curriculum that encompasses many different skills and sports to fully develop pupils' physical development, as well as through active clubs. There are many opportunities to take part in and be stretched by the sporting activities provided, with after-school activities such as judo, tennis, rugby, football and fitness. Residential trips promote independence, resilience and social development.
29. Pupils throughout the school are clear about behavioural expectations. In the early years, positive behaviour is encouraged and reinforced by teachers who help guide children to make decisions that are collaborative and inclusive. Incidents of poor behaviour are very rare and are dealt with fairly by teachers. The school's proactive approach to promoting good behaviour through PSHE lessons, assemblies and 'mood meters' in classrooms encourages self-awareness. Pupils are supported with this by effective use of reflective time following incidents, restorative conversations and targeted staff intervention. Effective anti-bullying strategies are in place. Incidents are identified early, and a range of strategies are employed to support all parties. There is a comprehensive system in place for recording any behavioural or alleged bullying incidents, which is monitored on a regular basis so that policies and procedures can be adapted where necessary. This monitoring has also been successfully used to implement specific individualised learning sessions that address any emerging themes in behaviour.

30. Appropriate supervision is in place in the various locations where pupils can choose to spend their free time. Children in the early years are suitably supervised by adults, and this allows for a variety of opportunities throughout the morning registration for them to engage in self-directed play.
31. Leaders ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for maintaining attendance and admission registers. Individual absence and any trends are regularly reviewed by leaders to support pupils' needs. Leaders have systems in place to report prolonged pupil absence to the local authority, as required by statutory guidance, in order to promote full attendance.
32. There are robust and comprehensive systems in place to support pupils' health and safety throughout the school. This includes frequent checks for electrical and water safety. First aid is promptly and effectively delivered by staff that are fully trained in paediatric first aid. Regular fire drills take place and fire-fighting equipment is appropriately maintained.
33. At the start of the inspection, seating in the dining hall at lunchtime for early years children was not appropriate to ensure consistently safe eating, but this was rectified during the inspection.

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

34. **All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

35. The curriculum promotes respect, inclusion and readiness for life beyond school. Pupils learn about diversity, rights and responsibilities through PSHE and themed awareness weeks. They learn about the work of the emergency services, Parliament and the judiciary through visits and invited speakers.
36. Clear messages from leaders enable pupils to develop a clear moral compass and understand the connection between their own actions and wider legal implications within society. Teachers in the early years establish clear routines and expectations, including turn-taking during story reading before the start of the school day, that allow pupils to learn how to distinguish right from wrong.
37. Pupils relish the opportunities for positions of responsibility that are available, including head prefects, house captains and digital leaders. Children in Reception classes are appointed as 'helpers of the day' and given simple tasks to encourage their understanding of responsibilities. Year 2 pupils are given positions of minor responsibility such as light and door monitors. Peer support systems such as buddy benches and Reception buddies help to foster inclusion and empathy. Year 5 pupils enjoy the responsibility of being buddies to younger pupils and support them in reading at breaktimes or occasionally in lessons. This fosters a sense of collaboration and empathy across year groups.
38. Pupils enjoy the opportunities and responsibilities of representing their school and their fellow pupils in sporting fixtures, international competitions and initiatives such as the 'Green Flag' accreditation for ecological achievement. The school council and wellbeing surveys ensure that pupils' opinions are considered by leaders with regard to school development. The introduction of different sports and the expansion of the lunch menu for those with dietary requirements are examples of pupil-led initiatives.
39. Pupils show understanding of a range of religious, ethical and philosophical concepts, developed through RE, PSHE lessons and assemblies. They learn about other cultures and festivals in lessons and through school events such as the 'festival of the month'.
40. Children in the early years develop social skills within planned classroom activities, in the outdoor learning environment and at breaktimes. Group tasks within the setting are commonplace, as are organised opportunities to work and play with older pupils.
41. Leaders actively promote social responsibility and community engagement throughout the activities of pupils, who engage enthusiastically in charitable fundraising during specific charity days and one-off events such as the 'Santa run'. Regular collections for foodbanks and visits to local care and residential homes are arranged to support pupils' understanding of their community and how they can be a positive influence within it.
42. The management of money, including learning about mortgages and banking systems, is taught through the PSHE programme. Children in the early years learn about the use of money and local services during short trips to the local town centre, for example to buy stamps at the post office.
43. Careers guidance is provided through guest speakers, science-focused workshops and interview practice for older pupils. Leaders provide suitable opportunities for pupils to be exposed to diverse

career paths and prepared for future opportunities. Pupils in Year 5 are assisted in preparing for entrance examinations, and in the final term of Year 6, pupils receive support in preparing for the transition to senior school, including, where appropriate, in understanding what to expect in boarding schools.

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

44. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

45. Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective and that there is a proactive safeguarding culture throughout the school. Leaders encourage vigilance and the prompt sharing of information. They provide a range of training opportunities, which includes updates on local and national contextual risks to pupils, and this training is regularly refreshed. Staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding, supported by robust policies and regular training, both in person and online, starting at their induction to the school. Staff understand how to report any low-level concerns or allegations about adults, should they arise.
46. Those with designated safeguarding responsibilities respond effectively and promptly to any safeguarding concerns that are raised. They consult with relevant agencies and refer concerns to the appropriate local safeguarding teams when required. Suitable and detailed safeguarding records are maintained that are securely stored and include details of the rationale for leaders' decision-making.
47. All pre-appointment checks required by statutory guidance are carried out appropriately and recorded accurately in a well-maintained single central record (SCR) of appointments. Leaders and external consultants appointed by the proprietor ensure safer recruitment and oversee recruitment processes effectively.
48. Digital safety is embedded in the curriculum through computer science lessons and reinforced in assemblies, including those led by Year 6 digital prefects during 'safer internet day'. Other areas of personal safety are appropriately taught throughout the curriculum. Robust systems for filtering and monitoring of internet usage are in place, and leaders ensure that these arrangements are evaluated frequently to assess their effectiveness.
49. The proprietor maintains a comprehensive oversight of safeguarding policy and procedures and ensures that safeguarding arrangements and all pre-appointment checks are in line with the Standards.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Heywood Preparatory School
Department for Education number	865/6023
Address	Heywood Preparatory School The Priory Priory Street Corsham Wiltshire SN13 0AP
Phone number	01249 713379
Email address	office@heywoodprep.com
Website	www.heywoodprep.com
Proprietor	Heywood Prep Ltd
Chair	Mr Samuel Antrobus
Headteacher	Mr Tim O'Connell
Age range	2 to 11
Number of pupils	257
Date of previous inspection	8 to 10 November 2022

Information about the school

51. Heywood Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day school. Set in a two-acre site near the centre of Corsham, Wiltshire, it is accommodated in a Georgian manor house. The school opened in 1940 and moved to the current site in 1953. It is owned by the Wishford Education Group, run as Heywood Prep Ltd, and overseen by the group's executive team. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2024.
52. There are 63 children in the early years in six classes.
53. The school has identified 49 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
54. The school has identified English as an additional language for 12 pupils.
55. The school states its aim is to be a caring, friendly community in which happy children discover a love of learning and the confidence to fulfil their potential.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

2 to 4 December 2025

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

57. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

58. 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

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