

## School inspection report

26 to 28 November 2024

# Westbrook Hay Preparatory School

London Road  
Hemel Hempstead  
Hertfordshire  
HP1 2RF

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. Pupils receive effective support from their teachers in line with the aims and values of the school. Pupils respond well to the broad educational opportunities which are provided.
2. Governors and senior leaders do not provide thorough oversight of all aspects of safeguarding. As a result, not all safeguarding practice reflects current statutory guidance. Some staff have limited knowledge regarding safeguarding policies and procedures.
3. Teachers support pupils' emotional wellbeing carefully. A pastoral leadership team regularly considers pupils' individual needs and provides effective support and counselling when needed, including from staff who are trained in mental health first aid.
4. Children in the early years are taught a stimulating curriculum. Caring staff support children well when they engage in guided and independent activities. Children in the early years make good progress.
5. The individual learning needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified well. However, those individual learning strategies which have been identified are not consistently implemented during all lessons.
6. Academic leaders implement a well-developed and broad curriculum. The marking and feedback provided for pupils in some subjects is highly effective and focused. However, in other subjects teachers' feedback is less effective as it does not inform pupils about what they need to focus on to improve further.
7. Health and safety and risk assessment procedures are thorough. Leaders maintain appropriate oversight of these procedures. They have implemented a robust system for staff to report any health and safety concerns. When health and safety issues are raised, leaders are quick to respond. Leaders manage and mitigate risk well and provide suitable training to staff to manage risks. As a result of these measures, the school environment is secure and suitable.
8. Physical education (PE) is an important aspect of the school's provision. Pupils participate in a wide range of physical activities in PE lessons, competitive fixtures and the extra-curricular programme. The PE provision supports pupils' physical and mental health effectively.
9. Leaders provide parents with nearly all required information via the school's informative website. However, a statement declaring the number of formal complaints received by the school in the previous year was not available at the start of the inspection. This oversight was rectified during the inspection.
10. Pupils are taught the values of respect and kindness. They seek positions of responsibility and thoughtfully provide service to others as prefects, monitors and as members of school committees.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are not 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 not met.

### Areas for action

The proprietor must ensure that:

- the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge
- fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other Standards are consistently met and
- they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils

so that:

- all the requirements of statutory guidance relating to safeguarding are met
- the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has the status and authority to fulfil their role in line with current statutory guidance
- the safeguarding policy is revised to reflect current statutory guidance in a timely manner
- all staff have sufficient understanding and knowledge of safeguarding procedures and policies.

### Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that required information relating to formal complaints is made available to parents in a timely manner
- ensure that marking and feedback consistently informs pupils about what they need to do to improve their work
- ensure that all teachers consistently and effectively embed strategies to ensure the progress of pupils who have SEND.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Leaders do not consistently demonstrate the knowledge and understanding to carry out all of their duties effectively. Safeguarding arrangements do not fully follow current statutory guidance. Their oversight of safeguarding policy and procedures is not effective. The senior safeguarding leader is not a member of the school's senior leadership team. The safeguarding policy is not revised to reflect latest statutory guidance. As a result, the school does not meet all the Standards.
12. Leaders establish a respectful and inclusive school environment which typically encourages pupils to work well and to make good progress. Leaders take considered actions, such as the provision of a wellbeing centre, to provide an environment which effectively supports pupils' positive emotional wellbeing.
13. Leaders in the early years ensure that children are taught a well-developed and balanced curriculum. Children show enthusiasm for their learning and are taught by staff who continually strive to improve and promote children's emotional wellbeing. Those who work in the early years are well-supported by leaders so that children's academic and pastoral needs are identified and addressed.
14. The governors challenge and support leaders by providing regular and effective oversight of most school practices and policies. For example, governors form focused working parties to support leaders' work in specific areas of the school's provision, such as in behaviour management.
15. Leaders are reflective and carefully consider aspects of the school's practices. For example, leaders consult effectively with staff and parents. This consultation has led to a revised and informative reporting system that clearly links to the school's values. Leaders collaborate closely with staff and parents to inform new initiatives which seek to improve the academic and pastoral provision provided for pupils.
16. Leaders maintain a clear and informative school website which provides parents with useful information. This includes a suitable complaints policy which identifies an appropriate complaints procedure. Leaders respond quickly to informal concerns. However, at the start of the inspection, leaders had not published a statement to indicate how many formal complaints were received by the school during the previous year. This oversight was rectified during the inspection.
17. Leaders are aware of and fulfil their responsibilities to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. A suitable accessibility plan is reviewed every year so that it responds effectively to meet the needs of pupils. Leaders take suitable actions when they make reasonable adjustments such as adapting classrooms and the timetable. As a result, pupils with disabilities effectively access the broad curriculum.
18. Leaders maintain constructive and useful links with local agencies who provide advice and expertise which help to develop effective school practice. For example, leaders attend local authority 'Prevent' duty training which informs training for staff relating to the risks of extremism.
19. Leaders have established a thorough and careful approach to risk management. Leaders provide staff with effective training so that they identify and manage risk carefully. Risk assessments are systematically reviewed to check that they are suitable and are checked by three senior leaders before a school trip can proceed. Leaders have also implemented a robust system to review trips after they have taken place. This means that risk assessments continue to be thorough and suitable.

Risk assessments are in place for individual pupils when necessary, for example to support pupils who may have sustained a temporary injury.

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

20. Standards are not met consistently with respect to the safeguarding of pupils.

**21. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included at the end of the report.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. Leaders implement a broad and well-planned curriculum which is suitable for the varied needs of the pupils. The curriculum covers all the required areas of learning and supports the principles of British values. Leaders carefully monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum including through learning walks, lesson observations, work scrutiny and pupil consultations. As a result of this monitoring, leaders have recently implemented a new learning charter which includes a focus on developing pupils' non-fiction writing and deepening pupils' understanding of how they learn. Pupils typically develop a responsible and independent attitude towards their work. They are motivated and supported to make good progress. Consequently, pupils are prepared well for their next stage of education.
23. Teachers typically plan lessons effectively. They have thorough subject knowledge and teach lessons in line with the planned schemes of work. In mathematics, teachers regularly provide tasks set at different levels. This means pupils select mathematical work at a suitably challenging level. Leaders support pupils' literacy carefully so that they develop confident reading and speaking skills. Teachers ask probing questions which appropriately challenge pupils so that they think more critically about their work. In Year 5 geography, pupils explain why coastal locations are moderated by the ocean. In English, pupils in Year 4 explore and discuss the rich vocabulary in Lewis Carroll's poem, 'Jabberwocky'. Pupils are typically engaged with their learning so that they develop new skills and broaden their knowledge and understanding.
24. Academic leaders implement a suitable assessment framework. Data is used to track pupils' performance effectively and to inform teachers about how different groups are progressing. Leaders develop strategies to provide further support for pupils, such as introducing a revised marking and feedback policy and focusing on reflective learning as one of the school's six core values. In some subjects, marking is regular and focused so that pupils understand clearly what they do well and what they need to do next to improve. However, in some subjects feedback to pupils is variable and does not consistently inform pupils about what they need to do to make further progress.
25. Children in the early years are provided with stimulating activities which develop their communication and language. Children participate in the house poetry competition which provides opportunities to perform and build confidence. They are inquisitive and ask interesting questions about their work and practise their handwriting when writing letters. Teachers model effective language which further supports children's communication and helps them to develop new vocabulary.
26. The individual needs of pupils who have SEND are identified and disseminated effectively to staff by well-qualified leaders. Pupils who have SEND are provided with personal learning passports which clearly identify individual strategies which will support them in making good progress. However, in lessons the implementation of these strategies is not consistent across all subjects or year groups. As a result, pupils who have SEND are not always supported consistently well.
27. Parents receive thorough information about their child's academic and personal development. Carefully written reports evaluate pupils' engagement with the school's six core values including how pupils think about and review their work whilst also giving focused feedback on academic progress in each subject. Parents also receive academic information about their child through a

regular schedule of parents' meetings. As a result of these measures, parents are well informed about the progress their child makes.

28. Pupils are provided with a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. In art club, pupils experiment by painting with mixed colours and pipettes. The cricket club supports pupils in developing catching skills during a well-coached and effective team game. In music, pupils join choirs and ensembles to extend their musical interests and enhance choral and instrumental skills. Pupils participate in a wide range of activities which develop their skills, interests and provide new knowledge.

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

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



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

30. Pupils are taught the values of respect and tolerance which underscore positive and friendly relationships within the school community. Assemblies on British values examine acts of respectful sporting behaviour demonstrated by Olympians, which pupils relate to their own school-based experiences. For example, they explore how to be respectful towards others in lessons and when playing sport. The school supports pupils' understanding of how to use words kindly and morally and pupils demonstrate this effectively in their daily interactions.
31. The well-planned curriculum supports pupils' understanding of how spirituality positively affects mental health and cultural appreciation. Pupils sing hymns in assemblies and are visited by people from different faiths who discuss the positive impact of empathy and inclusivity. In religious studies, pupils learn about Sikhism and visit a Gurdwara. Pupils in Year 3 visit a Hindu temple where they practise meditation which teaches them about mindfulness.
32. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum carefully supports pupils' emotional wellbeing. Pupils learn the importance of integrity and togetherness when exploring effective friendships and how to consider the feelings of others. In the early years, children develop self-knowledge when they learn about resilience and 'bouncing back' when things are challenging. As a result of the well-planned PSHE curriculum, pupils develop self-confidence and esteem and the skills to respond well to different experiences.
33. The relationships and sex education curriculum teaches pupils how to behave in an appropriately responsible and respectful manner. Pupils learn about consent and the dangers of misusing social media. They explore discriminatory themes when learning about sexual rights and discuss the importance of acceptance and principled behaviour.
34. Most pupils behave well and are supported by a range of effective strategies to reinforce positive behaviour. Merits are awarded for acts of moral kindness which contribute to the house points competition. Praise postcards are awarded to pupils for noteworthy actions such as showing support and consideration to others. Leaders systematically monitor behaviour and provide guidance and time for reflection to pupils when their behaviour falls below the school's high expectations.
35. Leaders implement a robust anti-bullying strategy so that pupils understand the harmful consequences of bullying. Effective anti-bullying measures are explored in PSHE lessons, assemblies and an anti-bullying week. Pupils are confident that when bullying is reported, teachers will take quick, appropriate and supportive actions. Behaviour and bullying records are detailed and maintained well.
36. Leaders plan a wide range of opportunities for pupils to participate in a broad PE programme which makes effective use of the school's premises and accommodation. Pupils understand that PE contributes positively to their physical and mental health. In Nursery, children learn to dance creatively and link their movements to winter weather such as freezing and melting. In PE lessons, pupils learn about the benefits of exercise and develop their understanding of how this has a positive impact on their muscles and heart. Pupils play sport competitively and learn the importance of teamwork and respectful sporting behaviour.

37. Health and safety procedures are robust and include well-maintained health and safety records. The school site is managed effectively because of measures such as perimeter fencing and a well-developed one-way vehicular system. Staff report any health and safety issues efficiently. These are quickly identified by leaders and suitably resolved. Fire safety is given an appropriately high priority. Pupils regularly rehearse how to safely evacuate school buildings. Staff supervise vigilantly at breaktimes so that pupils play and relax in a suitable manner. In the early years, leaders maintain appropriate child to adult ratios. As a result of these measures, pupils learn and play in a suitable and secure environment.
38. First aid procedures are appropriate and well-established. Staff are provided with regular training, including in paediatric first aid for those who work in early years. Medical records are carefully maintained.
39. The school implements effective admissions and attendance procedures. Pupils' attendance is high and an attendance champion regularly oversees attendance data and remains alert to any concerning trends. The local authority is appropriately notified when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.

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

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

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

41. Leaders develop effective strategies to enhance pupils' thorough understanding of how to be responsible and inclusive. Pupils are taught about the Equality Act 2010 in appropriate PSHE lessons and learn that protected characteristics such as disability, culture, race and religion are protected by law. Leaders introduce a cultural calendar which informs pupils about many of the important festivals which are celebrated around the world. The curriculum supports pupils' developing understanding about different global regions. Pupils in Year 8 learn about Australian bushfires whilst those in Year 6 explore the international response to disasters such as the Japanese earthquake. Pupils study appropriate texts in English lessons to teach the values of respect and tolerance which reinforce the importance of self-esteem and individual liberty. As a result, and in line with the school's aims, pupils gain a broad and empathetic understanding of a diverse British and global society.
42. Pupils develop financial understanding. Children in the early years learn about buying and selling through role play. Pupils in Year 4 explore the taxation system in well-planned PSHE lessons. In Year 8, pupils engage with entrepreneurialism when they plan businesses involving storyboarding, logos and marketing.
43. Pupils are provided with appropriate guidance on careers. For example, pupils in Year 7 learn to write a curriculum vitae and a letter of application to be senior prefects. A visit to a film studio teaches pupils how many different jobs combine into the making of a film. Pupils receive impartial and suitable information about careers which prepares them to make informed decisions in the future.
44. Leaders provide extensive and well-established opportunities for pupils to serve others in meaningful positions of responsibility. Pupils in Year 8 serve as prefects and act as effective role models to younger pupils. In Year 6, pupils are monitors and willingly give of their time to hear children in Reception read or organise litter picking so that the school premises remain clean and tidy. Pupils volunteer to sit on committees such as the catering committee and represent the culinary views of others when meeting with the catering team. Pupils are keen to accept responsibility and to make a positive difference to others.
45. Leaders maintain links with local organisations and pupils are keen to support those who are less fortunate. Charitable endeavours are led by an active charity committee. Food collections are assembled and donated to the Salvation Army. The charity committee choose to support *Electric Umbrella* by donating unwanted musical instruments which provide musical opportunities for others. The school hosts a creative arts day and invites pupils from other local schools to participate in collaborative activities. These measures mean that pupils learn and understand that it is responsible and kind to extend help and friendship to others.
46. Children in the early years learn to be helpful, inquisitive and responsible. They work together well and help teachers by sweeping up after creative activities. Children demonstrate care and responsibility by taking turns to look after guinea pigs. As a result of these well-planned opportunities, children in the early years develop responsibility and effective social skills which prepare them well for Year 1.

47. The curriculum teaches pupils about the law, right from wrong and democracy in an effective manner. In PSHE, pupils explore the difference between rules and behaviour. Pupils understand that respectful behaviour has a positive impact on society and learn that laws exist to act as a deterrent so that rules are observed. Pupils are taught about democracy such as when pupils in Year 1 vote on what their treat should be after collectively filling their marble jar. Older pupils study 'Animal Farm' and explore the damaging consequences upon society when democracy breaks down. When pupils learn about topics with political elements, staff are careful to ensure such topics are taught in a balanced manner.
48. Pupils are taught well about British institutions and services. Children in the early years are visited by the police who explain the job they do to keep the local community safe. Pupils in Year 4 visit a local educational organisation to learn about road safety, the highway code and how to contact the emergency services. Pupils learn about the Houses of Parliament and engage in house debates which are structured and modelled on parliamentary exchanges.

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

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

## Safeguarding

50. Leaders have not followed current statutory guidance as the DSL is not a member of the school's Executive Group and therefore does not have the necessary status and authority.
51. Staff knowledge and understanding of some aspects of safeguarding is not thorough. For example, their knowledge of key induction policies such as the whistleblowing and low-level concern policies is not confident. Knowledge of recent changes to statutory guidance is insecure, such as the latest changes to Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE). Staff understanding of contextualised safeguarding risks to pupils is limited. As a result, pupils' wellbeing is not promoted as effectively as it could be.
52. Safeguarding leaders receive appropriate training which develops their knowledge and skills. They are quick to respond when alerted to safeguarding concerns. Leaders effectively and constructively consult with local safeguarding partners to seek advice and expertise. Detailed and clear safeguarding records are maintained in line with current statutory guidance.
53. Leaders do not revise the safeguarding policy in a timely manner, so that it reflects the latest statutory guidance.
54. Some aspects of the safeguarding procedures are well developed and clearly understood by those who work at the school. Leaders discuss safeguarding weekly during staff meetings. Leaders provide staff with regular safeguarding training.
55. Leaders implement robust monitoring and filtering procedures so that pupils are protected from inappropriate areas of the internet. Pupils learn how to act responsibly when online through effective PSHE and computing lessons and assemblies. Leaders investigate any alerts quickly and record decisions and actions taken in a suitable manner. As a result of these measures, pupils have a well-developed understanding of how to stay safe when online.
56. Pupils seek effective support when needed through well-established systems. These include worry boxes, the form tutor system, the online form and staff who are trained in mental health first aid. Pupils feel supported when at school.
57. Leaders maintain a suitable record of safeguarding checks made on adults before they begin working with pupils. Appropriate training is provided for leaders involved in staff recruitment so that the process remains thorough and robust. For example, key leaders are trained in safer recruitment and in how to maintain the record of appointments effectively.

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

58. The safeguarding arrangements do not meet the Standards.
- 59. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included at the end of the report.**

## Schedule of unmet Standards

### Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR <sup>1</sup> Part 8, paragraph 34(1)	The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school –
34(1)(a)	demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
34(1)(b)	fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
34(1)(c)	actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

### Safeguarding

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –
7(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
7(b)	such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
EYFS 3.5 <sup>2</sup>	Providers must have and implement policies and procedures to keep children safe and meet EYFS requirements. Schools are not required to have separate policies to cover EYFS requirements provided the requirements are already met through an existing policy. Where providers are required to have policies and procedures as specified below, these policies and procedures should be recorded in writing. Policies and procedures should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant LSP.
EYFS 3.7	If providers have concerns about children's safety or welfare, they must immediately notify their local authority children's social care team, in line with local reporting procedures, and, in emergencies, the police. Providers must also take into account the government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales'. All schools are required to have regard to the government's statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', and other childcare providers may also find it helpful to read this guidance.

<sup>1</sup> The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('ISSR')

<sup>2</sup> Early years foundation stage statutory framework ('EYFS')

## School details

<b>School</b>	Westbrook Hay Preparatory School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	919/6021
<b>Registered charity number</b>	292537
<b>Address</b>	Westbrook Hay Preparatory School London Road Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP1 2RF
<b>Phone number</b>	01442 256143
<b>Email address</b>	westbrookhay@westbrookhay.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.westbrookhay.co.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Westbrook Hay Educational Trust
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Diana Robinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mark Brain
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 13
<b>Number of pupils</b>	380
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 January 2023

## Information about the school

60. Westbrook Hay Preparatory School is a co-educational day school outside Hemel Hempstead. The school is organised into three sections: The early years and Years 1 and 2 form the pre-prep section; the prep section is for pupils in Years 3 to 6; and the senior section comprises pupils in Years 7 and 8. The school is a charitable trust which is administered by a board of governors.
61. There are 25 children in Nursery arranged into two classes and there are 35 children in Reception arranged into two classes.
62. The school has identified 75 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
63. The school has identified three pupils for whom English is an additional language.
64. The school states its aims are to develop happy, confident and successful pupils who are prepared well for life in British and global society. It endeavours to develop a welcoming and inclusive environment where pupils give of their best.



## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

26 to 28 November 2024

65. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

66. 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 head, 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.

67. 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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For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)