

School inspection report

10 to 12 June 2025

Longacre School

Hullbrook Lane
Shamley Green
Guildford
GU5 0NQ

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 established a culture where the key aims and values of the school are embedded across the curriculum and well known to pupils. Pupils are able to identify and articulate how the school's 'seven Cs', curiosity, creativity, collaboration, critiquing, communication, commitment and craftsmanship, are relevant to many aspects of their school experience.
2. Leaders have the skills and knowledge to manage change while supporting pupils' wellbeing. The school has been through a period of considerable change in recent months, and this has been managed effectively through consultation and clear communication with the range of stakeholders including pupils and parents.
3. Suitable school policies are in place and implemented. However, their most current versions were not all readily accessible when the inspection commenced, and others needed details updating. Leaders rectified this during the inspection.
4. Effective risk assessments and mitigation strategies are in place for activities within school, for the site and for visits beyond school. Leaders mitigate risks that are less easily spotted.
5. Leaders of the early years prioritise individualised learning by tailoring the curriculum to meet the children's diverse needs. Leaders enable each individual to make good progress towards the early learning goals.
6. Teachers have good levels of subject knowledge and impart this with enthusiasm in lessons which they plan and deliver effectively.
7. Clear procedures are in place to identify the needs of any pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Early identification and the sharing of requirements and targets with parents add to the effectiveness of the school's support for these pupils.
8. Pupils develop skills across an extensive programme of activities in areas ranging across the arts and sports, from climbing to filmmaking, delivered by highly committed and enthusiastic staff.
9. Form tutors deliver a suitable relationships and sex education (RSE) scheme of work that they adapt effectively to meet pupils' needs. Leaders enable pupils to discuss potentially sensitive topics with adults who they trust.
10. Leaders implement a range of strategies to promote positive mental health in pupils, including through a counselling service based in the 'Bear Hut', situated to be easily accessible to pupils.
11. Pupils gain an understanding of the wider world around them and their responsibility towards it. This comes from discussions in lessons across the curriculum from the early years upwards and is complemented by extra-curricular activities such as the work of the *green team* and the nature-based outdoor learning club which strengthens the pupils' understanding of the natural world.
12. Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities respond promptly to any concerns raised. They maintain suitable and secure safeguarding records in line with statutory guidance.

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 oversight of policies to ensure that current and accurate versions are easily available to parents.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

13. Leaders ensure that the promotion of pupils' wellbeing is at the heart of the school's provision. They have the appropriate knowledge and skills to manage a setting in which all aspects of wellbeing from the academic to the pastoral are supported effectively.
14. A key aim of the school is to develop a sense of a pastorally supportive community among pupils, staff and parents and this is reflected across its provision in the positive relationships between the pupils and with staff. Leaders have devised systems such as the 'Bear Paws' awards to recognise pupils whose achievements and behaviour exemplify the school aims, ensuring that kindness is central to the school's culture.
15. Leaders engage in constructive self-evaluation of all aspects of the school. They assess the effectiveness of provision judiciously and identify successes to build upon and other aspects which merit further development. Leaders conduct surveys and frequent in-person meetings with parents and other stakeholders to inform their self-evaluation.
16. Leaders provide opportunities for staff to develop their professional knowledge and skills, including in areas such as risk assessment, fire management and evacuation procedures and first aid. They provide additional training opportunities for staff with focused areas of responsibility, such as outdoor education teachers.
17. In the early years, leaders enable staff to develop their knowledge and expertise through regular meetings focused on professional development, leading to an effective team who work in partnership to create a supportive and nurturing environment for children.
18. The school's policies cover all statutory areas appropriately. Leaders review policies and their implementation regularly. However, when the inspection was announced the most current versions of some policies were not immediately accessible and others required details to be updated. Leaders rectified these issues before the end of the inspection.
19. The school provides all required information to parents, mostly through its website. Regular detailed reports inform parents of their child's progress and include comments from the pupils themselves as they take responsibility for their assessment.
20. Leaders work effectively with other agencies including external safeguarding partners. They work alongside colleagues in the Bridewell foundation who lend further experience and support for areas such as risk management. Leaders ensure that the local authority is informed about the allocation of funding for any pupil with an education, health and care plan (EHC) plan.
21. Leaders assess risk effectively and ensure appropriate action is taken when a risk is identified. Risk assessments are in place for the premises, visits off site and for individuals with particular vulnerabilities. Risk assessments identify the likelihood of particular risks, and strategies to mitigate these. Leaders regularly review risk assessments and maintain a log of near misses to inform the effective management of risk.
22. The school fulfils its duty under the Equality Act 2010. Leaders implement a suitable and detailed accessibility plan to ensure that the curriculum and premises are accessible to all groups of pupils. The plan outlines a range of support strategies to ensure no pupil is discriminated against. The plan

details measures to allow physical accessibility such as the provision of portable ramps to support any pupils with more limited mobility.

23. A suitable complaints policy is in place. Leaders implement the policy effectively and maintain suitable records of all complaints, including those resolved informally. Leaders monitor any trends in complaints to inform their self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness.
24. Governors exercise effective oversight of the school and of leaders' decision-making. They visit the school regularly and talk to staff and pupils. Governors maintain oversight of teaching and learning by joining the leadership teams on regular and focused learning walks. There is a constructive demarcation of roles between the leadership team attached to the school and Governors on the court of the Bridewell foundation which enables effective oversight that ensures that the school meets the Standards.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

26. Leaders have shaped a broad curriculum which includes outdoor education and engineering. Pupils from the early years upwards benefit from specialist teaching in subjects including French, music and physical education. Teachers use effective schemes of work to build pupils' skills appropriately. Planning across subjects helps pupils to make connections between different areas of their learning, such as when they consider common themes in both geography and English texts.
27. Leaders of teaching maintain a culture of challenge for all which effectively promotes pupils' good progress. Pupils engage with the 'chilli challenge' across the prep curriculum and are adept at choosing the level at which they engage with a topic in a way which promotes active and responsible approaches to learning.
28. Teachers of the early years draw on their knowledge and expertise to plan and deliver a wide variety of learning opportunities, many of which are spontaneous and in response to children's interests and observations. Children in the early years are actively engaged in their learning and motivated to develop their skills and knowledge. Staff's continuous assessment of children's learning and areas of interest furthers this process.
29. A suitable assessment framework is in place. Leaders evaluate pupils' levels of achievement against national age-related expectations and use their analysis to shape teaching and the curriculum. Teachers provide pupils with clear feedback that enables them to understand the progress they are making and how to develop it further.
30. Supportive relationships between pupils and teachers facilitate purposeful working environments in which good progress can be made and support pupils' positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils work well with each other and show respect and consideration in their collaborative learning.
31. Pupils make good progress in creative subjects owing to encouraging teaching which promotes pupils' application of creative effort and ability to learn independently. Well-planned activities from the early years upwards respond to the range of pupils' musical experience and see all involved in effective shared music making in choral and instrumental activities, such as using a range of percussion.
32. Pupils make good progress in English where teachers guide effective debates about current issues and employ individualised questioning to encourage the pupils to develop their opinions. Teachers of languages use resources imaginatively and design topical activities, such as responding to an upcoming sports day, to foster engagement.
33. Teachers plan ambitious lessons in technology which see pupils develop their creative and practical skills effectively, such as when working with metal and other resistant materials. Teachers in humanities make effective use of resources, including digital tools, to develop pupils' planning skills alongside their knowledge.
34. Pupils make good progress in mathematics owing to well-planned activities delivered by enthusiastic teachers who offer clear explanations and develop pupils' confidence and skills in their problem-solving abilities and techniques. Pupils are capable scientists and engagement in science is fostered through searching questioning and, when appropriate, careful investigative work.

35. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are effectively supported from initial planning on admission to additional support within lessons, when required, including through the use of appropriate resources, such as vocabulary aids, and individual reading support.
36. In the early years, staff develop the children's communication and language skills effectively. Staff model the accurate use of grammar and pronunciation and extend children's vocabulary, for example offering 'heave' and 'tug' as alternatives to 'pull'. Staff pitch their questioning well to individual children and provide effective explanations to secure children's effective learning.
37. Leaders of provision for pupils who have SEND identify their needs early and share strategies to support them in lessons and also beyond the classroom when required. Pupils who have SEND make good progress owing to the support and empathetic responses provided by teachers who know their needs well.
38. A programme of after school activities provides pupils with opportunities to develop a wide range of skills and develops their learning in areas such as touch typing, chess and skateboarding, choir and judo.

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

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

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

40. Leaders have established a setting in which mutual respect is demonstrated between pupils and staff. Pupils understand respect owing to effective teaching and discussion in assemblies, lessons and form time when they learn about children's rights and how these apply to the world around them.
41. Pupils articulate their ideas fluently and discuss issues with confidence, showing respect for each other's opinions. Lessons in the effective personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme help pupils to understand different facets of an individual's identity and guide them in valuing diverse perspectives on issues ranging from supporting one's own sense of wellbeing to how best to protect the environment. Staff guide pupils how to recognise, manage and express their emotions appropriately.
42. In the early years, staff greet parents and children by name each morning, creating an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued. This approach builds the children's confidence, equipping them to enter the classroom independently and with a readiness to engage with learning activities.
43. Staff in the early years model high expectations to children in terms of courtesy in interaction with others. Staff demonstrate how to value others' achievements and support the development of the children's good behaviour effectively.
44. Leaders manage the supervision of pupils well. Staff on duty encourage meaningful games and play between a mix of year groups which fosters positive relationships between older and younger pupils. These relationships are developed with leaders' initiatives such as the 'walking bus' from the nearby village which sees pupils of different ages mix naturally together. Leaders maintain the required staff-to-child ratios in the early years at all times.
45. Leaders and teachers sensitively deliver age-appropriate RSE lessons that develop pupils' understanding of topics such as consent and puberty. Staff adapt the suitable RSE programme to respond to individual pupils' needs. Pupils can raise questions anonymously in advance of each lesson.
46. Leaders and staff implement effective behaviour management strategies. They communicate high behavioural expectations and make effective use of appropriate rewards and sanctions, with the result that pupils' behaviour is good. A suitable anti-bullying strategy is in place, including teaching pupils about different types of bullying and what to do if they are concerned. As a result, bullying incidents are few. Leaders respond effectively should any behavioural or bullying incident occur, including by encouraging pupils to reflect on their behaviour and its consequences and find ways to restore positive relationships.
47. Pupils learn about a range of different religions through the religious studies (RS) programme and excursions to places of religious importance. Pupils learn about key elements of different faiths, such as the tenets of Judaism, and explore similarities and differences between religions.

48. The school maintains suitable attendance and admission registers. Leaders monitor attendance rigorously and promote the importance of high attendance. Leaders inform the local authority whenever pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times of transition.
49. Suitably trained staff, including paediatric first aiders in the early years, administer any required first aid or medication appropriately. The medical facilities are suitable.
50. Leaders and governors oversee health and safety arrangements effectively. Leaders and external specialists carry out regular checks and servicing of facilities and equipment, including those related to fire safety, ensuring the premises and accommodation are well maintained. Regular fire evacuation drills and training ensure pupils and staff can respond with confidence in the case of an emergency.
51. The inclusive physical education (PE) programme is effective and develops pupils' skills in a wide range of sports. Teachers provide well-structured and engaging activities which develop pupils' physical skills whilst challenging the pupils with a range of activities to promote teamwork. All pupils are offered the chance to participate in representing their school. Pupils also learn about the importance of a healthy and nutritious diet.

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

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

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

53. Diversity is celebrated in assemblies and across the curriculum such as in art where pupils appreciate the work of a wide range of artists, and through the choice of texts in English so that pupils develop an understanding of social and cultural diversity. Staff engage pupils with issues relating to the treatment of different groups of people, including through events such as Black History month and Refugee week. Appropriate modelling and expectations from their teachers support the pupils in developing their understanding of diversity.
54. Year 1 pupils develop their sense of responsibility towards the community by visiting a local retirement village where lessons are completed alongside the residents. Pupils vote for house charities and are involved in a range of fundraising activities such as a car boot sale and a craft activity to support the local food bank. Leaders provide opportunities for Year 6 pupils to develop their sense of social responsibility by helping with younger pupils and taking on roles such as prefects, including a neurodiversity prefect role, peer mentors, kindness ambassadors and school council members.
55. The school actively promotes British values, such as individual liberty, tolerance and the rule of law, through teaching which includes age-appropriate explanations, such as showing a progression from school rules to the importance of law. Leaders and staff utilise the PSHE curriculum and assemblies to teach pupils about the importance of respecting people's protected characteristics, such as their belief, sex, and sexual orientation, preparing them for life in diverse British society.
56. Leaders arrange visits by speakers which develop pupils' understanding of British institutions. For example, pupils learn about the practical application of law and democratic institutions and processes. The school council enables pupils to experience the democratic process in action and pupils put forward suggestions, such as where to place the buddy bench and the provision of napkins. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to be 'head for a day' and put forward constructive suggestions when they are in this position.
57. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education through the detailed advice given for entry to the next school, including preparation for a range of entrance examinations and guidance on how to get ready for an interview. Aspects of the curriculum support their acquisition of a wider skill set including real world applications for learning in mathematics and computing.
58. The school develops pupils' economic awareness effectively. This begins in the early years with role-play shopping activities. Older pupils develop their understanding of taxes and budgeting through the PSHE programme. Lessons develop pupils' understanding of economic processes including how businesses need to manage costs and profit margins.
59. Teachers in the early years develop the children's abilities to share and play together through modelling courteous treatment of others and communicating consistent expectations. Staff help children understand the importance of taking turns and working fairly together. Leaders provide opportunities for older pupils to develop social skills in working together including helping to administer school events and overseeing younger pupils as 'line leaders'.

60. Pupils develop their understanding of right and wrong. They discuss ethical dilemmas such as when assessing the rationale for a fictional characters' difficult decision in an English text, or when hearing about an injustice in assembly and assessing the nature of a judicious response. In line with the school's 'seven Cs', leaders provide opportunities for pupils to critique current situations and to share ideas on topics which range from welcoming refugees to making a difference to the planet.
61. The programme of visiting speakers widens the pupils' understanding of contemporary issues. Former pupils come to talk about how options at school age have consequences and can lead to future success. Pupils learn about British institutions in lessons across the curriculum and from visitors including those representing the fire and police services. Leaders monitor speakers visiting the school, checking materials to ensure a balanced perspective on any political issues is presented to the pupils.

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

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

Safeguarding

63. The school's safeguarding culture is robust. Leaders implement a clear and appropriate safeguarding policy and revise it in response to any changes to statutory guidance. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities understand the school's context and put measures in place to mitigate any safeguarding risks linked to the locality that might emerge.
64. Staff training is effective. It begins on induction to establish the importance of safeguarding and is updated to respond to changes in statutory guidance. Staff understand the importance of being alert to safeguarding issues. They know how to respond to a concern and whom they should contact. Staff are aware of how the 'Prevent' duty relating to concerns about radicalisation and extremism applies to their school. They understand how to report any allegations or low-level concerns about adults working with pupils that may arise.
65. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities are suitably trained for their role. They respond quickly and appropriately whenever safeguarding concerns are raised. The safeguarding team works effectively with external agencies, including the local authority designated officer and children's services. They understand the thresholds for reporting concerns and take advice as needed. They communicate appropriate information relating to safeguarding concerns to the future schools of any pupil leaving the school.
66. Pupils know whom to contact if they have a concern and that there is a range of adults to help them, including the 'school listener' who offers counselling to all members of the school community. Leaders enable pupils to report concerns anonymously should they feel the needs, including through the use of 'worry monsters' in classrooms.
67. The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Suitable arrangements for internet filtering and monitoring are in place. Leaders receive alerts should anyone attempt to access inappropriate material and respond promptly to these. The system is subject to frequent testing and details of any alerts are kept.
68. The school completes all necessary safer recruitment checks before staff or governors begin work at the school. Leaders verify the references that have been received. They maintain a suitable single central record of appointments and monitor this carefully to ensure its accuracy. Staff trained in safer recruiting are involved in every appointment.
69. Governors maintain effective oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements. The designated safeguarding governor meets regularly with the safeguarding team, pupils and other staff to remain well informed about all aspects of safeguarding in the school.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

70. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Longacre School
Department for Education number	936/6315
Registered charity number	1096567
Address	Longacre School Hullbrook Lane Shamley Green Guildford Surrey GU5 0NQ
Phone number	01483 893225
Email address	office@longacreschool.co.uk
Website	www.longacre.surrey.school.uk
Proprietor	Bridewell Royal Hospital
Chair	Mr Andrew Blurton
Headteacher	Mrs Sophie Baber
Age range	2 to 11 years
Number of pupils	225
Date of previous inspection	7 to 10 June 2022

Information about the school

71. Longacre School is an independent co-educational day school located in Shamley Green near Guildford, Surrey. The school was founded in 1946. In January 2025 the school joined two other schools in becoming a member of the Bridewell foundation and has been administered by its court of governors since then. The school consists of a pre-prep school for pupils aged 2 to 7 and a prep school for pupils aged 7 to 11. The current headteacher took up her position in September 2024.
72. There are 61 children in the early years comprising two Nursery and two Reception classes.
73. The school has identified 35 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
74. The school has identified English as an additional language for three pupils.
75. The school states that its aim to educate pupils holistically is underpinned by its founder's motto: 'A happy heart goes all the way'. It seeks to develop in the pupils the attributes encapsulated in the 'seven Cs': curiosity, creativity, collaboration, critiquing, communication, commitment and craftsmanship.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

10 to 12 June 2025

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

77. 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.

78. 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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