

# School inspection report

15 to 17 October 2024

## **Uppingham School**

Oakham

Leicestershire

LE15 9QE

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. School leaders, supported by governors who know the school well, work consistently to develop the educational experience and the wellbeing of pupils. Strategic plans are regularly updated and evaluated, bearing in mind the school's core values which are centred on educating the whole person.
2. Leaders have not demonstrated secure knowledge of the necessity to report pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard times to the local authority, in accordance with statutory guidance. In other areas of practice, safeguarding procedures are effective and reflect current guidance.
3. Leaders have ensured that there is a clear approach to managing behaviour across the school which is well understood by pupils. However, there have been incidents of poor behaviour by senior pupils towards younger pupils and those with protected characteristics. Although the school has strategies in place to strengthen the overall culture of respect, these have not had a demonstrable impact in all year groups or boarding houses.
4. Pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum which provides a wide range of choices as pupils move through the school. Teachers demonstrate advanced levels of subject knowledge, use effective teaching techniques and set high expectations for behaviour in lessons. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and are well motivated to succeed. They achieve well in public examinations.
5. Leaders provide a broad programme of enrichment activities in which pupils are enthusiastic participators. It includes sporting, academic and creative activities, outdoor pursuits, community involvement and recreational opportunities. Consequently, pupils develop new interests, engage with the world beyond school and develop their skills, often to a high level. This provision is a significant strength of the school.
6. Leaders have created a boarding environment in which pupils are typically well cared for and supported by housemasters, tutors and residential staff. The close liaison between these staff, those in the health centre and the safeguarding team are important factors in promoting the wellbeing of pupils.
7. The requirements of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are suitably identified and plans are produced for how teachers should support them in the classroom. However, some teachers do not use strategies that consistently meet the needs of these pupils across all subject areas.
8. School leaders, overseen by governors with relevant expertise, ensure that the physical environment of the school is well maintained and that systems in place to promote the health and safety of the pupils are robust and effective.

## The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are not all 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 not all met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are not all 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:

- leaders and managers have systems in place to ensure that staff inform the local authority when pupils join and leave the school at non-standard times.

### Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that all teachers use appropriate strategies to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- ensure that incidences of poor behaviour are reduced by strengthening the culture of respect across the school.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. School leaders have a clear vision for the school's future and put in place detailed strategies to work towards this. In this they are supported by governors who know the school well and bring a variety of expertise to their roles. However, leaders and governors do not demonstrate sufficient knowledge and oversight with regard to the requirement on all schools to report to the local authority when pupils join or leave at non-standard times.
10. Typically, leaders carefully consider the risks associated with their decision making. When implementing the extensive enrichment programme, they recognised the risk of the youngest pupils lacking enough free time and have therefore devised a different foundation year programme for them. They also carefully evaluate and mitigate risks in the school community including those associated with the school site, the movement of pupils around the town and the risks associated with overseas trips
11. Although leaders have initiated a new behaviour management strategy across the school, leaders have not taken sufficient steps to ensure that policies and practices are being implemented consistently to ensure that the culture of respect is consistently evident in pupils' behaviour across the school.
12. Leaders initiate a wide variety of strategies to develop practice among both teaching and support staff. These have included mental health and emotional literacy courses for pastoral staff and, for teaching staff, opportunities to contribute to a research journal and to stay abreast of developments in research-led education. Consequently, pupils are well supported both academically and pastorally. They are confident and demonstrate resilience in their learning and in their relationships with others.
13. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum, known as 'Wellbeing' is carefully crafted to cover a wide range of topics including relationships and sex education (RSE). It is delivered effectively to all year groups. Leaders respond to pupils' feedback and regularly adapt the programme's content and its delivery. For instance, pupils' feedback has led to recent changes in the approach to issues relating to gender and identity, resulting in more opportunities for discussion and reflection.
14. Through suitable self-evaluation, leaders have identified the provision for pupils who have SEND as an area for development. They are implementing changes to the ways in which these pupils are identified and supported and these are having a positive impact on pupils. However, some teachers do not consistently use effective strategies to support these pupils in the classroom.
15. Leaders have introduced a management system which integrates pastoral and academic data. This enables a more rounded view of each pupil and of the strengths and challenges they face. This has improved the effectiveness of the support provided to pupils by staff.
16. There is effective leadership of boarding. Handbooks for houses, policies and training for boarding staff are suitable. There is a consistency of approach in leading and managing boarding houses. As a result, boarders are well cared for and place high value on the sense of community in their houses.
17. Leaders provide parents with regular reports about their child's progress and required information is made available to them, either on the website or on request. The school's site is well managed with

due regard to the security and safety of the school community. Leaders and trustees operate an effective complaints procedure, and an appropriate log of any formal complaints is kept.

18. Leaders ensure that they meet their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. There is a suitable plan in place which considers access to both school accommodation and the curriculum.

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

19. The standards are not consistently met with regard to safeguarding, admissions and attendance.

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

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

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

22. Leaders have established a balanced curriculum which covers a wide range of subjects so that all pupils have many opportunities to gain knowledge and develop skills. In Year 9, academic departments develop schemes of work which stretch and challenge pupils. For instance, in English, pupils study 'identity'; religious studies is structured around the big philosophical questions; and geography around unusual hazards. Learning materials are representative of a wide range of cultural backgrounds and teachers encourage pupils to explore ideas and to think deeply. As a result, pupils in this, their first year in the school, are excited by their learning.
23. There is a broad choice of subjects available for pupils to study at GCSE and at A level including a BTEC in sport. In the sixth form, pupils may also study a short course in French or German alongside their other subjects, thus maintaining linguistic skills. In many subjects the curriculum covers a wider range of knowledge than that defined by the specification for examinations and, for instance, involves pupils in teaching their peers about areas of interest. The scholars programme develops pupils' cross-curricular thinking and discussion skills effectively.
24. Typically, teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects. They deliver high quality lessons which are well planned and maintain pupils' focus and interest. Teachers use questioning skilfully to elicit and develop pupils' knowledge. They manage behaviour effectively in lessons and pupils are well motivated as they complete tasks individually or collectively. Pupils in the sixth form problem solve effectively when calculating margins of safety in business studies; in politics pupils develop their thinking whilst discussing institutional racism and its impact on minority groups. Pupils are focused and determined to succeed. They make good progress which is enhanced by the wide availability of support from teachers beyond taught lessons.
25. School leaders place high value on developing pupils' creativity and provide extensive opportunities for participating in creative subjects. Consequently, pupils develop their skills, as shown in their individual and sophisticated artwork; in innovative design and technology creations; in effective dramatic performances and in the very high standards achieved in their music making.
26. The school has appropriate school-wide systems for tracking pupils' progress which are effectively used to monitor and support pupils as they move through the school. These data systems which integrate pupils' learning and pastoral needs are used effectively to support pupils' progress, both by teachers in the classroom and by tutors in house. This support, based on detailed knowledge of prior attainment, helps pupils to become effective learners who make good progress. As a result, they achieve highly in public examinations at GCSE, A level and in sport BTEC. Many pupils also achieve success in the Extended Project Qualification, having studied a topic of their own choice independently.
27. Pupils who have specific learning needs are supported in a variety of ways, both within the classroom and in the learning support department. The learning support department identifies pupils who have SEND and staff produce individual plans which describe each pupil's needs and possible approaches to be used in the classroom. However, at times pupils are not supported in the ways suggested in lesson plans and, in these cases, they achieve less well.

28. Many pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) have high levels of fluency in English. Suitably targeted support is provided for the small number of pupils who need it and, consequently, these pupils develop their literacy and communication skills rapidly.
29. Leaders provide an enrichment programme characterised by a wide variety of opportunities. It includes a programme delivered each Friday afternoon known as 'Upp and Out' which includes options such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and the Combined Cadet force alongside those of community service, entrepreneurship and academic scholarship. Pupils engage enthusiastically with these programmes, assisting with science teaching for local primary school children, acting as runners in a local hospital or talking and engaging with elderly people in their homes or local care homes.
30. Sitting alongside the 'Upp and Out' programme are a large number of enrichment activities in which pupils participate, including for instance, song writing, beekeeping, classical films and drone racing. In houses the enrichment programme continues as pupils engage in creative and sporting competitions with other houses. Through these opportunities pupils develop new interests and skills which they pursue to a high level.

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

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



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

32. Leaders prioritise the wellbeing of pupils through the close links between staff in houses, teaching staff and the health centre. Tutors and pastoral staff support pupils effectively and pupils can discuss any challenges they face in an open and supportive environment. Trained Year 12 wellbeing advocates across all houses provide an extra layer of peer support for pupils. The close links between relevant staff in house and across the school mean that there is a prompt and appropriate response when any concerns are raised about a pupil's wellbeing.
33. The effective wellbeing programme which includes RSE is relevant and meaningful. The curriculum, based on the pastoral framework known as 'Rise Upp' covers a wide range of topics in which pupils explore issues of identity, relationships, citizenship and the challenges of the modern world. For instance, the Year 10 curriculum considers mental health and that for Year 11 promotes discussion about wider issues such as forced marriage and the exploitation of children. Provision for Year 12 includes talks from visiting speakers and workshops to follow up on themes such as equality and diversity and physical health. Consequently, pupils develop an understanding of life in British society as well as understanding more about themselves.
34. Leaders hold high expectations for pupils' behaviour and most pupils typically respond to these positively and behave well. A newly revised behavioural policy is in place which adopts a restorative approach to resolving issues. Most senior pupils model high standards of behaviour and act as effective role models for younger pupils to emulate. However there have been incidences of poor behaviour by older pupils towards younger ones and those with protected characteristics which relate to the culture of respect in the school.
35. In boarding houses, and in the newly opened house for day pupils, pastoral staff foster a sense of being part of a family. Each house community eats together, including at lunchtime, and community cohesion is strengthened by informal conversations between pupils and between pupils and staff, who take lunch in different houses regularly. Pupils are proud of their houses and engage enthusiastically in house events such as dramatic productions and in inter-house competitions. Pupils are well supported by diligent pastoral staff and, as a result, they are resilient and self-confident individuals who make the most of their time at school.
36. Leaders provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities and facilities to experience physical education within and beyond the curriculum. Lessons in physical education and games sessions are effectively delivered to all pupils by teachers and coaches with high levels of expertise. As a result, pupils develop their skills and achieve success both individually and in teams. They understand the value of physical fitness in maintaining their health.
37. The culture of the school created by school leaders draws on its Christian foundation and traditions, whilst also welcoming those of different faiths, or none. The whole school gathers in chapel several times a week where there is time for listening, reflecting and singing. Within the curriculum pupils explore issues of morality, philosophy and spirituality and thus develop their understanding of non-material aspects of life.
38. Leaders in boarding ensure that practice is consistent across the houses and that pupils are well cared for. The houses, located throughout the town, provide accommodation for both male and

female pupils which is well maintained and secure. There are effective systems in place to ensure pupils' security as they move from the school to their houses.

39. Leaders ensure that all health and safety procedures, including those relating to fire safety, are effectively implemented, including in boarding. Pupils are effectively supervised and there are suitable arrangements for first aid and the medical care of boarders.
40. The school has a suitable admissions and attendance policy which is implemented effectively with regard to pupils' daily attendance and admission procedures in almost all areas. However, leaders do not demonstrate a secure knowledge of the necessity to report pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard times to the local authority, in accordance with statutory guidance.

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

- 41. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.**

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

42. Leaders and staff encourage pupils to respect and value each other and they make clear the importance of mutual tolerance for all. Staff do this through the delivery of the wellbeing programme, lessons in other curriculum areas and by the 'Rise Upp' pastoral framework for all pupils which emphasises qualities such as personal responsibility, kindness and active engagement. Consequently, most pupils develop a strong understanding of the difference between right and wrong.
43. Leaders have created a whole-school strategy for equality, diversity and Inclusion (EDI). Core units within the wellbeing programme address stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination towards different groups. Staff and pupils discuss ways to diversify the academic curriculum within departments and in the EDI pupil council. As a result, departments present pupils with content which has a broader cultural content. For instance, in English, pupils study works in translation and from different parts of the world.
44. School and house leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop socially. Teamwork and collaboration are features of many lessons and this ethos is further promoted on the sports fields, in the Combined Cadet Force and in the many activities undertaken within the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Pupils consider global issues and engage in lively discussion about life in British society today so that they develop an understanding of the importance of the rule of law and democracy.
45. In their wellbeing lessons pupils learn about financial matters, banking and the tax system. Initiatives which pupils take to raise money for charitable causes also involve financial planning and accounting. Pupils in Year 11 learn about budgeting and stock trading which enables engagement with financial matters in an enjoyable way. The new course on skills of entrepreneurship for pupils in Year 13 extends pupils' understanding of economic matters.
46. Leaders have ensured that careers education is comprehensive and relevant. It begins as pupils join the school, when pupils in Year 9 build their own career profiles. It continues with relevant and helpful information in each year group. For instance, Year 11 take part in a programme called 'My Future Choices'. Advice for older pupils about university entrance and possible future careers is comprehensive and is supplemented with many visiting speakers. Pupils gain transferable skills and receive support that is individually tailored. As a result, pupils move on to universities of their choice and a wide variety of career pathways.

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

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

## Safeguarding

48. Whilst safeguarding is generally secure, leaders have failed to report pupils who leave at non-standard times to the local authority. In this regard they have not followed statutory guidance.
49. Safeguarding leaders take a consistent approach to identifying and managing the risk of harm to pupils through weekly meetings between safeguarding, health and pastoral staff. These meetings allow regular review of any concerns and lead to prompt and effective actions being taken to support pupils. Referrals to external agencies are made appropriately, including for those of child-on-child abuse and harmful sexual behaviour. There are comprehensive and confidential records of all safeguarding concerns and, where appropriate, pupils have risk assessments in place to ensure continued support and monitoring.
50. Leaders ensure that staff are suitably trained on induction and that they receive regular updates throughout the year. Members of the safeguarding team are all trained at the advanced level and they train staff effectively. Governors provide diligent and effective oversight of most aspects of safeguarding. Regular visits take place and reviews of practice and procedure are well documented.
51. Staff understand how to report any concerns that they have about adults, and they do so diligently. A suitable log of low-level concerns is kept. Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures and confident in the reporting systems which they use. They understand the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation because of regular training.
52. Pupils are well educated in an age-appropriate way about online risks and leaders have secure systems in place for filtering and monitoring the internet and they check pupils' activity diligently.
53. The school ensures that all required checks on staff, governors and volunteers are carried out before they take up their appointments. A suitable single central record documents these checks accurately and is regularly checked by a governor.

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

54. The standard relating to safeguarding is not met as the school has failed to follow statutory guidance. It has failed to report pupils who leave at non-standard times to the local authority.
- 55. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in 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.
NMS 2.2	The school's leadership and management, including its governing body, demonstrate good skills and knowledge, appropriate to their role, and undertake appropriate training as required.
NMS 2.4	The school's leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the Standards are met.
NMS 2.5	The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the wellbeing of pupils

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

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

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR part 3, paragraph 15	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admissions and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

### 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.

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

ISSR Part 3, paragraph 8	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that -
8(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
8(b)	such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools
NMS 8.1	<p>The school should ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and</li> <li>• such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State</li> </ul>

## School details

<b>School</b>	Uppingham School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	857/6002
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1147280
<b>Address</b>	Uppingham School Oakham Leicestershire LE15 9QE
<b>Phone number</b>	01572 822216
<b>Email address</b>	headmaster@uppingham.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.uppingham.co.uk">https://www.uppingham.co.uk</a>
<b>Proprietor</b>	Trustees of Uppingham School
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Barbara Matthews
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Richard Maloney
<b>Age range</b>	13 to 18
<b>Number of pupils</b>	840
<b>Number of boarding pupils</b>	754
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 to 5 November 2021

## Information about the school

56. Uppingham School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between 13 and 18 years. The school is a charitable trust and the members of the governing body act as the trustees. A new house exclusively for day pupils opened in September 2024. Years 9 to 11 are known as the lower school and Years 12 and 13 as the sixth form.
57. There are fifteen boarding houses, nine for male and six for female pupils. Day pupils are also members of these boarding houses where they are known as day-boarders.
58. The school has identified 102 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
59. English is an additional language for 196 pupils.
60. The school aims to provide an innovative and rigorous education in a supportive environment, which prepares intellectually curious, independent-minded, self-confident pupils for the challenges of living and working in the twenty-first century.



## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

15 to 17 October 2024

61. A team of nine inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

62. 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 trustees
- 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.

63. 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)