

## School inspection report

4 to 6 March 2025

## **Farnborough Hill**

Farnborough Road
Farnborough
Hampshire
GU14 8AT

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 ensure that pupils experience a school that has a clear focus on meeting their individual needs. However, leaders do not have the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfil the Standards in the management of risk, attendance, health and safety and fire safety.
- 2. Governors and leaders do not have appropriate oversight of the recommended actions required to ensure that all risks are appropriately mitigated. The fire audit contained clear actions that were required to be completed within a set timescale including installing suitable fire doors. These were not addressed and neither had leaders considered alternative approaches recommended by appropriate authorities. Health and safety checks are not consistently completed to ensure that risks are mitigated, which has resulted in pupils having access to photographic chemicals in the sixth form darkroom. Therefore, leaders do not ensure that the Standards are met consistently.
- 3. Leaders do not ensure that the attendance policy, and its subsequent implementation, adheres to statutory guidance. The policy includes incorrect attendance codes and staff are not using the correct attendance codes when registering the pupils.
- 4. Pupils are taught a broad and balanced curriculum which provides a wide range of subject choices as pupils move through the school. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, use effective teaching techniques and set high expectations in lessons. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and are well motivated to succeed. Pupils make good progress
- 5. In lessons, teachers check prior learning before starting new topics. Teachers forge positive relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils are confident to ask questions and seek clarification. Teachers ensure that pupils receive the support that they require.
- 6. Pupils experience a well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, including relationships and sex education (RSE). Lessons are delivered by staff who are trained appropriately. Pupils are encouraged to develop mutually respectful relationships. Teachers help pupils to develop a sense of belonging and self-confidence.
- 7. Leaders ensure that an appropriate behaviour policy is implemented with consistency in lesson time. However, the policy is applied less consistently during unstructured time and behaviour is less well managed.
- 8. The careers programme is founded upon national benchmarks, which are used to measure developments and future planning of the programme. A strong alumni community offers pupils the opportunity to access a variety of careers advice. The careers pathway at the school develops in scope and depth as the pupils get older, refining their understanding of potential career options over their time at the school.
- 9. Acts of collective worship help reinforce the school's ethos and values and provide pupils with the opportunity to consider spiritual matters. Pupils of all faiths or none have opportunities for quiet reflection.
- 10. Leaders are appropriately trained to undertake their roles with regard to safeguarding. Leaders ensure that newly appointed staff receive induction and on-going training to develop their understanding of school policies. Leaders undertake necessary pre-employment checks when recruiting staff. The record of appointments provides an accurate summary of all the checks undertaken.

## 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 not met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are 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:

- the current statutory attendance guidance is followed in the writing and implementation of the attendance policy
- leaders action the time-sensitive recommendations in the October 2024 fire audit
- leaders ensure that risks are consistently identified, assessed and mitigated.

#### **Recommended next step**

#### Leaders should ensure:

• that the behaviour policy is implemented throughout pupils' breaktimes so that behaviour is consistently appropriate during unstructured time.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

- 11. Governors meet regularly with the leaders of the school and demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's aims and ethos. However, statutory guidance has not been followed to ensure that the attendance policy is appropriate and implemented correctly. Leaders do not take the actions required to ensure that the school mitigates risk in relation to health and safety and fire prevention. Therefore, leaders do not demonstrate the appropriate skills and knowledge to ensure that the Standards are met.
- 12. Risk management procedures are not always adhered to in terms of health and safety within school. The failure to implement recommended actions from the fire audit and the unrestricted access to developing chemicals in the sixth form darkroom mean that pupils' wellbeing is not promoted well enough. Leaders ensure that educational trips and visits are appropriately risk assessed.
- 13. A suitable fire assessment has been carried out, but its recommendations have not been systematically implemented to reduce the risk of fire. For example, leaders have not conducted an appropriate review of fire doors within the school including by seeking suitable, timely expert advice, as recommended in successive fire risk assessments. This advice pertains to doors that are listed, and the recommendations are clear in the requirement to review what action should be taken. The process of reviewing the doors is not in place as suggested by the fire risk assessment.
- 14. The school seeks to find ways to hear pupils' views through the junior leadership team (JLT) and the use of anonymous questionnaires. Pupils develop confidence and leadership skills from knowing that their opinions are taken seriously by leaders.
- 15. Leaders plan a range of opportunities so that pupils can learn about different cultures and develop tolerance and respect for one another. This is through ensuring that PSHE lessons are well planned and relevant. Pupils are also given opportunities to broaden their perspective through a varied programme of assemblies, visiting speakers and one-off events such as Culture Day and Charity Week.
- 16. Leaders ensure that the school's Catholic founding principles and ethos are promoted through regular faith events and acts of collective worship. The creation of the multi-faith prayer room also offers pupils of different faiths or no faith the facility to focus on their own beliefs.
- 17. Leaders ensure that they respond promptly to any concerns raised. Complaints are responded to and recorded appropriately, within the specified timescale, in keeping with the complaints policy.
- 18. The pastoral team and leaders with responsibility for safeguarding have established effective links with outside agencies and seek their advice appropriately to ensure that appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to promote the safety and welfare of pupils.
- 19. Leaders assure themselves of the quality of teaching and learning through regular monitoring so that pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress. Leaders use data to identify where further support is needed and ensure that this is provided to pupils. The curriculum provides variety and balance for the pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in a range of subjects.

20. Leaders ensure that they meet their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. They have a suitable accessibility plan in place which considers access to the school's accommodation and the curriculum and which is implemented in practice.

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

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. Academic leaders have devised an appropriate and challenging curriculum that is tailored to the ages, aptitudes and needs of the pupils, including those who have SEND. At GCSE, pupils can choose from three modern foreign languages and are able to take three sciences. In addition, leaders implement a 'super-curriculum' which gives pupils the option to study additional subjects such as Classical Greek or further mathematics. At A level, pupils have access to a range of subjects including economics, politics and psychology.
- 23. In Years 7 to 9, teaching methods enable pupils to build on prior learning and make connections between subjects. Teachers develop positive relationships and as a result pupils are willing to ask questions and check their understanding as needed. Pupils make good progress in their lessons, as well as developing an enthusiasm for learning.
- 24. Thorough curriculum mapping that is appropriately reviewed ensures that pupils develop appropriate skills and knowledge during Years 7, 8 and 9. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and construct well-planned lessons which support and challenge pupils.
- 25. Leaders have a rigorous approach to ensuring that pupils' progress is monitored carefully and appropriately. Teachers provide timely and detailed feedback to pupils. Pupils understand the steps they need to take to improve their work. Teachers analyse data to ensure that pupils are given additional support when needed, meaning that pupils are able to catch up with their peers when gaps are identified in their learning. The timely individual support that is offered allows pupils to make good progress from their individual starting points. Results at GCSE and A Level reflect the progress that is made by pupils and are above the national average.
- 26. Teachers use a range of methods and resources to support pupils who have SEND. Pupil passports give details of pupils' learning needs and the strategies which can be employed to meet them. These passports are used to support all pupils who have a diagnosed learning need. Leaders monitor the consistency with which strategies from the passports are implemented. Staff, pupils and parents are encouraged to have input into the passports to ensure that they are kept updated. This collaborative approach helps pupils who have SEND to feel a sense of ownership over their learning and supports good progress.
- 27. Leaders ensure that the development of pupils' reading is given a high priority. Teachers promote the breadth and depth of pupils' reading through an incentivised reading programme that encourages pupils to actively read throughout the week. Teachers use weekly library lessons in Years 7, 8 and 9 and fortnightly sessions in Year 10 to encourage conversations about current reading. This means that pupils are supported to develop their literacy, which in turn underpins access to and success within the wider curriculum.
- 28. Leaders ensure that the small proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are well supported in lessons. Where needed, these pupils are provided with additional individual support. Pupils who speak EAL make good progress as a result of the effective support that they receive.
- 29. Leaders provide a planned programme of academic enrichment to pupils of all ages. The programme is ambitious and constantly evolving. Specific focus has been given to the development of communication skills and the ability to structure and articulate persuasive arguments. This has been

- done through the introduction of creative writing, debating and public speaking clubs. These clubs are well attended by pupils.
- 30. A range of curricular and co-curricular opportunities are on offer to pupils. Form tutors have a good overview of their tutees' co-curricular involvement. Pupils are encouraged to explore the different strands of the programme and to participate in a variety of clubs so that they develop skills in multiple areas of the co-curricular programme.

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 have not demonstrated the necessary skills and knowledge to create and implement a suitable attendance policy. Neither the school's attendance policy nor the codes being used to record attendance and absence in registers are in line with statutory guidance. Leaders report pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard transition points to the local authority as required.
- 33. Leaders do not ensure a consistent approach to taking timely action to mitigate risks in terms of fire and health and safety. Audits, with clear timescales for necessary action, have been conducted but these remain incomplete. Leaders have not responded suitably to the fire risk assessment. They have not undertaken a review of fire doors, electric socket changes and storage of wires, as recommended in the fire risk assessment, promptly. Leaders' lack of oversight with regards to health and safety results in uncontrolled access to photographic chemicals in the sixth form darkroom which increases the risks to pupils.
- 34. Leaders have implemented a new behaviour policy. They are monitoring and evaluating this appropriately. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is positive and consistently managed. However, the policy is not implemented consistently outside of lesson time. For example, some pupils congregate in indoor spaces and use mobile phones during unstructured time without being challenged by staff.
- 35. Pupils feel that their voices are heard and that leaders will make changes based on their feedback. This promotes the wellbeing of pupils by giving them some agency in their school experience.
- 36. Teaching staff implement a range of co-curricular opportunities for pupils which are divided into six stands: 'Be Active, Be Articulate, Be Creative, Be Curious, Be A Performer. Form tutors use their positive relationships with pupils to encourage them to participate in the programme. Teachers encourage pupils to try activities which they may initially feel are outside their comfort zone. Leaders maintain an overview of the programme and participation levels. This allows adaptations to the programme to be made accordingly. This promotes pupils' wellbeing by providing access to a wide range of activities to ensure that pupils have appropriate recreation inside and outside of the school day.
- 37. In the sixth form, leaders cultivate a positive culture. Pupils are confident and well supported by the staff. This, as for pupils of all ages, is enhanced by the provision of the wellbeing centre, access to counselling and nurses, and the support they receive from their teachers.
- 38. Leaders ensure that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner. Adjustments and training for staff are made to support pupils with physical injuries and medical needs to enable attendance at school.
- 39. Leaders provide a well-planned PSHE curriculum. Tutors deliver PSHE lessons which cover all aspects of the statutory guidance. This provision is supplemented by additional PSHE days when external speakers and providers focus on key elements of the PSHE course, such as personal finance and career choices. As a result, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the PSHE content, which also includes teaching on personal health and online safety.
- 40. Relationships and sex education teaching is effectively delivered, mainly by external speakers during focused days where academic lessons are suspended. Leaders with responsibility for RSE work closely with the biology and religious studies departments to ensure that elements of the

curriculum are co-ordinated across different subject areas and covered appropriately. The specific RSE curriculum covers a range of topics including consent, developing relationships and the dangers of online grooming. The teaching of RSE is sensitive to the Catholic ethos of the school and delivered in accordance with statutory guidance. For example, the topic of contraception is taught through the science curriculum whilst the ethical and moral aspect is covered in RE lessons.

- 41. The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to take on positions of responsibility and develop leadership skills. Pupils are given opportunities to share their views on how their school experience could be enhanced. The junior leadership team (JLT) help to make the sixth form centre a welcoming place for pupils from other years. Sixth form pupils listen to and support their younger peers.
- 42. Pupils benefit from a broad and wide-ranging physical education (PE) curriculum. Pupils are also given access to a range of co-curricular clubs and fixtures. Leaders prioritise the development of pupils' physical health. The intention is not only to provide elite sporting pathways, but also an opportunity for every pupil to find their favourite sport. Examples include, ultimate frisbee club, football, netball and hockey.
- 43. Pupils lead many activities and clubs themselves which offers them the opportunity to develop leadership skills. Sports, music, drama, academic clubs and numerous life-skill opportunities are offered to pupils. These activities promote pupils' ability to collaborate with one another and help to develop pupils' confidence.
- 44. Leaders implement appropriate anti-bullying and behaviour policies. A recently reconsidered detention programme, which has been developed through the recently reviewed behaviour policy, continues to be adapted and embedded. This has offered staff clarity on sanctions, and the progression of sanctions. Leaders promote positive behaviour through the 'one step beyond' initiative, in which pupils can be nominated for going over and above that which is expected of them, both academically and socially.
- 45. Pupils in Year 8 learn responsibility for others through the opportunity to be part of the 'buddy system' for Year 7 pupils. This is a responsibility that they both enjoy and take seriously. Pupils have the opportunity to contribute to their school from an early age and the breadth of opportunity increases as pupils move through the year groups.

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

46. 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

- 47. Leaders' focus on helping pupils to understand the school ethos of living 'wholeheartedly' has developed a positive culture of pupils getting involved in all aspects of school life. Pupils exhibit care, empathy and tolerance towards each other. They support one another and celebrate their peers' achievements, showing mutual respect in their daily interactions. Staff promote fundamental British values through a variety of activities across the school, such as assemblies and the PSHE curriculum. All pupils are given the opportunity to vote for pupil leadership candidates each year following public speeches given by potential candidates during hustings. Pupils value and engage with this process, and it helps to develop their understanding of the democratic process.
- 48. Leaders provide a comprehensive careers programme for pupils in all year groups. This includes use of local businesses and alumni to provide insights into a range of different future career options. Leaders organise a careers activity in morning registration, inspiring pupils to think about their future career choices, in preparation for National Careers week. Pupils are provided with other chances to broaden their knowledge of potential future options through careers fairs and 'take your daughter to work' opportunities in Year 8. Pupils are given opportunities for individual meetings following careers questionnaires to identify areas of potential aptitude, which prove helpful in pupils' planning for their future.
- 49. Leaders foster an awareness of diverse traditions and values. 'Culture Day' is a pupil led initiative that celebrates cultural diversity and encourages all members of the community to develop a deeper understanding of cultures other than their own.
- 50. Leaders have overseen the development of a multi-faith prayer room to ensure that it is a respectful space for reflection. This promotes pupils' wellbeing as pupils of all faiths and of no faith are able to use the space for quiet reflection.
- 51. Pupils in the sixth form attend training sessions with an international development charity and then share their knowledge of the work the organisation is undertaking and how this can be implemented within school. Such events give pupils the opportunity to contribute to society and to experience the process of procuring speakers and implementing a project which helps to prepare them for the world beyond school.
- 52. Leaders ensure that all faiths are considered though the chaplaincy. 'Open access' is a co-curricular club which provides pupils with an opportunity to ask about and debate world issues. This allows pupils to develop their understanding of the wider world and to engage with moral and ethical complexities.
- 53. Teachers identify opportunities for pupils to explore social, cultural and environmental aspects of the topics being covered. In design technology (DT) lessons, pupils evaluate the cultural and environmental aspects of their product design. The school has forged links with the local climate group and pupils in Year 8 have recently been chosen as youth climate ambassadors. This offers the opportunity for pupils to engage with local community and to be a positive voice for sustainability and the environment.
- 54. In PSHE lessons, financial wellbeing is embedded into the curriculum which facilitates the development of pupils' financial literacy, their understanding of financial terminology and their

numeracy skills, and supports economic wellbeing. In Year 9 PSHE lessons, pupils learn how to manage a household budget. In geography, pupils in Year 7 consider the environmental and cultural impact of tourism. In response, they are able to recognise and articulate the complexities of the benefits from an economic perspective against the potential impact on wildlife and the local population. These activities facilitate pupils developing their financial literacy and numeracy skills as well as their economic and social awareness.

55. Pastoral and academic staff create links with the local community. Pupils in Year 9 are involved in the 'empower' programme which allows the pupils to pitch ideas for how to introduce primary school pupils to a variety of different topics, such as science, technology and creative subjects, which they then deliver to pupils from local primary schools. This gives pupils a real-world opportunity to celebrate their local community and develop their sense of social wellbeing.

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

56. All the relevant Standards are met.

## **Safeguarding**

- 57. All staff receive appropriate annual training for safeguarding with regular updates throughout the year. They understand the school's safeguarding procedures and know how to report any safeguarding concerns. Leaders ensure that staff are familiar with the whistleblowing procedures and the process for reporting and recording low-level concerns about adults.
- 58. Suitable internet monitoring and filtering systems are in place and these are checked regularly. Pupils use their devices in school with the appropriate filters in place. Leaders ensure that pupils understand how to stay safe online.
- 59. Leaders make sure that pupils understand how to share concerns. Pupils are aware of who they can talk to if they are worried or upset. Pupils feel safe in the school. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding ensure that the school has established effective links with local agencies and seek their advice appropriately.
- 60. The staff are aware of relevant contextual risks for the school. Leaders mitigate risks appropriately to promote pupils' safety. Staff develop their knowledge through 'Prevent' training to notice any concerns about potential radicalisation or extremism and report appropriately under their 'Prevent' duty.
- 61. Leaders in charge of the single central record (SCR) have a clear and logical approach to safer recruitment and ensure that all of the required pre-appointment safeguarding checks are made appropriately. Governors provide effective oversight of recruitment checks and ensure that the policy for recruitment is correctly implemented.
- 62. Governors receive appropriate safeguarding training. The designated safeguarding governor oversees the safeguarding team diligently and provides suitable support and challenge. This enables governors and leaders to maintain effective oversight of safeguarding and to promote pupils' welfare.
- 63. The PSHE programme, school assemblies and external speakers make an effective contribution to safeguarding by raising pupils' awareness of how to keep safe and manage risk. Staff are quick to respond to any concerns and have adapted programmes and speakers appropriately, ensuring that the programmes in place support current topics of concern.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

64. All the relevant Standards are met.

## **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 3, paragraph 16	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
16 (a)	the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
16 (b)	appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
ISSR 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.

## 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 11	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant
	health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective
	implementation of a written health and safety policy.
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with
	the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 15	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission
	and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the School Attendance
	(Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

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

## **School details**

School Farnborough Hill

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Registered charity number 1039443

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**Proprietor** Farnborough Hill

Chair Mr Gerry McCormack

**Headteacher** Mrs Maria Young

Age range 11-18

Number of pupils 503

**Date of previous inspection** 15-19 March 2022

## Information about the school

- 65. Farnborough Hill is an independent Catholic day school registered as a single-sex school for female pupils, located in Farnborough, Hampshire. The school is a registered charity governed by a council of trustees. The current headteacher took up her appointment in April 2024.
- 66. The school has identified 111 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are no pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- 67. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for 24 pupils.
- 68. The school states its aims are to live Christ's Gospel values joyfully and wholeheartedly, forming each individual to fulfil her potential and face the future with wisdom, strength and dignity. Pupils are challenged to 'Be fearless. Be ambitious. Be ready. Be part of something extraordinary'.

## **Inspection details**

#### **Inspection dates**

#### 4 to 6 March 2025

- 69. A team of five inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The onsite inspection was quality assured by a monitor.
- 70. Inspection activities included:
  - observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
  - observation of registration periods and assemblies and collective worship
  - observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
  - discussions with the chair and safeguarding governor
  - 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.
- 71. 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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