

School inspection report

26 to 28 November 2024

Loughborough Grammar School

Burton Walks
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 2DU

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. Governors have an informed oversight of all areas of school life and ensure that leaders fulfil their responsibilities in meeting the regulatory requirements, including those relating to boarding.
2. Leaders monitor the school's implementation of its policies systematically so that Standards are met. Governors have a clear view of the strengths of the school and the areas where improvements are needed.
3. The curriculum and co-curricular programme meet the needs and interests of pupils.
4. Teachers have good knowledge. They engage pupils' interest and manage behaviour effectively. Some teaching does not challenge pupils with high prior attainment to tackle more demanding problems or ideas.
5. Teachers regularly assess pupils' work. However, written feedback in books sometimes lacks detail or suggestions for pupils regarding how to improve their answers.
6. Leaders support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and provide detailed information to teachers. Lesson plans identify these pupils, but teachers do not always make adjustments in their approach.
7. The behaviour policy and anti-bullying strategy are understood by staff and pupils and are effective. Pupils are well behaved, and bullying is rare.
8. Buildings and grounds are well maintained. Those responsible ensure that risks to pupils are minimised through systematic and detailed checks of health and safety and fire procedures.
9. Pupils are empathetic and recognise the value of service to others. They are supportive of each other in the boarding houses and appreciate the cultural diversity that those of different national and religious backgrounds bring to the school.
10. Careers education is provided from Year 7. It includes opportunities to find out about the world of work. Pupils receive individualised advice, including guidance on their decisions about university courses. Pupils move on to a wide range of degree courses and apprenticeships after leaving school.
11. The personal development curriculum deepens pupils' self-knowledge and includes issues relevant to pupils' ages. The programme includes all the requirements of relationships and sex education (RSE).
12. Safeguarding arrangements are effective in promoting the wellbeing of pupils. Leaders are mindful of the particular risks to boarders and younger pupils. Effective pastoral care ensures that pupils at risk of harm are quickly identified, and action is taken. Safeguarding leaders liaise effectively with external agencies.
13. Recruitment procedures are thorough, although leaders do not currently record all conversations that they have with those who provide references for job applicants.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

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

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that all teaching is planned to meet pupils' needs and abilities so that they make greater progress in all lessons
- ensure that the assessment of pupils' work gives them specific guidance on how to improve
- record evidence that they have verified the content of references for job applicants.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

14. The school's governance arrangements, and the experience of the governors themselves, result in an informed oversight of senior leaders. The full governing body delegates to the grammar school board the responsibility to check that leaders are meeting Standards effectively and consistently. They undertake this through regular visits and audits of documentation.
15. Governors with sufficient skills and experience maintain regular oversight of the implementation of the school's safeguarding arrangements. Leaders have detailed knowledge of and involvement in school life. Quality assurance includes observations, discussions with staff and pupils and a review of records to ensure that the school's policies and procedures are carried out effectively.
16. Leaders have assessed the risk to pupils of a public right of way that bisects the site. Suitable mitigation is in place and its effectiveness is constantly reviewed.
17. Senior academic, pastoral and support team leaders have secure knowledge in their areas of responsibility and apply it skilfully. Academic leaders co-ordinate comprehensive and detailed annual reviews completed by heads of department. These include the observation of teaching and reviews of pupils' written work.
18. The school's website provides clear and accessible information for staff, pupils and parents of both current and prospective pupils. This includes all the policies and documents required, including those relating to boarding. Parents receive annual reports and other frequent information about their child's progress.
19. Governors and senior leaders have a strategic approach to identifying and managing any risk of harm to pupils' wellbeing. Leaders limit the potential risks to boarders by providing secure, well-maintained accommodation. Leaders of boarding are experienced and regularly attend external training courses to ensure that they have up-to-date knowledge of approaches to the leadership of boarding.
20. Leaders provide pupils with a range of qualified adults with whom they can discuss their concerns. All pupils nominate an adult outside the formal pastoral system to whom they can talk.
21. The school's complaints procedure is in line with requirements. It encourages parents to share concerns with academic, pastoral or senior leaders. All concerns, including at the informal stage, are recorded in detail, with a clear chronology to ensure that published timescales are adhered to. Records are stored centrally and reviewed by governors to identify any themes or patterns.
22. Leaders make appropriate adjustments for those who have disabilities through an accessibility plan. They have strategies to enable any pupils who have physical disability to study at school or to board and in all ways the school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

24. Leaders provide a broad curriculum that includes all the required areas of learning. Year 6 pupils study subjects appropriate for their age and prepare effectively for the transition to Year 7. Leaders encourage pupils to explore their interests and aptitudes through the study of a wide range of subjects in Years 7 and 8, before starting to specialise in Year 9. For example, all pupils learn some French, German, Spanish and Latin.
25. Leaders have carefully planned the curriculum so that it meets the aptitudes and needs of pupils who have a wide variety of interests. The majority of pupils study three sciences at GCSE. They have the opportunity to study Latin, classical Greek and classical civilisation, alongside a range of subjects in the humanities, performing and creative arts, and technology.
26. Pupils study some A-level subjects alongside pupils from other schools in the Loughborough Schools Foundation (LSF). This arrangement helps sustain a wide range of curriculum choice in the sixth form.
27. Leaders demonstrate their commitment to the aim of developing pupils' interests by assigning one afternoon per week to the co-curricular programme. The choice of activity allows pupils to explore new interests outside the taught curriculum, or to develop their own specialisms, for example in music, drama or sport. Many pupils use the programme to further their academic studies, for example by following an extended project qualification, or by studying new subjects such as ancient Hebrew, Mandarin or astronomy.
28. Leaders provide a varied and extensive choice of recreational activity beyond the taught curriculum. These activities are well planned and enable pupils to develop independence and the skills that they need to move successfully to the next stage of their education. Boarders are actively involved in school life but have enough free time to enjoy their own pursuits.
29. Pupils in the lower years who complete physical, intellectual and service activities achieve an internal 'Thomas Burton' award which recognises their development in these areas. For example, pupils might learn or improve their skills in music, drama or cookery. They might extend their studies in computing or mathematics, learn a new language or volunteer in a range of service projects. Older pupils gain qualifications in drama, music, or through the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) award scheme.
30. Each sixth-form pupil has a professional development programme that includes co-curricular activities which strengthen their applications for the next stage of their education.
31. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Their teaching methods ensure that pupils are engaged in lessons, and pupils are encouraged to ask questions freely. In lessons, pupils make good progress in their own knowledge and understanding. Pupils' skills are well developed, especially in practical science, the speaking of modern foreign languages, art and music.
32. Leaders provide detailed advice on how to support pupils who have SEND in lessons. Lesson plans identify pupils who have SEND. In many lessons, the content and delivery are adjusted for these needs by providing different resources, but this is not consistent across all subjects.

33. Teachers are aware of pupils who speak English as an additional language and are careful to ensure that they understand subject-specific vocabulary.
34. In the majority of lessons, teachers actively stimulate pupils' thinking through the setting of difficult problems or in discussions. Leaders provide more demanding intellectual activity in co-curricular activities or the scholars programme. In other lessons, teachers do not plan activities that challenge pupils with high prior attainment, and as a result those pupils make less progress in these lessons.
35. Teachers provide feedback on pupils' work which helps them progress. However, written feedback often lacks detail or suggestions for pupils about how to improve.
36. Academic leaders have successfully embedded a framework to evaluate the progress of individual pupils relative to their starting points. Some teachers use this data to plan lessons. Leaders use data retrospectively to evaluate the extent of pupils' academic progress.

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

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

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

38. The decision to assign an afternoon in the week to the co-curricular programme contributes to the growth in pupils' self-knowledge and confidence. Pupils develop self-assurance and by the time they leave school they are 'world-ready', in line with the school's aim.
39. Leaders have developed a scheme in which pupils develop in their 'hands, heads and hearts', following a curriculum that develops their practical and intellectual skills and includes service to the school or wider community.
40. Pupils receive internal awards for satisfactory completion of their programme. The arrangements are effective in promoting pupils' self-development. A very large majority progress to the DofE award scheme, many achieving gold level.
41. Pupils are well supported by staff and older pupils so that they feel part of the school community. Pupils remain in the same pastoral groups for the majority of their time at school, and this helps build trust and support amongst those of the same age.
42. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme is taught weekly. The content is interesting and relevant, and time is allowed for discussions. Pupils receive RSE as part of the programme. Leaders assess its effectiveness in discussion with pupils and staff, and this guides ongoing improvements. Parents are made aware of the content of the course.
43. Pupils' physical health is promoted through regular physical education (PE) and games lessons. The curriculum allows them to take part in a wide variety of competitive and non-competitive sports. Levels of participation are high. Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to develop their physical skills through an outdoor education programme, including adventure training and membership of the three sections of the CCF.
44. Pupils appreciate art and music. The school supports pupils' spiritual development through a Christian Union and by encouraging pupils to explore world religions in assemblies and relevant lessons. In this way pupils gradually develop an awareness of the spiritual aspects of human life.
45. Leaders monitor schemes of work to ensure that teachers take opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of morality. The school's debating society, Model United Nations activity and lessons in subjects such as history and politics regularly address current moral issues. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong.
46. The school's written behaviour and anti-bullying policies give clear direction on the use of rewards and sanctions. Leaders promote good behaviour through the taught PSHE curriculum and the successful encouragement of kindness and respect in all areas of school life.
47. Incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are rare. When pupils do misbehave, leaders take immediate action and use sanctions proportionately. Parents are involved at the earliest stage. Victims and perpetrators are supported effectively, often through a series of reflective meetings with trained staff.

48. Leaders have planned the use of buildings effectively to provide suitable accommodation in which pupils study and enjoy recreation. Some of these, for example the music school, sports hall and swimming pool, are shared with other schools in the LSF. Those responsible maintain buildings and grounds to a high standard. Fire drills are held regularly, including during boarding time. As result, not only does the school meet the requirements of health and safety and fire legislation, but it also provides a well-maintained, stimulating and comfortable environment for pupils.
49. The medical centre meets the needs of pupils who are sick or need first aid. It provides a place where pupils can seek physical or emotional support.
50. Boarders occupy accommodation in the main school buildings. It provides a secure environment in which boarders are comfortable. The rooms and shared areas are warm, hygienic and well maintained, including showers and toilets. Boarders eat well and can prepare their own food and drinks.
51. Attendance is accurately recorded. Boarding staff know the whereabouts or know how to identify the whereabouts of boarders at any time. Leaders have updated their policies and procedures relating to attendance in line with the latest statutory guidance. An attendance champion has been appointed from the senior leadership team. Visits are made to pupils' homes if they have been absent for more than ten continuous days. As a result, the school is improving its already high levels of attendance.
52. The school maintains an accurate record of admissions and reports to the appropriate local authority any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition points in the school year.

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

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

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

54. School leaders have audited the curriculum to ensure that it supports a growth in pupils' human, social and economic knowledge. Respect for others is promoted through specific targeted activities, including weeks in which assemblies focus on particular world faiths or cultures. Pupils are confident but sensitive in exploring issues around cultural diversity and inclusion. They show high levels of respect for each other.
55. Boarders are a close and supportive community, and those from different countries quickly adapt to boarding life. Leaders provide spaces for pupils to socialise, for example in the recently developed tower café. They have a clear sense of right and wrong. They are proud of their houses, but are well integrated into school life, playing an active part in areas such as music and sport.
56. The school's co-curricular programme is instrumental in its contribution to pupils' social development. Its wide-ranging opportunities allow pupils to work alongside others of different age and gender in pursuing their own interests or developing new skills. Pupils are articulate and reasoned in conversation and listen attentively to different opinions.
57. Leaders develop pupils' understanding of the different forms of democracy effectively when opportunities arise, for example in the history and politics curriculum or in assemblies. They learn about the way that the country is governed and, particularly through their service activities, the inter-relationship between public, private and charitable services.
58. The pupil-led school council has a positive impact. It successfully gathers and synthesises opinion and ideas from across the school. Leaders, including governors, listen to its views alongside the results of regular surveys, as they consistently look to improve the experience for pupils.
59. Leaders expand pupils' cultural awareness through the extensive opportunities in art, music and drama within the taught and co-curricular programmes. Regular lectures stimulate interest in politics, the arts and scientific research. Leaders carefully select speakers to ensure that there is a balance of political views expressed.
60. Leaders provide a well-planned and wide-ranging careers programme. From the youngest age, pupils are given access to careers software and are encouraged to investigate potential professions relevant to their academic studies. Careers leaders provide specialist and impartial advice, for example on applications to read medicine, to study overseas, or to secure apprenticeships. Regular lectures, careers fairs and dinners ensure that pupils encounter those from the world of work.
61. Pupils receive individual advice when they choose subjects or activities. Sixth-form pupils invariably link their professional development programme with career aspirations, for example opting for the elite musicians course in preparation for application to conservatoires.
62. Leaders ensure that the PSHE curriculum contains an element of financial education relevant to pupils' age. By the time they leave, pupils have received a rounded economic education, including an understanding of tax, credit and savings.

63. Before they leave the school, pupils are given specific advice on practical matters such as staying safe at university or whilst travelling on a gap year, or how to access medical services. In this way, pupils are well prepared for society beyond school and equipped with the relevant life skills.
64. Pupils engage in a wide range of service to both the school and the outside community. Younger pupils satisfy the 'hearts' section of their co-curricular award through charity fundraising or by working in the school's eco-club. Senior pupils provide reading and numeracy support in local primary schools, visit local elderly people or volunteer with local charities.

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

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

Safeguarding

66. Safeguarding procedures are implemented effectively so that the wellbeing of both day pupils and boarders is promoted. The nominated safeguarding governor systematically tests the effectiveness of all aspects of the safeguarding arrangements by sampling records, interviewing staff and pupils, and regularly analysing the details of cases. A full report is provided to the governing body.
67. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding have the necessary knowledge and training to carry out their roles effectively. Safeguarding leaders work together and share knowledge and expertise across the LSF. These arrangements ensure that potential safeguarding issues across the school, including in boarding, are quickly communicated and addressed.
68. Teaching and support staff are trained to an appropriate level. Senior leaders have recently revised protocols to ensure the co-ordination of the training of shared and central staff. The training of governors and staff is up to date. Staff have an effective understanding of arrangements. They are alert to the particular risks faced by particular groups of pupils.
69. Pupils feel safe. They have a range of adults to speak to if they are concerned about anything. They have access to a variety of well-trained professionals, including house and nursing staff. Boarders are given the contact details of external organisations if they need advice. The school provides a telephone number of an independent person who is known to boarders.
70. Electronic reporting systems are used effectively to support safeguarding practice. Records are detailed, identify the risks to pupils, and explain the rationale for decisions made. Leaders review the effectiveness of actions taken. Safeguarding leaders and other staff have a secure knowledge of strategies to identify the possible radicalisation of pupils, and the consequent reporting procedures.
71. Filtering and monitoring software protects pupils online and identifies any inappropriate use. Leaders test the effectiveness of the software each week. Records are analysed by the safeguarding team and the nominated safeguarding governor. Pupils receive guidance about keeping safe online through the curriculum. Leaders have implemented a policy on the use of electronic devices by boarders that allows them regular access to home.
72. Leaders work closely with relevant safeguarding partners, including children’s services, ‘Prevent’ teams, the police and the local authority designated officer. They act on the advice given, including when handling any allegations against adults.
73. All appropriate pre-employment checks are made on adults before they come into contact with pupils. Files relating to these checks are well maintained and detailed, although there is no written record that the content of references has been verified. The single central record of checks undertaken is accurately maintained.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

74. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Loughborough Grammar School
Department for Education number	855/6012
Registered charity number	1081765
Address	Loughborough Grammar School Burton Walks Loughborough Leicestershire LE11 2DU
Phone number	01509 233233
Email address	grammar.office@lsf.org
Website	www.lsf.org/grammar
Proprietor	Loughborough Schools Foundation
Chair	Mr Roger Harrison
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Foster
Age range	10 to 18
Number of pupils	792
Number of boarding pupils	42
Date of previous inspection	30 November to 3 December 2021

Information about the school

75. Loughborough Grammar School is an independent boarding and day school for boys. It is one of four schools that make up the Loughborough Schools Foundation (LSF). The schools share some facilities. Pupils are taught alongside those from the two other senior schools in the LSF for some A-level subjects and co-curricular activities. The school is overseen by a board of governors and is a charitable trust.
76. There are two boarding houses situated on the school site.
77. The school has identified 141 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
78. English is an additional language for 73 pupils.
79. The school states that its aim is to build fulfilled and world-ready young men.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

26 to 28 November 2024

80. A team of eight inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

81. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of co-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the interim head, 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.

82. 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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