

School inspection report

14 to 16 October 2025

Gateway School

1 High Street
Great Missenden
Buckinghamshire
HP16 9AA

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 and governors work collectively to ensure that they promote and prioritise pupils' wellbeing and deliver the school's aims to prepare pupils for the challenges of the real world. Leaders continually reflect on how they can bring improvements to the experience of pupils. They use the views of parents, pupils and staff to help inform the changes that they make. They ensure that the Standards are met consistently.
2. Leaders typically ensure that all required information is provided to parents, including regular, detailed reports on pupils' progress. However, pupils' attainment and progress in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationships education are not formally reported.
3. Leaders ensure that there is a suitable curriculum in place which enables pupils throughout the school to develop their skills and understanding across the required areas. Through regular lesson observations and continuing professional development, leaders systematically monitor the teaching and learning in the school. Effective teaching and a range of resources enable pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL), to learn and achieve well.
4. Leaders use a comprehensive assessment framework and data analysis to monitor pupils' progress and inform targeted support and teaching strategies. While progress meetings facilitate information sharing, not all staff are using assessment data to inform planning consistently.
5. In the early years, staff foster nurturing relationships and support children's development through engaging and well-planned activities. Independence is promoted via consistent routines and interactive play, while diversity and social awareness are encouraged through inclusive resources. Children respond positively, displaying sociability and enjoyment in their learning environment.
6. Leaders have updated the behaviour, sanctions and rewards policy to proactively promote the desired values of being safe, caring and positive. The effects of these changes have yet to be reviewed.
7. Leaders ensure through practical applications that pupils understand and appreciate fundamental British values. These ideals are promoted by the pupil parliament and its associated committees, voting procedures for head boy and girl, pupil surveys, community engagement and charitable activities. Pupils develop social responsibility as a result. Well-chosen activities and resources, including those in the early years, promote an understanding and appreciation of others and their differences.
8. Leaders carefully consider how to prepare pupils for the next stage of their education, through transition activities and interactions with older pupils and adults, so that pupils face new challenges with confidence.
9. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and in line with current statutory requirements. The school responds effectively to any safeguarding concerns that arise.

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 pupils' attainment in PSHE and relationships education is formally reported to parents
- ensure that staff use assessment data consistently to inform their planning
- review the effectiveness of the changes to the behaviour, rewards and sanctions policy.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. The proprietor, through the governing body, knows the school well. The governors visit the school regularly and this informs their effective oversight of school policies, procedures and pupils' wellbeing. They receive regular reports from leaders and provide challenge and support where needed, to ensure that all Standards are met.
11. Effective self-evaluation is integral to leaders' approach to strategic development. It informs the development plan, the priorities of which are aligned to the school's aims and values. In addition to the school's pupil parliament, leaders seek the views of pupils and parents through regular surveys, which are also used to shape future developments.
12. Governors and leaders use both internal and external audits, in addition to effective links with other agencies, to assure themselves that leaders have suitable knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles well. Leaders appropriately inform the local authority of any pupils whose absenteeism raises concerns or who join or leave the school at non-standard transition points. Leaders provide the relevant local authority with the required information relating to pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), including that related to funding.
13. Regulatory health and safety record-keeping is systematic and robust. Leaders ensure there is a thorough induction programme in place for new staff alongside regular professional development opportunities, including safeguarding training.
14. Leadership of the early years is effective. Leaders have appropriate knowledge and skills, and support members of staff in the early years through well-informed feedback on observations. Regular meetings between the governor with responsibility for the early years and the head of the department ensure effective oversight.
15. Leaders implement risk management arrangements, including those for premises, welfare and safeguarding, to promote pupils' safety both within the school and on educational visits. Staff are sufficiently trained to make the most effective use of risk management and mitigation. There is a suitable accessibility plan in place which meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
16. Information for parents is on the website and up to date. Curriculum overviews are given to parents to inform them of topics and concepts being taught on a termly basis per year. End-of-year reports are detailed and informative, but currently there is no formal reporting to parents about their child's progress in PSHE and relationships education.
17. Leaders effectively implement a suitable written complaints policy and keep an appropriate log of any complaints received. Leaders are proactive in listening to parents through the various school committees and surveys in order to promote open dialogue and address any concerns raised in an appropriate and timely manner.
18. Leaders actively promote the wellbeing of pupils as evidenced by their decisions and actions, such as the development of the wellbeing hub and revision of the behaviour policy to match rewards to desired values.

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

19. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. Leaders have implemented a suitable curriculum, which covers a broad range of subjects including English, mathematics, science, computing, humanities, music, religious education (RE), physical education (PE), art, design and technology (DT) and a modern foreign language (MFL). Leaders carefully consider the content of each subject to ensure schemes of work are age-appropriate. Curriculum plans identify the skills and subject knowledge that they want pupils to learn. Lesson plans reference wider skill development such as challenge, ownership, dialogue and engagement. Cross-curricular projects, for example in music, drama, art and the humanities, enhance the curriculum. Leaders ensure there are opportunities for performance to improve oracy skills and confidence.
21. A strong focus on English and mathematics supports pupils' progress across other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 1 apply their knowledge of phonics to spell words and form letters correctly in subjects other than English. In mathematics, pupils select tasks of varying difficulty, which fosters self-evaluation. They practise mental arithmetic on a regular basis to enable them to work quickly in subjects such as science and DT.
22. Leaders ensure there is an effective curriculum in place in the early years which includes prime and specific areas of learning and is mapped to ensure continuity and progression. Teachers provide a broad range of learning experiences, including child-initiated opportunities, which enable children to make good progress and develop key skills. Staff patiently model language and encourage correct pronunciation through praise.
23. Leaders ensure that teaching is of a good quality through regular monitoring, for example in learning walks, and the use of continued professional development to strengthen the skills of all staff. Teachers use effective questioning to further pupils' understanding and knowledge and give pupils time to discuss and share ideas to promote deeper thinking skills. In English lessons in Year 2, pupils discuss alternative adjectives to make their descriptions more exciting; in DT lessons in Year 5, they evaluate the design of a land yacht, thinking about features such as the weight and shape of the sail to work out which design is more aero-dynamic. Lessons feature purposeful use of resources and are effectively structured to reinforce learning and maintain pupils' interest.
24. For pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) or who are bilingual, leaders ensure they can access the curriculum using a commercial assessment system, and then provide targeted support to enhance their language skills and vocabulary development.
25. Leaders ensure that pupils who have SEND are identified, and that extra support is provided through targeted interventions, such as extra phonics, reading or speech therapy. In class lessons, teachers implement tailored strategies and mechanisms to meet individual needs and promote good progress. In some lessons, teachers adjust their teaching strategies and levels of support or challenge to take account of pupils' prior attainment.
26. Leaders implement a comprehensive assessment framework. They use data analysis in core subjects to track progress, assessing both individuals and cohorts against projected targets. Leaders review this tracking to focus learning support or direct teaching strategies. Pupil progress meetings aim to share this knowledge with teaching staff, but not all staff use this data consistently to inform their planning.

27. Pupils' work is marked constructively so that they understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Parents are provided with detailed reports on their child's progress at the end of each year, with shorter reports and useful verbal feedback in the autumn and spring terms.
28. Pupils demonstrate a positive attitude in their lessons. They are eager to learn and achieve. They listen to each other and share their ideas as normal practice. Through the stimulating environment, and the opportunities given to them, such as lessons at the local farm or participation in the 'take one picture' National Gallery initiative, pupils develop their emotional, intellectual, social and creative skills to good effect.
29. There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities available at lunchtimes and after school. As well as providing sports clubs and special-interest groups like computer gaming, a number of clubs are led by external experts who provide pupils with the opportunity to extend their learning beyond the curriculum to improve their skills and enhance their knowledge. These include individual music lessons, judo and tennis.

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

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

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

31. Leaders and staff promote pupils' personal development through a comprehensive PSHE scheme of work known as 'learning for life'. This is supplemented by theme days, guest speakers, workshops and an assembly plan, which is linked to national event days. Leaders monitor the teaching of the programme through learning walks and an assessment framework, as well as pupil attitude surveys. These measures ensure that the content remains relevant and responsive to pupils' needs. An initiative known as the 'Gateway challenge' also promotes wellbeing and development by encouraging pupils to embrace activities within the categories of 'wider world', 'being active', 'being creative' and 'outdoor discovery'. It challenges pupils to develop their character and skill set, fulfilling the school's aims and promoting self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.
32. Personal skill development is further enhanced through the many opportunities to take on roles of responsibility within the school. Pupils can join one of the four committees that support the school parliament, stand for election as head boy or girl in Year 6, or act as sports ambassadors and librarians.
33. PSHE and relationships education lessons are well-planned and age appropriate. Staff make thoughtful adaptations for pupils who have SEND and younger learners, as well as those whose personal circumstances may make a topic uncomfortable. The school informs parents appropriately about the content of relationships education and PSHE lessons, and some staff share outcomes during parent-teacher meetings.
34. Leaders ensure that PSHE, relationships education and RE encourage mutual trust and respect for other people, teaching pupils about the major world faiths and their associated practices. Assemblies, outdoor education and art lessons enable pupils to develop their own spiritual understanding through teaching about reflection, for example, on the natural world.
35. Pupils are taught about bullying through the PSHE curriculum and assemblies. They learn about the difference between bullying and falling out with a friend. Pupils learn about the different forms that bullying can take and what to do if it happens to them or someone else. Bullying happens very rarely and is dealt with quickly and effectively when incidents arise.
36. Leaders have recently updated the rewards and sanctions policy and associated behaviour policy in order to reinforce desired attitudes and behaviours, linking them to the values of the school. There are positive relationships between teachers and pupils and among pupils themselves, and teachers remind pupils, when necessary, about being respectful to each other to create a supportive learning environment for all. Leaders plan to review the new structure to evaluate its ongoing effectiveness.
37. Children in the early years are supported in their development through well-planned activities that promote expectations of behaviour, such as turn-taking. Staff communicate and promote a calm and orderly environment and help children to recognise and regulate their feelings. The outdoor area encourages safe and considerate play. Transitions into school are supported through a programme of welcome activities.
38. The school offers a broad and inclusive PE programme that caters for pupils of all abilities. The most able are stretched while those needing additional support are given opportunities to succeed. PE

lessons are supplemented by additional activities, such as swimming, and extra-curricular clubs, such as judo. As pupils progress through the school, they acquire a wide range of physical skills, such as co-ordination, as well as other skills such as gamesmanship and leadership. Pupils also gain knowledge about the importance of exercise and diet.

39. Pupils are supervised well while at school. Staff on duty during playtimes monitor behaviour and encourage pupils to play co-operatively. The recent additional sports equipment provided at playtime gives pupils greater opportunities to be physically active.
40. Leaders ensure that attendance and admission registers are maintained in line with current legislation throughout the school, including in the early years. Robust procedures ensure that each pupil is accounted for during the school day and any unexplained absences are followed up and correctly recorded. Leaders monitor patterns of attendance and effective systems are in place to analyse attendance data for trends that may signal the need for investigation.
41. The appropriately equipped medical room and trained nurse are available during the school day. Secure record-keeping for the administration of medicines and recording of accidents ensures that parents are informed promptly about any treatment or medicine administered. Trends and patterns of accidents are tracked and measures put in place to ensure that any issues are addressed. Staff receive appropriate first aid training, including paediatric first aid training for those in the early years and mental health first aid training to support pupils who have emotional needs.
42. Rigorous oversight of health and safety by leaders ensures that policies are adhered to systematically and implemented effectively through clear lines of responsibility. Detailed records of all health and safety matters are kept to ensure that all routine inspections, including of fire safety equipment, take place at the right time. There are regular fire evacuation drills to ensure pupils know what to do in an emergency. Leaders ensure that premises are well maintained and comply with legislation.

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

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

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

44. The school actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law and tolerance through its 'learning for life' curriculum, assemblies and wider school activities. Pupils participate in democratic processes, such as voting for house captains and ambassadorial roles, from Reception onwards. Leaders ensure that, through the pupil parliament and its committees, pupils are taught that their opinions matter. They learn how their decisions affect their school life. Pupils learn about community engagement, with the eco-committee earning a Green Flag and leading sustainability initiatives. The charity, food and community committees support fundraising, menu planning and wellbeing.
45. Pupils learn about individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs through PSHE and RE lessons, by celebrating events such as Black History Month and through themed content in literacy and drama lessons. Leaders ensure pupils develop social and cultural knowledge and understanding through learning about people's varying cultures and backgrounds. They welcome staff, parents and other speakers into school to share costumes, practices and life experiences. As a result, pupils begin to appreciate and celebrate the diverse nature of society.
46. Pupils are prepared well for life in British society through events such as enterprise days and careers days. They are taught about current affairs through age-appropriate news programmes and assemblies linked to national events, which widen pupils' appreciation of world issues. Visits to the Houses of Parliament, the local church, a mosque and a Hindu temple further strengthen their social and cultural knowledge. Pupils are educated about the importance of demonstrating mutual respect. They learn about features such as neurodiversity and the importance of respecting people's differences, such as those related to race and belief. They develop inclusive attitudes and respect for the identities and needs of others.
47. Pupils are helped to develop a moral code as they learn to recognise the difference between right and wrong. This starts in the early years, where children are supported to make 'good choices'. The re-developed behaviour policy rewards the valued characteristics of being safe, caring and positive. This helps to nurture a responsible and supportive community within the school, where pupils behave well and help each other.
48. The mathematics programmes of study and themed activity days effectively develop pupils' understanding of economics and finance. They study the use of money in various scenarios and apply their understanding to activities such as planning school trips, creating a festival, or spending money at a shop or fair. In learning how to budget, purchase materials and create profit, pupils begin to develop their understanding of personal finances and the world of work.
49. Careers education and guidance is taught appropriately for the age and stage of pupils, widening aspirations and giving pupils opportunities to discuss and investigate different roles and careers. Leaders prepare pupils effectively for their transition to the next stages of their learning. Transition days allow pupils to become familiar with the practices of the forthcoming year, including progressing from the early years into the more formal learning environment of Year 1, and the introduction of more specialised teaching in the older year groups. Leaders also provide valued advice and support for Year 6 pupils and their parents to enable their successful transition to secondary education.

50. In the early years, staff develop warm and caring relationships with children, sharing enthusiasm and supporting development through carefully planned activities. Children are encouraged to be independent through well-established routines. These include promoting turn-taking, listening to each other and concentrating through interactive play. Children are prepared for society through a wide range of toys, including dolls with a variety of skin tones, and musical instruments from around the world. Children in the early years are sociable and friendly and demonstrate their enjoyment of the opportunities created for them.

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

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

Safeguarding

52. Governors are proactive in their monitoring of safeguarding through regular contact with the pastoral and safeguarding teams. They check records and review cases to ensure effective and rigorous practice. Well-considered measures are taken to manage identified risks associated with safeguarding needs, such as child-on-child concerns or mental health vulnerabilities. The school's safeguarding policy is up to date and records are kept in line with statutory requirements.
53. Suitable arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and protect them from harm. Leaders promote a culture of awareness and openness which encourages pupils and staff to readily discuss concerns. Staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities meet regularly with the safeguarding governor to discuss issues, analyse trends and review practice, including within the early years.
54. Leaders ensure that all staff, governors and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding training as they join the school, including 'Prevent' duty training. All staff receive regular update training, and their knowledge and understanding are formally assessed by the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). Leaders ensure that staff understand how to recognise and report safeguarding issues, including low-level concerns about adults.
55. Any reported safeguarding concerns are acted upon promptly, and when incidents occur, they are addressed swiftly and appropriately. The safeguarding team works effectively with external agencies, as the need arises.
56. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Online safety is taken seriously and taught effectively in PSHE and computing lessons. Pupils receive regular reminders and parents are supported through visiting speakers and regular school communications. Suitable internet monitoring and filtering systems are in place. These are tested appropriately, and any issues are dealt with quickly and appropriately. Leaders ensure that pupils are aware of safety protocols, such as recognising visitors and their identification lanyards. Staff are readily available for pupils to talk to, and pupils are confident to approach or contact adults if they have concerns. Pupils can use a 'worry box' to report a concern anonymously.
57. The single central record of appointments (SCR) contains accurate details of all necessary recruitment checks carried out before staff, volunteers or governors join the school. Staff involved in recruitment receive training in safer recruitment practices, and governors oversee the recruitment process and the SCR as part of monitoring the school's arrangements to ensure consistently effective practice.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

58. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Gateway School
Department for Education number	825/6000
Address	Gateway School 1 High Street Great Missenden Buckinghamshire HP16 9AA
Phone number	01494862407
Email address	communications@gatewaysch.co.uk
Website	www.gatewayschool-bucks.co.uk
Proprietor	Gateway School Ltd
Chair	Mr Steven Wade
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Coke
Age range	2 to 11
Number of pupils	252
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2022

Information about the school

59. Gateway School is a co-educational day school located in the Buckinghamshire village of Great Missenden. It is part of a group of schools owned by Bellevue Education Group Ltd, which oversees the management of the school. Its governance is the responsibility of the group's education committee, chaired by its schools' director. The head has been in post since April 2025.
60. The school comprises three sections: an early years setting for children aged 2 to 5 years, lower prep for pupils in Years 1 to 3 and upper prep for pupils in Years 4 to 6.
61. There are 42 children in the early years, comprising two Nursery classes for children in their pre-school year, aged 3 to 4, and two Reception classes.
62. The school has identified 44 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Four pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
63. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for five pupils.
64. The school states its aims are to provide an environment within which pupils can grow into curious, ambitious and confident learners, through developing respect and courtesy alongside resilience and problem-solving skills, so that pupils are well prepared for the challenges of the real world.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

14 to 16 October 2025

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

66. Inspection activities included:

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

67. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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