

# School inspection report

3 to 5 March 2026

## **Woodbridge School**

Burkitt Road

Woodbridge

IP12 4JH

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. The school's aims and values prioritise kindness, community and respect. Leaders ensure that the values are evident in policies and daily routines. Because of this, pupils' behaviour and treatment of others is notably courteous and considerate. They are well cared for and feel safe at school.
2. Leaders and governors have the appropriate knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They seek training and external guidance to ensure good practice, adopting a rigorous approach to monitoring and supporting all areas of school life. As a result, pupils thrive.
3. Leaders implement sophisticated quality assurance processes to ensure that all areas of school life, from teaching to the food offered, are consistently of high quality. A comprehensive training programme for all staff ensures that pupils benefit from their up-to-date knowledge and skills.
4. The curriculum allows pupils of all abilities and interests to enjoy their learning and achieve well. Recent additions have expanded practical options in areas such as languages and sports science. Further academic challenges are created through non-examined courses. The prep school curriculum in particular is linked to real-life scenarios. Many activities are rooted in the local community.
5. Pupils of all ages achieve well. They engage with their learning because of skilled teaching, well-planned lessons that allow for active participation, and encouragement and praise. Effective assessment methods mean that pupils are clear about their current attainment and about how to improve. Pupils are taught specific learning skills to help them commit key knowledge to memory so that it can be used in the future.
6. Pupils enjoy learning and are keen to show it. They achieve highly in examinations and are supported to progress to a range of competitive destinations. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who speak English as an additional language (EAL) achieve in line with their peers because of effective support.
7. Pupils apply effort, act responsibly and are self-motivated. They eagerly grasp opportunities to extend their learning and participate enthusiastically in activities and discussions. They are notably confident and articulate. They take part in the extensive extra-curricular programme, appreciating the skills and aptitudes it allows them to develop. Many pupils participate in sports, cultural and academic competitions and events, including at county and national level.
8. Leaders promote pupils' wellbeing through a range of initiatives that flag when pupils might need support at an early stage. The school culture of 'be kind and do your best' infuses policies and routines. This culture has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour, including in their interactions with others.
9. Effective meeting and communication structures mean that pupils' welfare is at the heart of all school decision-making. The development of the role of form tutors and heads of year ensure sensitive monitoring of pupils' wellbeing on a daily basis. As a result, staff understand pupils' particular needs, including those who have SEND, boarders and children in the early years.
10. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme and the citizenship curriculum ensure that pupils are taught about staying safe at school. They are prepared for the future in an age-appropriate way. The school's culture of kindness shapes pastoral care. It is evident

in the way that pupils behave, as well as in the way they are treated by adults and each other in the school community.

11. Boarders feel a sense of pride and belonging in their house. Leaders create an environment where pupils feel at home, stimulated and secure. The needs of international boarders are sensitively considered. Prior to the inspection, leaders had not ensured that boarders were consistently provided with necessary contact information for external support services as required by regulations. This was rectified during the inspection.
12. Pupils are ambitious about their future goals. They benefit from careers guidance and curriculum developments that allow them to build skills such as financial literacy and political understanding, so they can become responsible and active citizens.
13. Leaders ensure that pupils of all ages develop a sense of service and responsibility. Pupils contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the community, as well as to wider society. They do this through the school's extensive partnership and outreach programme, through leadership responsibilities, fundraising and mentoring, and through the school's relationship with a local care home. In doing so, pupils put the school's values of kindness and community into action.
14. Leaders and governors create a reflective and vigilant safeguarding culture in the school which ensures that pupils feel safe and know how to seek help. Robust procedures and a comprehensive staff training programme mean that staff are confident about what to do if there is a safeguarding concern.

## 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 boarders are always provided with details of two or more child-specific support services to contact in case of problems or distress, and that they are confident about how to contact the independent person.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

15. Leaders and governors put pupils' wellbeing at the centre of their decision-making. They are well trained to ensure that their skills are up to date and relevant to their roles. They initiate a range of external audits, including of governance. This ensures that their actions are effective, allowing the school to develop and supporting pupils to thrive. There is a notable depth of expertise in risk management, financial planning and safeguarding in the governing body. Care is taken to source new governors when vacancies arise in order to maintain a wide range of experience in the team.
16. The revised composition and structure of the senior leadership team allows for daily collaboration between the prep and senior schools to ensure consistency of approach between the two phases. Considered meeting schedules also ensure effective communication between academic, pastoral, extra-curricular and compliance functions. This allows for thoughtful liaison when decisions are made, benefiting pupils and parents, who find that transition arrangements run smoothly. Leaders have a deep understanding of the needs of pupils who have SEND and the impact of any decision-making on the quality of their experience. Boarding arrangements and the early years are well led and supported by leaders with relevant expertise. The collaborative approach taken by senior leaders supports the holistic experience of pupils and the notable sense of community.
17. A comprehensive programme of professional development reflects a culture of curiosity, care and professional pride. Leaders invest in a national platform of modular courses through which staff improve their skills across a variety of academic, pastoral and compliance areas. Middle leaders make extensive use of examination board training to ensure that teachers are confident to support pupils in examination technique. This maximises pupils' attainment. Leaders provide many options for development for staff in support roles, such as those relating to coaching, marketing and personnel. Professional development is linked closely to personal targets for efficient use of funds and the embedding of school priorities.
18. Leaders are highly visible around the site, inspiring trust and confidence among pupils, staff and parents. They teach classes and know pupils and all members of staff by name, using learning walks to monitor standards and to keep informed about all aspects of school life. Their determination to be visible in the school community creates an egalitarian culture with a marked sense of belonging. Leaders model the school's values, treating others with kindness and respect, and are always eager to improve.
19. Senior leaders and governors provide effective guidance and support to middle leaders when they are new to their role. This enables leaders to maintain effective management and oversight of their areas of responsibility.
20. Strategic planning is well structured and has pupils' outcomes at its centre. Initiatives such as promoting 'hard thinking' or monitoring pupils' wellbeing are broken down into development plans with target dates and identified accountability. Teachers' actions are evaluated for impact at department and year group meetings. The consistent focus on continuous improvement has a positive impact on pupils' experiences. The genuine interest in how pupils best learn radiates through the school. It is of enormous benefit to pupils, whose lessons are well structured, effective, and interesting.

21. The staff wellbeing committee represents all employees. There are several mechanisms whereby staff can express views and make suggestions. Regular 'listening' groups allow small groups of staff at a time to express views and to discuss strategic developments. Training options are matched to the needs of the role. As a result, staff feel valued and are motivated to do their best.
22. Policies are clear, accessible and regularly scrutinised by leaders and governors in impact reviews. These ascertain the effect of each policy on pupils' outcomes.
23. Parents receive regular updates on their child's progress. The timing and format of the reports is designed for maximum effectiveness. All required information is made available and is easily navigable on the school's website. Leaders prioritise home-school partnerships for a collaborative approach to pastoral care and academic support. They provide a series of webinars and live events, so parents feel informed about their child's life at school.
24. Where appropriate, leaders collaborate with external agencies such as children's services and medical care providers to produce informed care plans for pupils who have SEND. This ensures that pupils experience co-ordinated provision. Appropriate reports are made to the local authority about pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard times of transition.
25. Governors and leaders assess risk and take appropriate action to manage it. Where a significant risk is identified, external expertise is sought, and mitigations are put in place. Governors then undertake 'deep dive' reviews to ensure impact and best practice. They are aware of harder-to-spot risks such as, for example, those regarding digital safety, and of groups who may be disproportionately affected. These are recorded on the risk register.
26. Complaints are taken seriously and acted upon in line with the published policy. Any complaint or serious incident is logged and reviewed by leaders for learning points. In the prep school, minor issues are also logged to track trends and prevent escalation.
27. The school takes very seriously its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Leaders commissioned an external report on accessibility, consulted with pupils and parents, then drew up a new plan with short-, medium- and long-term aims. An accessibility committee monitors the progress of the plan, which is reviewed at three governing committees. Leaders have recently invested a considerable sum to ensure that the site is as accessible as possible. Pupils who have SEND are supported to access the curriculum and facilities. Leaders ensure that pupils have detailed profiles which highlight the support strategies that teachers can use to help them to be successful.

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

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

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

29. Leaders plan the curriculum in both the prep and senior schools to ensure that it is engaging and relevant and meets pupils' needs. It provides pupils with high-level academic challenge. Language choices include Latin, Greek and Mandarin, and there are timetabled slots for pupils to extend their academic learning. Programmes also include more practical options such as business studies, cultural language courses, sports science and photography. A refresh of the curriculum for pupils in Year 9 has led to the creation of a course called 'tripos'. This allows pupils to explore topics of general knowledge and culture in the past, present and future. Pupils consider questions such as "will artificial intelligence destroy our ability to think?" or "what makes a civilisation?" Pupils of all abilities achieve success.
30. Pupils are motivated to learn. They are supported to apply their knowledge in different contexts. In the early years and lower prep, children explore literacy and numeracy through topics such as 'toys'. In Year 1, for example, children place pictures of toys in chronological order as they learn number lines. They also design, make and sell toys through the 'young builders' programme. Specialist teaching in arts, languages, science and sport increases as pupils progress through the prep school. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have engineering lessons. Cross-curricular off-timetable days with both an academic and pastoral focus allow pupils to work collaboratively on tasks which they present to adult audiences. They enjoy their lessons and build confidence as a result.
31. In the senior school, lessons are frequently designed to link to real-life scenarios. There is a notable use of adult professionals and local employers who regularly support pupils' learning. In Year 10 physics, for example, pupils hear from a motor engineer about the benefits of epoxy resin in their motorised go-kart design. Senior pupils make nylon in chemistry.
32. Leaders take advantage of professional development opportunities to enhance their skills for pupils' benefit and to model lifelong learning. Subject leaders forge links with experts such as, for example, the Cambridge University astronomy department, which offers specialist lectures for science examination candidates.
33. In the prep school, all lessons include opportunities for pupils and children to develop the 'CLICK' skills of communication, leadership, initiative, collaboration and kindness. Content is delivered in a way that maximises chances to gain knowledge and to simultaneously deepen those skills. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils design a boat, working collaboratively in pairs to take measurements.
34. Pupils of all ages achieve highly in relation to their starting points. Pupils who have SEND achieve well because of effective support that ensures their needs are met. Thorough analysis of examination results ensures that any areas for development are addressed through rigorous action plans and training.
35. Skilled teaching enables pupils to achieve well in lessons. Clear instructions, interesting and adapted resources, thoughtful questioning and targeted feedback ensure that pupils understand how to be successful. They apply their skills, for example, in devising questions to classify objects in a Year 4 science lesson, or when applying the techniques of a professional theatre company to their own work in Year 8 drama.
36. Pupils in the senior school choose their own methods of recording their learning, moving smoothly between neat and well-organised written notes and files on their digital devices. Pupils are taught

how best to record and retrieve information for future use. This supports their attainment in tests and helps them to apply knowledge to real-life situations.

37. Pupils are encouraged to participate and challenge themselves. Teachers adapt their questioning, providing extra prompts if needed. In Year 7 philosophy and religion, for example, pupils are guided to work out the meaning of complex technical terms by linking to prior knowledge in this subject and in Latin. The school's research underpins pupils' typically effective development of critical reasoning and problem-solving skills.
38. Teachers' insistence on high standards of language and accuracy helps pupils to work with precision. Teachers remind pupils of all ages to 'use their words', for example, when children in Year 1 describe artefacts or Year 8 pupils use advanced theatrical terminology. Teachers employ strategies to help pupils proofread their work.
39. Informative reports are provided to parents on a regular basis. These include next steps and information about their child's approach to learning, as well as current and expected performance in each subject or area of learning. The report and parent consultation cycle in the senior school is planned for greatest impact on examination performance. A thoughtful assessment method for pupils in Years 7 to 9 ensures consistency across subjects and progression of standards towards GCSE grades. In the early years, there are also effective and detailed systems of assessment. As a result, pupils and their parents are aware of how they are progressing.
40. Pupils are confident to use both written and verbal feedback to make improvements. In some subjects, they are supported by software that provides instant feedback and adjusts to their knowledge and skills, increasing motivation. Leaders regularly analyse pupils' individual performance against expected outcomes and employ interventions to support progress. Assessment information and examination results are scrutinised to identify trends. This informs academic and pastoral support through closely monitored action plans. Pupils benefit from this rigorous analysis and tracking, resulting in improvements in attainment. Effective collaboration between academic and pastoral staff and parents ensures that pupils' wellbeing is at the forefront of decision-making.
41. Pupils act responsibly and are self-motivated. They arrive promptly at lessons, remember to bring the correct resources and work quietly on tasks when asked. Books show careful presentation and thoughtfulness about how to retrieve information later. Pupils in the early years have a hand signal they use if they wish to help someone else in the class, which they do frequently. Older pupils are taught to use advanced sources to support research and have the opportunity to complete A-level research projects that reflect personal interests.
42. Pupils who have SEND are identified on entry or as needs emerge through detailed tracking. Their needs are well met through individual support plans and, where required, the provision of specialist small group or individual lessons. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively in the prep school and in some mathematics lessons. The team of specialist teachers has been expanded. Class teachers are confident in how to adapt strategies to meet pupils' needs. They receive relevant training from the leaders of provision for pupils who have SEND. The effectiveness of support strategies is closely monitored. As a result, pupils who have SEND achieve success.
43. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported through specialist lessons, where appropriate. They are prepared well for tests in English to enable them to access university entry. Classroom teachers are trained in how best to meet their needs.

44. Pupils participate in a broad and stimulating extra-curricular programme which includes opportunities in academic pursuits, drama, music, creative arts, debating, outdoor pursuits and service opportunities, as well as options such as woodturning. Chess is popular, with large outdoor sets placed throughout the grounds. Many pupils take speech and drama examination courses and success rates are high. Dedicated time for extra-curricular participation, along with careful management to minimise clashes, ensure that older pupils continue with valuable extra-curricular activities as their academic studies intensify. Every pupil in the prep school participates in the extra-curricular offer. Pupils benefit from the way the programme builds skills and allows them to make new friendships and have fun.

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

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

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

46. Pupils' wellbeing is thoughtfully promoted. Leaders have developed the role of the form tutor as the first port of call for pastoral care. For example, the form tutor supports pupils in setting targets following an academic report, or in confiding a worry. In form time, pupils can meet their tutor individually or discuss topics such as world affairs or a current school issue. Form tutors serve as the conduit for regular information to parents. They are supported by heads of year, who monitor their work and provide resources to ensure consistency of quality. As a result, pupils understand that they have a range of adults who know them well and will advocate for them, and so they thrive.
47. Pupils overwhelmingly feel happy and safe in school. They are secure in the knowledge that they are cared for well. A weekly survey in the prep school monitors pupils' sense of wellbeing and triggers interventions or additional support. The modified head of year system has allowed for closer monitoring of pupils in a cohort and has triggered initiatives such as tackling social media overuse or 'banter' that crosses boundaries. Pupils can report any pastoral concerns, including anonymously through an online tool and a comments box. The pastoral hub ensures that senior pupils can access support easily. Pupils in the prep school are taught mindfulness techniques to help them respond positively to challenges and to manage emotions.
48. Leaders provide opportunities and spaces for pupils of all ages to develop spiritual understanding and appreciate the importance of calm reflection. The chapel at the heart of the school is open to pupils for quiet reflection or prayer. Religious festivals such as Lent are explored in assemblies and linked to the school's aims of kindness and responsibility. The religion and world views (RW) curriculum is designed to allow pupils to explore 'big' questions, for example in a Year 10 lesson where pupils explore the implications of a resurrection-based belief system. The chaplain plays a key role in the pastoral team. Pupils of all faiths and none are confident to seek advice. The focus is on individual choice about beliefs. Pupils are encouraged to use the extensive grounds to appreciate nature. Younger pupils have regular lessons outdoors.
49. Leaders ensure that pupils develop social skills. Pupils in the prep school and early years learn skills such as socialising at mealtimes, taking turns and road safety. Mixed-age initiatives such as 'buddy' lunches and breaks, residentials and experience days, as well as extra-curricular activities allow pupils to make friends both in their year group and outside it. Regular workshops, which include pupils from other schools, extend this further.
50. There is an appropriate policy for relationships and sex education (RSE), which reflects statutory guidance. Leaders ensure that pupils are taught about respectful relationships and understand consent. Leaders consult with parents when changes are made to the policy or curriculum.
51. Leaders provide pupils with many opportunities to develop and maintain their physical fitness. Pupils in the prep and senior school achieve highly in competitive sports, regularly reaching national and regional finals in sports such as cricket, hockey, cross country, swimming, athletics and equestrian events. Pupils not involved in competitive sport have options that build fitness habits for life. The canteen serves nutritious food. Vegetarian, fruit and salad options are always available. Staff in the early years adhere to safer eating guidelines. Allergen guidance is meticulously followed, with the school holding a national award for this work.

52. The PSHE programme addresses sensitive topics in an age-appropriate way. For pupils in the senior school, this includes issues related to gambling, consent and inappropriate sexual behaviour. Pupils reflect on their mental health and how to maintain a positive mindset. Visits from community groups such as the police keep pupils informed of their rights and responsibilities under the law, including regarding weapons, drugs and alcohol. Pupils are consulted about the content of the programme.
53. Leaders support teachers in managing pupils' behaviour by setting out a clear ladder of escalating sanctions with sources of further help. Teachers are trained in strategies to support pupils who have additional needs that might affect their behaviour. In the early years and prep school, teachers use a repertoire of methods to ensure a calm and orderly environment, such as counting down and hand signals. These routines support children as they transition from outdoor play to home time routines or during circle time. As a result, typically, behaviour is highly positive in lessons and around the site. Sanctions and rewards are applied consistently.
54. Instances of bullying are rare. Pupils know how to report any incidents. Lessons and assemblies address the need to be kind. Both victims and perpetrators receive support if any bullying should occur. Record-keeping is thorough, so trends are monitored closely. Any one-off incidents that might develop are addressed quickly. Pupils are confident that bullying is taken seriously. The school adapts national resources to educate pupils about appropriate boundaries and the impact of thoughtless language.
55. The site is attractive, secure and well maintained. A monitored alert system ensures minor maintenance issues are logged and dealt with promptly. As a result of external audits, leaders have taken steps to improve access and surveillance and to secure buildings. A new lockdown system has been implemented. Pupils' awareness of safety and security is embedded through the PSHE and citizenship programme, as well as through regular talks and assemblies. Governors monitor risks associated with site security through compliance and health and safety committees.
56. Pupils and leaders take sustainability seriously. Pupils in the prep school work on an eco-committee to suggest ideas for implementation. Solar panels have been added to roofing, lighting has been updated and investments have been made in electric machinery, new minibuses and recycling hardware.
57. Pupils feel safe in school. They are well supervised, including in the boarding house and at breaktimes. Children in the early years and prep benefit from routines that ensure transition times between activities are calm and structured. Pupils who are ill are taken care of in the medical centre attached to the boarding house. Many staff are trained in first aid, including all those in the early years, who hold paediatric first aid certificates.
58. Attendance patterns are monitored and tracked. Pupils' absence is reported appropriately, in line with government guidelines. Suitable admission registers are maintained.
59. Health and safety procedures are rigorous and reduce risk. These include detailed assessments of site hazards and fire risks. Regular drills, including at night, prepare pupils and boarders for emergencies. All records are meticulously kept, including of near misses, so that lessons are learned. External audits ensure compliance and good practice, with leaders acting promptly on advice. Pupils are educated about how to keep safe. Pupils studying engineering and design, for example, keep a 'health and safety passport' outlining rules and expectations.

60. The boarding house is welcoming and well maintained, with areas for social activities, including club opportunities solely for boarders. Boarders are happy and proud of their house. House staff are suitably trained to carry out their responsibilities. Pastoral care, including for international boarders, is attentive and understanding. Logs record where issues apply to boarders in order to track trends. Pupils in the house care for each other. During the inspection, boarders were provided with additional information relating to support services they can access, as well as a photograph of the independent person outside the school staff to whom they can speak. This ensures that boarders are confident in having independent adults additional to the school staff whom they can consult in case of problems or distress.

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

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

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

62. Leaders create a culture where mutual respect is paramount. The school environment is welcoming, differences are respected and pupils are able to express their individuality. They describe the school's culture as 'close-knit'. Pupils are taught about the law regarding protected characteristics. They know that the school's ethos of kindness encompasses these.
63. In the prep school, leaders instil routines that embed the aims of 'be kind and do your best'. Good manners and respectful behaviour are evident in start- and end-of-day routines and in the daily behaviour of pupils in the shared spaces, where doors are opened for others, canteen staff are thanked, and courtesies are exchanged.
64. Pupils are aware and respectful of different cultures. Key events such as Chinese New Year and Diwali are marked and allow international boarders to share their traditions. Opportunities to participate in trips and exchanges, such as to China, deepen pupils' global understanding. Pupils in the prep school take part in a 'discover our community' day and share different faith systems. Some language courses are cultural in focus rather than linguistic. Texts studied in both the prep and senior schools in English, drama and languages enable pupils to encounter other cultures and beliefs in an empathetic way.
65. Pupils are well prepared for life beyond school. Children in the early years and pupils in the prep school work through a life skills programme. This includes basic skills such as using cutlery or writing a thank you note. Pupils in Year 1 are taught how to phone the emergency services and speak in front of an audience. The school's 'Seckford' scheme, for pupils from Year 9, includes life skills education such as cookery and first aid. The sixth-form experience allows pupils opportunities to manage their own travel, dress code and non-contact time. Staff oversee independent study for sixth-form pupils but also allow for increasing autonomy. This cultivates pupils who embrace responsibility and think independently, and who are confident for their next stage.
66. Following consultation with pupils, leaders have created additional time within the senior curriculum for pupils to learn about and discuss global issues. The Model United Nations club allows pupils to learn about the processes of international law and politics.
67. A financial literacy pathway maps how pupils in the prep school acquire an understanding of money through assemblies, lessons, fundraising and an enterprise project. In the senior school, financial topics are integrated into citizenship lessons and the 'Seckford' scheme. Additional time has been created for this school priority.
68. The school provides comprehensive university and apprenticeship guidance. Bespoke support is available when needed. The majority of pupils progress to prestigious universities and some to art or drama schools, apprenticeships or employment. The developing careers programme, audited against national standards, provides older pupils with individual guidance. It is expanding to direct further activities to pupils in Years 7 to 9. An annual careers fair is open to all pupils and their families, as well as to pupils from surrounding maintained schools. Many lessons integrate visits from professionals, such as in English, where visits from professional writers are common. Overall, pupils are provided with balanced guidance and are encouraged to aspire highly.

69. In the early years and prep school, careers links are planned into cross-curricular projects. For example, pupils in Year 4 work as biologists and taxonomists, gathering and classifying leaves in the manner of Linnaeus. Senior pupils also learn about specific job roles through role play. In art, pupils in the sixth form learn to market and sell their work. There is a balanced understanding of employment opportunities within the arts as well as in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) areas.
70. Leaders provide many mechanisms for pupils to learn about the democratic process and express their views, including through suggestion boxes and the complaint system for boarders. Recent actions following pupils' ideas include the development of food menus and the refurbishment of common spaces such as the gym. A 'heatmap' exercise allows leaders to identify areas of concern for pupils. There is a democratically elected pupil council for pupils from Year 1 upwards. The school runs mock elections and hustings at times of elections in the country and engages with Parliament Week. Assemblies teach about the United Nations and children's legal rights. Pupils feel agency in their school and appreciate the value of democracy.
71. Pupils develop a robust sense of morality. The behaviour code and rewards and sanctions procedures encourage kindness. Where pupils make mistakes with behaviour, they are given the chance to reflect and make amends. Daily form time and weekly assemblies are important structures through which leaders model and exemplify morality and civic responsibility.
72. Pupils have many opportunities to lead and take responsibility for themselves and others, for example, as monitors and house captains. Pupil-support prefects, trained in mental health first aid, are visible via their yellow badges. Pupil leaders are trained so they are fair and confident in their roles, including as prefects in the boarding house. Extra-curricular activities such as sports teams, debating and the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) allow pupils the chance to lead and organise others.
73. Pupils develop a sense of service and duty through the many opportunities to work with and within the community. This is a priority for the school. Examples of community service include working in the associated care home, organising the community running event and raising money for charities. Through the year, hundreds of pupils from other schools come to Woodbridge School for workshops, for example in sport, arts, science and forensics.
74. Leaders ensure that pupils and the local community can take maximum advantage of the school's locality. For pupils in the early years and prep school, the extensive grounds and woodlands serve as an outdoor classroom as well as providing plentiful sporting and play space. Trips to the Tide Mill, the river Deben, Sutton Hoo and other local historical sites enhance pupils' appreciation of where they live or learn and put classroom projects into context. Prep and early years pupils experience a visit from a Suffolk Punch horse as they learn about agricultural practices. The site is a lively place in the evenings and at weekends, with various community groups using the facilities, with appropriate risk management in place.

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

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

## Safeguarding

76. Leaders create a culture of care and vigilance. This is supported by a comprehensive safeguarding policy. Procedures are easy to navigate, reflecting current regulatory guidance. The safeguarding team undertakes audits and training to continue to enhance the skills and experience of its members. Governors scrutinise arrangements for keeping pupils safe. External expertise supports this.
77. Staff understand how to report concerns of all types. Leaders use safeguarding and behaviour logs to prompt reflection and to make changes such as to playground supervision or the format in which records are kept.
78. Staff are well trained, so they are confident about what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. They receive annual updates and weekly reminders in staff meetings. Additional in-depth training covers areas such as digital safety or the 'Prevent' duty to identify pupils who may be at risk of radicalisation or extremism. The potential vulnerabilities of particular groups such as boarders or pupils in early years are considered. Training is adapted for staff role type. Records are rigorously maintained. Leaders check regularly through online testing and discussion to ensure that staff understand their responsibilities. Induction for new staff is comprehensive, including for those who join mid-year.
79. All members of the safeguarding team receive advanced training, including in matters relating to staff recruitment. The team works collaboratively and supportively, sharing knowledge and ensuring appropriate and discreet access to safeguarding information. The needs of pupils who have particular vulnerabilities, such as international boarders or early years children, are considered in procedures and noted in record-keeping.
80. Those with designated safeguarding responsibilities demonstrate judicious understanding of when to involve external agencies such as the police. They seek guidance from specialist external agencies regularly, including the local authority. Access to counselling services ensure that staff dealing with sensitive safeguarding issues themselves have support and guidance.
81. During recruitment, all required checks are conducted on staff, governors, volunteers and externally employed staff. The single central record of appointments (SCR) and recruitment files are meticulously maintained and monitored. Staff responsible for recruitment and human resources are well trained and knowledgeable. Governors maintain suitable oversight of recruitment arrangements. A member of the safeguarding team is involved in all recruitment activity.
82. Pupils are aware of the many ways in which they can seek help for themselves or peers. A variety of staff are identified as trusted adults to whom they can go for help and advice. Pupil mentors, trained in mental health first aid and how to flag a disclosure, provide an extra layer of support. Systems for raising concerns are clear and responsive.
83. The school's internet filtering and monitoring system identifies potential risks and prompts adults to support pupils as needed. Content restrictions protect pupils from inappropriate content on their devices. Pupils are taught in an age-appropriate way about digital safety through computing lessons, assemblies, form time, PSHE and citizenship programmes. Pupils in some year groups take a mid-year online quiz to test their understanding about areas such as password security.

84. Leaders take a proactive approach to emerging digital risks, with regular review and update of digital policies and practice. Parents are offered workshops on aspects of digital safety such as the use of virtual private networks (VPNs) and how to put security settings on their child's phones. A 'phishing' simulation is employed at regular intervals to keep staff and pupils on alert. These arrangements ensure awareness of digital responsibility among staff, parents and pupils.
85. The mobile phone policy is currently under review. Currently pupils may bring phones into school but may only use them during travel to and from school. Infringements result in confiscation. Boarders hand their devices in at night, with appropriate arrangements made for those who need to contact family or friends in a different time zone.

**The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding:**

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	Woodbridge School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	935/6054
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1110964
<b>Address</b>	Woodbridge School Burkitt Road Woodbridge Suffolk IP12 4JH
<b>Phone number</b>	01394 615000
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:schooloffice@woodbridgeschool.org.uk">schooloffice@woodbridgeschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.woodbridgeschool.org.uk">www.woodbridgeschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Proprietor</b>	The Seckford Foundation (Woodbridge School)
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Clive Schlee
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Shona Norman
<b>Age range</b>	4 to 19
<b>Number of pupils</b>	739
<b>Number of boarding pupils</b>	32
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 to 30 March 2023

## Information about the school

87. Woodbridge School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school. It was founded in the 1660s with the aim of educating children of Woodbridge in order to make them better citizens. It is owned by the Seckford Foundation, whose trustees constitute the governing body. The school is situated on two different sites in the town which are about ten minutes' walk apart, with the early years and prep on one site and the senior school for pupils aged from 11 to 18 on the other. Since the previous inspection, leaders have commissioned an external report on accessibility and drawn up a detailed accessibility plan, and also reviewed and enhanced site security.
88. The school has one co-educational boarding house in the heart of the senior school, which accommodates boarders from overseas and the United Kingdom. There are both full-time boarders and some who board on an occasional basis.
89. There are 11 pupils in Reception, who are taught in a specialist classroom within the prep building and who have a dedicated outdoor space.
90. The school has identified 158 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, 86 of whom receive specialist support. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
91. The school has identified English as an additional language for 32 pupils.
92. The school states its aims are to develop pupils to be proactive, responsible, free thinkers who go out into the world with the skills, knowledge and self-belief to become everything they are meant to be. The school aims to be a dynamic educational community, developing the person in body, mind and spirit, and developing the personality in temperament and behaviour through real-world learning, helping to shape a better world.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

3 to 5 March 2026

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

94. 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
- 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.

95. 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)**.

**Independent Schools Inspectorate**

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)