

School inspection report

21 to 23 January 2025

Wotton House International School

Wotton House
Horton Road
Gloucester
GL1 3PR

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'.

Contents

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS	3
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....	4
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS	4
MATERIAL CHANGE REQUEST.....	4
SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....	5
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE	6
SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	7
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	8
SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	9
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	10
SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....	11
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY	11
SAFEGUARDING	12
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING	12
SCHOOL DETAILS	13
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	14
INSPECTION DETAILS	15

Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders have successfully created a supportive and nurturing learning environment. Pupils realise their potential despite the educational, social and emotional barriers with which many of them contend. Pupils are afforded a wide range of opportunities to flourish, both within and beyond the broad and interesting curriculum.
2. The proprietor oversees all aspects of school life effectively. Leaders have the skills and knowledge they need to fulfil their roles well. The Standards are met consistently.
3. Leaders have developed a creative approach to curriculum design which ensures that all pupils' needs, interests and preferences are identified, understood and supported. Assessment of pupils' work is also adapted to best meet each pupil's needs. This comprehensive approach by leaders to create personalised pathways so that all pupils make good progress is a significant strength of the school.
4. The school actively promotes inclusivity and respect for all. As a result, pupils feel safe and comfortable in their school and demonstrate tolerance and understanding. Effective systems support pupils' mental, emotional and physical health.
5. A well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum addresses key areas such as healthy lifestyles and mental health. The programme helps pupils to develop the self-confidence, self-esteem and self-knowledge needed to navigate life successfully. A programme of visits, trips, speakers and work experience enables pupils to further develop these qualities in preparation for life in British society.
6. All aspects of health and safety are carefully monitored to ensure the safety of pupils. However, at the beginning of the inspection, some required signage near cold taps which provide drinking water was missing. This was rectified before the end of the inspection.
7. Parents have access to a wide range of information on the school's website. At the start of the inspection, the version of the school's safeguarding policy available to parents was not the current one and did not reflect the recent updates to government legislation. This was rectified during the course of the inspection.
8. Safeguarding is effectively embedded in a culture of vigilance and care within the school community. Leaders with safeguarding responsibilities are knowledgeable and experienced. The school's safeguarding policy is robust and aligns with all relevant statutory guidance. Staff receive regular and ongoing training to enhance their knowledge and confidence in addressing concerns related to safeguarding.

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

The proprietor should:

- ensure that all taps providing suitable drinking water are always clearly marked as such
- strengthen procedures so that policies are routinely and promptly uploaded to the school's website when they have been reviewed and updated, to ensure that parents always have access to the most up-to-date practice and statutory guidance.

Material change request

9. Inspectors considered the school's request for a change to the details of its registration to increase the age range from 5 to 17 years to 5 to 18 years.
10. The school currently includes provision for pupils who are 17 years of age to remain at the school to meet their educational and pastoral needs. Current staff have capacity to deliver A-level courses in a small number of areas. Leaders seek to offer A levels in these areas for a small group of pupils in the sixth form.
11. Leaders have identified that there will be no increase in pupil numbers beyond its current registration. No changes to the premises will be required and no modifications of risk assessments are anticipated.
12. It is recommended that the requested material change be approved.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

13. The proprietor provides appropriate challenge and support to leaders through regular reviews and meetings. Leaders possess the skills and knowledge they need and lead the school effectively. As a result, the Standards are met consistently. Leaders ensure that staff have the qualities required to meet the needs of all pupils. They carefully consider the actions needed to enable pupils to thrive in an environment in which they feel safe and secure whilst being challenged to improve their learning.
14. Pupils' wellbeing is central to all decision-making. Leaders take great care to consider the potential impact of initiatives on the wellbeing of individuals and groups of pupils. Leaders work effectively with a range of external providers to help them meet pupils' needs as well as possible. For example, they seek and act on advice from professionals, such as psychologists and occupational therapists, in order to provide the most suitable support for individual pupils, as appropriate.
15. Effective self-evaluation systems are in place to assess the school's work and its impact on pupils. Leaders regularly review practice to identify the school's strengths and areas for further development. They use the information they gather to form an appropriate school improvement plan focused on the next steps in the school's development. Leaders implement the plan fully, taking a range of appropriate actions to ensure that the school continually develops.
16. Risk assessment is comprehensive and focused on pupils' needs. Leaders know and understand this area well. They identify risks appropriately, including those that are not immediately obvious, and take effective steps to mitigate them. Leaders provide clear guidance to help staff identify, manage and reduce risks, often based on a detailed understanding of individual pupils' circumstances. In doing so, staff consider all aspects of pupils' lives, including their physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. Thorough risk assessments for areas of the school, educational trips and individual pupils are created and reviewed regularly.
17. The core values of respect, resilience, integrity, courage and compassion are well established. Pupils know and understand these values because they are part of the day-to-day life of the school. They are included throughout the curriculum and are regularly discussed in lessons and assemblies. Pupils understand these values and apply them effectively to their daily lives.
18. Parents' concerns are efficiently addressed by leaders and staff. Formal complaints are managed effectively by the proprietor in accordance with the school's complaints policy. Leaders consider issues raised and make changes to practice in response, when appropriate.
19. Parents have access to an appropriate range of information on the school's website. They receive regular updates on their child's progress and attainment. Leaders provide local authorities with all required information regarding pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. At the start of the inspection, the school's most up-to-date safeguarding policy was not available on the school's website. The website was updated with the current version during the inspection.
20. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Leaders make reasonable adjustments to meet individual needs, wherever necessary. A three-year accessibility plan is in place that focuses appropriately on ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum, information and buildings. Leaders routinely check that the curriculum and teaching do not discriminate against any individuals or groups of pupils.

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

21. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. Leaders plan, adapt and enhance the broad and varied curriculum to create unique and bespoke provision. The curriculum takes into consideration the aptitudes, interests and needs of individual pupils. In the prep school, leaders group pupils in two mixed-age classes, which allows for a range of different teaching methods and activities. For example, small groups of pupils have music and art lessons with specialist teachers, which helps them to make good progress in these areas.
23. Almost all pupils in the senior school follow an individual timetable that is adapted in some way to facilitate their particular prior experiences and social and emotional needs. Consideration is given to pupils' preferred forms of assessment when deciding their programmes of study. This leads to a carefully considered suite of qualifications including iGCSE and elements of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme. Pupils make good progress and leave school with the qualifications they need to move on to college or other destinations.
24. The needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are met well. Some pupils adopt a hybrid timetable which involves time in school, time online, time at home and, in some cases, time spent at other venues. The curriculum is deliberately broad, including subjects such as equine therapy, business, farming and photography, in order to motivate and engage pupils. Pupils who have SEND are given the support they need to access the full curriculum and be successful. They make good progress from their starting points.
25. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They plan the curriculum carefully and sensitively, tailoring it to individual pupils' learning needs. Teachers receive an ongoing programme of training and development, which enables them to further develop their understanding of how to fully support pupils who have SEND. Teachers liaise effectively with parents to ensure pupils' needs are understood well. They adopt appropriate approaches that engage and encourage pupils. This helps pupils to make good progress.
26. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are provided with appropriate support, where necessary. Although no pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English, teachers are alert to any possible additional needs that may arise. They provide additional support, such as helping pupils to understand subject-specific vocabulary, as appropriate. Pupils who speak EAL make good progress.
27. Teachers use a range of teaching methods and activities to match the needs, aptitudes and interests of pupils. They adapt material and activities to enable pupils to access the content and to make good progress. Strategies to manage behaviour are effective. This results in calm classrooms where pupils can concentrate and time is used efficiently. Warm and empathetic relationships are formed between adults and pupils. This helps pupils to feel secure so that they are better able to focus and learn.
28. Teachers provide pupils with useful feedback that enables them to learn from their mistakes. Time is built into lessons for pupils to make improvements to their work and focus on weaker areas. Pupils understand the process and recognise the benefit to their learning of revisiting and redrafting their work. As a result, pupils can see the improvements they have made, which contributes to their sense of achievement.

29. Assessment is used effectively. Teachers use different types of assessment to suit individual pupils' needs and preferred ways of communicating. For example, video is used, where appropriate, to assess pupils' understanding of what they have learned when they find it difficult to express themselves in writing. As a result, assessment accurately identifies pupils' strengths and areas where they need further support. Teachers use this information to help them plan pupils' next steps in learning. As a result, teaching matches pupils' needs well so that they make good progress.
30. Extra-curricular activities are designed to complement and support the academic curriculum. The variety of clubs provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop a range of further skills and knowledge in areas such as botany, art, video game design and jewellery. Some of these activities are run by pupils, which develops their leaderships skills as well as empathy towards others.

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

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

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

32. Leaders actively promote respect for others and acceptance of people's differences. Pupils are taught about the ways in which people can be different, for example in terms of race, culture, disability and sexual orientation. Leaders and staff model respect in their relationships with pupils and other adults. Pupils respond positively to this and interact respectfully with their peers and staff.
33. Pupils' wellbeing is a key focus for the school. Effective systems are in place to ensure the prioritisation of pupils' mental, emotional and physical health. For example, pupils have regular mentoring sessions in which they can raise, discuss and resolve their concerns. This environment enables pupils, some of whom have previously found attendance challenging, to transition into the school successfully. Leaders provide regular physical education activities in the curriculum. Pupils recognise the social and emotional benefits of these sessions as much as the physical contribution to their wellbeing.
34. The PSHE curriculum is well planned, suitably resourced and taught by knowledgeable staff. The programme covers a range of topics such as mental health and drug abuse. Activities in PSHE encourage pupils to think critically about their own personal traits and behaviours. The programme fosters empathy for, and appreciation of, their peers. Leaders encourage open discussion about mental health and wellbeing throughout the PSHE curriculum.
35. The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum is appropriate and follows current guidance. In the prep school, teachers sensitively introduce relationships education in small groups. Pupils develop confidence when discussing what makes a healthy relationship and how families work. Older pupils confidently learn about consent, contraception, 'sexting' and the development of healthy relationships.
36. School counsellors, along with pastoral leaders, play an essential role in providing emotional support for pupils. They offer regular 'check-ins' and a safe space for pupils to talk about their concerns. For pupils who experience anxiety in the school setting, a dedicated 'quiet stream' is provided which enables individual and small-group learning as well as calm areas for therapy and reflection.
37. The school's approach to fostering self-esteem and confidence is evident throughout its supportive environment. Pupils develop trust and confidence as a result of being encouraged to embrace mistakes and focus on progress rather than on perfection. Leaders encourage pupils to reflect on issues arising in their own lives as well as in the wider world as they develop their spiritual awareness and understanding.
38. Pupils adopt the school's core values throughout the school. They appreciate the manner in which the values inform the recognition and reward systems. This is clear in assemblies, where pupils are proud of being awarded, for example, integrity certificates.
39. The behaviour policy, incorporating rewards and sanctions, is implemented consistently and promotes good behaviour. Sanctions are proportionate and there is rarely need for further escalation of issues. Pupils are taught about bullying, and the forms it can take, and understand its dangers well. Bullying rarely happens and pupils are confident to report any concerns. Incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively on the rare occasions that they occur.

40. The school premises are suitable. Leaders have appropriate skills and knowledge and ensure that health and safety is given a high priority. Health and safety policies and practice are implemented effectively. Suitable fire prevention measures are in place, including regular fire drills. At the beginning of the inspection, some cold taps which provide drinking water were not marked as such. This was rectified before the end of the inspection.
41. Suitable procedures for first aid and medical care are in place. Designated staff receive appropriate first aid training. They are knowledgeable, confident and administer first aid to pupils effectively, when necessary.
42. Pupils are well supervised throughout the school day, including during breaktimes, extra-curricular activities and off-site trips and experiences. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure in their school environment.
43. Admission and attendance registers are maintained accurately and comply with relevant legislation. The local authority is notified when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times. Attendance is monitored closely. Appropriate support is provided to address any attendance issues.

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

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

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

45. Through a variety of community engagement projects, the school fosters an environment where pupils develop into responsible, respectful and confident individuals. These experiences contribute to pupils' wellbeing and encourage them to actively contribute to society, developing their empathy and a sense of social responsibility. For example, pupils in Year 8 visit a nursing home where they interact with elderly residents, showing respect for their experiences and stories.
46. Opportunities to explore the local area are planned effectively to ensure pupils gain knowledge and understanding of public services, for example, transport and policing. Pupils in the 'quiet stream' take ownership of such trips by researching public transport timetables and budgeting costs for entrance fees and transport.
47. From Year 3, the school encourages the development of economic wellbeing through activities that promote financial literacy and leadership skills. In the prep school, pupils discuss the role of money in society as part of the mathematics curriculum. In the senior school, pupils have opportunities to develop practical life skills, such as budgeting and identifying investment opportunities, particularly those who are interested in business and finance. This gives pupils the knowledge and skills to manage their finances in the future and prepares them for economic independence.
48. The careers education programme, which forms part of the PSHE curriculum, offers practical life skills such as planning for and running fund-raising events. The programme enables pupils to understand a range of jobs and careers through impartial and independent advice provided by teachers, leaders and external experts. Visiting speakers regularly share insights into their roles. Pupils are provided with opportunities to gain experience in real-world scenarios, such as independent work experience placements, which contribute to their career readiness.
49. Leaders have developed a leadership programme of moral philosophy, ethics and understanding the importance of personal values in leadership, which supports pupils to become responsible and ethical citizens. Leaders encourage pupils to consider these aspects in relation to taking responsibility for their own behaviour. Pupils are taught about law and order, including England's legal structure. Teachers encourage pupils to engage in discussions about right and wrong. Pupils learn about British values such as individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance, both within the school and in wider society. External speakers deliver sessions to support this, such as local police about aspects of the law.
50. Teachers ensure that values are discussed within curriculum subjects. For example, in humanities, teachers encourage pupils to explore indigenous societies, colonialism, British values and human rights. Pupils develop their understanding further through opportunities outside of the curriculum, including clubs and activities, trips and visiting speakers.

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. Safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively, and the school has a strong safeguarding culture. Leaders with safeguarding responsibilities possess the necessary skills and knowledge. The safeguarding policy aligns with current statutory guidance.
- 53. Staff receive regular training, ensuring they are confident and knowledgeable in managing concerns about pupils or staff. Safeguarding training forms a key part of the induction process for new staff.
- 54. All required pre-appointment checks are conducted efficiently to ensure that only suitable adults are employed to work with children. Accurate records of these checks are maintained in a single central record (SCR).
- 55. Leaders maintain strong relationships with external agencies, ensuring appropriate guidance and adherence to statutory requirements. Referrals are made to relevant authorities, including children's services, the local authority designated officer (LADO) and the police, when necessary.
- 56. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and other members of the safeguarding team meet regularly to identify safeguarding concerns and to decide next steps, for example, referral to the local authority. They maintain confidential records of concerns, including actions and decisions. The rationale for these decisions is discussed and recorded in regular meetings. Leaders use this information to refine and develop safeguarding practice.
- 57. The proprietor regularly reviews the work and actions of the DSL. An annual review of safeguarding procedures is conducted to ensure that the organisation prioritises pupils' safety and wellbeing.
- 58. Leaders have created a curriculum which effectively teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, both in school and beyond. For example, younger pupils are taught how to cross roads safely while older pupils learn about personal safety when travelling independently. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe online, at a level appropriate for their age. Effective internet filtering and monitoring systems are in place, which are reviewed regularly. Pupils feel safe and secure within the school environment.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Wotton House International School
Department for Education number	916/6006
Address	Wotton House International School Wotton House Horton Road Gloucester GL1 3PR
Phone number	01452 764248
Email address	info@iveuk.com
Website	www.wottonhouseschool.co.uk
Proprietor	International Village Education Ltd
Headteacher	Dr Daniel Sturdy
Age range	5 to 17
Number of pupils	87
Date of previous inspection	19 June 2023

Information about the school

60. Wotton House International School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged 7 to 17 years. The school is situated on two sites in Gloucester. The prep site caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 years and the senior school site for pupils aged 11 to 17 years. It was founded in September 2016. It is an International Baccalaureate School teaching the Middle Years Programme. The school is owned by a limited company. The company's directors, one of whom is the headteacher, are responsible for overseeing the school's operation.
61. The school has identified 39 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are 34 pupils in the school who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
62. The school has identified 5 pupils as speaking English as an additional language (EAL).
63. The school states its aims are to actively help pupils develop the confidence, skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in the modern world, supporting them to excel in the context of their local, national and global communities. The school strives to develop qualities including tolerance, resilience, leadership, courage, patience, empathy and emotional intelligence through the key cognitive skills of critical thinking, argument, logic, hypothesis testing, evidence evaluation and problem solving.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

21 to 23 January 2025

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

65. 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.

66. 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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