

School inspection report

9 to 11 September 2025

Westfield School

Oakfield Road

Gosforth

Newcastle Upon Tyne

NE3 4HS

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 actively promote the school's aims and ethos, creating an enriching educational experience and promoting the wellbeing of pupils. They share a clear vision, understand pupils' needs and have a secure knowledge of the strengths and areas for development in the school's provision. They manage and lead the school well, making decisions in the best interests of pupils and ensuring they fulfil the requirements of the Standards.
2. Leaders ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum meets the needs of pupils, including the youngest children in the early years and the oldest students in the sixth form. Leaders are responsive and flexible, making timely adjustments to the curriculum that reflect changes in pupils' needs. This careful planning ensures that pupils experience a wide range of subjects and learning experiences that prepare them well for future study and life beyond school.
3. Typically, lessons are well planned and delivered, enabling pupils to learn effectively. However, in some subjects in the senior house and sixth form, teachers do not check precisely what some pupils know and can do. They do not tailor activities that allow pupils to learn in these lessons as well as they should.
4. Leaders promote pupils' physical and mental health. High-quality pastoral care, effective physical education (PE) lessons and appropriate health and safety ensure that pupils learn and play in a safe and supportive environment, with their wellbeing prioritised. Leaders and staff promote positive behaviour effectively, setting clear expectations that pupils understand. Pupils behave well and show high levels of respect for peers, staff and the wider community. They understand differences between each other, and staff actively help them to value and show respect for diversity. This creates a positive and inclusive school environment.
5. The school is in the process of introducing a revised scheme of learning for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), which includes relationships and sex education (RSE). While the curriculum is planned, this is the first year of its implementation. Therefore, leaders are not yet able to evaluate its effectiveness. Other elements of the school's curriculum for careers and economic understanding, while in place, are not always precisely planned and delivered. For example, some older pupils do not develop a full economic understanding in line with their age and abilities. Other pupils do not have a precise understanding of the options available to them in further education, training or employment.
6. Through the election of school prefects and house leaders, pupils take responsibility for various aspects of school life. These roles include marketing leaders, challenge leaders, house captains and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) prefects. Such positions enable pupils to develop leadership skills, contribute to the school community, and take an active role in shaping school initiatives and events.
7. Leaders prioritise the safety of pupils. They work effectively with external agencies when needed, including the local authority's children's services and the local authority designated officer (LADO).

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 teachers use a precise understanding about what older pupils know and can do, to ensure that they identify and act so that these pupils learn more effectively
- develop the careers programme so that it more precisely informs pupils' understanding of the educational, training or employment opportunities available to them
- develop a well-planned approach to economic education to ensure that older pupils develop a rich understanding of the content
- monitor the delivery of the new PSHE and RSE curriculum to ensure the planning and delivery support pupils to learn the curriculum content, as intended by leaders.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Governors ensure that senior leaders are knowledgeable and skilled. They fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They undertake regular and effective self-evaluation, which informs a clear vision for the school. This self-evaluation is underpinned by their thorough knowledge of the pupils and the changing, diverse nature of their needs. For example, leaders have recently conducted a curriculum review to ensure that they provide pupils with a wider range of qualifications that closely align with pupils' interests and aspirations for further education, employment or training.
9. Governors and leaders actively promote the wellbeing of pupils in line with the aims of the school. The school's aims and values are well understood by all, including pupils and parents. Leaders effectively oversee the implementation of policies and procedures, prioritising pupils' wellbeing in the decisions they make. Leaders provide pupils with high-quality pastoral care and personalised interventions. Leaders have created a safe and supportive environment.
10. Suitable risk assessments are in place, are regularly reviewed, and are widely understood by staff. There is an appropriate range of risk assessments, including those related to curriculum, health and safety, off-site activities and trips. Risk assessments for activities are comprehensive and detailed; for example, clear procedures are in place for the use of outside spaces for teaching all pupils. Leaders take sensible and proportionate mitigations against the risks identified. They implement actions in a timely way and review them frequently to ensure safety.
11. Leaders provide parents and other relevant external agencies with appropriate information. The school website is comprehensive and includes relevant statutory information. Parents are provided with annual reports on their child's progress. Leaders provide the relevant local authority with required information and statements related to pupils with an education, health and care plan (EHC Plan), including the use of additional funding and finance. The school informs the local authority when pupils arrive or leave at non-standard transition points.
12. Leaders ensure that the school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, promoting inclusion and equal opportunities for pupils. The school's accessibility plan is detailed and comprehensive, ensuring that pupils can fully access the curriculum and school facilities. Staff are supported to ensure that teaching is inclusive, enabling all pupils to participate fully in school life and learning.
13. Leaders manage concerns and complaints using the school's three-stage complaints process effectively. Complaints are recorded and addressed promptly, ensuring fairness, transparency and adherence to school policies. Leaders monitor trends in complaints and concerns over time, using this information to identify areas for improvement, adapt procedures where necessary, and share lessons learned with staff to enhance practice and pupil experience.
14. Leaders work effectively with external agencies and make referrals to the local authority when needed. Low-level concerns are logged appropriately, and leaders address any concerns promptly and effectively to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils.

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

15. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

16. Leaders have created a well-planned and structured curriculum. They have carefully designed it to be appropriate to the ages and aptitudes of pupils, ensuring that learning experiences are challenging and accessible. Leaders regularly review the curriculum to ensure it remains relevant and prepares pupils effectively for their future lives. For instance, following a recent review of the curriculum, leaders have introduced a broader range of technical and vocational courses at GCSE and in the sixth form, to better reflect pupils' diverse aspirations for post-18 employment, training and further education.
17. Most teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. They use a range of strategies to support pupils in understanding new content effectively. They provide pupils with specific support and use questioning to check on pupils' understanding. However, in some lessons in the senior house and sixth form, teachers do not use a precise understanding about what pupils know and can do, nor do they match activities precisely to pupils' understanding. As a result, some pupils in certain subjects find work either too hard or too easy. This is not always identified or addressed by some teachers. Where this occurs over time, pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.
18. Most teachers provide precise guidance and feedback to pupils which supports them in developing their understanding. Leaders carefully track pupils' progress and identify when additional support is required, and act in a timely way to help pupils catch up. As a result, most pupils learn effectively over time and achieve a range of qualifications and accreditation.
19. The youngest children experience a well-planned curriculum, delivered through an effective range of planned and play-based activities. Staff model language and communication, helping children to develop their listening and speaking skills. Children learn to recognise sounds and letters and begin to develop early writing skills. They also develop their understanding of mathematics, learning to count, use number bonds and solve problems independently. Children make good progress and move confidently into Year 1.
20. Leaders support pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) through classroom-based support and specialist teaching. This support enables these pupils to gain greater fluency in English, allowing them to access the curriculum fully and make progress in their learning.
21. Leaders responsible for the identification and support of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively identify and assess the needs of pupils. Teachers are well trained and implement effective strategies in lessons so that pupils access their learning effectively alongside their peers. Leaders use regular reviews to ensure that support in lessons and through interventions is responsive and effective. This comprehensive support framework ensures that pupils receive the necessary resources and guidance to succeed academically and personally.
22. Learning is enhanced through well-planned educational visits that bring learning to life for pupils. These visits make use of the local area, including beach days and trips to local attractions such as Bamburgh Castle. These immersive experiences help deepen pupils' understanding of historical and cultural contexts, fostering engagement and enriching their educational experience.
23. Many pupils participate in the school's co-curricular programme, including a selection of lunchtime and after-school activities. The programme is comprehensive and varied, and additional clubs, such

as a robotics club and a list of challenge-based activities, enhance their curriculum offer and broaden their experiences.

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

24. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

25. Leaders actively foster a culture of respect and inclusivity across the school. The curriculum is carefully designed to give pupils opportunities to engage with key issues, including moral dilemmas, democracy and the principles of good citizenship. These themes are integrated into lessons, promoting reflection and discussion.
26. There is a well-planned and well-taught physical education (PE) curriculum for pupils of all ages. This is enhanced for the youngest children through outdoor activities, including using cars, trikes and large equipment such as tyres. As pupils get older, they experience a range of sports, such as rugby, hockey, dance and fitness. These activities contribute positively to pupils' health and wellbeing.
27. The school's new approach to the PSHE and RSE curriculum is carefully planned to ensure that topics such as healthy relationships, online safety, diversity, equality, mental health and personal responsibility are explored in age-appropriate and meaningful ways. However, this new approach has not yet been reviewed by leaders, especially its impact on some older pupils who have gaps in their understanding and knowledge of the content.
28. Pupils' behaviour across the school is consistently positive. The behaviour policy is implemented effectively by staff, and pupils are well behaved, courteous and respectful towards one another and adults. Teachers actively reward positive behaviour through the house points system, reinforcing good conduct and motivating pupils. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of expectations and contribute to a safe, supportive and purposeful learning environment. Positive relationships between pupils reflect the school's commitment to values such as kindness, respect and responsibility.
29. Leaders take positive and effective action to prevent bullying. Appropriate policies are in place, and expectations are communicated consistently to pupils and staff. Pupils are taught to recognise the different types of bullying, including verbal, physical, and online forms, and understand the impact that such behaviour can have on others. Through lessons, discussions and assemblies, pupils learn about the consequences of their behavioural choices and the importance of respect and empathy. As a result, incidents of bullying within the school are rare, and pupils are supported by staff who take prompt and appropriate action where concerns arise.
30. The premises and accommodation are well maintained. Health and safety checks are undertaken effectively and monitored meticulously. First aid facilities are managed by appropriately trained staff, including those trained in paediatric first aid. First aid incidents and accidents are recorded and reported appropriately. Pupils are well supervised by suitably trained staff.
31. Attendance and admission registers are accurately maintained and reviewed. The school ensures that the local authority is informed of any pupils leaving or joining at non-standard transition points. Leaders work closely to support pupils who need help to improve their attendance, including working with relevant external agencies.
32. Pupils are given a range of opportunities to develop their leadership skills, including positions such as prefects, as well as opportunities for older pupils to support and work with those in the early years. Pupils take these leadership roles seriously. They serve as positive role models, taking time to

listen to younger pupils and supporting their emotional wellbeing, fostering a caring and supportive school community.

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

33. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

34. Leaders and staff consistently model the school's positive values, fostering relationships with pupils that are rooted in respect and kindness. Pupils are explicitly taught the importance of courtesy and politeness, which are evident in their day-to-day interactions. Positive behaviour is recognised and celebrated through the school's house points system, reinforcing a culture of respect and responsibility. The school's culture of respect and accountability enables pupils to apply its values and principles in their daily lives, contributing to a respectful and cohesive community.
35. Pupils develop a clear sense of right and wrong through their exploration of principles such as fairness, integrity and responsibility. Through PSHE, as well as subjects including history and literature, pupils reflect on ethical dilemmas, the purpose of laws and the relationship between crime and punishment. Assemblies, tutor discussions and debates provide further opportunities for pupils to engage with contemporary moral issues and to appreciate differing perspectives.
36. In the early years, children are taught to care for and respect one another, taking turns and sharing resources during play and learning activities. For instance, children support friends by sharing toys or helping each other with tasks, such as fastening coats. These practices foster happy, collaborative and supportive relationships.
37. Through assemblies, church services during festive periods, and the PSHE programme, pupils develop an understanding of key values such as tolerance and the importance of respecting cultural diversity and people's identities and backgrounds. For example, pupils explore themes such as colonisation and decolonisation, and neurodiversity. They learn why it is important to acknowledge and respect people's protected characteristics, such as race, sex and religion, and engage with these themes through discussions.
38. Pupils develop their understanding of democracy through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. They learn about the role of Parliament, the electoral system and civic participation in PSHE and subjects such as history. Pupils also experience democracy in action through student elections and leadership roles, gaining a practical understanding of democratic processes.
39. In early years and the junior house, pupils are provided with a well-planned economic education. For instance, children in the early years develop an early understanding of money through role-play activities such as buying gifts and shopkeeping. However, older pupils in the senior house and sixth form access a less well-planned economic education. For these pupils, there are few structured opportunities to explore aspects of economics or personal finance beyond what is encountered in mathematics lessons. As a result, older pupils' understanding of economic concepts and financial literacy is less well developed.
40. Leaders provide a careers education for pupils of all ages. In early years children begin to explore different careers through talks and a guest speaker programme, allowing them to learn about roles such as nurses or firefighters. In the junior house, teachers introduce pupils to career pathways linked to their subjects, for example discussing jobs related to mathematics or languages. However, the programme provides only a very small number of structured opportunities for the oldest pupils to learn about personalised future careers or educational pathways. As a result, some older pupils do not have a clear understanding of their individual options, as they should.

41. Leaders ensure that pupils are exposed to a range of viewpoints and encouraged to consider evidence, think critically and form their own reasoned opinions. This approach promotes open-mindedness, respect for differing perspectives, and the development of well-informed, responsible members of the school and wider community.
42. Pupils contribute positively through a variety of initiatives, including raising money for charitable causes. They support the local care home, for example by singing for residents. These activities enable pupils to develop practical skills and values while fostering meaningful connections with the local community.

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

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

Safeguarding

44. Leaders are knowledgeable, well trained and have a comprehensive understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. They take decisive action to promote and protect pupils' wellbeing. Through a proactive approach and clear strategic leadership, leaders and staff cultivate a school environment where safeguarding is embedded in all aspects of school life. Leaders ensure that a robust and effective safeguarding culture is consistently maintained.
45. Leaders ensure that staff receive thorough and timely safeguarding training, with regular updates to maintain awareness of emerging issues. Staff are confident in how to respond when safeguarding concerns arise. Pupils are provided with multiple channels to raise concerns, all of which are taken seriously and acted upon promptly.
46. Leaders work effectively with local safeguarding partners, parents and relevant agencies when appropriate. The school's policy on low-level concerns is clearly communicated and widely understood by staff, ensuring that all matters, however minor, are addressed consistently and transparently.
47. Pupils are taught how to stay safe, including online, through the PSHE curriculum, assemblies and tutor time. The school has an effective internet filtering and monitoring system in place, which identifies potential online safeguarding issues. Leaders address any issues promptly and effectively.
48. Leaders ensure that safer recruitment procedures are implemented appropriately. All necessary pre-employment checks are completed before adults begin working with pupils. Recruitment practices are regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with statutory guidance and best practice. Leaders also ensure that staff suitability is continually monitored through induction, ongoing training and performance management, reinforcing the school's commitment to safeguarding at all levels.
49. Leaders have a clear understanding of contextual risks and ensure that risk assessments are carried out where necessary. These assessments are regularly reviewed and updated to safeguard the wellbeing of pupils.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

50. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Westfield School
Department for Education number	391/6012
Registered charity number	528143
Address	Westfield School Oakfield Road Gosforth Newcastle Upon Tyne Tyne and Wear NE3 4HS
Phone number	0191 255 3980
Email address	westfield@westfield.newcastle.sch.uk
Website	www.westfield.newcastle.sch.uk
Proprietor	The Northumbrian Educational Trust Ltd
Chair	Mrs Jackie Rowley
Headteacher	Mr Neil Walker
Age range	3 to 18
Number of pupils	191
Date of previous inspection	19 January 2023

Information about the school

51. Westfield School is an independent day school for female pupils aged three to 18 years old and for male pupils aged three to 11 years old. The school is situated in Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne. The school is run by The Northumbrian Educational Trust Ltd. The directors of this company also act as the governors of the school. The school is a member of Round Square, an international network of schools, and adheres to its ideals. The school is organised into three sections: the junior house for pupils aged three to 11, the senior house for pupils aged 11 to 16, and the sixth form for pupils aged 16 to 18 years old.
52. The school applied to the DfE to make a material change to the school's provision, to become co-educational from ages three to 11. The DfE commissioned ISI to conduct a material change in June 2025. Inspectors recommended that the material change be approved. The school began admitting male pupils to its junior house from September 2025.
53. There are 15 children in the early years, comprising one Nursery and one Reception class.
54. The school has identified 54 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Sixteen pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
55. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for 17 pupils.
56. The school states that its aim is to prepare pupils to become confident adults, equipped to contribute positively to the wider world. In doing so, it promotes the Round Square ideals, including leadership, democracy and environmentalism. The school seeks to make learning both enjoyable and meaningful, while enabling the character of every pupil to be developed to its fullest potential.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

9 to 11 September 2025

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

58. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods
- discussions with the chair of 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.

59. 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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