ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

School inspection report

13 to 15 January 2026

Godstowe Preparatory School

Shrubbery Road

High Wycombe

Buckinghamshire

HP13 6PR

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Governors do not ensure that all areas of the school's safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders do not ensure that staff have a full understanding of low-level concerns with respect to staff conduct and the expected procedures for reporting them. The staff code of conduct does not include guidance on low-level concerns as required by current statutory requirements. Required referrals to the local authority are not consistently made with regard to any allegations raised about adults' behaviour so that these can be followed up appropriately.

2. Leaders do not ensure that all the required safer recruitment checks are carried out and accurately recorded on the single central record of appointments (SCR).

3. Leaders in the early years set high expectations for children's personal development and learning outcomes. Adults plan targeted activities which match children's interests and increase their independence. Children make good progress as a result.

4. Boarding is well managed, enabling boarders to develop positive attitudes to learning and engage actively with the evening and weekend opportunities available to them.

5. Leaders plan the curriculum carefully to build on pupils' prior attainment and cater for their learning needs. They provide wide-ranging opportunities across a range of subjects, notably creative subjects, combined with specialist preparation for entrance examinations to senior schools. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils routinely secure places and scholarships to selective senior schools.

6. Teachers display good subject knowledge. They question skilfully and provide stimulating activities to challenge pupils' thinking. Pupils achieve well, particularly in reading skills, by the end of pre-prep. Teaching engages and challenges pupils so that they are focused and diligent learners who express their ideas clearly and confidently.

7. Leaders implement a comprehensive assessment framework to monitor pupils' attainment and progress over time. They use the assessment data knowledgeably to arrange support sessions, where needed, and adapt planning to reflect pupils' changing needs.

8. Pupils typically receive useful formal and informal feedback during their lessons. However, pupils are not always provided with clear guidance across the full range of subjects to enable them to understand how they can develop the quality of their work.

9. Leaders arrange extensive opportunities and prepare well-planned lessons in physical education (PE) to enable pupils to improve their technique across different sports and deepen their understanding of tactical play.

10. Effective behaviour management results in pupils who are well behaved and courteous. They reflect maturely on the consequences of their decisions and value the community around them. Pupils gain a sense of belonging to their respective houses when collecting house points.

11. Leaders carry out appropriate regular health and safety checks, including in fire safety, ensuring that facilities are well maintained.

12. Boarders' medical and dietary needs are met. Accommodation is well organised and comfortable and boarders can personalise their living areas.

13. Leaders introduce pupils to financial literacy in PSHE and mathematics lessons which helps to support pupils' decision-making for their adult lives. Pupils show awareness of the needs of others and understand the positive contribution they can make to others' lives. Leaders introduce pupils to different occupations during talks from visiting speakers and the annual careers fair. However, opportunities for pupils in Years 7 and 8 to develop a wider understanding of the various future career options open to them are less well developed.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are not 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 not met.

Areas for action

The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:

- demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school Standards are consistently met
- fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the independent school Standards are consistently met and
- actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils

so that:

- staff understand the procedures for identifying and reporting low-level concerns
- the staff code of conduct includes guidance on low-level concerns in line with current statutory requirements
- required referrals relating to concerns about staff conduct are made to the local authority
- all required safer recruitment checks are carried out before any person starts work at the school
- all safer recruitment checks are recorded appropriately on the single central record of appointments.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that pupils consistently receive feedback across the range of subjects that enables them to understand how to improve their work
- strengthen older pupils' awareness of potential career options in readiness for the future.

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Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

14. Leaders and governors work in close partnership. Regular visits to the site and detailed updates from school leaders provide governors with insight on the day-to-day operations of the school, including in such areas as pupils' academic results, complaints, attendance and boarding. Governors offer leaders support and challenge decision-making appropriately, when relevant. However, governors' and leaders' oversight is not sufficiently effective to ensure that Standards relating to safer recruitment, low-level concerns and referrals to the local authority about adult conduct are met.

15. Leaders with responsibility for boarding receive regular training. They manage the various procedures suitably, for example, by carrying out regular fire drills so that boarders have a clear understanding of what to do in the event of an emergency.

16. Leaders in the early years ensure that staff maintain effective dialogue about children's pastoral and learning needs. They encourage staff to reflect on their own practice and undertake specialist courses. Leaders adapt planning to align with children's evolving interests and needs. Children grow in confidence, notably in their social interactions and communication skills.

17. Leaders and governors set out a clear vision for the school's continuing development. This is regularly evaluated to ensure that it continues to reflect the school's ongoing direction. For example, a recent review of the school's aims involved comprehensive engagement with staff, parents and pupils. Leaders have recently introduced further initiatives linked to pupils' attitudes to learning. Leaders regularly monitor lessons and talk to pupils about their work to assess the impact of the recent initiatives relating to the school's approach to teaching. The school's aims are well understood by pupils. Staff training, most recently on reinforcing strategies to help pupils understand themselves as learners, enhances teachers' ability to support pupils' diverse learning needs.

18. Parents have access to the required information via the school's website or on request, including the school's boarding principles, its aims and key policies. Leaders regularly share information with parents during meetings and in written reports so that parents remain updated about their child's personal development and academic progress.

19. Leaders seek advice from external agencies to support pupils' and boarders' learning and healthcare needs when appropriate. The school shares required information with the local authority in respect of funding for pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).

20. A suitable risk assessment policy is in place. Detailed risk assessments outline arrangements for specialist rooms and activities, including science laboratories. For example, swimming arrangements for pupils, including children in the early years, are supported by risk assessments that give consideration to appropriate supervision, suitably qualified staff and pupils' medical needs, enabling pupils to participate safely. Leaders with responsibility for boarding evaluate risk assessments for off-site visits routinely to ensure their ongoing suitability.

21. An effective policy is in place to manage complaints. Leaders maintain detailed records of complaints submitted and scrutinise them to identify any patterns arising. Leaders respond to complaints in line with the specified timeframes in the policy.

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22. Leaders ensure that the school meets its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. A detailed accessibility plan includes arrangements to enable pupils to have equal access to the curriculum, school information and the physical environment.

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

23. Standards are not all met with respect to checks of the suitability of staff and the recording of these on the SCR and with respect to required referrals to the local authority and the understanding that staff have of low-level concerns.

24. Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are not met.

25. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

26. Leaders have designed the curriculum thoughtfully to enable pupils to acquire relevant skills and knowledge and be suitably prepared for their next schools. A focus on creative subjects, including music, design and technology (DT) and art, as well as well-structured examination preparation for selective senior schools enables pupils to deepen their understanding across a range of subjects. Leaders introduce subject content which extends beyond the age-related expectations of the national curriculum. Pupils routinely secure places and scholarships at selective senior schools.

27. Pupils make good progress, notably by the end of Year 8. Well-supported homework routines enable boarders to achieve well and an emphasis on daily reading in pre-prep provides pupils with heightened confidence when decoding words. Following a mathematics review, leaders are prioritising pupils' acquisition of skills in shape and space. Recent initiatives in mathematics, including additional specialist teaching, a club and themed week are designed to strengthen pupils' engagement and confidence in mathematics. There has not been sufficient time to determine the impact of these modifications.

28. Teachers' specialist subject knowledge and use of stimulating tasks extend pupils' thinking. Lessons are well planned to take into account pupils' prior attainment and learning needs. Pupils are enthusiastic, articulate and focused learners. They demonstrate effective recall of earlier learning and explain their reasoning eloquently. Teachers set high expectations for pupils' learning outcomes. For example, pupils in Year 7 use precise and correct grammar when translating sentences into Spanish and pupils in Year 2 design and technology (DT) lessons competently pin paper patterns for felt pencil case designs.

29. Leaders utilise a comprehensive assessment programme to monitor pupils' progress and attainment over time. They regularly conduct detailed analysis of assessment data to inform planning for pupils' next steps in learning. Leaders have recently introduced learning aims to encourage pupils to become resilient, curious, enthusiastic and reflective learners. Leaders monitor the impact of their implementation through targeted learning walks.

30. Pupils generally receive helpful written feedback and verbal guidance in lessons so that they know how to improve their work. However, such feedback to pupils is not provided consistently across all subjects and year groups. This restricts pupils' understanding of the steps required to develop their work further.

31. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress. Leaders identify pupils' needs early and use assessment data to arrange in-class, individual or external support sessions, when required. They select specialist classroom resources and physical activities based on individual pupils' needs. Classroom assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils' learning and emotional wellbeing. Clear targets are created for pupils who have an EHC plan.

32. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive targeted support when required. Leaders prioritise pupils' reading, writing and listening skills during individual and small group sessions. Pupils' use of resources such as translation applications, dictionaries and vocabulary lists increases their overall spoken fluency and understanding as well as their confident participation in lessons.

33. Staff in the early years make effective use of questioning to develop children's communication skills. They adapt their questions adeptly to support and extend children's understanding, such as when children in Reception are challenged to find different combinations of numbers to make a given total and when children in Nursery are encouraged to explain their reasoning fully when selecting suitable clothing for different weather types. Children sustain focus when engaging in conversations with adults and share their ideas enthusiastically. Leaders' effective teaching methods and high expectations enable children to achieve well.

34. Leaders provide a range of after-school and lunchtime clubs which reinforce and extend pupils' existing skills. For example, pupils in the 'digital leaders club' apply their online safety knowledge when designing posters and members of 'exercise club' practise co-ordination skills and display personal determination when challenged to hop in different ways.

35. Boarders respond positively to the opportunity to socialise with friends. Film night, dodgeball and cooking activities support boarders' development of social, creative and physical skills.

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

36. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

37. Leaders enhance pupils' spiritual awareness through assemblies and study of the different world religions. Pupils develop their aesthetic sensibilities through their engagement in musical and other expressive activities. Pupils in pre-prep display a sense of fulfilment when singing joyfully in hymn practice.

38. Leaders plan extensive opportunities in PE and games to help pupils keep fit and active. Teachers' good subject knowledge, clear modelling of technique and high expectations ensure pupils increase their technical skills and match play strategies. Leaders plan skilfully for pupils' progression so that children in the early years focus on body positioning and older pupils learn about strategic decision-making. The introduction of hockey and netball reflects leaders' ambitions to broaden pupils' experiences and enthusiasm for sport. Pupils achieve well, notably in lacrosse and cricket, at regional and national levels.

39. Children in the early years develop their gross motor skills and co-ordination through regular PE and swimming lessons. They persevere when learning to skip and use outstretched arms to balance on beams. Resources such as tweezers and tracing outlines of numbers develop children's skills in finer co-ordination.

40. An appropriate personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) curriculum, including topics on family, and personal goal setting increases pupils' understanding of themselves and others. A suitable programme of relationships and sex education (RSE) teaches older pupils about themes such as physical and emotional changes during puberty. Pupils learn to recognise typical behaviours associated with healthy relationships to help them nurture positive connections with others.

41. Pupils understand the school's behaviour strategy and expectations. When needed, leaders apply various sanctions fairly, including 'minus' points and lunchtime detentions. Pupils respond positively to earning house points as part of an effective house system. For example, boarders earn 'dorm points' by keeping their areas tidy. Leaders have recently introduced a new system of rewards to recognise positive attitudes to learning. Leaders also provide structured opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work and implement strategies designed to develop pupils' resilience when engaging with less familiar concepts. Pupils are polite, respectful and behave well. They enjoy celebrating others' successes. Instances of bullying are followed up promptly when they do occur. Leaders use assemblies and themed days to explain how pupils can identify and report bullying behaviours.

42. Staff are vigilant in supporting pupils at break times. Boarders are well supervised during evening activities and off-site visits. In the early years, an appropriate ratio of adults to children is consistently maintained.

43. The school maintains admissions and attendance registers in line with current statutory guidance. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance, lateness and absence requests carefully. They inform the local authority when pupils leave or join the school at non-standard times.

44. Thorough health and safety checks are routinely carried out and monitored by leaders. Facilities are well maintained. Fire evacuation procedures and signage are clearly displayed. Leaders and staff

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carry out regular fire drill practices, including during boarding time, so that all pupils know what to do in case of emergency.

45. Leaders cater suitably for pupils' medical needs. Staff with first aid responsibilities are suitably trained, including in paediatric first aid in the early years. They store medication securely and administer first aid or medication appropriately when required. Nurses and boarding staff supervise boarders who become unwell and arrange emergency medical and healthcare support when required.

46. Boarding accommodation, including the sleeping accommodation, is comfortable and well resourced. Boarders personalise their areas with photographs and soft toys to help them adjust to new routines. They store valuables securely in lockers.

47. Meals are suitably adapted to meet pupils' dietary needs. Boarders have access to a range of healthy foods, including a salad bar and fruit. Leaders with responsibility for boarding liaise routinely with guardians, including when there are any pastoral concerns.

48. Boarders learn to take responsibility through leadership roles, including as prefects and laundry monitors. Leaders enable pupils' views to be heard during boarding council and take boarders' views into account to enhance their experience.

49. Adults encourage children in the early years to share their feelings and listen to those of others. Tailored conversations based on their in-depth knowledge of the children are designed to reassure children and help them feel valued and secure. Children grow in self-confidence as a result.

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

50. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

51. Leaders plan effectively so that pupils develop financial awareness in preparation for future economic decision-making. Pupils in the pre-prep identify different coins in mathematics lessons and learn basic financial transactions during supermarket role play. In older years, pupils learn strategies for sensible money management, including around savings and credit cards. Boarders learn to spend pocket money wisely and take responsibility for a cash card during weekend trips.

52. Leaders highlight various historical events and figures, such as Martin Luther King in PSHE, to explain the importance of respect for, and appreciation of, the different groups of people in society. In Year 8 theology, philosophy and religion (TPR) lessons, pupils reflect empathetically about themes such as working conditions for enslaved people on historical transatlantic trade routes. Leaders and teachers enable pupils to recognise and challenge gender stereotypes. Displays promote the role of women as engineers and scientists and house names represent influential female role models, including Emmeline Pankhurst and Mary Seacole.

53. Pupils develop greater social awareness through activities which introduce them to diverse cultural traditions and perspectives. Leaders arrange regular themed events, including 'International Day' and 'Nigerian Independence Day'. Boarders from overseas gain further insight into their own cultures as well as British culture and customs when studying for the 'Dove international diploma'. For example, they visit places of cultural heritage and cook British food. Pupils share their own cultural experiences with peers and staff and learn those of others. They are also exposed to the idea of human rights and those recognised internationally.

54. Leaders arrange talks from visiting speakers and host an annual careers fair so that pupils gain insight into different occupations, for example in law, illustration and sport. However, the careers guidance does not enable older pupils to gain as wide a knowledge of potential career and further education options as possible and how future subject courses relate to different careers. This restricts older pupils' understanding of the different education and employment pathways available to them in later life.

55. Leaders provide opportunities to help prepare pupils for the next stage of education. They support older pupils with specialist entrance examination guidance and expectations of senior schools. They introduce older pupils to relevant presentation and project skills through the 'Dove diploma'. Transition days and activities help pupils prepare for their next steps. For example, children in the early years join pre-prep assemblies and breaktimes, whilst pupils in Year 2 prepare for Year 3 with transition days and an introduction to different sports.

56. Leaders and staff help pupils to develop moral insight by reflecting on principles such as justice and compassion in class discussions. Pupils in Year 8 TPR lessons debate themes such as whether war can ever be justified and younger pupils consider a range of ethical scenarios.

57. Pupils respond positively to the leadership roles available to them, including prefects, sports captains and library monitors. Younger pupils act as lunchtime table monitors. These activities help pupils to develop a wider sense of responsibility to others.

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58. Leaders arrange extensive opportunities so that pupils learn how to become responsible citizens. Pupils make donations to local foodbanks and animal, lifeboat and children's charities. They fundraise to send Christmas gifts and wash bags to overseas children's charities and perform at a residential care home. Pupils develop greater empathy as a result and reflect how their actions can positively impact the lives of others.

59. Pupils learn how fair processes can create a law-abiding society. Pupils engage in democratic voting for form monitors, pupil councillors and select charities through house assembly elections. Older pupils develop their understanding of democracy in TPR and history lessons. They explore the role of government and the impact of political figures, including Pitt the Elder and Wiliam Wilberforce. Staff ensure that any discussions of political themes are conducted impartially and without bias.

60. Leaders and staff in the early years promote children's social development effectively. Adults act as positive role models, emphasising turn-taking and modelling polite greetings to aid children to form successful and respectful friendships. Children play happily alongside each other. Children in Reception invite others to their imaginary play, negotiating roles sensibly. Clear routines, including filling water bottles and zipping up coats, increase children's independence.

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.

Safeguarding

62. Leaders and governors do not maintain effective oversight of safeguarding and ensure that suitable arrangements are consistently in place to promote pupils' wellbeing, including that of children in the early years, and boarders.

63. Leaders do not implement effective systems to ensure that staff possess a secure understanding of what constitutes a low-level concern in relation to staff behaviour and how to report these. Guidance on low-level concerns is not set out in the staff code of conduct, in line with current statutory requirements and staff are not provided with clear direction about such concerns. A suitable log of low-level concerns is not maintained.

64. Leaders do not ensure that required referrals to the local authority are always carried out when concerns or allegations arise about staff conduct, so that these can be responded to appropriately.

65. The school does not carry out or record all required safer recruitment checks as required by current statutory guidance. This includes references, prohibition from teaching and medical fitness checks, where relevant. In addition, the SCR does not always record dates of checks for identity, barred list, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates and verification of a candidate's right to work.

66. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe online at home and in school. They speak confidently about using password protection and explain maturely that websites can sometimes be blocked to protect their safety in school.

67. The safeguarding team seeks advice from specialist agencies, including children's services and early help practitioners, when required, to address concerns around pupils' safety and welfare.

68. Leaders implement suitable measures to restrict pupils' access to inappropriate websites. An internet filtering and monitoring system enables leaders to review and act on breaches. Leaders in the early years are vigilant about the safe use of electronic devices.

69. Leaders encourage pupils to confide in a wide range of trusted adults, including their teachers, specialist pastoral staff and, for boarders, an independent person. Leaders take additional steps to provide a variety of reporting mechanisms, including anonymous worry boxes for older pupils and a range of forums so that pupils, including boarders, can share any concerns. Leaders respond quickly to any such concerns that come to their attention.

70. Leaders provide staff with regular training, starting at induction, as well as interim safeguarding updates. Members of the safeguarding team are appropriately trained for their role.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

71. Standards are not met with respect to checks of the suitability of staff and the recording of these on the SCR and with respect to required referrals to the local authority and the understanding staff have of low-level concerns.

72. Standards relating to safeguarding are not met.

73. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.

Schedule of unmet Standards

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

The following standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR[1] Part 8, paragraph 34(1)	The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school –
34(1)(a)	demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
34(1)(b)	fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
34(1)(c)	actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.
NMS[2] 2.1	The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school and takes appropriate action where necessary.
NMS 2.2	The school's leadership and management, including its governing body where appropriate, demonstrate good skills and knowledge, appropriate to their role and undertake appropriate training as required.
NMS 2.4	The school's leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities consistently and effectively so that the standards are met.
NMS 2.5	The school's leadership and management and governance actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

Safeguarding

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
7(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
7(b)	such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 8	Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act(3) applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—

[1] The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('ISSR')

[2] National Minimum Standards for boarding schools ('NMS')

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8(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
8(b)	such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges.
ISSR Part 4, paragraph 18(2)	The standard in this paragraph is met if—
18(2)(c)	the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person—
18(2)(c)(ii)	the person's medical fitness;
18(2)(c)(iii)	the person's right to work in the United Kingdom; and
18(3)	The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment.
ISSR Part 4, paragraph 21(1)	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
21(3)	The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is—
21(3)(a)	in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether—
21(3)(a)(i)	S's identity was checked;
21(3)(a)(ii)	a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act;
21(3)(a)(iii)	a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
21(3)(a)(v)	an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained in respect of S;
21(3)(a)(vii)	a check of S's right to work in the United Kingdom was made; and
21(3)(b)	in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.
NMS 8.1	The school should ensure that: • arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and • such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
NMS 8.2	The school should ensure that all staff are aware that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility throughout the school and the boarding facilities.
NMS 19.1	Schools operate safer recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line

	with the regulatory requirements31 and having regard to relevant guidance32 issued by the Secretary of State.
EYFS[3] 3.1	Children learn best when they are healthy, safe, secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the people caring for them.
EYFS 3.3	Providers must take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. The requirements in this section explain what early years providers must do to: • Safeguard children. • Ensure the people who have contact with children are suitable. • Promote good health. • Support and understand behaviour. • Maintain records, policies, and procedures.
EYFS 3.5	Providers must have and implement policies and procedures to keep children safe and meet EYFS requirements. Schools are not required to have separate policies to cover EYFS requirements provided the requirements are already met through an existing policy. Where providers are required to have policies and procedures as specified below, these policies and procedures should be recorded in writing. Policies and procedures should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant LSP.
EYFS 3.13	Providers must ensure that people looking after children are suitable; they must have the relevant qualifications, training and have passed any required checks to fulfil their roles. Providers must take appropriate steps to verify qualifications, including in cases where physical evidence cannot be produced. Providers must also ensure that any person who may have regular contact with children (for example, someone living or working on the same premises the early years provision is provided), is suitable.
EYFS 3.18	Providers must record information about staff qualifications and the identity checks, vetting processes and references that have been completed (including the criminal records check reference number, the date a check was obtained and details of who at the setting obtained it).
EYFS 3.20	Providers must obtain a reference for any member of staff (including students and volunteers) before they are recruited. Providers should: • Not accept open references e.g. to whom it may concern. • Not rely on applicants to obtain their reference. • Ensure any references are from the applicant's current employer, training provider or education setting and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority. • Not accept references from a family member. • Obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed. • Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children). If the applicant has never worked with children, then ensure a reference is from their current employer, training provider or education setting.

[3] Early years foundation stage statutory framework ('EYFS')

	• Ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source. • Contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided. • Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the applicant. • Establish the reason for the applicant leaving their current or most recent post, and ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

School details

School	Godstowe Preparatory School
Department for Education number	825/6007
Registered charity number	310637
Address	Godstowe Preparatory School Shrubbery Road High Wycombe Buckinghamshire HP13 6PR
Phone number	01494 529273
Email address	schooloffice@godstowe.org
Website	www.godstowe.org
Proprietor	The Godstowe Preparatory School Company Ltd
Chair	Mrs Tara Leaver
Headteacher	Ms Kate Bailey
Age range	2 to 14
Number of pupils	219
Number of boarding pupils	44
Date of previous inspection	18 to 19 January 2023

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Information about the school

74. Godstowe Preparatory School is an independent day and boarding school located in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. It caters for male and female pupils in the nursery and pre-prep and for female pupils only from Years 3 to 8. The school is a registered charity whose trustees form the governing body.

75. Female boarders aged 7 to 13 years are accommodated in two boarding houses on the main site.

76. There are 36 children in the early years comprising one Nursery class and one Reception class.

77. The school has identified 55 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A very small proportion of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.

78. The school has identified English as an additional language for nine pupils.

79. The school states its aims are for every child's education to be a journey of joy, self-assurance and personal achievement so that they become confident, happy and successful. It seeks for pupils to cherish the values of kindness, respect, integrity and balance in order of pupils' healthy growth and happiness.

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Inspection details

Inspection dates	13 to 15 January 2026

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

81. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of 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.

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

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

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

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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For more information, please visit isi.net

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