

Progress monitoring inspection report

30 March to 1 April 2025

Ellesmere College

Ellesmere

Shropshire

SY12 9AB

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'.

Inspection outcome

The school meets all the relevant Standards that were considered during this inspection.

Inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

ISSR Paragraphs 2(1)a; 2(1)(b)(i); 2(1)(b)(ii); 2(2)(d)(i); 2(2)(d)(ii); 2(2)(h); 2(2)(i); 2A(1) b; 2A(1)(d); 2A(1)(f) 2A(2); 3(a); 3(b); 3(c); 3(d) and NMS 17.1

1. Leaders ensure that the curriculum policy is suitably documented and implemented effectively. It is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils, covering the required breadth of material. These effectively consider the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an education health care (EHC) plan. Leaders ensure that the curriculum policy and schemes of work promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
2. Staff use their subject knowledge effectively to implement well planned and suitably sequenced lessons. They provide clear feedback to pupils about new topics and knowledge they have learned, which helps them to deepen their understanding. Pupils respond appropriately and demonstrate motivation and engagement in their learning.
3. Staff receive suitable training so that they plan lessons consistently and routinely set a sufficient level of challenge for pupils. For instance, staff have completed relevant training to help them support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
4. Leaders ensure that staff use assessment information effectively to identify and plan appropriate support for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Leaders ensure that staff take responsibility for the progress and development of the pupils in their class. Staff monitor pupil achievement well and use suitable strategies to support and challenge pupils with different prior attainment. These include adaptations to the work set, effective use of resources and appropriate questioning, which help pupils make good progress from their starting points.
5. Since the last inspection, leaders have improved their oversight of teaching and learning throughout the school. Leaders meet regularly with subject leaders to identify school-wide areas of focus, such as providing effective levels of challenge within lessons. Leaders' recent checks on curriculum planning and teaching in the middle school have ensured that staff consider pupils' prior attainment effectively. This enables pupils to make good progress according to their ability.
6. Leaders implement an appropriate personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme during health and social awareness (HSA) lessons. The programme includes a suitable relationships and sex education programme (RSE), which is in line with all areas of statutory guidance.
7. The HSA programme teaches pupils about sex education. Pupils learn about consent, coercion, contraception and different types of relationships. They also learn about the values of respect and inclusion, such as when they are taught about lesbian, gay and bisexual, transgender (LGBT) people. This helps to prepare pupils for life in British and global society.
8. Leaders effectively communicate with parents on a termly basis about the contents of the HSA programme. Parents are appropriately informed in advance of sensitive topics and of their right to request that their child is wholly or partly excused from sex education provided as part of RSE.
9. The school meets the Standards.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

ISSR Paragraph 5(b)(vi)

10. Leaders ensure that staff promote the school's principles and values. Since the previous inspection, leaders have modified curriculum plans and assembly programmes to ensure there is a suitable focus on promoting pupils' personal development.
11. Lessons provide a strong focus on British values throughout the school. Schemes of work focus on encouraging respect, tolerance and empathy towards the needs of others, including those with protected characteristics.
12. Schemes of work include a range of opportunities to explore current affairs across the diverse school community. This helps to promote pupils' understanding of different cultures and the needs of a diverse world.
13. The school meets the Standards.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR Paragraphs 7(a);7(b): 8(a): 8(b) and 10; NMS 8.1 and 11.4

14. Leaders ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place and are implemented effectively. Leaders have appointed a new independent person who is not a parent, staff member, leader or governor. Boarders can contact the independent listener directly about any personal issues. Contact details for this independent person are displayed on notice boards alongside other contact helplines, including Childline and the Children's Commissioner.
15. The designated safeguarding leader (DSL) and deputy (DDSLs) understand their responsibility to contact children's services and the local authority designated officer (LADO) when necessary. DSLs fully understand their roles and work well with other agencies to safeguard pupils, including those in the early years and boarding. Regular safeguarding meetings help the DSLs coordinate their work effectively. Safeguarding records are detailed and include the actions taken by leaders to follow up on concerns. The arrangements in place reflect statutory requirements.
16. Staff, including the school's safeguarding leaders, are suitably trained. Staff confidently use a system for recording and reporting concerns. Staff receive regular information and safeguarding updates to keep them well informed. They understand the principles underpinning the staff code of conduct and the procedures for making a referral regarding staff conduct, including reporting low-level concerns.
17. The DSL acts promptly in response to safeguarding concerns and ensures that the wellbeing of pupils is closely monitored. The DSL maintains detailed records. These consist of clear and comprehensive summaries of concerns, notes of action taken, and the reasons for decisions reached, including whether to involve external agencies. All safeguarding information is stored securely.
18. The governors, including the designated safeguarding governor, effectively oversee the school's safeguarding procedures and their implementation. They ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place. Leaders assure themselves through regular checks that the filtering systems are effective, and that staff and pupils can work safely online.
19. The governors and the safeguarding team frequently meet to review the arrangements to safeguard pupils. Governors, including those who have a specific interest in boarding, regularly visit the school

and discuss boarding with pupils. The information gathered is then communicated to the full board. The governors ensure an annual safeguarding review is completed and that leaders promptly act on any recommendations.

20. A suitable written anti-bullying policy is implemented effectively. It clearly defines bullying and acknowledges the seriousness of bullying. Procedures are outlined and strategies for raising awareness among staff and educating pupils about bullying are in place. Staff receive training on the disciplinary sanctions used and the roles of parents and pupils in preventing bullying.
21. Leaders ensure that accurate and appropriate records are maintained of incidents that occur, and action taken to support both the victim and the perpetrator. Leaders have created a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated. Since the previous inspection, more frequent meetings occur across a larger number of pastoral staff, which has improved the implementation of this policy.
22. The school meets the Standards.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

23. The school meets the requirements for providing parents with safeguarding information. Particulars of the safeguarding arrangements are published on the school's website.
24. The school meets the Standards.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

ISSR paragraph 33(a); 33(b); 33(c); 33(d); 33(e); 33(f); 33(g); 33(h); 33(i)(i); 33(i)(ii); 33(j)(i); 33(j)(ii); 33(k)

25. A suitable complaints policy is in place and published on the school's website as required. The policy meets statutory requirements. Leaders ensure that all complaints are handled in line with the school's policy.
26. The school meets the Standards.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraphs 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c); NMS 2.1; 2.2; 2.4 and 2.5

27. Leaders and governors demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Following the previous inspection, leaders and governors acted promptly to implement a suitable action plan to address the unmet Standards.
28. Leaders and governors have implemented appropriate measures to ensure the school meets the Standards. They have ensured that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented consistently. They understand the requirement for an independent person for boarders and have ensured that one has been appointed who is independent of the school.
29. Governors ensure that leaders have developed more rigorous procedures for reviewing the effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching. Consequently, curriculum planning and teaching in the middle school better take into account pupils' prior attainment and enable pupils to make good progress according to their ability.

30. Leaders consult parents about the RSE curriculum, and they provide guidance to help them understand its purpose and content. Leaders ensure that the RSE curriculum is in line with statutory guidance, that pupil progress is assessed, and that secondary aged pupils are taught about LGBT people at a timely point in the curriculum.
31. Governors have suitable oversight of the school. They receive and scrutinise detailed reports and information on pupil progress, achievement and behaviour. Governors regularly visit the school with a specific focus, such as to look at risk assessment and boarding. Consequently, they are well informed and effectively hold leaders accountable.
32. The school meets the Standards.

School details

School	Ellesmere College
Department for Education number	893/6001
Registered charity number	1103049
Address	Ellesmere College Ellesmere Shropshire SY12 9AB
Phone number	01691 622321
Email address	reception@ellesmere.com
Website	www.ellesmere.com
Proprietor	Ellesmere College
Chair	Mr Charles Lillis
Headteacher	Mrs Vicky Pritt-Roberts
Age range	7 to 19
Number of pupils	564
Number of boarding pupils	156
Date of previous inspection	17 to 19 September 2024

Information about the school

34. Ellesmere College is a co-educational day and boarding school situated in rural Shropshire. The school consists of a lower school for pupils aged 7 to 13, a middle school for pupils aged 13 to 16, and senior school for pupils aged 16 to 18. The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. An acting head is in place pending the arrival of a new head in September 2025.
35. There are seven boarding houses, two for male pupils and one for female pupils aged 11 to 16, and four for sixth-form pupils, two for male and two for female
36. The school has identified 187 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Four pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
37. English is an additional language for 75 pupils.
38. The school states its aims are to produce fully developed and morally grounded human beings who will flourish as adults and improve the lives of those around them. It seeks to achieve this through a consistent, intense focus on individual academic performance.

Purpose of the progress monitoring inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. This inspection was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection which was carried out at the request of the DfE. The purpose of this inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the Independent School Standards/National Minimum Standards for boarding schools/Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and any other requirements that the school was judged not to comply with at its previous inspection.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

31 March to 1 April 2025

39. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for two days.

40. Inspection activities included:

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- discussions with the chair of governors and members of the governing body
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils and staff
- visits to the boarding houses accompanied by staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work.

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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For more information, please visit isi.net