

Sector summary

Independent mainstream schools

2022-2023



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Teaching and learning

What's going well

- Across the schools visited, pupil progress is strong. Communication skills are a particular strength.
- Most pupils develop strong mathematical skills.
- Schools offer a broad curriculum, that is frequently well tailored to the needs and interests of pupils.
- Staff know their pupils' needs, abilities and interests extremely well and build strong nurturing relationships with their classes.
- Teachers use a range of assessment strategies effectively to understand pupils' progress and provide timely feedback to move learning on.

What needs to improve

- Where writing is less secure, pupils do not consistently apply their writing skills accurately. When writing in subjects across the curriculum, pupils do not always write at the same high standard as they do in their English lessons.
- Progress of pupils' digital skills is variable.
- Where pupil progress is less strong, this is most frequently because teachers overly scaffold activities and do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to work independently.

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Care, support and well-being

What's going well

- Schools place an extremely high priority on the well-being of their pupils.
- Staff know their pupils very well and meet their needs highly effectively.
- Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and hold positions of responsibility, which develops their leadership skills and self-confidence.

What needs to improve

- Pupils are not always able to exhibit resilience and the ability to improve work and learn from their mistakes.

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Leading and improving

What's going well

- Leaders have a clear vision for their school, are ambitious for their pupils and have high expectations of their staff.
- Leaders provide all staff with worthwhile opportunities to engage in professional learning.

What needs to improve

- Professional learning is not always linked well enough to the individual development needs of staff.
- Shortcomings in the quality assurance and school improvement process mean that leaders' improvement plans are not based upon strong evidence, have not identified the few areas that may benefit from development or do not focus well enough on improving pupils' outcomes.

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Overview of recommendations from inspections

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Four independent mainstream schools were inspected during 2022-2023.

All schools inspected were left a recommendation relating to quality assurance. Recommendations focus on formalising, sharpening, strengthening or embedding these processes.

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Reflective questions

Questions to help independent mainstream schools **reflect on their self-evaluation and improvement planning**:

- How effectively do the school's arrangements to evaluate the quality of teaching and assessment capture the key strengths and areas for improvement across the full range of provision?
 - How well do quality assurance processes focus on the impact of provision on pupils' progress and well-being? How well do leaders use a range of information to identify areas for improvement?
 - When evaluating teaching, how effectively do leaders focus on how well it helps pupils make progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding?
 - How well do leaders use the results of quality assurance processes to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress, to improve teaching and learning?
 - How effectively do leaders plan for improvements in teaching? How clearly do plans for improvement set out aims and objectives, timescales and success criteria to evaluate progress in learning and arrangements for monitoring?
 - How effectively do leaders monitor plans for improvement? How well do leaders revise and adapt improvement plans in light of evidence from quality assurance processes?
 - How well do leaders link priorities for improvements in teaching to professional learning? How effectively do they evaluate the impact of professional learning on teaching and pupils' progress?
 - How well does the school allocate resources, including staff members' time, and input from partner organisations, to ensure the success of its improvement work?
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Effective practice

To read about individual providers that are working effectively in specific aspects of their work, visit our [effective practice summary page for 2022-2023](#)