

# School inspection report

26 to 28 November 2024

## **Loughborough High School**

Burton Walks  
Loughborough  
Leicestershire  
LE11 2DU

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 and leaders have a clear understanding of their responsibilities, so that pupils' wellbeing is actively promoted. Decisions are made with appropriate assessment of risk and in keeping with the school's aims. Leaders have the skills and training needed to carry out their duties effectively. They have established robust systems for monitoring the implementation of policies. This ensures that the Standards are consistently met.
2. The broad curriculum encourages pupils' intellectual curiosity and enables them to develop their knowledge and understanding across all the required areas of learning. Teachers are knowledgeable and create positive, supportive relationships in lessons. Their planning and methods enable pupils to make good progress although on occasion teaching does not provide appropriate challenge for all pupils. Pupils consistently achieve well in public examinations.
3. Pupils who have a special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported by the learning support department and make good progress from their starting points. On occasion, their specific needs are not taken into account in lessons.
4. The extensive co-curricular programme provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their skills, interests and leadership skills.
5. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme is well constructed and ensures that pupils develop a deep understanding of the importance of respect and tolerance for others. A thorough relationships and sex education (RSE) programme gives pupils the information they need as they mature into young adults. These elements of the curriculum help to develop the pupils' self-knowledge and self-assurance.
6. Policies to encourage positive behaviour and deter bullying are understood and respected by pupils; they are respectful and supportive of each other. Attendance is systematically monitored and there is suitable staff supervision throughout the day.
7. Health and safety policies are suitable and procedures thoroughly monitored. The school site is well maintained and the premises are secure.
8. The PSHE programme and 'Futures' department together provide a well-planned and effective careers programme which supports pupils as they prepare for the next stage of their lives.
9. An understanding of safeguarding procedures is well embedded across the school. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) provides regular training to staff. Systems ensure that any concern is reported and acted upon promptly, in partnership with local agencies, as necessary. Recruitment processes are thorough in carrying out all required pre-employment safeguarding checks, although not all those relating to references are clearly recorded.

## 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 that verification of all references for new staff appointments is clearly noted in centrally held records
- strengthen systems for monitoring the quality of teaching to ensure appropriate challenge for all pupils
- share the effective practice in some subject areas to ensure consistency of teaching and support for pupils who have SEND.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Members of the Foundation's governing board are assigned to individual school boards to provide specific oversight of the school's work. This supports governors and school leaders in ensuring that decisions are made in line with the Foundation's values and that there is consistency in implementing them.
11. Governors check that leaders have the knowledge and skills needed to carry out their duties in discussions and by interrogating the information provided on leaders' regular written reports. Governors have a clear understanding of leaders' management of academic and pastoral matters. They are also regular visitors to the school. Governors meet with senior leaders to discuss academic progress across subjects. They undertake occasional learning walks with senior leaders. The designated governor for safeguarding meets regularly with the DSL and monitors recruitment processes. Such activities enable governors to be confident that leaders are checking that school policies are effectively implemented.
12. Senior leaders undertake a rigorous school review, identifying areas in which progress has been made since the previous inspection and those which need further attention. The process helps senior leaders to be confident that policies are up to date and that action is taken when issues are raised. They ensure that policies are known and understood by staff and pupils. Leaders are alert to supporting the pupils' mental health; they promote a supportive environment in which decisions consistently consider the pupils' wellbeing.
13. Governors and leaders have a strategic and comprehensive approach to identifying and managing potential risk to pupils. Risk assessments of the site and buildings, including the risk of fire, are thorough and mitigating actions are taken. Leaders are conscious of any local risk factors and take appropriate action, such as ensuring pupils know and respect any out-of-bounds areas. Suitable risk assessments are made prior to pupils being taken on educational trips and visits. Leaders are mindful of the risks presented to pupils in using the internet and social media. Appropriate systems for filtering and monitoring internet usage are in place and checked regularly.
14. Leaders use training opportunities provided by other agencies, for example in training in the government's 'Prevent' duty so that they are alert to the dangers of extremism. They contact other agencies including social services as appropriate. Local authorities are informed should a pupil leave or join the school at a non-standard time. Leaders work with parents should a pupil's attendance cause concern, and with the local authority's inclusion team.
15. Leaders ensure that the curriculum meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 so that it provides for the needs of all groups of pupils. There is a suitable accessibility plan; this shows adaptations made for pupils with mobility issues, including installation of a chair lift and planned training for staff on the needs of neurodiverse pupils. Leaders provide parents with all required information, either directly on the school website or in writing if requested.
16. The complaints procedure is suitable. It includes satisfactory arrangement for convening a panel hearing. Senior leaders monitor any informal complaints being recorded and take action to help find a resolution. They also reflect on any issues that are resolved at the formal stage to see what improvements to procedures could be made.

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

**17. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. The curriculum is broad and provides appropriate challenges across a range of disciplines. In line with its aim to help pupils develop both intellectually and creatively, leaders encourage pupils to include a humanities or arts subject as part of their individual GCSE course choices. Collaboration with other Foundation schools enables leaders to offer a wide range of choices at A level, meeting the needs and aspirations of the pupils effectively.
19. The curriculum enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subject areas. They develop their skills in oracy and writing in their study of modern and classical languages as well as English. Their mathematical understanding develops well and is applied confidently in other subjects including sciences, economics and geography. Their work in art and music evidence their creative skills and appreciation of aesthetic beauty. They use technology confidently in their learning.
20. The learning support department works with pupils who have SEND to identify useful strategies to help their learning. Most teaching makes effective use of this information, for example by providing print outs on coloured paper, or rest periods as needed. There is some inconsistency in teachers' awareness of these pupils' needs and on occasion teaching does not take them into account. When this happens, it hampers pupils' ability to achieve at their best in the classroom.
21. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are typically confident in English but are also supported by the learning support department. Strategies such as providing lists of subject specific vocabulary and checking understanding are used routinely by teachers.
22. There is a clear framework for the assessment of pupils' progress. Leaders have strengthened procedures for giving regular feedback to pupils. Teachers provide useful written comments and verbal feedback on pupils' work, so that there is dialogue between pupil and teacher. Pupils' work improves as a result.
23. Leaders make effective use of data to track the progress of pupils in Years 11 to 13 against external examination grades. Pupils make good progress over time. Analysis of the progress of pupils who have SEND or who speak EAL shows that strategies to support them are successful in enabling them to make good progress from their starting points. Pupils have consistently achieved well at GCSE and A level. Most pupils go on to university, some choosing specialist music or arts colleges.
24. The tracking of the progress of younger pupils is effective, drawing on the school's own grading system. This tracking, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with staff and pupils show that pupils make good progress. Tracking is used by teachers to ensure their awareness of pupils' individual aptitudes and needs, adapting their lessons to support pupils' progress further. Regular reports on their child's progress are provided to parents.
25. Teachers know their subjects well and relationships between teachers and pupils are positive. Lessons are well structured and classroom behaviour managed skilfully. Teachers typically provide appropriate levels of challenge, using questioning to encourage pupils to think more deeply. There is, however, some inconsistency in teaching and on occasion pupils with higher prior attainment are not appropriately challenged. Teaching employs a range of different methods and activities, such as role play or drawing on links to current affairs, to engage pupils' interest and encourage their

reasoning skills. Pupils collaborate well in group discussions and pose thoughtful questions. They are curious and self-motivated learners, keen to understand and to explore new topics.

26. A broad co-curricular programme enables pupils to explore subjects further or to challenge themselves in taking on something new. Clubs, many of which are initiated or led by pupils, include creative, academic, sporting and musical opportunities. Clubs are well attended, and pupils benefit from developing their personal interests and skills in these.

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

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



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

28. Leaders emphasise the importance of supporting pupils' mental and emotional wellbeing and have encouraged pupils' understanding of this. The daily form sessions give teachers the time to form positive relationships with their pupils so that they are alert to any concerns and offer support. PSHE lessons include mindfulness training, helping pupils to develop strategies to manage their emotions and develop resilience. There is a pupil wellbeing committee and wellbeing prefects who meet regularly with senior leaders who act upon their proposals for activities such as mindfulness art or park run sessions. The sixth-form prefects organise regular informal opportunities for pupils to talk, helping to form positive and supportive links between year groups.
29. Sixth-form prefects are given suitable responsibilities and duties such as being linked with specific form groups as mentors or organising assemblies. Duties are focused on supporting the school community as a whole. Those with responsibility roles are reliable in carrying out their duties, understanding that these are important for creating a sense of a united school community.
30. Teaching across the curriculum encourages pupils' understanding of the need to treat others with respect, regardless of differences including in ethnicity, disability or gender. Displays show pupils' pride in the range of ethnicities in the school, for example a world map on which pupils pin notes about the origins of their families and share their families' stories. The PSHE programme helps them to understand the importance of respecting the legal rights of others.
31. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to engage in discussions on philosophical matters such as whether humans have free will and the ethics of experimentation on animals. Significant religious festivals such as Diwali are celebrated in pupil-led assemblies. The school's tradition of celebrating Christmas by staging a series of tableaux unites Christian belief with music and appreciation of Renaissance art, thus enhancing pupils' appreciation of spiritual and non-material values.
32. Leaders encourage pupils to develop self-confidence, self-esteem and resilience in the classroom and co-curricular activities. Feedback from teachers on their written and oral work provides praise and encouragement. Activities include debating which helps pupils to develop confidence in public speaking. The numerous musical activities develop their confidence in performing. Drama performances include an evening of plays entirely directed and performed by pupils from Year 9 to Year 13.
33. Pupils' understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle is well embedded through PSHE teaching and physical education lessons. Lessons and extra team training help pupils develop their skills and fitness. Involvement in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and Combined Cadet Force (CCF) faces pupils with physical challenges and helps them further develop self-confidence and resilience.
34. The well-constructed PSHE programme provides pupils with clear guidance on supporting their mental and physical health. Pupils are taught basic first aid, the importance of sleep and the dangers of substance abuse. In the RSE course pupils learn about forming positive relationships and matters of consent, as well as menstruation, contraception and caring for their sexual health. Surveys are

used to check the pupils' understanding and to allow pupils to ask about areas on which they would like more information. Pupils are provided with the information they need as they mature.

35. Leaders have set out clear behavioural expectations of the pupils and these are well understood by pupils. Teachers appropriately implement the behaviour policy. Records are kept of serious breaches of the policy and suitable sanctions set.
36. There is a clear anti-bullying policy. It is effective in ensuring that bullying is recognised by all pupils as unacceptable and that bullying events are rare. Thorough records are kept of any incidents and of the actions taken as a result.
37. Admissions and attendance policies reflect current regulatory requirements and are carefully followed. The safeguarding team monitors attendance figures regularly and ensures that prompt action, including a meeting with parents, is taken should a pupil's attendance rate cause concern.
38. Measures for first aid are appropriate, with suitable numbers of staff trained. All medicines are stored correctly. School leaders take a proactive approach to the management of the school site and buildings. Preventative action against the risk of fire is thorough. All required checks are carried out in a timely manner and clearly recorded. Suitable numbers of staff are on duty throughout the day to supervise pupils and access to buildings is secure.

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

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

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

40. The broad curriculum ensures that pupils develop skills to reflect on the human and social complexities of modern society. Teaching in geography, for example, extends pupils' understanding of issues of global poverty, inequality and the impact of pollution. History lessons on the medieval feudal system and the Suffragette movement help pupils to grasp the role over time of a drive for respect and equality in creating modern society.
41. The curriculum gives pupils a well-grounded appreciation of different cultures. English teaching includes literature from non-European authors and the extensive music programme draws on global influences. Topics in art are used effectively to combine development of artistic skills with reflection on social issues, for example in displays of ceramics inspired by powerful female figures and the qualities they embody.
42. Pupils have a sound understanding of modern political structures. They organised a mock election at the time of the general election, with candidates reflecting the policies of each party in Parliament. Leaders encourage pupils to know that their opinions matter and can effect change in their school lives; for example, a pupil petition resulted in the option to join the CCF being extended to pupils below the Sixth form. Seeing democracy in action in this way helps pupils' understanding of the importance of participating in the democratic system.
43. The PSHE programme helps to develop pupils' economic awareness and acumen. This starts in Year 7 with topics on money matters including saving and borrowing money, and continues throughout the school. Financial education in the sixth form includes coverage of tax, the cost of borrowing, student loans and budgeting.
44. Careers guidance is comprehensive. Pupils are taught in the PSHE programme to reflect on their interests and aptitudes as part of choosing option subjects for GCSE and A level. The 'Futures' programme has a clear strategy and structure of activities to support pupils in reflecting on potential career paths. Careers guidance is impartial and supports pupils whether their chosen next step is university, apprenticeships, specialist arts colleges or employment.
45. The curriculum ensures that pupils are given a groundwork of principles so that they know the difference between right and wrong. Teachers use opportunities when dealing with misdemeanours to foster in pupils an empathic understanding of others' perspectives and needs. As a result, pupils develop a keen sense of fairness as well as of their own self-worth.
46. Pupils are proud to be members of the school community and take opportunities to contribute to it. Sixth-form pupils provide positive role models in their leadership roles as prefects and house captains. They volunteer to take assemblies on topics important to them, such as women's health. They initiate events such as an Arts evening and lead clubs such as an LGBTQ society. Younger pupils also volunteer to take responsibility roles as charity or school forum representatives.
47. Leaders encourage pupils to be involved in local activities. A contingent from the CCF took part in the recent Remembrance Day parade in the town. Pupils are also taught to be aware of the needs of wider society. Members of the voluntary services unit support pupils in local primary schools and visit care homes for the elderly. Each year group decides on a charity and organises activities to

support its work. Pupils raise money and organise practical activities, for example collecting clothing and hygiene products for local homeless people.

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

**48. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

49. Rigorous safeguarding procedures are well embedded. Governors have undertaken safeguarding training. The nominated safeguarding governor is in regular contact with the DSL to provide oversight and support. The governor also regularly reviews recruitment processes and records. Governors undertake an annual formal review of safeguarding so that they have a clear understanding of how the school is managing concerns.
50. Leaders have set in place an extended safeguarding team. The DSL is supported by a number of deputies, some of whom have responsibilities within specific shared facilities. This ensures close oversight of safeguarding procedures across all areas of the campus used by the pupils.
51. The safeguarding team ensures that staff working in the school are well trained in safeguarding; support staff working across all the schools are regularly trained by the Foundation's central services department. Training includes extending staff understanding of health conditions such as eating disorders. It also considers the leaders' awareness of risks to pupils' mental health, so that staff are alert to and act upon emerging concerns.
52. The safeguarding team meet regularly and there are clear systems for ensuring that safeguarding concerns are managed promptly. The DSL liaises with local services, seeking advice as needed and acting upon it. Safeguarding records are thorough and kept securely. Information is shared appropriately should a pupil transfer to another school.
53. The PSHE programme and computer science lessons ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and in using social media. There are suitable systems for the filtering and monitoring of internet usage in the school. The effectiveness of these systems is regularly checked and reported to governors by the DSL.
54. Pupils are encouraged to nominate a specific staff member as the trusted adult to whom they would turn for support; they also know they can report a concern to any member of staff. Pupils know that there are a number of adults, including their form teachers, to whom they could turn for advice. In addition, there is a well-publicised confidential system for reporting worries anonymously using a QR code.
55. The recruitment process is robust, so that checks on the suitability of adults to work with pupils are completed before individuals are allowed to begin employment at the school. This includes the verification of references, some of which is done by the school, although this is not always clearly recorded on the central files of recruitment checks.

## The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

56. All the relevant Standards are met.

## School details

<b>School</b>	Loughborough High School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	855/6009
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1081765
<b>Address</b>	Loughborough High School Burton Walks Loughborough Leicestershire LE11 2DU
<b>Phone number</b>	01509 212348
<b>Email address</b>	high.office@lsf.org
<b>Website</b>	www.lsf.org/high
<b>Proprietor</b>	Loughborough Schools Foundation
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Roger Harrison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Fiona Miles
<b>Age range</b>	11-18
<b>Number of pupils</b>	522
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 November to 3 December 2021

## Information about the school

57. Loughborough High School is an independent day school for female pupils between the ages of 11 and 18. Founded in 1850, the school is one of the four schools that comprise the Loughborough Schools Foundation. It shares a site with two of the other Foundation schools, allowing for some use of joint facilities in sports and music. The school have a common governing body, supported by individual school boards.
58. The school has identified 111 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
59. English is an additional language for 11 pupils.
60. The school states its aims are to create a positive and supportive environment within which pupils have opportunities to develop creatively, intellectually, spiritually and morally. It seeks to encourage pupils' initiative, independent thinking and involvement in co-curricular activities. It intends that pupils learn to behave maturely, responsibly and considerately, so preparing them to become active citizens of 21<sup>st</sup> century society.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

26 to 28 November 2024

61. A team of five inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

62. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and form times
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair
- discussions with the head, 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 with pupils
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work with members of staff
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

63. 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

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