

School inspection report

4 to 6 March 2025

Yarm School

The Friarage

Yarm

North Yorkshire

TS15 9EJ

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 successfully provide an education that enables pupils to develop the skills and confidence to become able to contribute positively to society. Leaders' and governors' decision-making ensures that the school meets the Standards and promotes pupils' wellbeing effectively.
2. The school operates in a calm, positive and productive atmosphere. Pupils make good progress, engaging positively in lessons. Leaders provide a stimulating and secure environment for pupils in which they enjoy a wide range of educational, physical and artistic curricular and co-curricular opportunities. However, leaders could enhance their monitoring and analysis of the impact of the co-curricular programme on pupils' development of their skills.
3. Teachers provide pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), with effective support and guidance. Teaching encourages pupils to apply what they know, take risks and think deeply. Lessons are well planned by teachers who utilise their good subject knowledge to develop pupils' learning effectively.
4. Leaders use a suitable framework for assessment to monitor and track pupils' progress. Teachers use this to identify pupils' individual needs, working closely with tutors to determine any additional support that may be needed.
5. Health and safety arrangements are typically effective. The school premises and accommodation are well maintained. However, during the inspection a cupboard containing cleaning materials was left unlocked contrary to the school's expected procedures. Leaders rectified this during the inspection.
6. A clear behaviour policy is in place and implemented effectively. Pupils behave well, supported by guidance and clear expectations from leaders and staff. There are very few behavioural issues.
7. Pupils are taught the importance of respect, diversity and inclusion through a well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme, which the school refers to as 'SPaCE' (social, personal and citizenship education).
8. The school offers many opportunities for pupils to support the local community through charitable endeavours and volunteering. Pupils' participation in such opportunities is high.
9. Leaders promote a culture in which safeguarding is prioritised. This includes providing regular training for all staff, maintaining effective links with local safeguarding partners and ensuring the effective safer recruitment of staff.

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:

- strengthen their monitoring of arrangements for the storage of cleaning materials to ensure that all expected health and safety procedures are always adhered to
- strengthen their monitoring and analysis of the impact of the co-curricular programme on pupils' development of skills.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders have the appropriate skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities across all aspects of the life of the school. This ensures that they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils.
11. Governors maintain regular contact with school leaders, including through regular meetings and constant communication, to ensure that they carry out their roles effectively so that the school maintains compliance with the Standards. Governors and leaders base their plans for the future development of the school on effective self-evaluation that considers the impact of academic and pastoral provision on pupils' wellbeing. Leaders use their self-evaluation to generate a continuously updated development plan.
12. Leaders effectively promote the school's aims and ethos by embedding its 'education for life' motto throughout the culture of the school. Leaders' references to the aims of the school encourage pupils to develop their academic and broader life skills.
13. Governors and leaders effectively develop policies, and leaders ensure that staff implement them appropriately and as desired. Staff are suitably trained, qualified and informed to carry out their duties. Leaders consult staff about the content of policies and procedures to encourage a sense of ownership amongst staff of policies that directly affect them.
14. Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, making sure that no members of the school community experience discrimination in any form. The school's accessibility plan details the actions planned and taken to ensure that pupils can access the curriculum and premises effectively. Reasonable adjustments are in place for pupils who have SEND so that they are able to engage fully with the curriculum.
15. The risk assessment policy helps to guide leaders and staff to identify and mitigate potential risks in the school. Leaders effectively manage potential risks relating to the premises and activities as well as educational and residential trips. Staff receive suitable risk assessment training. Risk assessments include consideration of the welfare and needs of individual pupils and how to minimise any potential risks relating to classrooms, resources and learning activities. All risk assessments are reviewed at least annually, with those relating to trips and visits evaluated at the conclusion of each activity.
16. Parents are provided with all required information, much of which is available via the school website. Additional information is available on request. Leaders provide regular reports to parents about their children's progress and attainment. Reports are detailed and supported by regular face-to-face parental consultations.
17. Leaders ensure that any formal and informal complaints are dealt with in an appropriate and timely manner. Parents are encouraged to make early contact with the school to discuss issues with senior staff or governors in order to resolve them quickly.
18. The school informs the local authority when pupils leave or join at non-standard times. No pupils are currently funded, wholly or in part, by the local authority. Leaders maintain suitable links with other agencies, such as local safeguarding partners and external professionals with expertise in supporting pupils who have SEND, and act on their advice.

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

19. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. The school provides a balanced curriculum that covers a wide range of subjects, including all required areas. These include design and technology, music, drama and theatre, psychology, textiles, computer science and politics. Effective schemes of work are in place that show cross-curricular links and give clear guidance to teachers on suitable resources to be used in different situations. For each year group there are clear teaching plans for each subject.
21. Teachers plan well-structured lessons which consider the learning needs of all pupils. Teachers' communication of information is clear and timely, and activities develop learning points methodically. Teachers structure work and activities to enable pupils to learn effectively from each other. Teachers provide opportunities within their subject for pupils to think and learn for themselves. Coursework is structured so that pupils develop reading and research skills effectively.
22. Teachers have effective subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the topics they are teaching. They make effective use of a range of well-chosen teaching methods. Pupils respond actively and enjoy learning opportunities that enable them to deepen their understanding. Teachers motivate pupils to encourage each other and give constructive criticism in a collaborative way.
23. Teachers know their pupils well. They encourage pupils to reflect on their work, provide effective advice to individual pupils and groups, and ensure that pupils act on this advice to build skills and make good progress. The choice of high-quality texts and sources, and use of challenging and sophisticated questions, including for younger senior pupils to prepare them for the expectations of GCSE examinations, ensure that there is stretch and challenge for all. Teachers make certain that pupils understand key terms and concepts so that they can interpret texts and sources of information effectively and express their perspectives and findings confidently.
24. All departments are engaged in what the school terms 'professional learning enquiry projects', which take an action-research approach towards extending understanding of professional practice. Staff training ensures that staff are kept up to date with ideas about best practice in teaching and education.
25. The school provides pupils who have SEND with effective support. School leaders work closely with the prep school, screening all pupils in Year 7 and again in Year 9 and Year 12 to determine the nature of their individual needs and provide appropriate support to meet these. Teachers maintain respectful relationships with pupils, allowing the mutual trust between them to support pupils to attain well. Teachers maintain high expectations of all pupils, including those who have SEND. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points, successfully developing their skills and knowledge.
26. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) also receive effective in-class support when this is required. For example, staff provide pupils with effective support and clarification of the meanings of subject-specific terminology.
27. Leaders implement an effective system to track pupils' progress in all subjects and year groups. This enables teachers to be able to check what pupils have learned securely and to have a clearer understanding of aptitudes and learning needs. Teachers' feedback to pupils provides them with clear advice about how to improve their work further.

28. The school provides pupils with a wide range of co-curricular activities and clubs. Both at lunchtime, during lesson time and after school, opportunities exist in sports, music, performance and general interest. The range complements the school's 'education for life' philosophy. However, leaders could enhance their monitoring and analysis of the impact of the co-curricular programme on pupils' development of skills.
29. Teaching promotes British values such as those of democracy, the rule of law and mutual respect across the range of subjects and through the SPaCE programme.

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

30. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

31. The school provides pupils with effective pastoral support, including for their mental health and emotional wellbeing. Pupils can receive specialist emotional support from the school's counselling and health and wellbeing practitioner. Tutors meet pupils twice daily to provide ongoing pastoral support. Tutors regularly discuss with pupils the progress they have made in academic and pastoral areas. Leaders inform staff appropriately about pupils' individual physical or emotional health needs so that those needs can be met. Such discussions and support have a positive impact on pupils' self-confidence and self-awareness.
32. The school enables pupils to develop their spiritual awareness. Religious education (RE) lessons develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of a range of different faiths and religions. School assemblies encourage pupils to reflect on non-material aspects of life. A range of school trips and visits to different religions' places of worship add to pupils' appreciation and understanding of different faiths.
33. Suitable relationships and sex education (RSE) and PSHE education are effectively delivered through the SPaCE programme. This well-designed curriculum allows pupils to revisit key topics that are appropriate for their age. Such topics include puberty, consent, healthy relationships of different kinds, the causes of stress and how to cope with these, and factors that have an impact on the healthiness of lifestyles. Pupils learn that being able to talk through concerns with a trusted adult is likely to be helpful to their wellbeing.
34. Teachers set clear behavioural expectations and provide pupils with effective encouragement to behave well. Leaders and staff implement appropriate rewards and sanctions in a fair way to promote suitable behaviour. As a result, poor behaviour is rare.
35. Leaders and staff implement a clear and effective anti-bullying strategy. They educate pupils about the harm that bullying can cause, so that pupils understand that bullying is not tolerated. Leaders encourage pupils to come forward with any concerns about possible bullying and respond swiftly and robustly to any bullying incidents that do arise.
36. The school maintains admission and attendance records as required by current statutory guidance. Leaders monitor patterns of attendance effectively and take measures to promote high attendance. The school informs the local authority of any pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard times of transition.
37. Governors and leaders monitor health and safety procedures typically effectively so that the premises are appropriately maintained and secure. Staff are suitably trained and demonstrate appropriate knowledge. Leaders make sure that required checks and maintenance are carried out methodically and quickly ensure that required repairs are carried out when necessary. However, during the inspection, a cleaning cupboard was left unlocked in contravention of the school's expected procedures. Leaders rectified the issue immediately once they became aware of it. Fire safety policies and procedures meet all requirements, and a suitable fire risk assessment is in place. Termly fire evacuations are carried out and evaluated.

38. Appropriate supervision is in place in all aspects of school life. Staff rotas are thorough, and staff are vigilant and supervise pupils effectively at all times. First aid provision is effective, with suitable numbers of staff trained in administering first aid.
39. Senior pupils have the opportunity to apply to become school prefects and successful pupils support staff in their break time and lunchtime duties. Senior pupils are also involved in activities such as assembly organisation, helping with school tours, readings, and supporting younger pupils via societies and during house events.

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

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

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

41. Leaders promote a culture of mutual respect across the school. Supportive staff act as effective role models for pupils in this regard. Pupils learn about the importance of equality and inclusion and the need to respect the protected characteristics of people, such as their race, gender, sexual orientation and religion. A number of 'cultural days' have been held to increase understanding of the lives of others within the school community. As a result, pupils treat each other respectfully and collaborate well when working together in and out of lessons.
42. The school actively promotes fundamental British values. The SPaCE programme has a focus on promoting respect, diversity and inclusion. Themes relating to equality, inclusion and diversity, such as freedom of speech and the impact of societal change, are also woven throughout the curriculum, including through the texts that pupils study. Pupils learn about democracy through a voting system for representative pupil positions. Pupils develop an appreciation of the rule of law and the importance of government in society through debates and discussions in tutor time. British institutions are covered in curriculum politics lessons and during assemblies. Pupils are well prepared for life in British society.
43. The school provides pupils with a well-rounded and comprehensive careers programme. The programme begins in Year 7 through the SPaCE curriculum and provides pupils with up-to-date information and advice around preparation for subject-option choices and different careers. University and apprenticeships are discussed as post-school options of equal value. Leaders organise opportunities for visiting speakers, including alumni, to talk to pupils at whole-school and departmental level. These presentations help pupils to make informed choices about a wide variety of options available to them.
44. Through the SPaCE programme, in lessons and through the co-curricular programme, pupils of all ages benefit from economics education. A club run by the economics department mirrors a national television series that explores business skills, in which pupils of all ages observe or take part in order to learn the importance of business themes. Budgeting, saving and the value of money are taught in SPaCE lessons. Pupils involved in charity fundraising learn about the importance of money for those charities. Careers lessons for older pupils cover student finance and the wider aspects of student life.
45. Pupils understand the principles of right and wrong. For example, pupils present assemblies on moral principles such as kindness. Pupils develop the ability to accept responsibility for their actions and learn how to resolve disagreements and differences. The debating club routinely explores aspects of ethical and moral issues and dilemmas, including those raised by current news topics, such as ethical considerations relating to climate change and aspects of war. The curriculum also explores moral and ethical issues, such as forced marriage, misogyny and what constitutes truth.
46. The school enables pupils to support the local community. The school has developed a range of partnerships with local charity organisations. These partnerships afford high levels of pupil participation in activities such as working with people who have disabilities through the Physically Disabled and Able Bodied (PHAB) group, putting on concerts in local nursing homes and memento events for those affected by dementia. Pupils' engagement with such activities helps to develop their sense of responsibility towards others.

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

47. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

48. Governors, leaders and staff share an effective commitment to protect and safeguard pupils. They implement suitable safeguarding policies and procedures in line with the requirements of current statutory guidance.
49. Governors maintain a thorough oversight of safeguarding policies through regular school visits, discussions with school leaders, termly reports to the board and annual monitoring of the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements.
50. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities are appropriately trained for their roles and act effectively as a team. They ensure that all staff and governors receive safeguarding training as part of their induction to the school, with regular updates delivered subsequently. Staff demonstrate suitable knowledge about safeguarding issues and procedures including those related to the risks of radicalisation and extremism.
51. The safeguarding team responds effectively when safeguarding concerns are raised. They act upon concerns promptly and in an appropriate way. The safeguarding team works effectively with relevant external agencies, liaising closely with the local authority designated officer (LADO), children's services and the police where necessary, including by referring concerns on to them when required. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) maintains suitable logs of safeguarding concerns and the rationale for the actions taken in response to these. The safeguarding team reviews these records to ensure the school is aware of any emerging patterns.
52. There is a clear and effective system in place for pupils to report any concerns that they might have.. Pupils are confident that they will be listened to and that their concerns will be dealt with in an appropriate way.
53. The school teaches pupils how to stay safe, including when online and in their use of social media. Appropriate filtering and monitoring of online activity is in place, overseen and checked by the DSL.
54. The school carries out all required safer recruitment checks on staff, volunteers and governors before they commence work at the school. These checks are accurately recorded on a suitable single central record (SCR) of appointments. Governors monitor the SCR at least twice yearly.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Yarm School
Department for Education number	808/6002
Registered charity number	1093434
Address	Yarm School The Friarage Yarm North Yorkshire TS15 9EJ
Phone number	01642 786023
Email address	admin@yarmschool.org
Website	www.yarmschool.org/
Proprietor	Yarm School Foundation
Chair	Mr Mark Thompson
Headteacher	Dr Huw Williams
Age range	11 to 18
Number of pupils	787
Date of previous inspection	9 to 11 February 2022

Information about the school

56. Yarm School is an independent co-educational day school situated in Yarm in North Yorkshire. It was founded in 1978. It is one of two constituent schools of the Yarm Foundation, alongside the preparatory school, which was inspected at the same time. Both schools are overseen by a single governing body.
57. The school has identified 74 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
58. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for 156 pupils.
59. The school states its aims are to provide an excellent holistic education to enable pupils to fulfil their potential as individuals and to develop skills to become confident adults who will contribute positively to society. It aims to build and sustain a supportive, ambitious and inclusive community. The school strives to provide a first-class all-round educational experience that develops broader life skills, habits and attitudes that will help pupils to prepare for their next steps and future careers.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

4 to 6 March 2025

60. A team of seven inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

61. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods, tutor time 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
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

62. 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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