

School inspection report

25 to 27 November 2025

Prior's Field School

Priorsfield Road

Godalming

Surrey

GU7 2RH

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'.

Contents

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS	3
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....	4
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS	4
SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....	5
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE	6
SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	7
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	8
SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	9
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	10
SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....	11
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY	12
SAFEGUARDING	13
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING	13
SCHOOL DETAILS	14
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	15
INSPECTION DETAILS	16

Summary of inspection findings

1. The proprietor and school leaders are appropriately knowledgeable and experienced. They commit decisively to promoting a positive, caring culture that encourages pupils to fulfil their potential across all areas of school life. As a result, pupils value individual differences and are socially responsible. Leaders reflect thoughtfully on how to improve provision so that all pupils benefit. Governors provide careful oversight. Together with other leaders, they promote pupils' wellbeing and ensure the Standards are met consistently, including the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools.
2. Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of respect for all. The focus on equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in assemblies, the curriculum and associated activities, allows pupils to deepen their knowledge of, and appreciation for, other cultures, customs and beliefs.
3. Teaching is adapted suitably to meet pupils' different needs, including for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Lesson planning is effective. An appropriate variety of learning tasks enables pupils of all abilities to develop their skills and understanding so that they achieve well.
4. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are supported effectively to improve their English language knowledge and skills as needed. Leaders ensure that they receive specialist individual tuition when necessary.
5. Boarding leaders create a welcoming, friendly boarding community in which boarders of all ages socialise happily. This includes at weekends when they enjoy a wide variety of activities and trips. Boarders' health and wellbeing needs are well met. They appreciate their comfortable, homely accommodation.
6. Effectively supported by governors, leaders implement appropriate health and safety measures, including those related to fire safety systems. Premises and accommodation are suitably maintained. Weekly committee meetings and termly reports to governors provide ongoing supervision of the quality of the school's offer. Daily site monitoring is in place. However, a lapse in prioritisation of actions resulted in an oversight which was rectified during inspection.
7. Pupils develop a clear understanding of values such as democracy and the importance of public services. They secure this in taught sessions and through co-curricular opportunities such as working with charitable organisations. Pupils of all ages are keen to serve others. They take on responsibilities and contribute positively to the locality through practical support and fundraising initiatives.
8. The careers programme ensures that pupils have personalised, appropriate support as they choose examination and post-school pathways. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are introduced to key employability skills. However, they have fewer opportunities to learn about the variety of careers open to them.
9. Together with governors, leaders prioritise pupils' safety and wellbeing. All staff and governors complete appropriate safeguarding training on joining the school. This is updated regularly, including through pertinent weekly reminders. Procedures for the recruitment of staff are robust. Leaders with safeguarding responsibilities work with relevant agencies as required, so that pupils have suitable support. Consequently, there is an effective culture of safeguarding across the school.

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 the actions arising from health and safety checks are appropriately prioritised as a matter of routine and carried out promptly
- embed the recently revised careers education in Years 7 to 9 so that pupils have a broader understanding of the variety of careers open to them.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders ensure that the school supports pupils of all ages to grow in self-confidence. Consequently, pupils become representatives of the school's motto to 'live by admiration, hope and love', with an awareness of their obligations to each other and to wider society. Pupils and staff advocate these values. As a result, the school is welcoming and supportive. Leaders actively promote pupils' wellbeing in all aspects of school life.
11. Governors have appropriate knowledge and skills to meet their obligations effectively, including those related to the boarding provision. They ensure that leaders have the necessary skills to fulfil their responsibilities so that pupils thrive. Governors check the quality of provision, for example, through termly reviews, on-site visits, discussions with staff and pupils, as well as through focused committees. Appropriately informed by these activities, they provide suitable levels of challenge to continue to improve the school's work.
12. Annual self-evaluation and ongoing reflection are part of leaders' approach to strategic planning. As a result, leaders, supported by governors, have a clear vision for ongoing improvement. This vision is supported through suitable action plans and timelines. Leaders consider any health and safety risks carefully and implement strategies to mitigate them.
13. Day-to-day risk management is thorough as a result of adherence to suitable policies, regular compliance checks, health and safety and fire safety training. Appropriate risk assessments are written for school accommodation, including boarding houses, as well as for activities that take place on and off the school site. Well-defined routines and clear expectations reduce risk further. Care plans are in place for individual pupils where necessary.
14. Leaders ensure that pupils receive education that is suitably wide-ranging. The well-balanced curriculum is matched appropriately to pupils' age and aptitudes. Leaders offer suitable pathways providing all pupils with the opportunity to learn and achieve. They routinely review the curriculum to ensure that it meets regulatory requirements and pupils' needs.
15. Boarding arrangements are well led. Staff are knowledgeable and committed to caring for boarding pupils. They carry out their responsibilities effectively so that pupils feel well known, safe and comfortable in the boarding community.
16. The school's suitable accessibility plan, to improve access to the premises and the curriculum, is implemented effectively and reviewed at least annually. Consequently, leaders fulfil their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Leaders promote EDI effectively. They make reasonable adjustments for those pupils who have SEND. Leaders make sure that members of the school community do not suffer from discrimination. Pupils are taught to appreciate individual differences through informative personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons, assemblies and tutor time. As a result, pupils understand the importance of tolerance and respect for all.
17. Appropriate provision is in place for those who speak EAL. As a result, pupils who need to improve their English language knowledge and skills catch up quickly.
18. Leaders provide all of the necessary information to parents, pupils, staff and to relevant external agencies in line with their statutory obligations. Information is available directly from the school and much is on the school's website.

19. The school has an effective complaints procedure. Complaints are responded to in a timely fashion. Suitably detailed records are kept of concerns and actions taken. The school reviews complaints regularly to allow lessons to be learnt as necessary.
20. Leaders report to the local authority when any pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. Pupils benefit from a curriculum that reflects the school's aims and values. It is wide-ranging, covering, for example, sports, creative and academic subjects appropriately. As pupils progress through the school, they access a relevant variety of academic choices and qualifications appropriate to their abilities and interests. This includes a suitable choice of GCSEs, as well as non-examined courses. The sixth form offers a range of A-Level options and BTEC qualifications. The programmes ensure that pupils across the ability range are well catered for.
23. Teachers have a detailed understanding of their subjects and examination requirements. Most pupils attain results at GCSE and A level at least in line with their starting points, including those who have SEND. Leaders and governors scrutinise examination results against national norms. This process informs decisions for academic improvement at a strategic level, such as in the decision to increase the focus on adapting teaching to match it precisely to individual pupils' needs.
24. Effective assessment and tracking processes are in place following planned improvement actions. The information gathered from the checks on pupils' learning informs teachers' planning. As a result, pupils understand how to address individual areas of weakness and build on their strengths so they achieve well. Pupils respond routinely to teachers' feedback. This provides pupils with personalised goals for improvement, as well as recognition of their successes.
25. Skilled and knowledgeable teachers plan lessons effectively, choosing relevant resources and activities to support pupils' learning. Relationships between teachers and pupils are respectful and purposeful. Teachers encourage pupils' progress, providing opportunities for them to apply their knowledge and understanding in increasingly complex ways. In sixth-form history lessons, for example, pupils learn to debate at a high level as they consider the relationship between Germany and the Soviet Union between the world wars. In textiles, younger pupils produce intricate sewing from their individually designed and detailed patterns.
26. The curriculum includes a wide range of suitably resourced creative arts subjects. The school champions pupils' achievements in the displays of their work across the school site. Academic subjects are enriched through co-curricular opportunities involving art, drama, music, photography and textiles. There are regular exhibitions, plays and concerts over the year, with pupils involved in stage management roles as well as performance. Consequently, pupils have many possibilities for self-expression, teamwork and to support emotional wellbeing while learning new skills and knowledge.
27. Pupils who have SEND are well supported. Consequently, they make good progress. Leaders provide specific advice to teachers through planned academic support 'passports'. Teachers compile these effectively with input from pupils and parents. This planning underpins the appropriate classroom support provided, which includes suitable seating plans, differentiated resources, effective questioning and thoughtfully considered presentation of material. This means that pupils who have SEND build their knowledge and skills successfully alongside their peers. As necessary, leaders organise further tailored interventions, including bespoke individual lessons.
28. The small number of pupils who speak EAL have suitably personalised academic support so that they progress well in line with their peers. Pupils improve their English language skills and understanding through specialist tuition, as well as the use of word banks in subject lessons and through clear

written feedback from teachers. Leaders also ensure that individuals who speak EAL have half-termly, suitably specific, linguistic targets to work towards.

29. Pupils benefit from a wide range of well-attended lunchtime and after-school activities, some of which pupils have initiated. Pupils enjoy being able to choose from a wide variety of opportunities including creative writing, drone flying, knitting and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) challenges. As a result of these options, pupils develop a range of new skills and knowledge, which contributes effectively to their good progress over time.
30. Boarders benefit from the academic support they can access on site during evening study times should they need to. Outside of study time, activities such as cooking, crafts and taking part in weekend trips are encouraged by staff. As a result, pupils learn a variety of new skills and enjoy mixing across the age groups.

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

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

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

32. A well-planned programme of PSHE covers all statutory elements alongside a comprehensive and age-appropriate programme of relationships and sex education (RSE). The PSHE curriculum focuses on topics such as enterprise skills, how to manage emotions and emergency first aid. Leaders also organise whole school PSHE pastoral and wellbeing days. In these, pupils learn about subjects as varied as nutrition and self-defence. Leaders ensure that pupils receive age-appropriate RSE education, in line with the latest statutory guidance. Pupils see the relevance of lesson content and are confident in their understanding of topics such as contraception and consent.
33. The school pays careful attention to the provision and benefits of physical education (PE). A varied PE programme allows pupils to develop their skills and competencies in sports such as hockey, netball, cricket, tennis and athletics. Leaders promote an approach that recognises the importance of developing leadership, resilience and working collaboratively, alongside individual fitness and skills. Pupils become confident and competent in line with their individual abilities. They enjoy the challenge of sports matches and competitions.
34. Leaders promote high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Consequently, pupils show courtesy and respect to all members of the school community. They understand what is expected of them and how the school's rewards and sanctions systems are applied. The behaviour policy is applied fairly and consistently. The robust anti-bullying policy is well understood by staff and pupils. Bullying is rare. When it does occur, it is quickly and effectively addressed. All relevant information is appropriately recorded, so that leaders manage any patterns of bullying behaviours. As required, all pupils concerned are supported by well-trained staff.
35. Pupils' spiritual development is supported through religious education (RE) lessons which focus on world religions and encourage discussion and debate. Assemblies include a wide range of religious perspectives so that pupils grow in their understanding of others' faiths while being encouraged to consider what they personally believe and why.
36. The school provides a range of opportunities to develop pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and confidence. Leaders, for example, ensure that pupils are able to develop self-worth through service to others in the school community. Carefully trained, democratically elected prefects are role models for the pupil body. Pupils of all ages take on positions of responsibility. These include leadership roles within the boarding provision's 'family' groups, academic mentoring, the school council, organising the 'Eco-Schools' group projects and overseeing charity fundraising.
37. Suitable medical facilities include effective arrangements to care for boarders should they become unwell. Appropriate training is in place for staff including in first aid and in careful recording and monitoring of medicines. Any incidents are analysed to identify further improvement actions needed. Care plans support individual provision for pupils who need it. Pupils with mental health needs access help from the on-site school counsellor. Leaders ensure that other specialist medical provision is available as necessary.
38. Boarders learn about each other's customs and cultures as they socialise across the year groups in the evening and at weekends. This promotes a mutually supportive and inclusive boarding

community. Boarding leaders facilitate arrangements to allow boarders to give their views formally and informally. Consequently, pupils feel heard and their opinions valued.

39. Appropriately supported by governors, leaders make sure that health and safety procedures, including those related to fire safety systems, are effectively implemented. A co-ordinated estates plan ensures that premises and accommodation are well maintained. Leaders maintain a planned cycle of health and safety checks. During the inspection, however, a delay in prioritisation meant that some window restrictors had not been repaired. Swift action was taken to rectify this. Additional oversight arrangements are now in place, with enhanced monitoring of health and safety checks. Careful record-keeping and strong links with local agencies are part of an appropriate cycle of health and safety management. Effective use of electronic access to buildings, in addition to a strong staff presence, including during social times, means that pupils are well supervised.
40. Admission registers are suitably maintained. Attendance procedures follow statutory guidance. The school understands the link between attendance and pupils' wellbeing. There are clear processes in place for swift follow up of any absence, alongside arrangements to support individuals to attend school when difficulties occur. Boarding houses have effective systems for ensuring that staff know the whereabouts of boarders outside lesson times and in the evenings.

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

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

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

42. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. They have plenty of opportunities to contribute to school life positively. Pupils canvass others' opinions, proposing school improvements through membership of the various pupil committees and the school council. Leaders act on pupils' suggestions providing, for example, a greater variety of sporting opportunities and a broadening of financial education.
43. Leaders promote and model British values. These are reinforced in and across the curriculum. In modern foreign languages, for example, pupils learn about individual liberty and the right to protest. In PSHE pupils are taught the broad outlines of the political and legal systems in Britain. Supported by leaders, the religious studies pupil ambassadors promote mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs. They organise activities, such as inter-faith panels, as a forum for discussion. These activities contribute well to the school's commitment to the values of tolerance and respect for all, preparing pupils effectively for life in British society.
44. Leaders ensure that pupils show respect for individual differences, such as different faiths, cultures and relationships. In the religious studies curriculum, pupils study world religions. They develop an understanding and respect for others' faiths. Pupils lead the school's LGBTQ+ club. Other clubs set up by staff include, for example, a focus on support for neurodiverse members of the community. Library staff ensure that resources cover a wide range of experiences, cultures and behaviours so that pupils can learn more about themselves and others. Leaders have recently organised and staffed a wellbeing room. A peaceful space adjacent to the dining hall, provides for those pupils who need quiet time during the day. These arrangements reinforce the school's ethos of inclusion and equality. As a result, pupils are understanding of and considerate towards each other.
45. The recently revised careers programme provides pupils with access to accurate, up-to-date and impartial careers guidance. This includes personalised support and one-to-one guidance on appropriate subject choices at GCSE and A level, in line with their aptitudes and ambitions. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 learn about key employability skills through activities such as developing and presenting a business pitch. However, they have few opportunities to learn about the world of work more broadly and the variety of careers open to them.
46. Leaders ensure that pupils learn financial literacy through opportunities in the PSHE curriculum. Pupils receive age-appropriate education on matters such as personal banking and budgeting. In mathematics, pupils learn about the dangers of gambling through lessons on probability. In the sixth form 'Life Matters' programme, pupils learn to cook on a budget and about basic car maintenance as preparation for managing their finances wisely when they leave school.
47. Through the co-curricular programme and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, pupils have opportunities to contribute positively to communities locally and further afield. As a result, pupils demonstrate initiative and commitment, often maintaining links with community organisations beyond their formal involvement. Sixth-form pupils volunteer at local charity shops and organise collections for a hygiene bank charity. Pupils taking the level 2 sports leaders award plan and host a gymnastics competition and sports days for local primary schools. Younger pupils are actively involved in raising money for local charities. These experiences enable pupils to develop social

responsibility, cultural awareness and an understanding of the positive impact they can have on others.

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. Leaders and governors, successfully promote pupils' safety and wellbeing. Consequently, the school's suitable safeguarding policy is implemented effectively. The commitment to supporting and protecting pupils conscientiously is well embedded in daily practice.
50. Safeguarding leaders and the wellbeing team receive the training necessary to carry out their roles efficiently. Leaders ensure that all staff and governors receive safeguarding training on joining the school. This training is updated at regular intervals. A weekly bulletin reminds staff and governors of key topics. Governors overseeing safeguarding meet with safeguarding leaders regularly. Leaders' actions ensure that staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities and child protection procedures.
51. Staff know how to report any concerns they may have about adults. They understand the importance of reporting concerns immediately. Leaders take appropriate action if needed. A detailed log of all low-level concerns is kept and reviewed by leaders. This is so that any patterns can be identified and addressed
52. Pupils, including boarders, know who to go to if they are concerned for their own or others' safety. They understand the range of reporting methods, including the importance of speaking to a trusted adult. Pupils are clear that their concerns will be taken seriously. Leaders act promptly and appropriately. Records show that this is the case. Safeguarding leaders maintain productive relationships with the local authority and external agencies. They seek advice and make timely referrals to children's services, working closely with the local authority designated officer and the police when appropriate.
53. Effective systems and thorough monitoring arrangements filter and monitor safe internet use. Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to keep safe online through PSHE and information and communication technology (ICT) lessons. Staff know how to support pupils' online safety. Pupils learn about potential risks, for example, posed by radicalisation and extremism and out in the community.
54. The recruitment records and the single central record of appointments show that all required checks on new staff are made in a timely manner. Safer recruitment practice is in place to support pupils' safety.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Prior's Field School
Department for Education number	936/6010
Registered charity number	312038
Address	Prior's Field School Priorsfield Road Godalming Surrey GU7 2RH
Phone number	01483 810551
Email address	office@priorsfieldschool.com
Website	priorsfieldschool.com
Proprietor	Prior's Field School Trust Ltd
Chair	Mrs Hazel Morris
Headteacher	Ms Zoe Ireland
Age range	11 to 20
Number of pupils	282
Number of boarding pupils	53
Date of previous inspection	21 to 23 September 2022

Information about the school

56. Prior's Field School is an independent day and boarding school for female pupils. Founded in 1902, it is situated close to Godalming and is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
57. Boarders are accommodated in two houses on site, one for those in Years 7 to 10, and one for those in Years 11 to 13.
58. The school has identified 137 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
59. The school has identified English as an additional language for 12 pupils, 9 of whom receive additional support.
60. The school aims to provide a high-quality, broad and holistic education within a culture of admiration, hope and love, and to encourage intellectual ambition, self-empowerment and the desire and confidence to succeed at school and beyond.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

25 to 27 November 2025

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 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.

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**.

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