

School inspection report

16 to 18 September 2025

Gosfield School

Cut Hedge Park

Halstead Road

Halstead

CO9 1PF

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 carry out self-evaluation designed to enable the school to meet its aims. Governors' oversight of the school ensures that all policies are implemented effectively.
2. The school provides a broad and well-resourced curriculum planned effectively to meet pupils' needs. Pupils in the sixth form can study towards a range of qualifications to help prepare them for their future careers. Effective teaching enables pupils to progress well.
3. Teachers' feedback to pupils is typically effective in both the prep and senior schools. However, sometimes teachers' feedback does not advise pupils as clearly as possible about how to develop their learning and work further.
4. Effective teaching in the early years enables children to make good progress and achieve well, particularly with regard to their communication and language skills. The engaging activities and effective use of the outdoor provision enable children to become resourceful, confident and motivated to learn. Leaders' processes for food preparation for children in the early years do not ensure that all potential risks are fully considered.
5. Pupils in the sixth form experience a curriculum that is tailored to their academic interests and aspirations for the future. Lessons in this part of the school provide regular detailed feedback to enable pupils to build upon their prior attainment. Additional programmes develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the nature of modern British society.
6. The school supports pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well and enables them to make good progress and attain well, including in GCSE examinations.
7. Leaders foster a community that prioritises kindness and respect within a supportive environment where pupils feel known and valued. Leaders and staff take effective measures to enable pupils to feel confident about asking questions and expressing their views. Staff model and promote British values, such as mutual respect, in each class, and also through a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) programmes.
8. The school's behaviour management and anti-bullying strategies are effective. Leaders and staff encourage pupils to consider the impact of their behaviour on others and to develop the skills to resolve conflicts with each other.
9. Leaders encourage pupils to support the school community and broader British society through charitable endeavours. The school provides opportunities for pupils to support others in a structured way, such as through fundraising and local foodbank initiatives.
10. The school provides effective careers guidance overall. It supports pupils to identify some possible careers that might relate to their aptitudes and develops their awareness of educational and training routes. However, the careers guidance provided does not always inform pupils of the range of potential careers available as effectively as possible to help them link their choices of subjects at GCSE to these.

11. Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Staff are suitably trained and understand how to report any safeguarding concerns should they arise. Leaders with safeguarding responsibilities respond appropriately to concerns and maintain detailed and suitable records of these.

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 teachers' feedback to pupils consistently advises pupils as clearly as possible about how to develop their learning and work further
- ensure that careers guidance provided informs pupils of the range of potential careers available as effectively as possible to help them link their choices of subjects at GCSE to these
- review processes for food preparation for young children to ensure that any potential risks are assessed and mitigated.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. Leaders and governors work collaboratively to secure a culture of continuous improvement through self-evaluation and strategic planning. The current four-year plan includes effective actions to ensure the breadth of curriculum and ensure that teaching features specialist subject knowledge through all phases of the school.
13. The governors oversee the strategic direction of the school and evaluate how well it promotes its aims and ethos through a range of activities, including meetings with leaders, visits and the regular scrutiny of policies and procedures. Governors produce regular detailed reports on key strategic and statutory areas.
14. Risk assessment is typically effective. Thorough risk assessments are in place to cover pupils' activities as well as the different areas of the school site. These risk assessments include appropriate control measures in place to mitigate the identified potential risks, including in areas of the school site and learning activities undertaken by the pupils. Leaders and governors review risk assessments regularly to ensure their continued suitability. However, leaders do not ensure that processes for food preparation consider all potential risks.
15. The school provides all required information to parents and parents of prospective pupils, much through the school's website. Parents receive regular reports about their child's progress and approach to learning. The school provides the local authority with all required information relating to the use of funds to support pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
16. Leaders implement a suitable complaints policy and procedure. They respond swiftly and appropriately to any concerns that are raised. Leaders promote an ethos of open communication with parents, so that, where possible, complaints can be resolved at an early stage.
17. Leaders ensure that the school fulfils its responsibility under the Equality Act 2010. An appropriate accessibility plan is in place. Leaders review and update this plan regularly.
18. Leaders liaise effectively with external agencies to help support pupils who have SEND and those affected by safeguarding issues.

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 broad and well-resourced curriculum. Schemes of work develop learning points methodically. Leaders take pupils' needs into account in their curriculum planning. Curriculum schemes of work contain subject content beyond the age-related content of the national curriculum. Initiatives such as the 'Turner programme' support pupils in making cross-curricular links between subjects and reflecting on their own personal approaches to their studies.
21. Within the sixth form, pupils study towards a range of qualifications ranging from a T level in sports coaching, an A level in further mathematics to a Diploma in performing arts. Staff plan these subjects effectively to meet pupils' needs and cover the requirements of the assessment criteria. The curriculum in the senior school covers a range of areas such as study skills, oracy and cross-curricular projects that are designed effectively to develop pupils' skills and understanding in these areas. The curriculum includes a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in the creative arts effectively, including through workshops, the provision of specialist teaching and trips to art studios.
22. In most lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge and understanding of the pupils' needs to make suitable adaptations to teaching methods and the communication of subject content so that pupils make good progress. However, learning activities do not always engage pupils as well as possible in some lessons, limiting learning at times, particularly that of pupils with higher prior attainment.
23. Effective teaching ensures that most children in the early years achieve well and reach national age-related expectations by the end of the Reception Year. Children develop their communication and language skills particularly well. Staff structure the early years curriculum and teaching to enable children to build their skills well, including through self-chosen activities, and obtain a secure grasp of age-appropriate knowledge and understanding in areas such as mathematics and phonics. Staff make effective use of the outdoor provision and environment to enable children to explore and develop their curiosity, knowledge and skills further.
24. Pupils in the sixth form learn successfully in a supportive environment and through engaging teaching and learning activities tailored to their prior attainment. Teachers make effective use of questioning to check pupils' knowledge and deepen their understanding.
25. Staff monitor pupils' progress well through regular assessment of work. Most teaching features effective feedback to pupils that advises them clearly about how they could improve their work further. However, the effectiveness of the feedback provided to pupils is variable across different subjects.
26. Leaders analyse assessment data to understand how pupils progress over time. They use their evaluations of this to identify where additional support might be required for particular pupils.
27. The school provides pupils who have SEND with effective support when required. Leaders and staff assess individual pupils' needs and adapt provision to meet these. They regularly check the progress made by pupils who have SEND to see whether the support provided has been effective or needs adjusting.

28. The provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) is tailored to the individual needs of each pupil, supported by planning that identifies their needs and regular communication with parents.
29. The school provides a wide-ranging recreational programme that helps to develop pupils' academic and broader interests outside the classroom. Lunchtime and after-school sessions vary from a club based around popular film characters in the prep school, to the astronomy club and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) activities in the senior school. Leaders monitor and encourage pupils' participation to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to develop their skills and confidence across the variety of different activities.

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. Leaders maintain a school culture that prioritises kindness and mutual respect. Staff model respectful and inclusive interactions with each other and treat pupils with respect. This, alongside the supportive pastoral care provided, supports pupils' development of self-confidence and self-esteem.
32. Effective behaviour management is in place. Leaders and staff communicate clear behavioural expectations and acknowledge pupils when they show positive behaviour. Typically, pupils behave well, showing respect to each other and to adults. Leaders act swiftly to resolve any incidents of poor behaviour. They encourage pupils to reflect upon the impact of their behaviour and facilitate productive dialogue between pupils who have disagreements.
33. Leaders and staff make it clear that bullying is not tolerated in the school. Staff teach pupils how to recognise potential bullying behaviour and report any concerns they may have. Leaders respond to any bullying incidents effectively, including by enabling pupils affected to understand how their behaviour impacts others. Leaders keep clear and detailed records of behavioural and bullying incidents. They use these records to identify any trends and adapt their provision to educate and prevent further negative behaviour.
34. Pupils learn about issues relating to diversity and equality throughout the curriculum, including through well-managed discussions of current affairs and issues such as fake news and its possible consequences. The PSHE programme explores the importance of mutual respect and tolerance. Pupils learn about the contribution of different cultures to the expressive arts, as well as exploring the cultural context of pieces of literature. Pupils learn about the harm that can be caused by different forms of discrimination and prejudice, including misogyny and homophobia. Such themes are explored through the PSHE curriculum and talks delivered by external speakers.
35. Staff support children's emotional wellbeing and physical health. They help children identify, express and manage their emotions, such as by using 'expression pebbles' and speaking to children about the importance of sharing feelings and concerns with trusted adults.
36. All pupils access an inclusive physical education (PE) curriculum that enables them to develop their fitness and skills across a range of sports and activities. Teachers' celebration of pupils' achievements supports their confidence, and effective coaching develops pupils' teamwork skills and the quality of their performance in sports. Pupils learn about the importance of exercise, healthy eating and balancing their commitments.
37. Health and safety arrangements are effective. Leaders ensure detailed and regular checks of equipment, including fire safety equipment, and servicing of utilities to ensure the premises are well maintained and suitable. Appropriate fire safety procedures are in place, including regular staff training, up-to-date fire risk assessments and fire evacuation drills to ensure that pupils know how to respond effectively in the event of an emergency.
38. Leaders support pupils' medical needs through the provision of appropriate accommodation. Staff are appropriately trained to provide effective medical care in the case of an accident or illness. There are appropriate procedures for the administration and storage of any medication required.

39. Leaders ensure that admission and attendance registers are kept secure, with appropriate information always held and information shared with the local authority as required.

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 encourage pupils in all year groups to develop a sense of responsibility towards the school and wider community. Pupils take on leadership roles, such as school captains, which enable and require them to contribute positively to school life. Programmes such as the 'prep ambassador award' encourage older pupils to support younger ones. Pupils raise money for charities that they choose themselves, such as a national animal welfare charity and a national safety at sea organisation. Older pupils raise awareness of mental health issues and breast cancer, supporting charities related to these. Pupils support local foodbanks and initiatives to improve a local shelter for sheep.
42. Pupils learn about key British institutions and the rule of law through the PSHE programme. They learn about democratic representation and how national elections and other electoral processes work.
43. Pupils in the prep school begin to engage with the moral issues raised by decisions made by key characters in history and fictional characters in English texts. Within PSHE and RSE lessons, pupils discuss topical issues, such as the advantages of, and problems with social media. They discuss ethical issues such as the morality and consequences of pay-day loan agreements and the marketing of these. Pupils' exploration of such issues helps them to develop a sense of right and wrong.
44. The school develops pupils' economic understanding effectively. Pupils learn about themes such as budgeting sensibly, managing rent and mortgage payments and the repercussions of non-payment. Pupils undertake enterprise activities, such as managing the tuck shop.
45. The careers provision is effective overall, with impartial information about a suitable range of destinations covered at several stages of a pupil's education. Pupils in the prep school experience careers fairs built around the potential careers that the pupils express interest in. This is further developed through the 'dream big' programme and regular talks from parents representing a range of professions.
46. In the senior school, staff work with older pupils to determine careers that relate to their interests and aptitudes. Staff provide pupils with advice about choosing A level options. A structured careers programme provides pupils with guidance on applications to universities and apprenticeships, as well as routes into paid employment. There is a range of presentations that cover life at university as well as the likely expectations of workplaces. However, pupils are not always informed as effectively as possible about the range of potential careers available to help them link potential careers to their choices of subjects at GCSE.

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. Safeguarding practice is robust and consistent across the school due to appropriate systems being in place. Leaders ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and in line with current statutory guidance.
49. Governors receive regular safeguarding training. They oversee the school's safeguarding policy and procedures effectively. This is facilitated by meetings, at least termly, with leaders with safeguarding responsibility. Safeguarding is a standard agenda item at governors' meetings.
50. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities respond appropriately and quickly to any safeguarding concerns that arise. They work effectively with external safeguarding agencies and refer concerns to them promptly when appropriate and in line with local and national thresholds. The safeguarding team maintains suitable and secure records that include clear and detailed information about safeguarding concerns and leaders' decisions and actions in response to these.
51. The school implements appropriate procedures to respond to any low-level concerns or allegations about adults working with pupils that may arise. Leaders report these to the local authority when appropriate.
52. All staff receive appropriate training in safeguarding which meets local and national requirements and is made specific to the school. This training begins as part of the induction of staff new to the school.
53. Staff inform pupils of the importance of sharing any concerns that they might have with trusted adults. Pupils can also access an anonymous online reporting system as well as use 'worry monsters' and 'concern boxes' across the school site to communicate any worries.
54. The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online or using social media. An appropriate internet filtering and monitoring system is in place and tested regularly.
55. The school carries out all required safer recruitment checks on staff and governors before they commence work at the school. All checks are recorded in an appropriate single central record of appointments (SCR). The headteacher and chair of governors regularly review the SCR to ensure that safer recruitment procedures are effective.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

56. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Gosfield School
Department for Education number	881/6010
Registered charity number	310871
Address	Gosfield School Cut Hedge Park Halstead Road Halstead Essex CO9 1PF
Phone number	01787 474040
Email address	enquiries@gosfieldschool.org.uk
Website	www.gosfieldschool.org.uk
Proprietor	Gosfield School Limited
Chair	Ms Katherine Makaroff
Headteacher	Mr Roderick Jackson
Age range	2 to 18
Number of pupils	368
Date of previous inspection	29 November to 1 December 2022

Information about the school

57. Gosfield School is an independent co-educational day school situated on a single site in Halstead. The school was founded in 1929 and is overseen by a board of governors. The current chair of governors took up her position in October 2024.
58. There are 24 children in the early years, comprising one Nursery and one Reception class.
59. The school has identified 78 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Five pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
60. The school has identified English as an additional language for a very small proportion of pupils.
61. The school states its aims are to establish a caring environment with a friendly and supportive ethos which celebrates achievement. It seeks to secure lifelong educational foundations through nurturing pupils' potential and through their knowledge of every child.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

16 to 18 September 2025

62. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

63. 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
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

64. 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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