ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

Progress monitoring inspection report

20 to 21 March 2025

Ditcham Park School

Ditcham Park

Petersfield

Hampshire

GU31 5RU

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'.

Inspection outcome

The school meets all the relevant Standards that were considered during this inspection.

Inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR Paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b), 11, 16(a) and 16(b)

1. Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are now in place and are implemented effectively. The designated safeguarding leader (DSL) and their deputy (DDSL) are now regularly in contact with children's services and the local authority designated officer (LADO). DSLs fully understand their roles and now work well with other agencies to safeguard pupils. Regular safeguarding meetings help the DSLs coordinate their work effectively. Safeguarding records are detailed and include the actions taken by leaders to follow up on safeguarding concerns. The arrangements in place reflect statutory requirements.
2. Staff, including the school's safeguarding leaders, are suitably trained. Staff have received training in safeguarding procedures and know how to record and report concerns. Staff receive regular information and safeguarding updates to keep them well informed. They understand the principles underpinning the staff code of conduct. They know the procedures for making a referral regarding staff conduct and understand the importance of reporting any low-level concerns.
3. Senior leaders take appropriate action if any perceived breach of the staff code of conduct occurs, or an allegation is received with regard to an adult who works with children. They understand their responsibility to make a referral to the relevant statutory bodies once investigations by external agencies are completed. Staff understand the whistleblowing procedures should they wish to raise any concerns.
4. The safeguarding team responds promptly to safeguarding concerns and ensures that the wellbeing of pupils is closely monitored. Leaders maintain detailed records which consist of clear and comprehensive summaries of concerns, notes of action taken, and the reasons for decisions reached, including whether to involve external agencies. Referrals to local authority safeguarding partners are made where necessary and support for pupils and parents is appropriately managed. All safeguarding information is stored securely.
5. The governors, including the designated safeguarding governor, effectively oversee the school's safeguarding procedures and their implementation. They ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place. Leaders assure themselves through regular checks that the filtering systems are effective, and that staff and pupils are able to work safely online when they are at school.
6. The governors and the safeguarding team regularly meet to review arrangements for safeguarding pupils. The governors ensure that an annual safeguarding review is conducted and that leaders promptly implement any recommendations.
7. The school has an appropriate policy in place for health and safety which is reviewed and updated regularly. It is implemented consistently and effectively. Governors maintain effective oversight of health and safety. Senior leaders regularly monitor all aspects of health and safety. This includes a fire risk assessment conducted by a suitably qualified person. An appropriate first aid policy is effectively implemented, and first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner.

8. Those responsible for day-to-day operations provide detailed reports, including through completion of required maintenance logs and records of work carried out by internal maintenance staff and contractors. The roles and responsibilities of staff and governors for health and safety are stated clearly and there is appropriate delegation of duties and training. Maintenance staff know the site well and are aware of potential risks and hazards. The school has a comprehensive asbestos management plan and appropriate measures are taken to ensure safe control and storage of hazardous substances (COSHH). Maintenance logs are used effectively by maintenance staff to prioritise work schedules and respond to emergencies without delay.
9. An appropriate risk assessment policy is effectively implemented. Risk assessments are suitably detailed and regularly reviewed by school staff, and steps are taken to reduce risks to pupils. This includes leaders assessing and taking steps to mitigate risks to pupils who require additional support due to medical conditions. Staff have received appropriate training on completing risk assessments, including risk assessments for offsite visits and residential trips.
10. The school meets the Standards.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

11. The school meets the requirements for providing parents with safeguarding information. Particulars of the school's safeguarding arrangements are published on the school's website.
12. The school meets the Standard.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

ISSR paragraph 33

13. Leaders have reviewed the school's procedures for implementing the complaints policy in response to complaints received by the school. The complaints log records both informal and formal complaints made by parents. Complaints records are stored in a well-organised system. Leaders record the actions that the school has taken, and lessons learnt when a complaint has concluded. Governors ensure that appropriate action is taken to resolve complaints in accordance with the school's policy.
14. A suitable complaints policy is in place and published on the school's website as required. The policy meets statutory requirements. Leaders ensure that all complaints are handled in line with the school's policy.
15. The school meets the Standard.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraphs 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

16. Leaders and governors demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Following the previous inspection, leaders and governors acted promptly to put in place a suitable action plan to address unmet Standards. Leaders and governors have implemented appropriate measures to assure themselves that the school meets the Independent School Standards. They have ensured that the school's safeguarding policy and procedures are implemented consistently and effectively.

17. Governors ensure that staff receive the necessary training and guidance to carry out their roles effectively and understand how to report low-level concerns. They ensure that safeguarding concerns for pupils are referred to the appropriate agency without delay, when necessary. Leaders ensure that suitable risk assessments for safeguarding are implemented and consistently monitored.
18. Governors are frequent visitors to the school. They receive detailed reports and information on pupil progress, achievement and behaviour. Governors are well informed and effectively hold leaders accountable for their work.
19. The school meets the Standards.

School details

School	Ditcham Park School
Department for Education number	850/6049
Registered charity number	285244
Address	Ditcham Park School Ditcham Park Petersfield Hampshire GU31 5RN
Phone number	01730 825659
Email address	info@ditchampark.com
Website	www.ditchampark.com
Proprietor	Ditcham Park School Charity Association
Chair	Mr Roger Overend
Headteacher	Mr Graham Spawforth
Age range	2 to 16
Number of pupils	426
Date of previous inspection	16 to 18 April 2024

Information about the school

20. Ditcham Park School is an independent co-educational day school. It was founded in 1976 and occupies its original site on a rural campus in the South Downs National Park. The school is developed around a large Victorian stately home, with specialist facilities, including those for the early years, in purpose-built accommodation. The school is a charitable trust, and a council of governors oversees its work.
21. There are 29 children in the early years comprising one Nursery and one Reception class.
22. The school has identified 142 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Five pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
23. English is an additional language for three pupils.
24. The school states its aims are to find the best in every child through an 'all round' approach to education which identifies and develops all abilities including academic, sporting and creative. With a curriculum focus on science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM), the school seeks to promote academic excellence by inspiring pupils to develop a lifelong love of learning. Through innovative, dynamic and progressive teaching it aims to inspire pupils to be excited, curious and passionate about their learning and interests. The school strives to develop strong links with parents and the local community, providing an environment based on Christian values in which pupils flourish, are happy and self-confident. The school community aims to support all children in developing the necessary knowledge and skills to equip them for further and higher education, underpinned by a desire to shape the modern world for the better.

Purpose of the progress monitoring inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. This inspection was an unannounced progress monitoring inspection which was carried out at the request of the DfE. The purpose of this inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the Independent School Standards and any other requirements that the school was judged not to comply with at its previous inspection.

Inspection details

Inspection dates	20 to 21 March 2025

25. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for two days.
26. Inspection activities included:

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- tour of the school site to review health and safety
- discussions with the chair of governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils and staff

- scrutiny of information published on the school's website.

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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