

# Wakefield Independent School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Christine Inkster HMI

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## Information about the school

Wakefield Independent School is a non-selective, Church of England, coeducational day school providing education for boys and girls aged from three to 16 years. There are currently 165 pupils on roll with 155 attending full-time and 10 part-time. There are 22 pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage of whom 16 are in receipt of government nursery funding. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The school's stated aim is 'to give pupils opportunities to use their unique talents to achieve success, to find learning enjoyable, stimulating and well-ordered with the opportunity for self-expression'. It aims to bring out the very best in pupils and provide a sound education based on a well-balanced curriculum. The school sees the importance of a nurturing ethos to foster pupils' emotional well-being as essential to the development of well-rounded individuals.

The school opened in September 1980. It is located within the Nostell Priory Estate and is housed in three separate buildings, although separated by a main road. The three buildings form the bases for the three phases of education in the school. They are: 'The Rectory' (Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 to 4); 'Wragby' (Years 5, 6 and 7); and 'The Nostell Centre' (Years 8 to 11). The school had its last full inspection in April 2009 and a monitoring inspection visit was conducted in March 2010.

## Evaluation of the school

Wakefield Independent School achieves its aims successfully and provides a good quality of education for pupils across the whole age-range, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The good curriculum and good quality of teaching and assessment ensure that pupils of all ages make good progress in their learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their behaviour are outstanding. Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils, including safeguarding are outstanding. The school has addressed all the issues identified at the last inspection, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and in respect of the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. All the regulations are now met.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

## Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. It is carefully planned to ensure breadth and balance and it meets pupils' needs effectively. There are appropriate schemes of work and long-term, medium-term and short-term plans are in place which ensure progression and continuity in learning for pupils. Good emphasis is given to developing skills in literacy and numeracy and pupils have opportunities to practise these skills in other subjects. The provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection and is now used effectively across the curriculum, for example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson pupils were using their mathematical and ICT skills effectively to produce bar charts on the computer. The curriculum is based on the National Curriculum programmes of study with the full range of subjects being taught in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. In Key Stage 4 pupils study a good range of subjects to achieve GCSE accreditation. Specialist provision is made for the teaching of music, physical education, French, German and, in Key Stage 2 for design and technology and art. Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is taught effectively through discrete lessons and aspects are also woven throughout the curriculum. This provision does much to promote pupils' personal qualities and helps to build their confidence and self-esteem. Effective careers guidance and opportunities for work experience help pupils make suitable choices about the next stage of their education and they are successful in gaining access to appropriate sixth form provision.

There are strengths in the enrichment of the curriculum through visitors into school and visits to places of interest, such as art galleries, theatres and museums and residential visits including those to France. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as art and craft, choir, music band and sporting activities. Older pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and have opportunities to participate in Sports' Leaders Awards and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. There is an effective homework policy and all pupils have homework diaries which contain their individual aspirational targets. The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection and there are now more opportunities for learning outdoors where activities mirror those indoors. The curriculum pays good regard to all the areas of learning and there is effective planning for continuous free-choice activities.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good for pupils throughout the school enabling them to make good progress from their individual starting points. Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and children work well independently. Adult intervention is effective during free-choice activities as adults use good questioning skills and take every opportunity to promote children's speaking and listening skills. Children have good pencil control and this enables them to form their letters correctly from an early stage and the benefits of this skill can be seen throughout the school. Staff have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and effective routines have been established which are clear to children. This has enabled the newly-admitted Nursery children to settle in very quickly. Children responded very well to a visit from members of the fire service during the inspection. They gave thoughtful answers to questions about the differences in the fire engines and uniforms of fire services across the world. Children

participate in all activities with confidence and they are making good progress in their learning.

A particular strength in lessons throughout the school is the excellent relationships between staff and pupils, often sharing good humour. When teaching is good or better, pupils are well motivated and fully engaged in their learning. There is some outstanding teaching, where there is a brisk pace to the lessons and a wide range of practical and challenging activities which promote pupils' engagement and interest. Most pupils have a good understanding of their targets and know what they have to do to achieve them, but not all targets have been set at this early stage of the term. In some lessons, there is an over-reliance on worksheets which often restricts pupils' opportunities to write at length and achieve the best they are capable of. There is a strong focus on developing basic skills. Younger pupils read every day and there are home/school reading diaries which are used to promote communication between parents and carers and the school.

Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection and the progress of each individual child is carefully tracked. Pupils who are underachieving are quickly identified and swift action is taken to provide additional help and support to those pupils who require it. Marking identifies what pupils have done well, but there are few comments to help pupils improve their work. Pupils say they do not always have the opportunity to respond to marking and feedback. The quality of assessment is good for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Regular observations take place, which are included in each child's personal file along with samples of their work and photographic evidence of their achievements.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils say they are extremely proud of their school and are very keen to participate in events to celebrate their achievements such as at Speech Day which is held at Wakefield Opera House. Pupils show great respect towards adults and their peers and instinctively help one another without being asked. There is a family atmosphere where older pupils help to look after the younger ones. Pupils' attendance is above average. The behaviour of pupils is outstanding in lessons and around the school. They demonstrate natural courtesy opening doors and stepping aside for visitors and adults. Pupils say that behaviour is always very good and that pupils get on very well together. They have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They are adamant that there is no bullying although a small number of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed a concern about this. Pupils are fully aware of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and are sure that if any should occur it would be promptly dealt with by staff. Pupils say that they feel very comfortable in approaching staff if they have a worry or concern. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage work cooperatively together, their behaviour is exemplary and they are able to take responsibility for choosing their activities and doing jobs in the classroom, such as tidying up.

Pupils' spiritual development is supported very well through school assemblies where they are able to reflect on moral dilemmas and give thoughtful responses to questions asked. They are gaining a good awareness and appreciation of faiths and cultures that are different to their own through religious education lessons and throughout the curriculum. This promotes tolerance and harmony and prepares pupils extremely well for life in a multicultural society. Pupils gain a very good understanding of public institutions through PSHCE lessons. They make a significant contribution to the local and wider communities through a wide range of fundraising events for charities.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school now pays due regard to current national guidance and procedures on safeguarding. Since the last inspection, all staff, including the designated officers for child protection, have undergone child protection training at the appropriate level. All the required policies and procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety of pupils and these are rigorously implemented throughout the school. Suitable risk assessments are in place, including those for educational visits. There are daily and weekly health and safety checks carried out and any concerns are promptly addressed. All electrical equipment and fire equipment are regularly checked and a suitable fire risk assessment and fire plan are in place. Fire drills are conducted twice each half-term. Any incidents and accidents are rigorously recorded and first aid equipment is readily available in all three buildings.

Pupils are fully aware of how to live healthy lifestyles and choose to eat healthy foods. There are extensive opportunities for pupils to engage in exercise and they benefit greatly from developing their skills in a wide range of sports. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and are very aware that school rules are effectively implemented, particularly when moving between buildings. They are aware of the dangers of substance misuse and about safe use of the internet. Pupils also have a very good awareness of safety rules in lessons such as in the science laboratory and when using design and technology equipment. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire believe that their children are kept safe.

## **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The school's procedures for recruitment and vetting ensure the suitability of staff and proprietors to work with children. All the required checks have been completed and the information is recorded in the single central record which meets requirements.

## **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The school comprises three separate buildings which are set in extensive and attractive grounds with a range of playing fields and recreation areas as well as areas of woodland. Classrooms provide suitable environments for learning and are of an appropriate size to accommodate the number of pupils in each class or group. There are specialist rooms, such as music rooms, art rooms, ICT suites and a science

laboratory and these are well-resourced. There is now suitable provision for pupils who are ill.

### **Provision of information**

All the required information is available for parents and carers and others in the school prospectus and on the website. A new website has been created and is about to be launched. Parents and carers are given a wide range of information on their child's progress, including two full written reports annually and three 'Effort Check' reports which provide information on pupils' attitudes to their learning. Very few parents and carers responded to the 'Parent View' questionnaire and some concerns were expressed, for example, about the amount of homework and the school's response to any concerns they may have. However, all said their children were happy and that they would recommend the school to others.

### **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

There is a complaints policy which meets regulatory requirements and is made available to parents and carers.

### **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

### **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Ensure that teachers' marking consistently tells pupils how they can improve their work and provide opportunities for pupils to respond to marking and feedback.
- Reduce the over-reliance on worksheets to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to write at length and are not restricted in their responses.

## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education		√		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		√		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		√		

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	√			
The behaviour of pupils	√			

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	√			
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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Day school		
<b>Date school opened</b>	September 1980		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–16 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 75	Girls: 80	Total: 155
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 5	Girls: 5	Total: 10
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£4,590 - £6,375		
<b>Address of school</b>	Nostell Centre Doncaster Road Nostell Wakefield West Yorkshire WF4 1QG		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 865757		
<b>Email address</b>	head@wakefieldindependent.co.uk		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs K Caryl		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Wakefield Independent School Limited		

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



28 September 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Wakefield Independent School, WF4 1QG**

Thank you for the warm welcome we received when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and visiting your lessons to see how well you are learning. You are clearly very proud of your school and told us you enjoy school very much. This letter is to inform you about what we found.

- Your school provides you with a good quality of education. The quality of teaching is good and this enables you all to make good progress.
- The quality of the curriculum is good and you all benefit a great deal from the many activities that are provided for you, particularly visits out of school and the wide range of clubs you can join.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making good progress because of the good teaching and curriculum they receive.
- Your behaviour is excellent and we found that you were all extremely polite and friendly. You are very keen to become involved in fundraising activities in order to raise money for many charities.
- You have a very good understanding of and show respect and tolerance towards those from different backgrounds to your own.
- You told us that you feel very safe in school and you know how to keep yourselves safe, for example, when moving between buildings or when using equipment.
- All the staff care about you very much and want you to achieve as much as you can.

In order to help you achieve even more, we have asked the teachers to make sure that they give you information on how to improve your work and give you opportunities to correct it. We have also asked that they reduce the number of worksheets that you use so you can write freely and share your ideas more fully. We wish you all the best for the future. It was a privilege and pleasure to meet you.  
Yours sincerely

Christine Inkster  
Her Majesty's Inspector