

# Wakefield Independent School

Nostell Centre, Doncaster Road, Nostell, Wakefield WF4 1QG

**Inspection dates** 26–28 April 2016

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Pupils have excellent social skills. They are confident and express themselves well.
- Teachers are highly skilled at adapting tasks to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to take part in activities.
- Pupils manage their behaviour extremely well. They are courteous and polite.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, and the high levels of attendance are a testament to this.
- Children in the early years are extremely well cared for. Their needs are well met.
- Teachers act as good role models, and relationships throughout the school are good.
- Teachers know the pupils well and use this knowledge to help pupils learn.
- Pupils achieve well in a range of subjects.
- The headteacher personifies the school ethos, allowing every child to have an opportunity to shine.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher spend time observing learning. This allows them to identify areas of development and secure improvement.
- The headteacher ensures that the school complies with all the independent school standards.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers assess pupils on a regular basis. However, this information is not used well by leaders and managers to support improvement.
- Governors do not have an effective performance management system in place that supports and challenges the headteacher.
- Governors are not sufficiently involved in the process of ensuring that all independent school standards are met.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that better use of assessment information is made to improve the attainment and progress of pupils and the quality of teaching, particularly in key stage 4, by:
  - judging and following pupils' progress from their starting points
  - evaluating the progress of different groups of pupils
  - evaluating pupils' progress in different subjects and areas of learning.
  
- Improve governance by ensuring that:
  - a more structured performance management system challenges and supports the headteacher effectively
  - governors/proprietors take responsibility for ensuring that all independent school standards are consistently met.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher promotes the positive ethos of the school extremely well. She is successful in ensuring that pupils are given the opportunity to become well-rounded individuals who become valuable members of society. This aspiration is shared by all adults in school.
- All staff in the school ensure that pupils have equality of opportunity. Activities are arranged and adapted well to ensure that pupils are given every opportunity to take part.
- Staff are highly motivated to meet the academic and emotional needs of pupils. They are supported well by the headteacher to do so. Both the headteacher and the deputy headteacher spend considerable time in lessons to bring about improvement. Staff feel very well supported and further training is encouraged.
- The headteacher goes to great lengths to meet the needs and interests of all pupils by ensuring that a wide range of activities and subjects are available for pupils to take part in and study. A number of clubs are available after school, such as netball and drama, so that pupils will find something to interest them and excel at.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is good. Through a range of activities, pupils become confident, articulate and extremely socially mature. Fundamental British values are well promoted. Through debates and assemblies, pupils learn to value and celebrate difference. Pupils have a good understanding of different religions and cultures but have few opportunities to experience them first-hand through celebrations, visits or visitors.
- Parents are very pleased with their children's progress and consider them to be safe and happy. Homework diaries and an open-door policy for both the headteacher and teaching staff mean that parents can immediately deal with any concerns or issues they may have. One hundred per cent of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire would recommend the school to other parents.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have access to a wide range of assessment information which is regularly obtained from teachers. This information is not used well to help identify patterns and trends in pupil achievement and the quality of teaching. Pupils' starting points are not taken into account when considering the progress they are making. In some year groups, this can lead to expectations not being high enough. Assessment information is also not used to look at the achievement of different groups of pupils and different subjects. Consequently, weaknesses in a small number of subjects and key stages have not been identified.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors are dedicated to ensuring that the fundamental ethos of the school, that every child must be given the opportunity to shine, is met. This they do well.
  - Governors know the school well as a result of thorough reports from the headteacher at fortnightly meetings. Through these meetings, the governors ensure that the welfare needs of pupils are met. However, they leave much of the responsibility for meeting the independent school standards to the headteacher.
  - Governors do not have a system of appraisal in place for the headteacher and therefore only challenge on issues that are raised by the headteacher.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher ensures that all staff are well trained and know their responsibilities so that pupils are protected. Thorough risk assessments, along with other documents such as the Code of Conduct, ensure that arrangements to keep pupils safe in a potentially hazardous site, due to unfenced boundaries, are carried out diligently.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils. Consequently, pupils are willing to take risks and tackle challenges more willingly.
- Teachers know their pupils well. This means that they set work that meets the needs of pupils and takes into account pupils' emotional well-being. In a mathematics lesson in Year 1, for example, after setting the initial task, the teacher quickly recognised those pupils who needed extra support or were ready for more challenge. This allowed pupils, particularly the most-able, to move on to more challenging tasks.

- Teachers move around the class giving individual feedback to support pupils' learning. The small numbers in each class enable them to be able to support all pupils. This interaction in lessons helps pupils to know where they have gone wrong, identifies any misconceptions and helps them to know how they can improve their work.
- All pupils are set appropriate homework on a regular basis and this helps reinforce learning that is happening during the school day.
- High standards are expected in reading and writing in all subjects.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils have excellent social skills. They are given a range of opportunities to develop self-confidence, such as taking part in the English Speaking Board programme.
- Pupils are incredibly proud of their school and are eloquent when sharing their opinions with visitors. Presentation in their books is good.
- All adults are excellent role models. They show respect and demonstrate good manners, and this permeates through to interactions throughout the school day.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe. The local authority supports the school in teaching pupils about road safety awareness and cycle proficiency. Assemblies and personal and social skills lessons help, particularly older, pupils learn about predatory behaviours and the consequences of illegal drug use.
- The youngest pupils are well aware of what the various forms of bullying are. Because pupils have excellent relationships with adults, they say they are confident they can talk to teachers if they are worried about anything. Pupils know the dangers that internet use may pose and how to keep themselves safe.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils love their school and enjoying coming to school, as the high levels of attendance testify.
- Behaviour in classes and around the school is exceptional. Pupils self-regulate their own behaviour, and intervention from adults is rare.
- Pupils are extremely polite and courteous.

## **Outcomes for pupils are good**

- Wakefield Independent School is a non-selective independent school. Pupils generally start school with levels of attainment that are typical for children of their age. However, at least 18% of pupils join the school at times other than that which is normally expected, often enrolling into the older classes. These pupils come with a wide range of starting points. In 2015 and 2016, between 65% and 75% of pupils joined the school during key stage 4.
- In the last three years, 99% of pupils who sat entrance exams gained an offer of a place at their chosen school.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training and employment. Since the last inspection 98% of pupils gained an offer of a place at their preferred choice of sixth form college. All pupils take part in work experience and all receive valuable impartial careers advice.
- Outcomes are good in a range of activities and subjects. Many pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. In 2015, 64% of pupils in Year 10 achieved their bronze medal and 87% of pupils in Year 11 achieved their silver medal.
- All pupils are welcome to join the school choir, and they were extremely proud to win the accolade of best choir at the local music festival last year.
- Pupils from Reception to Year 6 are members of the Children's University with high numbers already having achieved bronze, silver and gold awards.

- Pupils make good progress in key stages 1 and 2 and reach levels that are at, and generally above, that of other pupils nationally.
- Progress in writing in 2015 for pupils in key stages 1 and 2 was better than in other subjects and above that of other pupils of the same age nationally.
- Pupils read well; they are fluent and enjoy reading. There is a wide range of literature for pupils to choose from. Younger pupils read to an adult every day and are encouraged to read to their parents every night. Phonics (letters and the sounds that they represent) is well taught to younger pupils. This enables pupils to reach high standards in reading. Fifty per cent of pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2014 reached levels that were higher than expected for their age.
- Pupils in key stage 3 make good progress across a range of subjects. Current pupils reach attainment levels that are expected for pupils of their age. A lack of clear starting points and insufficient use of assessment information means that actual progress over time is difficult to track.
- There are five key stages in the school. Pupils in key stage 4 have in the past not made progress in line with pupils in the other four key stages. Predicted outcomes are too frequently not reached.
- Pupils' work in books demonstrates that current pupils in key stage 4 are making better progress towards their targets, particularly in English, than in previous years.
- The number of pupils achieving five A\* to C grades in GCSE in 2015 was lower than that of other pupils nationally.
- In lessons, the vast majority of teachers move pupils on to more challenging work if needed so that they can meet the needs of the most-able pupils. In the younger classes, the most-able pupils achieve well; this is an improving picture in older year groups.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support which leads to examples of excellent progress. A wide range of strategies and commercial schemes are used to support these pupils.

## Early years provision

**is good**

- Children enter the Nursery and Reception class with levels of attainment that are broadly typical for their age. The majority leave with attainment at or above that typically expected. Levels of attainment in all areas of learning have improved since the last inspection.
- As in the rest of the school, adults act as excellent role models. They are courteous, polite and respectful, as are the children.
- Children's good development socially and academically means they are very well prepared as they move to the next class.
- Adults use questioning skills well to help the children learn and grow in confidence. Younger children listen carefully to their stories, and careful questioning helps promote their comprehension skills.
- Children behave extremely well. They are friendly and kind to their peers. Children are happy and excitable and respond well to the gentle, firm discipline of adults.
- Children are encouraged to become independent. They enjoy the challenges and activities that give them the confidence to become even more independent, such as when collecting the registers.
- Children learn through a range of well-planned activities in a stimulating and vibrant environment. Two different rooms give children time to explore different areas of learning with a wide range of good-quality resources. Outside areas support learning well. Leaders and managers are developing a new outdoor area to complement and encourage further learning in the outside environment.
- Adults working in the school engage extremely well with parents, who say they are pleased with the work the school does. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in their child's school day. Communication with parents is good; teachers are always available at the beginning and end of the school day and homework diaries are available for those parents who cannot come into school.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that all requirements of the early years and the independent school standards have been met.
- The early years leader has only recently begun to use assessment information more effectively to chart children's progress and support better learning. This information is not yet used well to identify progress for different groups of children or for the different areas of learning. Neither is it used to help plan the next steps in children's learning.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108307
<b>Inspection number</b>	10006062
<b>DfE registration number</b>	384/6116

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Independent day school
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–16 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	187
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	19
<b>Proprietor</b>	Wakefield Independent School
<b>Chair</b>	Mr R Field
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs K Caryl
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£4,650–£6,900 per annum
<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 865757
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wakefieldindependentschool.org.uk">www.wakefieldindependentschool.org.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@wakefieldindependent.co.uk">info@wakefieldindependent.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26–27 September 2012

## Information about this school

- Wakefield Independent School is a non-selective independent day school for a maximum of 222 boys and girls aged from three to 16 years. There are currently 187 pupils on role of which currently one has a statement of special educational needs.
- There are two proprietors, who are also referred to as governors.
- The school was last inspected in September 2012 when it was judged to be good.
- The school does not use or provide any forms of alternative education for pupils.
- Many pupils enter the school at times other than is normally expected, with the majority entering in classes for older pupils.
- As per the school's website, the ethos of the school is: 'To treat children with respect and, through example, to instil the highest moral values and attitudes towards others. To provide a sound educational programme based on a well-balanced curriculum, applying equal opportunities to all pupils through consistently high standards and the pursuit of excellence. The encouragement of all children to realise their potential through the recognition of personal talents and ability. To optimise relationships through good conduct, discipline and confidence in preparation for emergence into the adult world and to foster the emotional well-being created by a structured environment so essential to the development of a well-balanced individual.'

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over two and a half days, with one day's notice, by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, proprietors, teaching staff and pupils. They also met with pupils informally during the school day. When meeting with pupils, inspectors listened to them read and spoke to them about their work and the school.
- The inspectors visited all the classrooms and observed learning in a range of subjects. They also studied pupils' work in a range of year groups and subjects.
- The inspectors toured the building both inside and outside to ensure relevant independent school standards were met and that pupils' welfare is taken into account.
- The inspectors took into account 26 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Sixteen staff responded to the staff questionnaire and these responses were also taken into account.
- The inspectors considered the behaviour of pupils during different times of the school day, and considered pupils', parents' and staff's opinions about behaviour.
- The inspectors examined school documentation, including pupils' achievement information and the admission and attendance registers. They also studied a range of policies required as part of the independent school standards, including those relating to behaviour, safeguarding and welfare, as well as health and safety documents.

## Inspection team

Jo Sharpe, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Malcolm Kirtley

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
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