

School inspection report

23 to 25 September 2025

Leicester High School for Girls

454 London Road

Leicester

Leicestershire

LE2 2PP

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. Leaders and governors prioritise the wellbeing of pupils. They are constantly striving to achieve the school's aim that every pupil is known, valued and supported to achieve their potential. They make choices in the best interests of pupils. Leaders and governors have a range of quality assurance mechanisms to check on the effectiveness of the school's work. Governors monitor the school's work through reports, visits and meetings, offering both support and challenge. Collectively, they ensure that the requirements of the Standards are consistently met.
2. Despite their insight and quality assurance, there are some gaps in leaders' and governors' administrative oversight. For example, they ensure that policies and procedures are written in line with statutory requirements and are implemented by well-trained staff. However, at the start of the inspection, the school had not made the most up-to-date policies available to parents on their chosen website. Additionally, minor administrative errors in the recording on the school's single central record of appointments had not been identified before the inspection. These issues were rectified quickly during the inspection.
3. Leaders have created a well-planned and balanced curriculum, ensuring a breadth and depth of learning. In the early years, the curriculum carefully supports individual development both indoors and outdoors, enabling children to build confidence, motor skills and independence. The junior school provision is enriched by the introduction of languages from Year 1 and musical tuition from Year 3, and at GCSE and A level, a wide range of subject choices is accommodated within and beyond the formal timetable.
4. Teaching across the school is underpinned by good subject knowledge and high expectations. Most pupils make good progress, responding positively to praise, effective questioning and well-targeted feedback. However, some teaching does not consistently use an understanding about what pupils know and can do to plan and adapt learning so that they are well supported. Additionally, some teaching does not use the range of strategies available to meet the differing needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Where this occurs, pupils find work too hard or too easy.
5. Assessment frameworks are in place across the school, with baseline data in the senior school used to inform interventions and set targets. However, not all teachers and leaders use the range of information available to them in order to check that pupils make the progress over time of which they are capable.
6. Beyond the formal curriculum, leaders provide a broad extra-curricular programme to enrich pupils' skills and knowledge. Some activities have been made compulsory to increase participation and voluntary involvement has also grown. This ensures that pupils benefit from a wide and enriching experience that complements their academic development.
7. Leaders have established a well-planned personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum that equips pupils with the knowledge, skills and confidence to make informed choices, build healthy relationships and prepare for life beyond school.
8. A clear school culture celebrates diversity and promotes respect for different beliefs and protected characteristics. The curriculum, assemblies and other events enhance pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development, fostering tolerance and respect within a multicultural community. Pupils

extend their sense of mutual respect in school to the wider community and to understand the wider context in which the school exists.

9. Pupils behave well, show respect for peers and staff, and understand right and wrong. High behaviour expectations, effective anti-bullying measures and restorative approaches support positive relationships between pupils and staff.
10. Leaders maintain a robust safeguarding culture. Safeguarding policies and procedures reflect the requirements of current statutory guidance. Leaders provide appropriate training that ensures that pupils are effectively safeguarded. However, although staff are well trained and confident to report the most significant concerns related to adults working with pupils, some are not confident in identifying and reporting low-level concerns regarding the behaviour of adults.

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 staff are well trained to have a secure understanding of the definition, identification and their role in reporting low-level concerns about the behaviour of adults working with pupils
- ensure that systems are in place to check the accuracy of the single central record of appointments
- ensure that the policies used and implemented in school are the same as the versions made available to parents, including an appropriate pupil attendance policy
- ensure that teachers use a thorough understanding of what pupils know and can do, so that pupils are fully supported to learn effectively in lessons, including pupils who have SEND
- ensure that all leaders and teachers use the full range of assessment information available to them so that pupils are making the progress over time of which they are capable.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Leaders' actions ensure that the school's vision, that every pupil is known, valued and inspired to be their best, is consistently achieved. Leaders review the provision for pupils using a range of evidence, including the views of pupils, parents and staff. Leaders constantly seek to provide pupils with opportunities to develop a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding, as well as personal qualities, in preparation for adult life. Leaders use a thorough knowledge of their school to identify and act when they need to bring improvements. For example, following some reviews, they have recently brought improvements to their quality assurance of teaching and provision for staff training.
12. Governors use a range of information to assure themselves of the effectiveness of leaders' work. They scrutinise reports about different aspects of the school's provision, undertake regular on-site visits and meet with senior leaders. They provide appropriate support and challenge for senior leaders and ensure that leaders use good knowledge and skills to enable the school to meet the requirements of the Standards. However, aspects of governors' quality assurance have not identified some gaps in leaders' oversight, notably related to administrative errors in the single central record of appointments and the availability of some policies.
13. Leaders and governors have developed an appropriate approach to managing risk, including through the development of a suitable range of risk assessments for a wide variety of areas. Leaders manage risks related to the school site, curriculum, educational visits and off-site activities effectively. Leaders carefully consider actions to support pupils who may require elevated levels of care or support in particular circumstances. The management of risk is typically effective. For example, risk assessments identify potential hazards and determine the appropriate action to mitigate the risk of harm to pupils.
14. Leaders develop and implement policies and procedures that meet the requirements of current statutory guidance. The school chooses to make most of these available through the website. Leaders ensure effective and consistent implementation of policies and that they are understood by staff and pupils. For example, an appropriate three-stage complaints policy is written and made available to parents. Staff deal effectively and in a timely manner with informal concerns and leaders are aware of the requirements to deal with formal complaints, should they arise.
15. However, some of these policies and procedures that were available on the website were out of date at the start of the inspection. For instance, the school meets its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. An appropriate accessibility plan is in place that outlines how the school ensures that all pupils have access to the curriculum, information and school facilities. However, the plan available to parents at the time of the inspection was out of date, alongside the online safety policy. The school's most up-to-date policies were placed on the website during the inspection.
16. Leaders provide parents and external agencies with timely and appropriate information related to individual pupils. Leaders provide parents with regular written reports about their child's attainment and progress. They inform the local authority of any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition points. They also provide the local authority with all appropriate information related to pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) including that related to funding and finance. They liaise appropriately with external agencies, such as local safeguarding partners, when needed, to secure specialist support for pupils.

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

17. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Leaders review and refine the curriculum to ensure that it constantly provides a breadth of opportunity for pupils of all ages, in line with their abilities, interests and aspirations. They invest in ensuring that the youngest children and pupils develop effective foundational knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics, so that they can access the rest of the curriculum. This curriculum is enriched by a wide range of subjects, including specialist teaching in modern foreign languages from Year 1 and individual musical tuition from Year 3. The oldest pupils choose from a wide range of GCSE and A-level qualifications.
19. Most pupils learn well in lessons and progress over time. For instance, in the junior school, pupils develop secure linguistic skills which they apply to their reading, writing and speaking. They speak with accuracy, expression and confidence when speaking to others and presenting to the class. In the senior school, especially in GCSE and A-level subjects, teachers increasingly modify their approach to meet the needs and aptitudes of the pupils. Pupils achieve well in the qualifications of their choice and go on to appropriate post-18 destinations in employment, training or education.
20. Knowledgeable teachers plan and provide a high-quality curriculum for the youngest children in the early years. Leaders invest in a well-resourced indoor and outdoor environment that is well matched to the needs of the curriculum. Children's early speech, language and communication are developed by staff through high-quality daily communication. Over time, children develop high levels of independence and confidence in their learning and with one another. Well-trained staff help children to develop their gross and fine motor skills through their use of tools and balancing and building their own structures. Children's emerging needs are identified early and appropriate support is introduced to adapt their experiences so that they learn effectively and are ready to transition into Year 1.
21. Most teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan and deliver lessons that actively engage pupils with their learning and enable pupils to develop secure concepts and skills. They use well-targeted questioning techniques to support pupils' understanding of key concepts and knowledge across the subjects. They provide helpful and precise guidance that aids pupils' understanding of what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve their work. However, some teachers do not identify what pupils know and can do when planning and teaching their lessons. This results in some pupils completing tasks that are too easy or too hard, without sufficient support or guidance.
22. Leaders have developed a framework for assessment throughout the school, including a range of baseline assessment information that informs leaders of pupils' potential, target grades and appropriate actions to support or challenge pupils' learning. However, leaders are not utilising this information to its full potential to assess the progress that pupils make from their varied starting points, particularly in the junior school. As a result, some leaders and teachers use this data to inform their planning to identify where pupils are capable of making more progress, but this approach is inconsistently applied. As a result, leaders and teachers are not using the full range of information available to them to ensure that pupils are all making the progress of which they are capable.
23. Leaders assess and monitor the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and provide support for the development of their English skills where required. Leaders are

knowledgeable about how to identify and support those in the early stages of learning English. Staff provide a range of support, including targeted speaking, listening, reading and writing strategies, to ensure pupils who need it can acquire the necessary linguistic skills and knowledge.

24. Leaders identify the needs of pupils who have SEND and provide appropriate guidance to teachers about the strategies to support pupils' needs. Teaching in the early years and in Years 11, 12 and 13 uses this information precisely to plan to support pupils' needs. However, some teaching does not consistently use this information or adapt provision precisely to address the needs of some pupils.
25. Leaders have developed a broad provision of extra-curricular activities to broaden the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding beyond the formal curriculum. Pupil involvement in mandatory and voluntary activities provides them with a rich addition to their learning through sports such as netball and karate.

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

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

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

27. Leaders have developed a school culture where pupils develop respect for the beliefs and views of others. Assemblies and philosophy and belief lessons enable pupils to learn about different religious beliefs and to understand their impact on school culture as well as wider society. Pupils are taught to be respectful of people's protected characteristics, for example, sex, race, religion and sexual orientation. Pupils interact positively in the diverse, multicultural community in which individuals are valued. Assemblies and philosophy and belief lessons, and events such as the annual cultural day, enhance pupils' spiritual understanding and cultural awareness. As a result, pupils show high levels of respect for others.
28. The PSHE curriculum helps pupils to develop an appropriate range of skills and knowledge to help them understand the world in which they live. The well-planned and effectively implemented curriculum is age appropriate. Leaders adapt the curriculum in response to current issues that arise both in school and in the wider world. Pupils learn to understand the issues they face and recognise the importance of making appropriate choices in life and in developing healthy relationships. Sensitive and responsive teaching supports pupils to develop self-confidence, self-esteem and self-knowledge.
29. The curriculum includes an age-appropriate and well-considered RSE programme that supports pupils' understanding of key issues such as consent and the negative effect of toxic relationships. The curriculum helps pupils to prepare for life beyond school, at university and in the adult world.
30. Pupils understand right and wrong and can apply this understanding to the use of school rewards and sanctions. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is of a high standard and the respect they show for their peers as well as their teachers is a hallmark of the atmosphere of the school. Pupils generally feel their teachers are fair, accessible and sort out any concerns effectively and quickly. There is an appropriate policy and protocol in place that is implemented effectively by leaders.
31. The school has an appropriate anti-bullying policy and strategy that is fully embedded across the school. Leaders have developed effective procedures for responding to any incidents that arise, clearly identifying when incidents meet the definition of bullying or can be treated as acts of unkindness. Pupils discuss issues to restore relationships as effectively as possible.
32. Leaders carry out detailed analyses of pastoral trends, including behaviour, which lead to the identification of areas for continued development, such as peer mediation and restorative approaches. As a result, the school's systems encourage pupil reflection and behavioural change where necessary.
33. Leaders identify opportunities for pupils to hold positions of responsibility, such as being prefects and school council representatives. These opportunities further develop the growth of pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem.
34. Leaders provide pupils with a well-planned and taught physical education programme through the curriculum and the extra-curricular programme. A range of team and individual sports are provided for pupils to experience, including activities that develop their physical fitness. Leaders continually

monitor pupils' experiences of the curriculum to ensure that it meets the requirements and needs of the pupils.

35. Premises and accommodation are maintained to a high standard, with effective health and safety arrangements in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Suitable precautions are taken to reduce the risk of fire.
36. Suitable arrangements and accommodation are in place to care for pupils who become unwell. Staff are appropriately trained to deliver first aid, including for children in the early years.
37. Admission and attendance registers are appropriately maintained. Registers are taken twice daily and rigorous systems ensure any absences are appropriately followed up and recorded accurately in line with the most recent guidance. Leaders notify the local authority of any pupils joining or leaving the school at non-standard transition times. Staff monitor attendance effectively and actively promote pupil attendance.

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

38. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

39. Through the breadth of the curriculum, pupils develop an understanding of their place in the world. The curriculum extends pupils' keen sense of fairness and respect for others to the wider context of life in British society. Links with the NHS, local university, the police and local community organisations enable pupils to develop their understanding of the rule of law, democracy, individual liberty and British values. Leaders ensure that a balanced and unbiased perspective is presented to pupils on political matters.
40. Pupils experience a well-planned careers curriculum, delivered through the PSHE programme, delivered by well-trained staff in an impartial manner. Staff provide pupils with a wide range of information about the choices available to them. As pupils get older, staff tailor their advice to support individual pupils and, as a result, pupils are well equipped to explore and make informed decisions about their futures. Sixth-form students go on to study a range of courses at a variety of institutions. External and internal speakers, regular workshops and educational visits to local institutions provide pupils with a broad range of career options, supporting their chosen pathways and preparing them for further education, training and employment opportunities.
41. Children in the early years are helped to develop social skills through sharing and talking and, as pupils develop through the junior school, they grow in confidence and can communicate effectively with each other, adults and different audiences. Senior school pupils develop these skills further and demonstrate mature relationships with peers, teachers and other adults. Leaders demonstrate that issues raised by pupils are understood and acted upon.
42. The school offers a variety of opportunities for pupils to contribute to the lives of others both within the school and the wider community. For example, older pupils act as mentors for younger pupils, help to lead extra-curricular clubs and become school council representatives. Pupils regularly volunteer in the local community and build on their community experiences in school to develop their understanding of the importance of contributing to society. The curriculum also enables pupils to develop an understanding of the wide range of religions represented both in the school and the local community. Through discussions, lessons and visits, pupils develop a mature understanding of their community.
43. The curriculum successfully develops pupils' economic awareness in an age-appropriate way. As pupils get older, they learn how to read bank statements, understand tax, create budgets, make financial decisions and understand the impact of those decisions, and potential debt, on their lives in the adult world. The oldest students in the sixth form are well supported to understand specific aspects of economic education that support their transition into adulthood.
44. Throughout the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities, pupils are given opportunities to collaborate with their peers in discussing key aspects of their social development. Children in the early years are encouraged to share, take turns and discuss things with peers when disputes happen. Pupils in the junior and senior parts of the school are comfortable working with others to solve problems and recognise the importance of discussing ideas in an appropriate manner, considering the views of others and taking responsibility for their actions.

45. The PSHE and philosophy and belief curriculums stretch pupils' sense of moral understanding and include challenging topics such as the ethics of lying or whether it is ever morally acceptable to kill someone. Further discussions of right and wrong through the use of scenarios equip pupils with the necessary skills to make informed decisions, exhibit empathy towards others and encourage them to behave ethically.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

46. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

47. Leaders ensure that safeguarding is a high priority. The safeguarding policy and procedures are suitable and reflect current statutory guidance.
48. Governors have established oversight of safeguarding arrangements through regular reports and reviews of safeguarding in the school. A designated safeguarding governor meets regularly with leaders to ensure effective systems are in place to protect children from the risk of harm.
49. Safer recruitment processes are well established. Leaders ensure that all required pre-employment checks are undertaken before adults start working with pupils. However, during the course of the inspection, administrative errors in recording these checks were found in the single central record of appointments despite regular checks by governors and senior leaders. These errors were rectified before the end of the inspection.
50. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities are appropriately trained for their roles. They make effective decisions whenever safeguarding concerns arise and take appropriate and timely action to support pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders maintain suitable records of safeguarding concerns, their decisions, actions and rationale in response to these.
51. Leaders establish effective liaison with external agencies. For instance, they contact appropriate local authority teams for advice on safeguarding issues and report concerns when necessary.
52. Staff receive regular training to ensure they are confident to identify, respond to and report any safeguarding concerns that may arise. Staff carefully consider pupils' wellbeing and are quick to identify and report any concerns. Training ensures staff understand their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty with regard to dangers of radicalisation or extremism. Staff maintain an awareness of any contextual risks that may arise.
53. Staff take appropriate action if they have an allegation about an adult's behaviour, which might present an immediate risk of harm to pupils. However, there is not a consistent approach to the recording and reporting of low-level concerns related to adults' behaviour. Staff have not been as well trained in the approaches to identifying, recording and reporting these concerns.
54. Pupils learn how to stay safe through the PSHE programme and a carefully planned assembly series. They learn about the potential risks when online and learn strategies to keep themselves safe. Leaders ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring procedures are put in place and checked regularly to support pupils' safety when online.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Leicester High School for Girls
Department for Education number	856/6009
Registered charity number	503982
Address	Leicester High School for Girls 454 London Road Leicester Leicestershire LE2 2PP
Phone number	0116 2705338
Email address	enquiries@leicesterhigh.co.uk
Website	www.leicesterhigh.co.uk
Proprietor	Leicester High School for Girls Limited
Chair	Mrs Jane Carroll
Acting Headteacher	Mr John Partridge
Age range	3 to 18
Number of pupils	248
Date of previous inspection	1 to 3 November 2022

Information about the school

56. Leicester High School for Girls is an independent day school for female pupils aged 3 to 18 years old, located in Leicester. The school is a charitable trust run by a board of directors. The directors also take on the role of a governing body at the school. The school consists of a pre-school and junior department for pupils aged between 3 and 10 years old and a senior school for pupils aged between 10 and 18 years old. Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors was appointed in September 2023, and an acting head was appointed in September 2025.
57. The early years department has one foundation class of 11 children and one Reception class with nine children.
58. The school has identified 43 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Three pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
59. The school has identified English as an additional language for 20 pupils.
60. The school states its aims are to provide a personalised education that empowers each pupil to achieve her full potential and develop a lifelong love of learning. The school strives to ensure high standards of academic performance, pastoral care and a broad co-curricular programme, nurturing confident, ambitious and well-rounded young women in a welcoming and supportive community where every individual is valued. The school encourages pupils to be intellectually curious and creative and aims to help each pupil to discover her talents, develop confidence and self-belief and embrace challenge through the promotion of respect, empathy, integrity, kindness and inclusivity.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

23 to 25 September 2025

61. A team of three 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
- 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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