

# School inspection report

1 to 3 October 2024

## **St Edmund's School**

Portsmouth Road

Hindhead

Surrey

GU26 6BH

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. The school is a happy and busy community. Leaders promote an inclusive and supportive environment where pupils feel valued and are well cared for. Pupils are happy, well motivated, self-confident individuals who are proud of their school.
2. Leaders are supported by governors who know the school well. Governors ensure that leaders have the appropriate skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. During their visits to the school, and through regular meetings, governors provide suitable oversight and challenge. They ensure that the Standards, and their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, are met consistently.
3. Pupils follow a broad and well-resourced curriculum that is suited to their ages, abilities and needs. Teachers are knowledgeable, enjoy teaching and know their pupils well. Pupils behave appropriately and enjoy learning in the positive, supportive environment. Teachers deal with occasional behavioural incidents quickly, and with sensitivity and understanding.
4. Approaches to assessment are well developed and pupils' progress is tracked rigorously. Pupils are given regular feedback about their work and are challenged to do their best. Pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language (EAL), make good progress. GCSE results are above the national average.
5. Staff know individual pupils' needs well. The special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) department is approachable and supportive. Robust systems are in place for sharing of information regarding pupils who have SEND. Staff access this information and adjust their lessons so that pupils who have SEND make good progress.
6. The early years provision meets children's needs well. Staff have detailed knowledge and understanding of how young children learn as well as about their emotional and social needs. The curriculum is planned and delivered effectively so that children make good progress.
7. The school's extra-curricular provision is wide ranging. It enables pupils to further develop and enhance a range of skills, including communication, teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, time management, organisation, public speaking and creative design.
8. In the senior school, the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), and relationships and sex education (RSE) programmes of study are less well developed than other aspects of the curriculum. Teaching of these subjects is also variable. At times, the content of the PSHE and RSE programmes lacks relevance for pupils. As a result, they do not meet pupils' needs as well as they could.
9. Careers provision is also under-developed and the strategy is unclear. As a result, careers education does not flow systematically and incrementally as pupils progress through the senior school. This means that pupils sometimes do not receive all the information they need in a timely fashion.
10. Pupils' wellbeing is given a high priority. Pupils are confident to raise concerns and they know that teachers take them seriously. Pupils are encouraged to prioritise their safety, wellbeing and physical and mental health, including in their online interactions.

## 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:

- develop a clear strategy for careers education so that the programme builds incrementally over time, in order that pupils receive the advice and guidance they need, at the right points, as they move through the senior school
- review and develop the PSHE and RSE programmes of study in the senior school, and the quality of teaching in these subjects, to ensure that these areas of the curriculum fully meet the needs of all pupils.

## Material change request

11. Inspectors considered the school's request for a change to the details of its registration to include the removal of boarding provision and to increase the number of pupils on roll from 615 to 650 pupils.
12. The school no longer offers boarding provision for pupils.
13. Leaders plan to increase the number of pupils at the school from Year 5. Leaders have made arrangements to extend existing class sizes and have appointed additional staff to support this.
14. Leaders have taken appropriate steps to prepare for the proposed increase in pupil numbers. This includes effective planning for the deployment of staff and resources. The former boarding facilities have been repurposed in preparation for the proposed increase in pupil numbers. Classrooms have been thoughtfully laid out to accommodate the proposed increase in pupil numbers. A new health centre was opened in 2022, and a new dining hall and food technology suite in 2023. These additional facilities are sufficiently well resourced to accommodate the proposed increase in pupil numbers. Rooms within the former boarding house have been adapted to provide additional learning provision for pupils who have SEND.
15. Safeguarding arrangements for pupils are appropriate and are likely to remain so with the increase in pupil numbers. Recruitment checks are carried out diligently for all staff. All new staff receive comprehensive induction training, including safeguarding.

16. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is approved. It is recommended that the material change request be approved.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

17. Governors and leaders work closely and collaboratively with one another to ensure the Standards are met consistently. Together, they actively promote pupils' wellbeing and foster a safe, inclusive and supportive environment where pupils feel valued and cared for.
18. Governors and leaders have clear aims and vision that are widely shared and understood. The aims and ethos are communicated to parents, who appreciate the family feel of the school and its individualised approach. Regular meetings and school visits enable governors to support and challenge leaders effectively. Governors monitor how well procedures are followed and the quality of practice throughout the school.
19. Governors and leaders evaluate the school's effectiveness perceptively. They regularly check all aspects of the school and seek the views of pupils, parents and staff. Leaders and governors use this information to draw up clear and appropriate plans for school improvement. They prioritise pupils' wellbeing needs and take prompt action where necessary.
20. The school has an appropriate range of policies covering all areas of its work. Leaders regularly review and update policies, ensuring that they comply with current guidance. Policies are shared with parents, staff and pupils, as appropriate. They are widely understood and implemented effectively and consistently.
21. Leaders have a strong understanding of the Equality Act 2010. They ensure that the school meets its duties consistently. Leaders create an environment in which everyone is welcomed and valued, whatever their background or characteristics. Leaders maintain a suitable accessibility plan, which they update regularly. They continually seek to identify ways that the school can improve access to all aspects of school life for pupils who have SEND.
22. Leaders make and maintain effective links with external agencies, which benefits pupils. For example, leaders seek advice and support from hearing specialists and other experts to support pupils who have SEND, as appropriate. They work with the local authority and children's social care, as necessary, to promote pupils' wellbeing.
23. Parents receive reports regularly about pupils' progress, attitudes and attainment. Other required information is made available to parents, largely through the school's informative website.
24. A suitable risk assessment policy is in place and risk assessment throughout the school is thorough. Leaders receive ongoing training to ensure that they have appropriate knowledge and understanding in this area. They have a rigorous approach that enables them to identify a broad range of risks, including those that are not immediately obvious. Leaders put suitable measures in place to mitigate risks. They review these measures regularly, and make changes as necessary, to ensure pupils are as safe and well looked after as possible.
25. The complaints policy is appropriate. If a complaint is made, it is managed effectively and dealt with within the timeframe stated. Detailed records are kept about complaints received and the actions taken in response to them.
26. The school provides all required information to local authorities with regard to pupils whom they fund on EHC plans.

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

**27. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

28. The carefully thought through curriculum provides for smooth, incremental academic progress for pupils as they move through the school. Leaders and teachers constantly review and reflect on the curriculum. They make regular and effective changes to course design so that the curriculum is appropriate to pupils' ages and aptitudes. The curriculum focuses strongly on language and communication. As a result, pupils develop sophisticated linguistic skills. There is also a sustained focus on developing mathematical skills, scientific enquiry and creative expression. The curriculum equips pupils well for their next stages in learning. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. GCSE results are above the national average.
29. Throughout the school, teachers are enthusiastic subject experts who are passionate about teaching and pupils' learning. They manage class time well. They deliver lessons that are well resourced, well planned, fun and engaging. As a result, pupils are well behaved and consistently show an eagerness to learn. They participate with motivation and maturity. Teachers ask carefully chosen questions that help pupils to acquire knowledge and deepen their understanding. Teachers encourage pupils to ask pertinent questions to move their learning forward. They empower pupils to be reflective intellectual and creative learners. Teachers provide useful extra help for pupils through clinics at lunchtimes and on Saturday mornings.
30. Pupils who have SEND make good progress from their individual starting points. Robust systems are in place for the appropriate sharing of information regarding pupils who have SEND so that staff recognise pupils' individual needs well. Lessons and resources are adapted to enable pupils to access the curriculum and make good progress. The SEND department provides strong support for pupils throughout the school, including through the deployment of teaching assistants and the use of digital technology.
31. The school's approach to assessment is well developed and effective. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding of what they have been taught. They use this information to adapt their teaching plans in order to address any misconceptions and gaps in pupils' learning. Teachers provide pupils with frequent and encouraging feedback on their work. They help pupils to identify their own strengths and areas for improvement. As a result, pupils become more self-aware and able to think for themselves.
32. The early years curriculum focuses well on the seven key areas of learning. The development of communication and language skills is given a high priority. Staff know the children in their care very well. They take time to recognise children's individual strengths and areas for development. In all areas of the curriculum, staff support children in small groups and individually, responding proactively to their individual needs. Children make good progress in the early years and are well prepared to move on to Year 1 by the end of the Reception Year.
33. Pupils have access to a huge choice of recreational activities, which are open to pupils of all ages. They benefit from a wide range of clubs including journalism, chess, music technology, art, coding and orienteering. These stretch and challenge pupils, and offer new opportunities. Clubs and other extra-curricular activities are well attended, fun and richly enhance the educational offering.



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

**34. All the relevant Standards are met.**

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

35. Leaders create an ethos that promotes courtesy and care. They focus strongly on encouraging mutual respect, spiritual development and moral understanding. Pupils learn about the ways that people can be different and that it is wrong to judge people on their personal characteristics such as race or religion. As a result, pupils are kind to one another and have a clear sense of right and wrong.
36. The wellbeing of each pupil is given a high priority throughout the school. Pupils are well cared for by supportive staff, who encourage them to share any worries they might have. Children in the early years are encouraged to identify their feelings and to communicate these effectively with each other and with staff. They learn to collaborate with each other confidently, follow rules and take turns.
37. Pupils behave well and follow the school's rules. Any issues that arise are addressed promptly. The behaviour policy is applied fairly and consistently to all. The school's systems encourage pupils to reflect upon their actions and to learn from them. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and engage fully with their learning. Rewards are keenly sought and are showcased in assemblies, celebrating individual successes.
38. An anti-bullying strategy is in place which is effective in minimising bullying at the school. Any instances of bullying are dealt with efficiently and appropriately. Pupils know that their concerns will be dealt with sensitively and they are confident to report their worries. Pupils know how to stay safe online. They are confident to raise concerns regarding incidents of cyber-bullying.
39. There is suitable provision for and management of first aid across the school, via the health centre. Suitable processes are in place for the administration of medicines and the management of physical injury and illnesses. First aid training is up to date, and a suitable number of relevant staff are trained in paediatric first aid.
40. The PSHE curriculum and relationships education meet pupils' needs well in prep and pre-prep. The school uses a programme that covers a broad range of important topics, building pupils' knowledge and understanding gradually as they move through the school. PSHE and RSE are less effective in the senior school. The curriculums are not as well developed or as well matched to pupils' needs as they are in the younger year groups. There is also variability in how well the subjects are taught. As a result, these aspects of the curriculum do not consistently meet senior pupils' needs well enough.
41. The premises are well maintained and suited to the needs of the school. The newly constructed facilities for drama, music and dining further enhance the quality of provision. The stimulating learning environment encourages pupils to engage actively and think creatively. Pupils are supervised appropriately throughout the site.
42. Attendance records and admission procedures are appropriately maintained, in accordance with regulatory requirements. Staff are familiar with their duties regarding children missing from education. They report punctually to the local authority about any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard times of the school year.

43. There is a suitable health and safety policy, which is implemented effectively. Fire procedures and infrastructure are appropriate and there are regular fire drills. Frequent checks are conducted on equipment, which is repaired and replaced as necessary.
44. The physical education (PE) curriculum is comprehensive and well structured. The programme covers a wide range of sports and disciplines including football, athletics and trampolining. PE and sports science are offered as options at GCSE level. PE is taught effectively by enthusiastic and well-trained staff. The curriculum is enhanced by sports matches and other extra-curricular activities. Pupils achieve well, enjoy sport and are physically active.

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

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

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

46. Throughout the curriculum, pupils experience academic and co-curricular opportunities that promote fundamental British values, and develop their social and cultural understanding. Pupils are encouraged to develop mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs. From an early age, pupils understand that any form of discrimination is wrong and is not accepted by the community.
47. All pupils take religious education to GCSE level. They study a variety of belief systems and learn the importance of respect when considering the beliefs of others. Visits from a range of external speakers support pupils to understand and appreciate differences. Pupils develop their cultural understanding through the co-curricular programme, which includes a range of performing arts activities and is augmented by a variety of trips and visits.
48. Pupils in the senior school are provided with impartial careers advice. They are supported effectively as they make their GCSE subject choices and move on to the next stage of their education. However, the strategy for careers provision is unclear and the programme is not fully developed. Careers education does not develop systematically, step by step, as pupils progress through the school. As a result, pupils' experience is, at times, piecemeal and inconsistent.
49. Pupils of all ages engage in charitable work. Some pupils are part of the school's charity team. Pupils are enthusiastic about their three selected charities and relish supporting charitable activities. Pupils show an awareness of the needs of others within the community. Many senior pupils carry out volunteer work locally. A group of pupils have formed a volunteering club. They undertake litter picking and help to run school events.
50. In the early years, children's social development is supported well. They learn that the environment and living things should be cared for. Children learn about respect, responsibility and the difference between right and wrong. Children regularly visit a residential home and take trips in the local area, such as to the fire station, to understand how their community works.
51. Throughout the school, pupils have opportunities to take on leadership roles. The school council meets at regular intervals and has initiated changes within the school. Year 8 pupils are given regular duties, such as emptying recycling bins or being an assistant in chapel. Both the prep and senior school have heads of school and divisional leaders. Older pupils have opportunities to mentor younger pupils through sports leadership, reading programmes and a number of 'buddy' schemes. This helps them to develop responsibility and learn the importance of being good role models.
52. The school's 'Friday afternoon programme' teaches pupils about the law, British institutions and services, democracy and the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on and understand the reasons for and effects of wars, such as through relevant exhibitions and commemorating the lives of previous pupils who died during conflicts.
53. Effective economic education is delivered in a range of ways. For example, the PSHE curriculum includes topics such as budgeting, mortgages and credit scores. In Year 6, pupils take part in a project to design a theme park within a designated budget. Pupils develop an appropriate understanding of money and financial matters.

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

**54. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

55. Pupils feel safe, happy and secure at school. The school's positive and supportive atmosphere creates a sense of openness and trust. Safeguarding is given a high priority throughout the school. Members of the extensive safeguarding leadership team are well qualified and knowledgeable about their roles. Effective arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare.
56. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained and recognise possible signs of abuse and neglect. When concerns arise, staff understand their responsibilities and report any potential issues at the earliest opportunity. Staff know the correct procedures to follow and do so routinely. Safeguarding leaders take prompt and effective action in response to concerns that are raised.
57. Governors understand their safeguarding responsibilities well. They meet regularly with the safeguarding team to assure themselves of the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.
58. The safeguarding team has developed strong working partnerships with external agencies. This enables them to draw upon professional guidance and advice, as required, to put arrangements in place that safeguard pupils and protect them from harm.
59. Safer recruitment guidelines are followed thoroughly and effectively. Pre-employment checks are conducted robustly and recorded appropriately on the school's single central record. A comprehensive induction safeguarding programme is in place for new staff, which provides them with all the information they need to begin their roles.
60. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when cooking and crossing roads. They are taught about how to stay safe online through the curriculum and regular talks on internet safety. An appropriate and effective filtering system is in place to prevent pupils accessing inappropriate information when using the internet. The safeguarding team monitors internet use and takes appropriate action when required.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	St Edmund's School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	936/6053
<b>Registered charity number</b>	278301
<b>Address</b>	St Edmund's School Trust Ltd Portsmouth Road Hindhead Surrey GU26 6BH
<b>Phone number</b>	01428 604808
<b>Email address</b>	schoolsecretary@saintedmunds.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.saintedmunds.co.uk
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jackie Alliss
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Adam Walliker
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 16 years
<b>Number of pupils</b>	615
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	September 2023

## Information about the school

62. St Edmund's School is an independent co-educational day school situated in Hindhead, Surrey. The school is a charitable trust, overseen by a board of governors. The school includes an early years setting, a lower school for Years 1 to 4, prep for Years 5 to 8 and a senior section for Years 9 to 11.
63. There are 45 pupils in the early years comprising two Nursery classes and one Reception class.
64. The school has identified 210 pupils as having SEND. Seven pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
65. English is an additional language for one pupil.
66. The school states its aims are to provide a broad-based curriculum reflecting traditional values and subjects, and to promote confidence in every pupil and to encourage them to develop skills as independent learners in an inclusive environment in which pupils feel valued and involved. Also, to help pupils develop good inter-personal skills and be sensitive, to show respect for the needs and feelings of others and assist pupils in developing self-discipline, self-respect and self-esteem so that they may live their lives with joy and fulfilment.



## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

1 to 3 October 2024

67. A team of five inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

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

69. 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

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