

School inspection report

19 to 21 November 2024

Lincoln Minster School

The Prior Building

Upper Lindum Street

Lincoln

LN2 5RW

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 are committed professionals who have a clear vision of what they want to achieve, reflecting the aims of the school. They understand their roles and responsibilities and ensure that they create this culture among pupils and staff. Their work is well monitored and reviewed by the proprietor body and governors. They ensure that the Standards are met consistently.
2. Teachers are knowledgeable and skilled in the delivery of the curriculum. Pupils value their education and work hard. The co-curricular programme enables pupils to experience activities and develop skills, enhancing their learning and opportunities in the curriculum. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who are in the early stages of learning English are supported by staff who understand their needs and implement appropriate support. Overall, pupils learn and achieve well, including at both GCSE and A Level. However, in the prep school, teachers' use of assessment information is not precise to identify where pupils need further support or challenge in their learning.
3. Pupils are confident and articulate individuals, comfortable in putting forward their ideas, within a supportive environment, both inside and outside the classroom. They access a curriculum and a range of additional opportunities that support their physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing. Pupils behave well and create a climate of harmony and kindness.
4. The school's leaders and governors have an effective oversight of health and safety procedures and risk management but are not always fully consistent in implementing some site procedures.
5. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and a willingness to take on responsibility for their actions. The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme helps to promote the values and principles behind modern society and the school prepares pupils well for life beyond school. The careers programme is comprehensive and much valued by pupils, enabling them to consider all the potential avenues for their futures.
6. The setting for the early years foundation stage (EYFS) is stimulating and well resourced, promoting children's engagement with learning and facilitating their progress. The teaching develops effectively the children's confidence in their communication skills. The setting supports the children's wellbeing, and their social, personal and emotional development.
7. Safeguarding is deeply embedded in the school's culture, with regular staff training ensuring their competence in identifying and reporting concerns. Suitable safeguarding records are maintained using an online platform. Leaders work closely and securely with external agencies, to make sure that pupils get timely support.
8. At the time of the inspection, there were no boarders. However, leaders are knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities for any future boarders. The site and accommodation are well cared for and appropriate.

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:

- strengthen the monitoring of the implementation of site procedures to ensure that they are completed consistently as leaders expect
- ensure that teachers in the prep school are confident and skilled to use assessment information more effectively to identify where pupils need more support or challenge in their learning.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. The proprietor body and governors ensure that the leaders have the training, expertise and experience they require for their roles. They ensure the school's aims and ethos are delivered consistently and effectively. The proprietor and local governing body bring considerable experience to the task of managing the school. They maintain a close monitoring role, to ensure the school's leaders fulfil their responsibilities and that the Standards are met consistently.
10. Leaders prioritise the wellbeing of pupils, actively promoting the proprietor's core values of ambition, confidence, determination, creativity, respect and enthusiasm. Their development planning focuses on how their actions achieve the objective of 'bringing out the best in everyone'. Leaders use a range of evidence to measure their effectiveness, and act to address areas that need improvement. They listen carefully to pupils, staff and parents when they make changes, for example, at lunchtime and in the timing of co-curricular activities. They create a culture of inclusivity among staff and pupils, which is evident in the many interactions of the school community.
11. Leaders manage the planning and delivery of the curriculum well, including for children in Reception. They provide oversight of staff training, teachers' planning and pupils' learning. There is a clear focus on addressing the needs of pupils, and leaders take timely action to improve provision, where needed. Teachers' use of assessment to identify how well pupils are faring is less well developed for younger pupils in the prep school, than for pupils in the senior school. Leaders are continuing to develop teachers' understanding and approach.
12. Leaders understand the importance of robust arrangements for health and safety. They are suitably trained about the areas that they need to monitor and review. They ensure compliance through regular tours of the site and discussions with those individuals responsible for these areas. Leaders have developed an effective risk assessment policy and procedures, which include addressing pupils' wellbeing, harmful behaviours and boarding risks. Risks are managed appropriately. Some procedures were not being followed consistently, as identified by inspectors during a tour of the site. This issue was remedied during the inspection and measures put in place to ensure future management.
13. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. There is an appropriate accessibility plan which considers any barriers that might exist in the curriculum, the provision of information and the access to the school site. This plan then sets out any specific areas for improvement and provides a timescale for action.
14. Leaders ensure that they provide appropriate information to parents and other stakeholders. There are comprehensive policies on the school's website, covering the various aspects of school life and meeting regulatory requirements. The school liaises with the relevant external agencies regarding pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and reports appropriately through annual reviews of provision and funding. The complaints policy sets out the required procedures. Appropriate records and information are maintained, and available to all appropriate stakeholders. The school has a detailed safeguarding policy and effective procedures. The proprietor body and governors review these policies and processes.
15. At the time of this inspection, there were no boarders at the school. Leaders are knowledgeable about the provision that they would put in place, should they decide to re-admit boarders, including

a suitable range of recreational activities. The accommodation is well maintained. Leaders have a good understanding of the Standards that they are required to meet.

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

16. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

17. Leaders provide pupils, including the youngest children, with a broad curriculum that provides well for the different ages of pupils. Pupils access high quality learning experiences across a range of subjects that cover all regulatory requirements. The curriculum and associated activities are well thought through and planned.
18. Pupils secure a wide range of accreditation and qualifications, including GCSE and A Level, as well as other nationally recognised qualifications. At GCSE and A level, as well as in the other qualifications offered, pupils gain results that are broadly in line with national averages. On leaving the school, pupils move onto a variety of destinations, including higher education, training and employment that is closely aligned with their abilities, interests and aspirations.
19. Teachers are knowledgeable in the subjects that they teach. They plan lessons that enthuse and engage pupils in their learning. They use resources effectively to teach new knowledge and develop pupils' learning. Teachers use a range of ways to identify what pupils know and can do and adapt their lessons accordingly.
20. Teachers provide guidance and feedback suggestions of 'even better if' and 'what went well'. Pupils are provided with time in lessons to think about their teachers' feedback. They are confident to present their ideas in lessons and to learn from any mistakes that they make. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic learners, show a focused attitude towards their work and make steady progress.
21. In early years, teachers are knowledgeable about how to support the youngest children to learn effectively. Teachers actively develop children's language and communication skills in planned activities and when children play. Children access an array of songs, rhymes, stories and poetry. Teachers deliver the school's chosen phonics programme effectively, so children learn to recognise and sound out new words effectively. Teachers use a range of resources, including in the outdoor environment, to encourage children to learn effectively. Teachers know children well and adapt to their needs. Children are well-ready to transition into Year 1 at the end of Reception.
22. Leaders have been developing the school's use of assessment to assess pupils' abilities on entry and routinely review how well pupils are faring. In the senior school this is helping teachers to identify where pupils need further support, or where some pupils are ready to apply their learning in more complex ways. However, teachers in the prep school are not as confident or effective in using this performance information. They are not using it with enough precision to identify where pupils need additional support or challenge in their learning.
23. Leaders prioritise the support that they provide to pupils who have SEND. Leaders are skilled in using a range of screening tools, strategies and assessment to identify pupils' needs. They create support plans with detailed information about how best to support pupils in their learning and development. This information is made available to class teachers and subject leads, so they can plan their lessons accordingly. Leaders monitor pupils' progress precisely and act promptly when pupils need extra help. Pupils, including the youngest children, who have SEND learn and attain well.
24. The school provides support for pupils who speak English as an additional language, with early identification and effective strategies for helping their progress. Most pupils who join in the early stages of learning English begin in the prep school. Here, teachers are adept at supporting pupils, so

that by the time these pupils reach the senior school, they are able to access the curriculum fully and independently and require much less additional support.

25. There is an extensive co-curricular programme for pupils, including those in the sixth form, which is accessed by all pupils. Pupils develop new skills, including leadership opportunities and they have put forward suggestions for new activities to be included, such as the introduction of rowing and archery, both of which have been popular. Leaders have a good understanding about the types of activities that they would need to implement should they admit boarders again.

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. Pupils access a range of opportunities to develop their physical health. Pupils, including children in Reception, learn about healthy lifestyles, the importance of exercise and eating well. Leaders provide a range of opportunities in physical education for pupils to learn sports, exercise and take part in competitive games. Pupils enjoy traditional team sports alongside activities such as rowing, polo, and climbing. The youngest children swim regularly and enjoy their outdoor adventure learning space. There is also a breadth in the co-curricular programme including competitive fixtures with other schools.
28. Leaders provide a well-planned PSHE curriculum for pupils throughout the school. Teachers deliver this curriculum, ensuring that it is age-appropriate and develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of the range of topics being studied. Pupils provide feedback to their teachers, and this informs teachers' future planning of the curriculum. The teaching of relationships and sex education (RSE) takes place within these lessons, is delivered by well-trained staff, and meets the regulatory requirements.
29. Leaders prioritise the mental health and emotional wellbeing of pupils. In addition to the PSHE curriculum, there are a range of other ways in which this is promoted for pupils, including through regular use of online platforms to identify and address pupils' concerns. National initiatives such as 'Girls on Board' and 'Boys on Board' help the discussion on issues of emotional wellbeing; they encourage pupils to develop their levels of resilience and promote the value of forming healthy friendships. As a result, pupils are confident and articulate about the importance of mental health and wellbeing for themselves and others.
30. Pupils behave very well. They are self-confident and form productive relationships with peers and adults alike. Children in early years showed an ability to work cooperatively with each other and were polite and focused on their tasks. Pupils respect the views of others and form common bonds, supporting each other and understanding the importance of dealing with any anti-social behaviour that might arise. Leaders take a positive approach towards bullying, focusing on pupils taking responsibility for their own actions. Pupils value the importance of rules and taking responsibility for their actions. Consequently, the day-to-day school culture is harmonious, and rare instances of poor behaviour or bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively.
31. Leaders ensure that appropriate health and safety arrangements are in place, including external specialist expertise and audits and comprehensive risk assessments. On occasion, procedures are not always followed consistently in line with leaders' expectations. An example of this was identified by inspectors on site, and was rectified by the end of the inspection. Regular checks and certifications ensure equipment safety, including appropriate servicing of minibuses. Premises and accommodation are maintained to a high standard and ensure there is a well-kept and conducive learning environment. Suitable accommodation and provision are in place for the short-term care of sick pupils. Pupils are well supervised.
32. The admissions and attendance registers are completed efficiently with due care shown to any need for reporting to local authorities, including when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition times.

33. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities. For example, prefects are proud of their roles and undertake a thorough an interview process for the role. They take on specific responsibilities within the school and act as valuable role models for younger pupils.

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

34. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

35. Leaders promote inclusivity and respect. Pupils value the differences between people, including those of different faiths, genders, lifestyles, cultures and beliefs. The PSHE curriculum, enhanced by the assembly programme, helps pupils understand more about life in British society and in the wider world. Pupils experience this first hand through trips, visits and visiting speakers, for example recently working with a local mosque.
36. Teachers support children in Reception to develop their social skills. Teachers spend time helping children to learn new routines, play kindly, take turns and share. Teachers teach children these skills through well-planned activities and reiterate the importance of these skills while children are playing. This ensures that children learn co-operatively and collaboratively with one another.
37. Pupils exhibit a strong understanding about the experience of different groups within society. They actively promote respect and equality for all. The 'Compassionate Minster' co-curricular activity encourages pupils' engagement with the community, such as charity work or working with a local primary school. This promotes a greater awareness of society and the importance of compassion and empathy.
38. Pupils value the opportunities that they have to take on responsibility in the school and to have their views listened to. There are many opportunities for pupils to express their ideas, including through the school council, suggestion boxes, and regular feedback in lessons. For example, pupils in the senior school recently identified new ways of approaching the lunchtime routine, which are now in place.
39. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to learn about democracy, law and public services. For example, the youngest children vote for which Christmas book to read, while pupils in the prep school enjoy studying national Parliament week and having the opportunity to vote for school councillors. Lessons encourage pupils to think of broader issues of morality such as in English where pupils discussed maturely why anti-social behaviour and savagery developed among children in *The Lord of the Flies*. Pupils recognise and understand the requirement for sanctions for situations which are affecting other pupils adversely.
40. Pupils develop their economic understanding and awareness through the curriculum and other activities, such as external speakers, including bank employees coming in to talk about student finance. The youngest children learn about money and buying things through their play opportunities. As they move through the school, pupils learn about pocket money, budgeting and other life skills.
41. There is an extensive careers programme which develops appropriately, as pupils get older. The careers team works with pupils individually to personalise the provision to their needs and direct precise guidance and support. Leaders make use of the expertise of external speakers including employers and alumni. Pupils are introduced to a range of options such as apprenticeships, careers the armed forces, self-employment and gap years, as well as higher education. Consequently, pupils are prepared thoroughly for the next stage of life beyond school.

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

42. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

43. The school's safeguarding policy is comprehensive and in line with up-to-date statutory guidance. The safeguarding team are well trained. They ensure that safeguarding processes align with the policy. They provide clear guidance and training to staff so that adults working with pupils are confident to identify concerns and report these appropriately.
44. Leaders are adept at identifying and addressing safeguarding risks, including those related to the local context. Leaders act in a timely manner in response to any concerns. They work effectively with appropriate external agencies responsible for safeguarding.
45. The proprietor body and governors are well trained. They monitor effectively the policies and procedures for safeguarding and maintain a regular contact with the relevant school leaders. They undertake a range of activity to check on the effectiveness of safeguarding, including a formal review of safeguarding each year.
46. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online, through PSHE and ICT lessons. Leaders also provide relevant guidance and training to pupils. Pupils know that they can talk to adults if they have concerns, or that they can use other mechanisms to report concerns, such as the suggestion boxes. There are appropriate policies and procedures for filtering and monitoring online content. Leaders act swiftly to address any identified issues or concerns.
47. Although there were no boarders at the time of the inspection, leaders had a clear understanding of the safeguarding requirements for boarders.
48. Recruitment checks for all staff and volunteers are carried out efficiently and the record of these checks is maintained accurately. These also are monitored regularly by the members of the governing body with specific responsibility for safeguarding.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Lincoln Minster School
Department for Education number	925/6012
Registered charity number	1016538
Address	Lincoln Minster School The Prior Building Upper Lindum Street Lincoln LN2 5RW
Phone number	01522 551300
Email address	communications@lincolnminsterschool.co.uk
Website	www.lincolnminsterschool.co.uk
Proprietor	United Learning
Chair	Ms Kate Richards
Headteacher	Mr Jon Tyler
Age range	4-18
Number of pupils	453
Number of boarding pupils	0
Date of previous inspection	23 November 2022

Information about the school

50. Lincoln Minster School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school located in Lincoln for pupils aged 4 to 18. The school is split across two sites. There is a preparatory school for pupils aged 4 to 11 located in Church Lane, Lincoln. The senior school and sixth form for those aged 11 to 18 are based on the site on Upper Lindum Street. The school's proprietor is United Learning, who delegate specific responsibilities to a local governing body.
51. Currently there are no boarders in the school. The boarding provision is registered to take boarders from Years 3 to 13, for male and female pupils. The accommodation for boarding is comprised of one boarding house called 'The Mount' on the site at Upper Lindum Street.
52. There are 23 children in the early years, comprising of one Reception class.
53. The school has identified 131 pupils as having SEND. 18 pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
54. English is an additional language for 13 pupils.
55. The school states its aims are to provide its pupils with a love of learning that will continue throughout their lives, to promote moral and personal values and to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding and confidence that will enable pupils to achieve their full potential. The aim is to provide an environment that sets high expectations, facilitating stretch and challenge, where each child is stimulated to fulfil their potential in preparation for the next stage of their education and future employment. The school shares the proprietor body's core values of ambition, confidence, determination, creativity, respect and enthusiasm and the objective of 'bringing out the best in everyone', enabling each student to become a balanced, happy and articulate person.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

19 to 21 November 2024

56. A team of six inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The onsite inspection was quality assured.

57. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

58. 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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For more information, please visit isi.net