ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

Material change inspection report

6 December 2024

Silcoates School

Wrenthorpe

Wakefield

West Yorkshire

WF2 0PD

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'.

Inspection outcome

The school has requested a material change to change the age range from 3 to 19 to 2 to 19.

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school Standards if the material change is implemented.

Inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

ISSR Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4; EYFS 1.1-1.2, 1.12-1.20, 2.1-2.18, 3.34 and 3.61

1. Leaders have planned to introduce a new Nursery class for pupils aged two.
2. Leaders ensure that curriculum planning for the early years is in place and suitable for the age and stage of the children attending. Plans focus on providing activities and experiences that will support children's development in the seven areas of learning.
3. The early years provision includes an indoor and outdoor learning environment. Staff plan specifically for these spaces. Leaders have evaluated their provision to ensure that the environment contains suitable resources for children aged two. For example, they provide resources to develop fine motor skills, and dressing-up clothes and music to encourage imaginative play and movement.
4. Early years leaders ensure the curriculum is appropriately matched to the age and capability of the school's youngest pupils. The Pre-school is in a separate building to the Reception class. The Pre-school has reorganised their setting to ensure that there is a separate space for the youngest nursery pupils for parts of the day.
5. Staff use their knowledge of early years to implement well-sequenced learning. They plan for children to move freely between activities and make choices about where they want to play. Opportunities for the children to exercise and enjoy daily fresh air are plentiful.
6. Leaders ensure that staff receive specific training. This means they have a secure understanding of the learning needs of each particular age group with which they work, and in relation to the new Nursery class, where specific skills and knowledge are required.
7. Staff have a secure understanding of assessment and leaders have considered how current practice will be applicable in the new Nursery class. For example, staff gather information about children's starting points when they join the school. They analyse and review their observations of children over time to determine what children know, can do, and understand. New learning steps are identified and provide a focus for future learning.
8. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour in the early years. They set clear, age-appropriate guidelines. Staff demonstrate suitable knowledge and skills to help young children learn how to develop positive relationships and manage their feelings, for example, when taking turns and sharing when playing.
9. In early years, staff carefully plan transitions to support children to be happy and content. This includes making sure that children have a place where they can sleep and quietly supporting them as they awake. This actively promotes children's wellbeing.

10. Governors are regular visitors to the school, including in the early years. They receive reports on events and data related to children's outcomes. This information ensures that governors are well informed enough to support and challenge leaders.

11. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

ISSR Paragraph 5; EYFS 1.6

12. Leaders and managers effectively promote equality and diversity, for example, by instilling respect for others and celebrating children's differences through activities and daily routines. They ensure appropriate resources are provided to stimulate children's awareness of different cultures. Staff promote behaviours that develop children's independence, positive attitudes, and self-esteem.

13. Staff demonstrate a secure understanding of how the youngest children develop social skills. They effectively teach children how to share spaces and resources. They promote opportunities to teach children how to play alongside and with others and make independent choices.

14. Governors attend school events, which gives them an insight into pupils' social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development. Attendance at assemblies, celebrations, and speech days, enables the governors to see and appreciate the pupils' academic and personal achievements.

15. The school is likely to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR Paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b), and 9; EYFS 3.4 to 3.7, 3.9, 3.11 to 3.15, 3.24 to 3.25, 3.29, 3.51 to 3.54, 3.58 to 3.60, 3.62, 3.64 to 3.65

16. Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place and are implemented effectively. Staff, including the school's safeguarding leaders, are suitably trained. Staff receive regular information and safeguarding updates to keep them well informed. The designated safeguarding leader (DSL) and deputy designated safeguarding leaders are knowledgeable about their roles and work well with other agencies to safeguard pupils, including with the local authority designated officer.

17. Early years recruitment procedures are robust. Records of checks are made appropriately on the single central register, and staff are fully inducted. They undertake appropriate safeguarding training, including what to do when they have concerns about a child or if allegations are made about staff. Procedures about no mobile phones being present in early years are well understood by staff and information is shared, such as with parents, to ensure that procedures to safeguard children are followed.

18. Regular risk assessments, both indoors and outdoors, and comprehensive policies ensure that children are well safeguarded. All of the Classroom Coordinators who work in the early years have paediatric first-aid training. Any accidents or medicines given are carefully recorded, and parents are informed on the same day. Fire practices are held regularly.

19. Leaders ensure that safeguarding information is shared promptly with staff who are directly responsible for pupils' welfare. Safeguarding, pastoral and healthcare staff work effectively together to consider how best to meet the needs of individual pupils. Leaders use their shared knowledge to implement suitable support plans, including referrals to child and adolescent mental health services when appropriate.

20. The proprietor effectively oversees the school's safeguarding procedures and their implementation. Regular meetings take place between the proprietor and the DSLs to review the arrangements. This includes arrangements for safeguarding pupils when they are off site and attending school trips. The proprietor ensures that an annual safeguarding review takes place and that leaders act promptly on any recommendations.
21. Leaders proactively promote good behaviour and have implemented an effective anti-bullying strategy. Staff model high expectations and are vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety and wellbeing. The pupils demonstrate supportive learning behaviours and care about each other and their environment. Bullying records are thorough and reflect a relatively low level of incidences.
22. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

23. The appropriate safeguarding policy is published on the school's website.
24. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraphs 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c), 34(2); EYFS 3.23, 3.26 to 3.28

25. The proprietor and senior leaders demonstrate good skills and knowledge. They fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
26. Leaders in the early years have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding of the learning and development needs of the youngest children so that the Early years foundation stage (EYFS) requirements are consistently met.
27. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

School details

School	Silcoates School
Department for Education number	384/6027
Registered charity number	1158796
Address	Silcoates School Wrenthorpe Wakefield West Yorkshire WF2 0PD
Phone number	01924 291614
Email address	enquiries@silcoates.org.uk
Website	www.silcoates.org.uk
Proprietor	Silcoates School
Chair	Mr Michael Hunter
Headteacher	Mr Chris Wainman
Age range	3–18
Number of pupils	517
Date of previous inspection	30 January to 1 February 2024

Information about the school

29. Silcoates School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between three and 18 years on the outskirts of Wakefield. The school was founded in 1820. Originally a boys' boarding school, it became a day school in 1995 and fully co-educational in the early 1990s. The spiritual ethos of the school is broadly Christian, in line with its foundation, and is open to families of all faiths and none.
30. The school is a charitable incorporated trust, overseen by a board of governors.
31. The school has identified 116 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Three pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
32. The school has identified eight pupils for whom English is an additional language.
33. The school states its aims are to provide an all-round education, supported by nurturing and proactive pastoral care, where every pupil is supported to reach their academic potential and develop the skills, qualities and aptitudes to lead a full, productive and happy life. Silcoates seeks to be an open, welcoming and inclusive community which focuses on the core values of tolerance, understanding and service to others.

Purpose of the material change inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection following an application made by the school to the DfE to make a material change to the school's provision. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about whether the school is likely to meet the Independent School Standards and Early Years Foundation Stage requirements if the material change is implemented.

Inspection details

Inspection dates	6 December 2024

34. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for one day.
35. Inspection activities included:

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- observation of lessons in Early Years
- discussions with the chair of governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils, staff and parents

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**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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