

# School inspection report

10 to 12 March 2026

## **Windlesham School and Nursery**

190 Dyke Road

Brighton

BN1 5AA

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 have a common vision for the school which is appropriately informed by rigorous self-evaluation and detailed development planning.
2. Teachers deliver a wide-ranging curriculum which takes national expectations as its starting point and extends these through areas such as French, drama and outdoor learning in both woodland and beach environments. Pupils learn from teachers' subject knowledge and are enthusiastic to apply the sophisticated concepts and vocabulary which are clearly modelled and explained.
3. Teachers assess pupils' abilities and achievements regularly and use their findings to tailor lessons accordingly. They set ambitious goals for pupils and provide an appropriate blend of challenge and support in order for these to be achieved. Teachers of younger children deliver a range of subjects to the same class, but leaders organise the school so that pupils in the oldest two year groups work in a subject-specialist environment similar to that of a typical senior school. This supports pupils in making good progress and being prepared well for subsequent stages in their education.
4. Leaders and teachers promote pupils' physical and mental wellbeing appropriately. They organise a wide range of sporting activities alongside lessons in nutrition, health and fitness. They reinforce pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence through frequent praise, an effective rewards programme based around house points and various performance opportunities in concerts, assemblies and religious services.
5. Pupils are typically well behaved. However, staff members are inconsistent in their responses to low-level misdemeanours such as calling out in class, interrupting peers whilst they are talking and unduly boisterous playground activity. The school's behaviour management system is therefore applied inequitably because misconduct that is unacceptable to most teachers is tolerated by others, including occasions when some pupils distract others from their learning.
6. The school's helpful and informative website contains useful information for the parents of pupils and prospective pupils. However, when the inspection commenced, it omitted some required documents such as a previous inspection report and statement of religious ethos. Leaders corrected these oversights during the inspection.
7. Teachers arrange experiences which develop pupils' appreciation of democracy and the rule of law. Membership of the school's pupil council is determined by vote, as is election to key positions such as head pupils and house captains. Pupils learn how laws are made and visit the Houses of Parliament to witness the democratic process in action for themselves.
8. Leaders encourage pupils to play a positive role both within their school and in wider society. All of the oldest pupils have specific prefect responsibilities which enable them to lead, guide and help others. Teachers arrange for pupils to sing in a local church, participate in the Brighton Children's Parade, help clean the nearby beach and visit the city foodbank with donations.
9. Leaders and staff implement suitable safeguarding protocols and procedures. They receive effective training and respond appropriately to any concerns that are raised. Leaders carry out all required checks on adults joining the school and do so in a timely manner. However, the recording of key dates in the school's single central record of appointments (SCR) is occasionally inaccurate. As a

result, some inconsistencies were evident between the meticulously maintained staff files and the SCR. The school corrected these minor errors in the SCR over the course of the inspection.

## 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 staff apply the behaviour policy consistently throughout all activities so that pupils' conduct is always appropriate
- ensure there are no errors in the school's single central record of appointments (SCR) so that it records pre-employment checks consistently accurately
- ensure the school website consistently includes all necessary information, including required previous inspection reports.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. The school benefits from a committed team of governors who maintain typically effective oversight of the school. They are frequent visitors to the campus when they meet with pupils, staff, parents and leaders to inform their monitoring of the school's activities.
11. Regular governors' meetings take place on at least a termly basis, are meticulously minuted and contain appropriate challenge of staff members for governors to be assured of leaders' knowledge and skills. Governors oversee the school complaints procedure appropriately and check that all required pre-employment checks are carried out when new staff are appointed.
12. Leaders typically provide the required information to the parents of pupils and prospective pupils, much of which is achieved through the school's helpful and detailed website. The school provides parents with two formal consultation events each year and regular written reports about their child's progress and achievement. At the end of the summer term, these include detailed comments in all subjects. However, when the inspection commenced, one previous inspection report dating from 2018 was omitted from the website, as was the required information about the school's ethos. Furthermore, contact details for governors had not been updated to show the names of the two recently appointed co-chairs of the board. The school rectified these oversights during the inspection.
13. Leaders carry out regular reviews of the school's performance through scrutinising a wide range of evidence that includes pupils' assessment scores and progress measures, observations of activities and dialogue with staff, parents and pupils. Their linked development planning takes this comprehensive self-evaluation as its starting point and extends it through a series of meetings with staff and governors, during which various specific focuses, such as community involvement, use of technology and pupils' emotional regulation are discussed and targets created. These whole-school priorities are agreed collaboratively amongst the staff team and result in each employee implementing three pledges of improvement in their practice to meet the goals outlined within the development plan.
14. In the early years, leaders deploy staff appropriately and ensure that the required ratios between adults and children are met. Ongoing professional development ensures that early years staff remain up to date with national expectations, so they provide appropriate learning experiences which facilitate children making good progress.
15. Governors, leaders and teachers have a common understanding of the potential risks that could affect pupils, alongside the measures that have been identified in order to mitigate these. There is a range of suitable and regularly reviewed risk assessments in place concerning various everyday considerations such as swimming lessons in the school pool, areas of the grounds, visitors to the campus and pupils going on school trips. Risk assessments take into account the particular needs of individual pupils whenever this is necessary.
16. Leaders maintain and implement an appropriate accessibility plan which identifies measures that make the premises and curriculum accessible for pupils, staff and visitors. Combined with the culture of mutual respect and elimination of discrimination, which is evident throughout the school's activities, this means that the school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

17. Leaders build effective links with external agencies. They liaise with the local authority as required, both as a referral point for safeguarding matters and a source of training for pupils in travelling safely as pedestrians and cyclists in the streets around the school. Leaders also maintain links with the nearby church in which the school holds performances that commemorate events in the Christian calendar such as Christmas and Easter.
18. The school's policy and procedures regarding the handling and resolution of complaints are appropriate and effective. Records are maintained that detail how the school investigates each submitted complaint and responds to it.
19. Leaders inform the local authority when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times of transition, as required. They also provide the local authority with the required information about the annual reviews and funding arrangements for pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).

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

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

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

21. Leaders implement a curriculum that uses national expectations as a starting point but extends these through the incorporation of additional subjects such as French, drama and outdoor learning in the nearby woodland and beach. Teachers of younger pupils deliver a wide range of subjects through an approach that typically takes a specific area of history or geography as an overarching starting point for many curriculum subjects. Topics such as ‘dinosaurs’, ‘explorers’ and ‘Ancient Greece’ commence with a ‘wow day’, during which teachers organise various activities that engage pupils’ interest effectively, such as performances from visiting theatre companies, as launchpads for subsequent enquiries.
22. Pupils in the two oldest year groups of the school are taught by subject specialists. They are required and supported to organise themselves in a manner comparable to typical practice in senior schools, in order to become familiar with the demands of moving classrooms and teachers throughout the day. Pupils in these older classes study different topics in each subject, such as ‘mountains’ in geography and *Macbeth* in English. Leaders structure the curriculum so that teachers are able to explore links between different subjects. For example, pupils create imaginative artwork of black holes to demonstrate concepts they have explored in science lessons.
23. In the early years, teachers use high-quality resources to deliver practical activities that are linked to children’s interests, such as about bears. These extend children’s vocabulary and mathematical thinking effectively. For example, whilst creating collage homes, children accurately use terms such as ‘habitat’ and ‘arctic’ as they respond to carefully phrased questions posed by the adults around them. Further conversations require children to count and add numbers above ten, and teachers refer to appropriate resources such as number lines whenever necessary to consolidate and extend children’s numeracy skills.
24. Teachers throughout the school employ a thorough and detailed assessment programme to inform and develop how they plan lessons. Ongoing marking of work results in detailed feedback to pupils which accurately identifies useful steps for future progress. Additionally, four assessments each year in reading, mathematics, spelling, grammar and writing are used to monitor and develop specific support and challenge for individual pupils when necessary. Co-ordinators of other subjects, such as the humanities, use national curriculum learning objectives as their starting point for assessment, but expand these through bespoke objectives for each group which reflect the pupils’ ages, interests and aptitudes, such as the history target to ‘identify significant historical events that shaped Brighton and Hove’. Teachers and leaders evaluate data rigorously. They use it both to amend subsequent lessons so that any misunderstandings by pupils are addressed, and to inform subsequent curriculum revision, staff training and focuses for whole-school development.
25. Teachers plan lessons which are appropriately focused on pupils’ developmental needs and enable all individuals to make good progress. Leaders identify five key ‘learning powers’ of co-operation, reflection, creativity, resilience and independence, to which teachers refer frequently in all subjects. Teachers show high expectations of pupils and structure lessons that progress at an appropriate, but efficient, pace. Pupils engage with a wide range of activities that develop their learning well. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, skills and expertise and they employ sophisticated vocabulary which they encourage pupils to emulate. Pupils are motivated by the thought of making new discoveries and understanding new concepts. Consequently, pupils typically apply themselves well and in a sophisticated manner to topics under discussion. For example, pupils in Year 1

confidently explore the roles of gears and cogs in clockwork toys, those in Year 5 use the terms 'singularity', 'event horizons' and 'magnetars' when discussing outer space and pupils in Year 6 accurately identify alliteration, personification and assonance in Shakespearean literature.

26. Leaders of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) identify which individuals in the school need additional help to make progress, then create bespoke individual learning plans (ILPs) which include measurable termly targets. The effectiveness of support provided by teachers and teaching assistants is reviewed and provision is adjusted whenever necessary. Leaders communicate effectively with all staff, deliver appropriate training and monitor the achievements of pupils on the SEND register regularly. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress.
27. Teachers support the linguistic development of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) through focused lessons in reading and spelling which facilitate rapid development in pupils' written and verbal English. Once they have gained a degree of fluency, pupils continue to receive provision such as structured opportunities for purposeful conversation and explicit vocabulary teaching. These ensure that the pupils are able to access the curriculum and engage fully in lessons.
28. Leaders provide a wide range of optional clubs and activities each week. These range from sporting and musical pursuits to multi-lingual conversation, songwriting and skateboarding. Some of these clubs result from proposals voiced by pupils through the school council. With appropriate oversight from staff members, pupils develop and lead certain activities themselves, such as a fantasy role-playing adventure society and a football club for younger children. The clubs programme is effective in enabling pupils to practise and develop their existing abilities, develop new interests, hone leadership skills and socialise with like-minded friends whilst participating in activities of common interest.

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

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

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

30. Leaders encourage pupils of all ages to question phenomena they see in the world around them and to consider matters from a variety of viewpoints. An assembly focuses on how scientists typically begin their enquiries by asking 'What if...?' and places emphasis on curiosity, enquiry and empathy with others. As a result, pupils are confident to articulate the awe and wonder they feel concerning matters beyond the immediately physical and they show clear appreciation of others' opinions. For example, when pupils suggest ideas for what could be the subject of a close-up photograph, they praise suggestions which include fur, forestry, fish and the universe even after being informed that the image in question is actually of paintbrush bristles.
31. Leaders implement a programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education that reflects the school's overall aim for pupils to grow into happy, confident and well-rounded individuals. Age-appropriate units cover areas such as personal safety, mutual respect, diversity, the rule of law, internet safety and environmental protection.
32. Teachers plan and deliver lessons in relationships and sex education (RSE) in line with current statutory guidance and engage with parents appropriately as part of the required consultation process as the curriculum is revised and developed. Through a range of topics such as 'feeling good, feeling safe', pupils learn about concepts including consent, healthy relationships, human biology and personal boundaries. Leaders make appropriate arrangements should parents request pupils to be withdrawn from certain lessons.
33. Teachers boost pupils' self-esteem effectively through consistent verbal praise of their diligence, self-application and consequent success. Pupils are awarded house points for listening carefully, being fair, showing respect, caring for others and working hard. They record these in diaries, which develops their self-knowledge, and they gain rewards when they reach particular colour-coded thresholds. Leaders also provide frequent performance opportunities for pupils, such as singing in both a nearby church and a national arena, which foster self-confidence effectively.
34. Pupils throughout the school participate and develop skills in various team and individual sports that include basketball, touch and tag rugby, gymnastics and swimming. Leaders arrange for pupils to play in a programme of matches and fixtures which enables them to represent their school in the sports that they enjoy. As a consequence of their work in physical education (PE), PSHE and science, pupils understand that exercise, a healthy diet, appropriate hydration and a balanced approach to stress and pressure all make positive contributions to physical and mental health. Furthermore, teachers frequently refer to the school's recently introduced tool which enables pupils to identify and manage their emotions. Pupils use this appropriately and effectively.
35. In the early years, children's co-ordination and control are developed through carefully structured physical activities. For example, working with a specialist teacher, children practise bouncing, throwing and catching balls before progressing to paired throwing. As children's proficiency develops, they hone their motor skills, co-ordination, teamwork and language, using terms such as 'under-arm' accurately.
36. Rare incidents of serious pupil misbehaviour are managed appropriately in line with the school behaviour policy. The active promotion of thorough and comprehensive anti-bullying measures

results in any bullying being resolved efficiently and effectively. However, teachers do not deal consistently with low-level disruption such as pupils calling out inappropriately during lessons. Conduct which many staff members deem to be unacceptable is not always challenged by other staff. Pupils recognise the inequity in this, and their progress is occasionally negatively impacted when distractions caused by unsuitable conduct are not addressed.

37. Leaders arrange for appropriate levels of supervision of pupils to be in place throughout the school day, including in the early years. This typically results in timely advice being given to pupils who may be getting carried away during playground games, and as a consequence altercations become defused and pupils remain friends. Nevertheless, this lacks consistency across the staff team and pupils occasionally need to alert staff to developing situations before adults take appropriate action.
38. Leaders apply the specific health and safety training that they have received to maintain the school premises appropriately. They implement an effective programme of frequent internal checks which is complemented by thorough oversight from governors. Advice and expertise are sought from external specialists when appropriate.
39. Leaders manage fire prevention measures effectively, with clearly marked exits, unobstructed escape routes and regularly serviced fire safety equipment. Termly fire evacuation practices are carried out so that pupils know what to do should they hear the alarm.
40. The school provides suitable accommodation for first aid and the medical treatment of pupils. Staff are appropriately trained and qualified in first aid, including in paediatric first aid for those who work in the early years. First aid and the administration of medication is managed effectively.
41. Leaders maintain admission and attendance registers in line with current statutory guidance. They promote high levels of attendance, monitor patterns both for individuals and groups, and take appropriate action should a pupil's absence give cause for concern.

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

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

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

43. Leaders develop pupils' mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs and therefore prepare them appropriately for life in a multicultural society. Five world religions, plus Humanism, are studied in depth throughout the school. Teachers emphasise common human considerations and ideas about the development of character, such as appropriate conduct, empathy with others and human worth. These lessons are complemented and extended through a programme of assemblies which includes celebrations of festivals such as Diwali and Holi as well as case studies of key figures in Black history and contemporary culture. Teachers emphasise diversity in all its forms, including recognition of 'Pride' month and a range of literature in classrooms that depicts a wide range of characters with contrasting backgrounds and heritage.
44. Teachers develop pupils' understanding of money and finance throughout the school. Children in the early years visit a local supermarket to purchase items on their shopping list, and the oldest pupils explore spending decisions, savings, investments, risk, interest and credit cards within their PSHE work. These pupils also run their own enterprises, such as designing and making fidget toys and personalised keyrings, and buying flowers wholesale and then retailing them as bouquets. Classes then vote to determine which good causes, such as a charity to help those with cerebral palsy or a variety of animal shelters, will benefit from the profits raised.
45. Leaders plan multiple opportunities for pupils to understand the practical application of democracy both within the school and in wider society. These include elections which determine the appointment of members of the school council, the house captains and the head pupils. Pupils study how laws are made, investigate courtroom trials and visit the Houses of Parliament. Leaders take appropriate steps to ensure that balanced perspectives are presented to pupils whenever political matters are discussed.
46. Leaders ensure that all pupils in the oldest cohort of the school have responsibilities such as librarians, positive lunchtime ambassadors, charity co-ordinators or representatives of a range of curriculum subjects. For example, the science prefects assist in leading a whole-school assembly and speak with confidence and enthusiasm when they visit the nursery to demonstrate principles of magnetism to the youngest children and their teachers.
47. In the early years, children engage positively with staff and each other. They demonstrate appropriate behaviour during activities, such as selecting their own materials when they set about making a collage about habitats and then taking turns to use resources such as glue. They follow effective modelling and guidance from the adults around them, which results in them co-operating politely and demonstrating patience and empathy towards each other.
48. Leaders actively source the views of pupils in a variety of ways, including regular meetings of the school council. This comprises one or two pupils from the five oldest year cohorts. Council discussions are diligently minuted and the resulting records are displayed for all to see. They show an appropriate mixture of scheduled discussions alongside matters raised as any other business. The council's recent achievements include developing the upcoming term's clubs programme to reflect the interests and wishes of the pupils, and the purchase of additional indoor and outdoor play equipment.

49. Teachers make appropriate arrangements for pupils to make positive contributions to their locality. These include helping to clean up the beach as part of the school's regular 'beach school' activities, working with the nearby church to participate in services and mount displays, participating in the Brighton Children's Parade and making donations to the local foodbank.

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

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

## Safeguarding

51. Leaders maintain a robust safeguarding culture by encouraging staff to report anything that concerns them, no matter how small. Leaders emphasise that seemingly insignificant matters can piece together to inform more major concerns. They report to governors regularly and review the safeguarding policy whenever necessary to ensure that it reflects current statutory guidance.
52. Leaders carry out appropriate safer recruitment checks when appointing new members of staff. They complete these checks within an appropriate timescale so that no employee begins work until the process is complete and the school confirms the suitability of the successful candidate. However, when the inspection commenced, some errors had been made in transposing the dates of certain checks from the staff files, which are assiduously maintained, into the SCR. Governors had not identified these mistakes during their termly scrutiny of the SCR. Leaders amended the SCR to show correct information before the end of the inspection.
53. Leaders provide staff with effective safeguarding training, which begins during the induction process when they explain child protection protocols and procedures, including those relating to whistleblowing and low-level concerns should staff need to raise allegations or voice worries about adults working at the school. Leaders then provide frequent refresher and extension training briefings on at least a weekly basis. This results in a team of knowledgeable and vigilant staff throughout the school who are continually reminded of their safeguarding duties, so they remain confident about fulfilling their responsibilities and managing any concerns that are raised. Leaders provide more extensive training opportunities whenever necessary, such as when national requirements are updated. These include the 'Prevent' duty to combat extremism and radicalisation.
54. Members of the school's safeguarding team have the necessary authority, time and higher-level training to carry out their duties competently. They respond appropriately to concerns and maintain detailed records on an electronic platform which assists in ensuring that communication with the remainder of the staff team is appropriate and effective. The safeguarding team provide effective support and liaise constructively with the local authority, referring concerns to them when required. They use information and training provided by local safeguarding partners to refine the school's procedures and ensure they remain appropriate.
55. Pupils know that they can talk to any member of staff if they have a worry or concern. Leaders explain the role played by members of the safeguarding team and encourage pupils to feel comfortable about discussing matters with them. 'Worry boxes' are provided in all classrooms for those pupils who would prefer to put their concerns in writing, and these are regularly checked by staff. The school operates a regularly reviewed system which requires pupils to identify 'five trusted adults' whom they are happy to approach.
56. Leaders ensure that pupils receive effective teaching so that they know how to promote their personal safety, both in the physical world and when they are online. Pupils learn how to be digitally responsible in their computing and PSHE lessons as well as through presentations by external visiting speakers, from whom they recall key messages such as the importance to 'stop, block and screenshot' should they receive unpleasant messages over the internet. They learn to be wary of misinformation and understand the importance of keeping personal information secure and not communicating with strangers. Leaders ensure that a robust internet filtering and monitoring system is in place so that no inappropriate content is viewed in school. Members of the safeguarding team

take suitable action when they receive alerts relating to any potentially inappropriate online searches.

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

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	Windlesham School and Nursery
<b>Department for Education number</b>	846/6013
<b>Registered charity number</b>	269264
<b>Address</b>	Windlesham School and Nursery 190 Dyke Road Brighton East Sussex BN1 5AA
<b>Phone number</b>	01273 553645
<b>Email address</b>	info@windleshamschool.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.windleshamschool.co.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Windlesham School Trust Ltd
<b>Co-chairs</b>	Dr Christine Mannion Watson and Mr Jack Cornish
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Nicholas Matthews
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	126
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 to 23 March and 30 June 2023

## Information about the school

58. Windlesham School and Nursery is a co-educational independent day school and nursery with a Christian ethos located in Brighton, East Sussex. Founded in 1948, the school is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher was appointed in April 2025 and two of the existing governors became co-chairs of the board in June 2025.
59. There are 26 children in the early years comprising one Nursery and one Reception class.
60. The school has identified 14 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
61. The school has identified 12 pupils who speak English as an additional language.
62. The school states its aims are to blend the best of tradition with forward-looking innovation to help every child grow into a happy, confident and well-rounded individual who is ready to thrive in the world ahead. The school seeks to achieve this by offering what it intends to be a rich, balanced curriculum in a nurturing and supportive environment where every child is recognised and celebrated as unique.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

10 to 12 March 2026

63. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

64. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and an assembly
- discussions with the co-chairs of governors
- discussions with 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.

65. 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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For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)