ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

School inspection report

30 April to 2 May 2024

Lewes Old Grammar School

Tyne House

140 High Street

Lewes

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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 communicate the school's stated aims. Trustees maintain oversight of the school's policies and procedures, though this is not always effective in ensuring that the school meets the Standards.

2. Leaders ensure that effective risk assessment arrangements are in place. Staff complete regular and effective risk assessments for trips, the early years, potentially risky areas and daily activities.

3. Leaders plan a broad curriculum to meet the needs of pupils of different ages. Teachers implement this curriculum effectively, including in the early years, so that pupils make good progress. Children in the early years meet their learning goals, and attainment at GCSE, A level and BTEC is above national averages.

4. Teachers provide effective individual support to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This enables them to make good progress.

5. The programme of careers advice includes opportunities to engage with individual guidance, work experience and exposure to possible career choices. However, the careers guidance provided to individual older pupils is not as developed or effective as possible.

6. Behaviour management is effective overall. However, a small minority of senior school pupils exhibit low-level poor behaviour. Leaders have recognised this and recently devised and implemented the 'respect' programme. However, it is too soon for this programme to have had a demonstrable impact. Incidents of bullying are few and, when they occur, are handled appropriately by staff.

7. Pupils demonstrate respect for diversity. They successfully develop an understanding of democracy, right and wrong, and the rule of law.

8. Not all safeguarding arrangements are effective. While leaders respond effectively to any safeguarding concerns about pupils, the school does not always adhere to the requirements of current statutory guidance with regard to the management of allegations against staff.

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The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are not 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 not met.

Areas for action

The proprietor must ensure that:

- the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge
- fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the other standards are consistently met and
- they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils.

so that:

- statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State, particularly with regard to the management of allegations against staff, is consistently adhered to.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- take effective steps to reduce the number of low-level behavioural issues in the senior school
- ensure that the careers guidance provided to individual older pupils is as developed and effective as possible.

Material change request

9. Inspectors considered the school's request for a change to the details of its registration to include an increase in pupil capacity from 675 to 710.

- Leaders implement effective health and safety, fire safety and risk assessment procedures. Supervision arrangements are effective. The premises and accommodation are suitably maintained and contain sufficient and suitable toilet and washing facilities, as well as medical, teaching and dining facilities, for the proposed maximum number of pupils. The school employs sufficient staff to teach and supervise 750 pupils effectively, and all staff are subject to the required pre-employment checks. The safeguarding team have sufficient capacity to cater for the proposed maximum number of pupils. Leaders have planned effectively for the proposed material change.

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- However, not all the school's safeguarding arrangements are effective. In particular, the school does not always make referrals relating to allegations against staff to relevant external agencies when required.

10. It is not recommended that the requested material change be approved.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Trustees maintain oversight of the school's functions that is effective in many respects. They visit staff and pupils on both school sites, receive reports and presentations, and review information to quality assure the impact of decisions made by leaders. However, the trustees' oversight does not ensure that leaders always demonstrate the knowledge and skills that they need to make the school meet all of the Standards.

12. Leaders make appropriate strategic plans to promote pupils' wellbeing. Their self-evaluation integrates feedback from pupils, staff and parents. Leaders use this information appropriately to inform decision-making, including about how best to recruit and deploy staff. For example, they have carefully considered the potential implications on pupils' wellbeing of the proposed addition to the maximum number of pupils. The resulting actions include recruiting additional staff, purchasing an additional building, expanding the sixth-form centre and creating a facility designed to support pupils' emotional wellbeing.

13. Leaders identify potential risks, such as those related to the site's location. They review the risks appropriately, and ensure that suitable security measures are in place. These measures include individual contactless cards which allow access and identify who is entering and leaving the buildings. Other potential risks, such as those relating to educational visits, the use of specialist rooms and the early years are identified and mitigated against by suitable control measures. Leaders regularly review risk assessments to ensure their continued suitability and effectiveness.

14. Leaders make sure that school policies and their implementation comply with equality legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010, and reflect the school's stated aims. Leaders take proactive steps to determine and implement suitable adjustments for individuals with disabilities, including through an appropriate accessibility plan.

15. Leaders and staff in the early years share updates with parents about their child's learning and information at the start and end of the day. Parents of pupils of all ages are given feedback on progress through parents' evenings and written reports. All required policies, spanning the early years, senior, and sixth-form phases, are readily accessible to parents via the school website or the school office.

16. Leaders follow their published policy for handling complaints effectively. They resolve most matters at an informal level, whilst others are resolved formally within appropriate timescales. Leaders keep appropriate records of complaints and the actions taken as a result of them. Trustees understand their role in the complaints process and review formal complaints with leaders to identify possible recurring themes and refine practice.

17. Leaders of the early years ensure that staff possess the necessary knowledge and skills to teach a balanced and age-appropriate curriculum. They ensure that the early years provision, including the indoor and outdoor spaces, is suitably staffed and resourced. Leaders conduct regular professional development discussions with the staff to develop their practice.

18. Leaders maintain effective links with external agencies with regard to the support for pupils who have education, health and care (EHC) plans and pupils who are affected by safeguarding issues. Leaders provide the local authority with required information relating to any pupils whom it funds.

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

19. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included at the end of the report.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. Leaders plan a broad curriculum based on the needs and ages of the pupils which promotes the positive values of the school. Curriculum plans build on knowledge and skills developed by pupils in previous years and map the order and timing of aspects to be taught. Leaders support pupils in selecting some subjects for Year 9 before making final selections of GCSE options. This develops pupils' opportunity to deepen their learning in specific academic directions and the ability to pursue their interests early. Leaders ensure that teachers effectively implement the curriculum through a systematic programme of observation of teaching and professional development.

21. Teachers use their subject knowledge effectively to support pupils in making connections between their existing understanding and new concepts. They focus pupils on specific aspects of the subject so that pupils' skills and understanding improve. For example, in English, clear teaching about features of persuasive writing and the importance of careful editing contributes to the quality of pupils' writing. Teachers use appropriate resources to create an engaging learning environment for the pupils. They regularly check and extend pupils' knowledge by asking targeted questions that reflect the pupils' needs. For example, in mathematics, clear dialogue and precise questioning about aspects such as the sine and cosine rules supports pupils' effective mathematical development. Pupils receive regular and detailed feedback, either written or verbal, which supports their progress. As a result, pupils are self-motivated, eager to learn, and make good progress.

22. Children in the early years meet their learning goals. Pupils sustain progress throughout the junior school, with most meeting or exceeding national expectations. Pupils' attainment at GCSE, BTEC, and A level is above national averages. Leavers achieve places in a broad range of universities, gap year opportunities and places of work.

23. Leaders use a cohesive system for tracking pupils' achievement. Heads of departments review assessment data termly, identifying pupils who are not making expected progress and planning additional support where required. Teachers use their knowledge of the specific support necessary to adapt tasks and questioning in lessons and plan co-curricular support sessions.

24. Leaders use data to monitor the progress of pupils who have SEND and provide training for teachers to support these pupils, such as about neurodivergence. Suitable support plans which define targets and strategies for achieving them are in place, and teachers adapt tasks in class effectively. In addition, they support pupils effectively in group and one-to-one learning sessions. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive effective additional support when required to develop their fluency in English.

25. Leaders plan a wide range of co-curricular activities that support pupils to develop and pursue interests. They successfully promote pupils' creative and aesthetic development through art, music, drama and choral societies, often culminating in mixed-age performances. Leaders monitor attendance at these activities, and using strategies such as asking pupils to suggest activities, have increased pupils' participation in the extra-curricular programme.

26. Leaders in the early years phase have high expectations and provide an environment that enables children to feel safe and secure in their learning. They use effective strategies to meet children's needs, such as planning opportunities for children to practise skills in many different ways. Leaders

provide the children with a balance and range of activities. Consequently, children in the early years develop emotional, intellectual, social, creative and physical skills effectively.

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

27. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

28. Teachers deliver a suitable relationships and sex education (RSE) programme within personal, social and health and economic (PSHE) education lessons. The content of the RSE curriculum develops in line with age and needs, and includes changes to bodies, managing healthy relationships and consent. Teachers check pupils' progress across topics through regular assessments.

29. Pupils participate in a wide range of sporting activities in the junior and senior schools. These include co-curricular activities such as tennis, hockey, football and cricket. Sessions for pupils in Years 7 and 8 allow pupils to pursue alternative physical activities, such as bouldering and trampolining, which have increased participation and enjoyment. The knowledge of the specialist sports teachers positively impacts pupils' acquisition of specific physical skills. Children in the early years develop appropriate body control skills, such as using a pencil successfully and throwing and catching.

30. Teaching develops pupils' spiritual and moral sensibilities effectively by taking opportunities to explore issues in these areas as they arise across the curriculum. For example, in philosophy lessons, pupils explore issues such as the ethics of genetic engineering, while in religious studies (RS), pupils compare the moral tenets of different religions, such as Buddhism and Judaism.

31. The comprehensive PSHE programme enables pupils to understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, such as the importance of a balanced diet, exercise and sleep. Pupils learn and use strategies to support their emotional wellbeing, including how to manage emotions, self-care during stressful periods and how to access support from the school's wellbeing centre.

32. Teachers in the early years support children to identify their emotions successfully and develop strategies to help themselves feel better. Similarly, in the junior and senior schools, caring staff notice pupils' emotions quickly and respond sympathetically. Pupils have constant access to key staff such as class teachers, form tutors and wellbeing support staff for support. Consequently, the pupils feel noticed, supported, and well looked after.

33. Leaders use the rewards system effectively in the junior school. Weekly assemblies promote the school values of kindness, and weekly commendations further boost pupils' self-esteem. Teachers nurture positive and supportive relationships between teachers and pupils. As a result, pupils in the junior school behave well consistently.

34. Behaviour management in the senior school is not always so effective. The vast majority of senior pupils in the senior school are well behaved and kind. However, a small minority exhibit low-level poor behaviour. Leaders have recognised this and recently devised and implemented the 'Respect' programme, which clearly defines expectations, rewards and sanctions. Teachers reinforce elements of this in lessons and free time. Leaders routinely monitor implementation to ensure that it is consistent and fair. However, the 'Respect' programme has not yet had the desired impact on the amount of low-level behaviour exhibited in the senior school.

35. Bullying is taught about in the PHSE scheme and leaders take regular opportunities to communicate messages about why it is harmful and not permitted. Teachers develop pupils' understanding of direct and indirect bullying and how to respond if bullying occurs. As a result, the number of bullying

incidents is low. Teachers deal with bullying fairly and rigorously, with the result that pupils have confidence in the school's anti-bullying procedures.

36. The school's accommodation is suitable for the pupils. The medical, toilet and washing facilities are sufficient and suitable to meet the pupils' needs. The premises are methodically maintained through regular checks and servicing. The sites have appropriate outdoor spaces in which pupils learn and relax. Leaders ensure staff supervise pupils appropriately in lessons and free time through timetables. These appropriately match staff skills and experience with pupil needs, including in the early years.

37. Leaders commission external specialists to conduct fire risk assessments, and follow the advice that they receive. A suitable policy for reducing the risk of fire is in place and regular fire evacuation practices are carried out by staff and pupils.

38. Staff accurately maintain admissions and attendance registers with all required information. Leaders ensure that attendance records are cross-checked with the electronic signing-in and out system. Staff quickly follow up on non-attendance. Leaders inform the local authority whenever any pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times of transition.

39. Suitable first aid is in place for pupils who have an injury, become unwell or have specific medical needs. Staff across the school receive regular aid training, with some staff, including in the early years, being paediatric first aiders.

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

40. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

41. The PSHE programme works alongside the 'Respect' initiative to promote British values, such as those of respect for people's beliefs, religion and individual freedom, and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of diversity effectively. Pupils explore themes such as how to challenge one's preconceptions and the harmful effects of prejudice and discriminatory behaviour and successfully learn how and why to challenge these. This learning is further developed in RS lessons through study of diverse religions and the value of differing views and cultures. Outside lessons, the school runs events and societies which celebrate diversity. As a result, pupils develop their cultural understanding well and demonstrate an awareness of the importance of mutual respect and an appreciation for those with different beliefs to their own.

42. Pupils successfully develop an understanding of democracy, right and wrong, ethical principles, and the rule of law through the PSHE programme. They demonstrate the ability to apply these concepts to real-life situations, such as when discussing the impact of militant action, and the ethical implications of different choices, such as those relating to medical advancement. Leaders ensure that any discussion of political issues remains fair and unbiased.

43. Leaders carefully plan increases in autonomy and responsibility as pupils progress through the school as part of preparation for their lives in British society. Junior pupils develop responsible attitudes, take on suitable class-based roles and represent the views of their peers to the school council. Older pupils have increased freedom to choose the pre-option subjects available in Year 9 and leave the school site from Year 11.

44. Teachers encourage pupils to recognise their social responsibilities through various opportunities. These range from junior pupils taking on roles of responsibility in looking after the immediate environment, volunteering as part of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE), and various charity initiatives. Pupils participate in various events to support the local community, including with foodbank collection, community litter picking and visits by the junior choir to a local care home.

45. Pupils in the sixth form value the opportunities planned by leaders to contribute to the school community. These opportunities include supporting younger pupils in co-curricular activities and lessons, developing self-confidence and a sense of giving back to the school.

46. Leaders ensure a suitable programme of careers advice, including opportunities to engage with work experience and the world of work. Careers education begins early, with junior school pupils encouraged to consider their possible aptitudes and career goals as part of the PSHE curriculum. Leaders in the senior school invite external speakers to inspire an interest in career pathways. Pupils use app-based assessments to help guide themselves as to potential future career choices. However, as identified in leaders' self-evaluation, the individual careers guidance provided to older pupils is not as effective or developed as possible with regard to consideration of the pupils' particular aptitudes and aspirations.

47. Staff in the early years know the children well and model positive social behaviours and language, and plan social development in all aspects of learning. Adults encourage discussion and support children in taking turns to listen, share and play together. Older pupils are socially aware of themselves and their peers. Teachers use planned learning, such as PSHE, religious studies and

history, and unplanned opportunities to highlight and develop social behaviours. As a result, pupils respond well to adults and their peers.

48. Leaders ensure pupils access a suitable programme of economic education. In the junior school, this begins with learning about the role of money and extends into practical application in an enterprise project. This project enables pupils to develop essential budgeting, negotiation, and team-working skills. Older pupils successfully learn about managing personal finances and how to avoid debt.

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

49. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

50. Most arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of pupils are effective. Leaders respond effectively whenever safeguarding concerns about pupils are raised, including by liaising with and, when appropriate, referring concerns about pupils to local children's services or other appropriate agencies. However, the school does not always implement effective arrangements with regard to the management of allegations against staff. In particular, leaders do not always make referrals relating to allegations against staff to relevant external agencies as required by current statutory guidance. This issue was not identified by trustee's monitoring of the school's safeguarding policy and procedures.

51. Leaders ensure that all safeguarding concerns about pupils are taken seriously and recorded carefully. Staff are appropriately trained, including about the 'Prevent' duty and the importance of identifying and reporting potential safeguarding issues, however minor. This training begins before commencing work at the school and continues with regular updates that reflect current statutory guidance. Systems for preventing, reporting and managing child-on-child abuse are effective. Pupils can identify staff to whom they can go and be listened to if they are worried.

52. Recent additional recruitment has successfully increased the capacity of the safeguarding team. The safeguarding teams of both sites meet regularly to ensure that there is a consistent approach to safeguarding across the school and the support for any pupils affected by safeguarding issues.

53. Pupils are taught how to access the internet safely and can identify key strategies such as password security. They develop their awareness of cybercrime and how to manage the potential risks posed by social media. Suitable monitoring and filtering systems are in place to protect pupils when accessing the internet through the school's network. The designated safeguarding lead monitors daily reports and liaises with class teachers and form tutors to support pupils when required.

54. Leaders consistently implement the safer recruitment policy effectively. They carry out appropriate checks before adults commence work at the school. These are suitably recorded in a single central register of appointments.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

55. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included at the end of the report.

Schedule of unmet Standards

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

The following standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR[1] Part 8, paragraph 34(1)	The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school –
34(1)(a)	demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
34(1)(b)	fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
34(1)(c)	actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

Safeguarding

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –
7(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
7(b)	such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
EYFS 3.5	Providers must have and implement policies and procedures to keep children safe and meet EYFS requirements. Schools are not required to have separate policies to cover EYFS requirements provided the requirements are already met through an existing policy. Where providers are required to have policies and procedures as specified below, these policies and procedures should be recorded in writing. Policies and procedures should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant LSP.
EYFS 3.7	If providers have concerns about children's safety or welfare, they must immediately notify their local authority children's social care team, in line with local reporting procedures, and, in emergencies, the police. Providers must also take into account the government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales'. All schools are required to have regard to the government's statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', and other childcare providers may also find it helpful to read this guidance.

[1] The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('ISSR')

School details

School	Lewes Old Grammar School
Department for Education number	845/6032
Registered charity number	1163491
Address	Lewes Old Grammar School Tyne House 140 High Street Lewes East Sussex BN7 1XS
Phone number	01273 472634
Email address	office@logs.uk.com
Website	www.logs.uk.com
Proprietor	Lewes Old Grammar School Trust
Chair	Mrs Sue Bonell
Headmaster	Mr Robert Blewitt
Age range	3 to 19
Number of pupils	710
Date of previous inspection	23 to 25 June 2021

Information about the school

56. Lewes Old Grammar School is a co-educational day school in Lewes. The senior and sixth-form pupils occupy a range of buildings on Lewes High Street. Junior school pupils and children in the early years are taught on a separate site. The school is a charitable trust, overseen by a governing body formed of the trustees.

57. There are six children in the early years comprising one Reception class and one Nursery class.

58. The school has identified 95 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Six pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

59. English is an additional language for two pupils.

60. The school states its aims are to enable pupils to develop respect for others, self-esteem and the ability to think for themselves. It sets out to help pupils grow in self-confidence, leadership and organisational skills, while reaching their academic potential.

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Inspection details

Inspection dates	30 April to 2 May 2024

61. A team of six inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

62. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other trustees
- 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
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

63. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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