ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate

# School inspection report

6 to 9 May 2026

# Barfield Prep School

Runfold

Guildford Road

Runfold

Farnham

GU10 1PB

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'.

# Contents

**SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS** ..... **3**

**THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS** ..... **5**

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS ..... 5

**SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE** ..... **6**

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE ..... 7

**SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION** ..... **8**

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION ..... 9

**SECTION 3: PUPILS' PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING** ..... **10**

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS' PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING ..... 11

**SECTION 4: PUPILS' SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY** ..... **12**

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS' SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY 12

**SAFEGUARDING** ..... **13**

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING ..... 13

**SCHOOL DETAILS** ..... **14**

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL** ..... **15**

**INSPECTION DETAILS** ..... **16**

## Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders have created a warm, inclusive and nurturing school culture. Pupils and staff build highly positive relationships, show respect to one another and collaborate harmoniously. Leaders prioritise pupils' wellbeing in the decisions that they take. They ensure that pupils are safe, nurtured and cared for as individuals.

2. Governors and leaders collaborate well to provide strategic direction for the school. Regular formal and informal meetings and reports ensure that governors are informed about the school's effectiveness and any areas for improvement. Leaders write and implement suitable policies and procedures, many of which are provided on the school's website. At the beginning of the inspection, the safeguarding policy on the website was not specific to the school's context and daily practice. These issues were rectified before the end of the on-site inspection.

3. Leaders have developed a broad, engaging and ambitious curriculum, enriched through meaningful cross-curricular and outdoor learning opportunities. Teaching is carefully planned and adapted to meet pupils' differing needs. For instance, the school has effective systems to identify and support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are well supported to access learning and achieve well. Teachers' effective use of assessment and targeted support ensures pupils are well supported to learn confidently, collaborate respectfully and make good progress over time.

4. The school provides a caring and inclusive environment in which pupils' wellbeing, confidence and personal development are promoted effectively. Pupils benefit from a broad physical education (PE) and sports programme, a well-planned personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum, and a wide range of opportunities which encourage healthy lifestyle, resilience and positive relationships. Leaders promote respect, equality and inclusion across the school community and pupils demonstrate maturity, responsibility and pride in their school. Behaviour, safeguarding, health and safety, admissions and attendance procedures are managed effectively, with leaders working closely with families and external agencies to support pupils' wellbeing and development.

5. Pupils develop a thorough understanding of British values, equality and social responsibility. Leaders provide them with a rich programme of leadership opportunities, community involvement, life skills and wider curriculum experiences. Pupils learn to work collaboratively, respect diversity and contribute positively to their community. They are respectful and make positive friendships. Over time, pupils develop confidence, independence and an understanding of future careers and economic wellbeing.

6. Children in the early years benefit from a warm, nurturing and stimulating environment. Carefully planned teaching, high quality adult interactions and a balance of play-based and structured learning support their learning and development. Effective assessment and timely intervention ensure children are well supported to develop confidence, independence and resilience. They are well ready to transition into Year 1.

7. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and there are appropriate systems in place to protect pupils. The safeguarding team responds sensitively to any concerns and follows the required

procedures promptly. However, a few staff are less secure in the precise way that they should report low-level concerns and whistleblowing.

# 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 systems for reviewing policies to ensure that they are appropriately contextualised and personalised to reflect the school's specific practice
- ensure that all staff are consistently confident in using established channels to report and record low-level concerns about adults working with pupils.

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## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders successfully promote the school's aim of creating an environment where children can be children. Leaders promote a sense of belonging and community. Pupils are enthusiastic when they arrive at school and in their lessons. They engage keenly in the opportunities available to them. Leaders place a high priority on pupils' wellbeing and personal development through a positive and inclusive culture. This is reflected in practices such as mindful form time, routine teacher check-ins and strong pastoral monitoring systems. As a result, pupils feel known, valued and confident to seek support when needed.

9. Leaders evaluate the school's performance effectively and identify appropriate priorities for improvement. Lesson observations, learning walks and assessment information are used purposefully to identify target areas and inform the school development planning process. As a result, leaders' actions and evolving curriculum development support pupils' academic improvement and strengthen pupils' learning of core skills.

10. Leaders have an appropriate range of policies and procedures that are in line with statutory guidance. Leaders make these available to parents via the school's website. However, at the beginning of the inspection, some of the detail in the safeguarding policy was not precisely aligned with the specific school context and daily practice. This was rectified before the end of the inspection.

11. Leaders implement the school's complaints policy appropriately when concerns are raised. Record-keeping is detailed and well maintained, with logs demonstrating that complaints are managed and resolved in line with the school's procedures.

12. Leaders maintain effective and supportive links with external agencies, which provide advice and guidance effectively to support the school's knowledge and understanding. The school informs the local authority promptly whenever pupils join or leave at non-standard transition points. They also work appropriately with external agencies related to pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), including providing information related to funding and finance.

13. Leaders have established a thorough approach to risk assessment across the school. A wide range of risk assessments are in place covering the site, activities, educational visits and individual pupil needs where appropriate. Checks are carried out regularly and record-keeping is detailed and well organised. Any issues identified are addressed promptly to help ensure that risks are minimised effectively.

14. Leaders ensure that the school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The school demonstrates a clear understanding of accessibility requirements and statutory guidance. They adjust the curriculum and physical adaptations to ensure that all pupils can access learning opportunities and the school site appropriately. Leaders review this plan routinely to ensure that it meets all relevant and reasonable expectations.

15. The proprietor body receives relevant and detailed information about the school's effectiveness from governors and leaders who work for the proprietor body. Safeguarding oversight is supported through regular visits and a range of activities, including reviews of the school's approaches to safer recruitment. The proprietor provides appropriate challenge and support to school leaders. However,

the proprietor body's checks on provision had not identified the contextual errors in the safeguarding policy.

## 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 have developed a broad and engaging curriculum which provides pupils with rich learning opportunities. Pupils study a wide range of subjects and develop knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Learning is enhanced through meaningful links between subjects, helping pupils apply their skills in different contexts, including the development of debating skills within history lessons. Outdoor learning is an important part of the curriculum and is planned across subjects and age groups, supporting learning in areas such as science and art.

18. Children in the early years benefit from carefully planned teaching, stimulating indoor and outdoor provision and high-quality adult interactions. Adults' adept interventions support children's early learning and development. For example, early phonics and letter formation are taught effectively, ensuring children evolve appropriate early reading and writing skills. The organisation of classrooms and outdoor spaces allows children to explore activities independently and access a wide range of rich learning opportunities. Teachers use an effective mix of planned and play-based activities to engage and enthuse children in their learning. They check on how well children are learning and developing, using a range of assessment information. They act quickly to support any children who need extra help.

19. Teachers have a thorough understanding of the subjects that they teach, which helps to develop pupils' enjoyment of learning. Teaching is carefully planned to meet the needs of pupils, including high prior attaining pupils and those requiring additional support. Teachers use assessment information, classroom observations and their knowledge of pupils to adapt learning effectively. Lessons are typically well paced, engaging and ambitious, with teachers using practical activities and effective questioning to deepen pupils' understanding. For example, in Year 6 history, pupils explore ethical dilemmas faced by leaders and confidently discuss issues of trust and decision-making. Teachers encourage respectful discussion and collaboration, helping pupils to listen carefully, disagree respectfully and work towards shared decisions

20. Pupils develop a broad range of knowledge and skills across the curriculum and engage positively in their learning. They demonstrate confidence when discussing ideas, working collaboratively and applying their learning across different subjects. Outdoor learning opportunities enrich pupils' experiences across subjects, including science and art, and contribute positively to their personal and academic development. Pupils demonstrate respect for others, listen carefully and work well together. The school uses effective assessment systems to monitor pupils' progress and identify where additional support or intervention may be needed. Assessment information is used well to inform whole-school priorities, including current work on handwriting and spelling. As a result, pupils learn well and make good progress over time.

21. The school has effective systems in place to identify pupils who have SEND and assess their individual needs. Information is shared with staff so that teachers have a secure understanding of the support and adaptations required for pupils in their classes. Teaching is adapted appropriately to meet pupils' differing needs, and targeted support and specific strategies are used to help pupils access learning successfully. Staff work closely together to monitor pupils' progress and ensure that provision remains responsive and effective. Leaders regularly review the impact of provision for individual pupils.

22. There are a very small number of pupils each year who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and an even smaller number who are in the early stages of learning English. Leaders fully understand their responsibilities to support pupils' linguistic skills and provide an array of in-class support and additional intervention, when pupils need it. This ensures that pupils with any gaps in their language understanding are well supported to develop important reading, writing and speaking skills in English, and access the curriculum alongside their peers

23. Leaders have developed a broad programme of recreational activities, which make good use of well-resourced outdoor play and learning areas, including climbing, cheerleading and musical theatre. This enables pupils to broaden their skills as well as to pursue new passions and interests.

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

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

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

25. Pupils benefit from a broad and well-planned PE and sports programme. Proficient staff help pupils to develop their skills and understanding across a wide range of team and individual sports. Pupils also enjoy taking part in regular competitive matches against other schools. Through these opportunities, they gain a thorough understanding of the important of healthy and active lifestyles. Outdoor learning and physical activity further encourage pupils to make positive choices.

26. The school promotes respect, equality and inclusion, helping pupils to understand and value differences, including protected characteristics. PSHE, RSE, assemblies and wider curriculum experiences encourage tolerance, diversity and positive relationships. A new RSE curriculum has been introduced which provides age-appropriate teaching and is shared with parents, so they understand what is taught and when. The school also addresses current social themes such as equality, gender and respect through assemblies, PSHE lessons, digital learning and form time.

27. The school successfully creates an environment where pupils' wellbeing is effectively promoted and supported. Staff promote confidence and resilience in pupils. Targeted interventions support pupils to work and play harmoniously. Healthy lifestyles are encouraged through physical activity, outdoor learning, hygiene education and nutritious food. Pupils' medical needs are met through an appropriate medical room and staff trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid. Leaders work closely with families and external professionals, including mental health teams. These experiences help pupils to develop positive emotional and physical wellbeing.

28. The school creates a positive environment where pupils feel supported and challenged, helping to build their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are given meaningful responsibilities within school life, including roles in the pupil parliament, where they represent the views of their classmates. Initiatives such as 'Taco Tuesday' and buddy benches demonstrate that pupils' views are valued. Older pupils, including the head boy and head girl, show maturity, responsibility and pride in their school community.

29. Leaders have implemented appropriate behaviour and anti-bullying policies and procedures. Pupils understand expectations and the consequences of poor behaviour. Preventative strategies and targeted support help pupils learn how to work and play positively together. The school's focus on mutual respect, equality and inclusion further supports positive behaviour and relationships across the school community.

30. Leaders take their health and safety responsibilities seriously and ensure the school site is well maintained. Systems and procedures are regularly checked both internally and by external contractors. Staff receive comprehensive and up-to-date training. Pupils are supervised carefully by attentive staff, including during breaktimes and lunchtimes and, in the early years, when eating.

31. Admissions procedures are well managed, with the local authority informed promptly when pupils join or leave outside normal admission times. Attendance registers are completed accurately and on time. The school works closely with parents and the local authority attendance officer to support families and maintain high levels of attendance.

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32. Children in the early years are supported effectively in their emotional and physical development. Staff create a warm, nurturing environment where children feel safe, valued and confident to explore their learning. Positive relationships between adults and children help to build trust, independence and resilience, while clear routines support children in managing their feelings and developing social skills. Opportunities for physical development are well planned, both indoors and outdoors, enabling children to strengthen their co-ordination, balance and fine motor skills through a range of active and practical experiences.

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

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

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

34. Pupils develop a secure understanding of important British values, including democracy, the role of law and the role of public services. Through voting, debating and leadership opportunities they learn how decisions are made and why rules and laws are important. They learn about the UK parliamentary system, current affairs and political ideas. Pupils also learn about the role public services play within society and the wider community. For example, children in the early years learn about important people that help them, such as the police, fire service and healthcare services.

35. Pupils show respect for diversity and develop an understanding of equality, fairness and the rights of others. Younger pupils learn about kindness and treating others fairly, while older pupils discuss more complex ideas such as gender stereotypes and the freedom for individuals to make their own choices. The school's values of integrity, compassion, tolerance and resilience are recognised and celebrated through reward systems and celebration assemblies. Through community events, charitable work, the religious education curriculum, life skills and educational trips, pupils develop their social and cultural understanding.

36. Children in the early years develop effective social skills, supported through a rich range of activities. Adults encourage sharing, co-operation, communication and positive relationships with others. The welcoming and creative environment helps children build confidence and independence in their interactions.

37. Pupils willingly take on roles and responsibilities across the school. Through leadership opportunities, group work and class discussions they learn how to work collaboratively, make shared decisions and support others within the school community. They also make a positive contribution to the local community through events such as charitable fundraising, where they choose local charities. They develop a sense of social responsibility and connection to the local area.

38. Pupils learn about a wide range of careers through careers fairs, visitors and talks. This helps to broaden pupils' early understanding of future opportunities. Leaders also support pupils as they transition between year groups, helping them to develop confidence and prepare for new expectations as they progress through the school.

39. Leaders ensure that opportunities for economic education are planned through a comprehensive life skills curriculum. This allows pupils to develop an understanding of money, what it is used for, how to save and what it means to be in debt. This learning is delivered explicitly in mathematics and life skills lessons. The learning is enriched in lessons such as pizza making, where budgets are calculated and pupils were required to look at comparative costs of homemade pizzas and shop bought versions.

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

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

# Safeguarding

41. There are suitable arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of the pupils, including children in the early years. At the beginning of the inspection, the safeguarding policy was available on the website and took account of the up-to-date statutory guidance. However, some of the detail in the policy was not precisely aligned with the specific school context and day-to-day practice. This was rectified before the end of the inspection.

42. Leaders responsible for safeguarding are well trained and understand their roles and responsibilities. They provide thoughtful support that is matched to the needs of pupils and their families and helps to improve outcomes for pupils. Leaders work closely with external agencies, including children's services, to make sure concerns are dealt with quickly and appropriately.

43. All staff complete a thorough induction programme when they join the school and receive regular training to keep their knowledge up to date. Staff follow safeguarding procedures well and take their responsibilities seriously. Staff meet regularly with leaders to discuss any additional needs that pupils have, and how best to support them. Staff understand their role to report low-level concerns about adults working with pupils. However, a few are less secure in the precise way that they should report low-level concerns and whistleblowing.

44. Leaders follow the required safer recruitment procedures when appointing staff and volunteers. They make sure all necessary suitability checks are completed before anyone starts work at the school. Records are maintained accurately on the school's single central register. Leaders and governors check the appropriateness of the checks that are made and the accuracy of the record keeping.

45. Leaders ensure that pupils across the school know who they can speak to if they have a concern. Pupils say they feel safe and cared for and know who they can talk to if they are worried. The school gives pupils different ways to share concerns, including classroom 'worry monsters' or worry boxes. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online, through the curriculum, the digital learning programme and assemblies. Leaders implement an appropriate internet filtering and monitoring system. Leaders check on the effectiveness of the system. They act quickly and appropriately when any concerns are raised.

46. Governors maintain an effective oversight of safeguarding procedures. Regular communication with leaders helps governors stay informed about leaders' work, emerging patterns and trends and allows them to review the impact of leaders' work.

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

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

## School details

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|---|---|
| **School** | Barfield Prep School |
| **Department for Education number** | 936/6308 |
| **Registered charity number** | 309243 |
| **Address** | Barfield Prep School<br>Guildford Road<br>Runfold<br>Farnham<br>Surrey<br>GU10 1PB |
| **Phone number** | 01252 782271 |
| **Email address** | admin@barfieldprep.org.uk |
| **Website** | www.barfieldprep.org.uk |
| **Proprietor** | St Peter's College, Radley |
| **Chair** | Mr David Smellie |
| **Headteacher** | Mr Andrew Boyle |
| **Age range** | 2 to 11 |
| **Number of pupils** | 281 |
| **Date of previous inspection** | 20 to 22 June 2023 |

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## Information about the school

48. Barfield School is an independent co-educational day school, located in Farnham, Surrey. The school was previously a limited company and registered charity, run by the Prep Schools Trust. In 2025, the school became part of Radley Schools Group. The chief executive officer became the chair of the proprietor body at the same time. There is a local governing body that acts in an advisory capacity for the proprietor body. The school comprises a Nursery, a lower school for pupils from Reception to Year 2 and an upper school, for pupils in Years 3 to 6.

49. The school has 102 children in the early years, comprising five Nursery and two Reception classes.

50. The school has identified 32 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Eight pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.

51. The school has identified English as an additional language for a very small number of pupils.

52. The school states its aims are to create an environment where children really can be children, where relationships are strong and a close relationship between home and school is nurtured in the partnership of education. It aims to provide a grounded approach to independent education, stating that a Barfield Journey means that children leave the school with an academic profile they can be proud of, as well as with the skills and experiences they need to cope with the demands of the next chapter of their educational lives. It seeks to deliver a curriculum which prides itself on balance, where the children understand and respect the value of academic rigour, but equally the importance of being creative and the acquisition of skills that are learnt outside of the traditional classroom. It aims to ensure that children are happily challenged in their learning and are nurtured as individuals, and guided and prepared for successful entry into the right senior school at the right time. The school seeks to provide a unique ethos in which family, community and socially responsible values are instilled through outstanding pastoral care. It also seeks to fulfil the school's social and environmental responsibilities to society, and to enable all members of staff to have the opportunity for personal development and to make the fullest of contributions to school life.

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# Inspection details

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| **Inspection dates** | 6 to 8 May 2026 |

53. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The onsite inspection was quality assured by a remote monitor.

54. Inspection activities included:

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

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

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- 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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