

# School inspection report

25 to 27 February 2025

## **Lochinver House School**

Heath Road

Little Heath

Potters Bar

Hertfordshire

EN6 1LW

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 share a clear vision for the school's future development. Together, they have undertaken a wide-ranging review of the school's work, which has led to substantial changes to the school's leadership structure, curriculum and procedures for the pastoral care of pupils. Some of the most recent changes to procedures are not fully embedded. Leaders implement policies and procedures effectively so that the school meets the Standards.
2. The governing body maintains effective oversight of the school. Through regular contact with leaders and staff, they provide well-informed support and challenge. Leaders manage risk with care to minimise the possibility of harm to pupils. Parents are provided with the required information and can access a suitable complaints procedure.
3. The revised curriculum supports the school's aim of developing pupils' international perspectives and understanding. It also reflects the requirements of senior school entry examinations. Teaching is generally well planned and engages pupils in their learning. Pupils are keen to contribute to lessons and make good progress from their individual starting points. In a few cases, activities are not matched to the needs and abilities of all pupils and their progress is not as consistent.
4. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) typically make good progress because teachers adapt their teaching and provide effective individual support.
5. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are well supported and typically make rapid progress in their fluency in English.
6. Leaders promote good behaviour. Pupils are polite and will challenge poor behaviour and bullying. Health and safety, fire prevention and medical provision are well managed. Attendance is monitored closely.
7. Leaders in the early years have developed a curriculum which promotes all the required areas of learning. Children are curious and adventurous learners who enjoy the well-planned activities, including those in the outdoor learning environment. There are positive relationships within the setting and children are prepared well for their next stage of learning.
8. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme ensures that pupils gain the knowledge and experience that they need in later life. Pupils respect difference and take a lead in supporting local charities.
9. Leaders have established secure safeguarding arrangements. Staff are well trained and understand their responsibility to report any concerns. Leaders respond promptly and ensure that safeguarding information is shared appropriately. Pupils know who to approach if they have concerns. Recruitment processes are robust.

## 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 that all new procedures are embedded consistently across all sections of the school
- ensure that all teachers plan work which is well matched to the prior attainment and needs of pupils so that they make consistent progress.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders demonstrate considerable knowledge and skills in carrying out their roles. The wellbeing of pupils underpins their decision-making. Leaders and governors have recently undertaken a wide-ranging and detailed review of all aspects of the school's work to ensure that it meets the evolving needs of pupils.
11. This has led to a wide range of recent developments. These include changes to the curriculum, so that it is aligned with the school's aims, and enhanced systems of pastoral support for pupils. A new senior leadership structure, new policies and procedures have been introduced. Leaders are alert to unintended consequences resulting from these changes. They have identified some new procedures which are not fully embedded across all sections of the school, such as those relating to behaviour management.
12. The governors provide effective oversight of the school and assure themselves that school leaders have a clear strategic plan for the school's future. Members of the governing body have a wide range of skills relevant to their role. Nominated governors oversee their areas of expertise and report back to the main board. Governors ensure that the Standards are met through detailed reviews of policies and procedures. They provide informed challenge through regular meetings with leaders and visits to the school. They are reflective in their approach to their role and make effective use of external advice and guidance to support their work.
13. Leaders in the early years ensure that provision meets the needs of the children, who make a positive start to their time at school and make good progress. Recently introduced changes to the curriculum for the early years aligns with the developments in the rest of the school, so children make smooth transitions as they move through the school. Activities are well planned, so that the children are engaged in their learning.
14. The management of risk is thorough and supports pupils' wellbeing. Detailed risk assessments are in place to monitor and mitigate potential hazards, including those relating to school trips and the school site. Staff are provided with suitable risk assessment training and take effective action when required. There are regular reviews of risk assessments to ensure they remain fit for purpose. Staff in the early years check carefully for hazards in the setting, including the outdoor learning areas.
15. Leaders have established effective links with local services and agencies to support the wellbeing of pupils. They supply the information required by the local authority, including regarding the use of funds related to pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
16. A suitable complaints policy is in place and followed when required. Complaints records are kept securely and include details of any actions required as a result of the complaint. Both leaders and governors reflect on any lessons which emerge and make changes to procedures when required.
17. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and publishes a suitable accessibility plan outlining reasonable adjustments for pupils who have a disability. The timescales and actions to complete specific tasks on this plan are not always clearly stated.
18. The required policies and information are accessible on the school's website and provided to parents and prospective parents as required. When new statutory guidance is introduced, leaders ensure policies are updated as required and implemented effectively.

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

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

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

20. Leaders have developed a wide and diverse curriculum which provides a breadth of different experiences for pupils. Recent changes, such as increased time allocated to numeracy and literacy, mean that pupils are better prepared for senior school entry examinations whilst gaining a broader international understanding and awareness, in line with the school's aims.
21. All the required curriculum aspects are covered, including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. All pupils learn at least one modern foreign language and older pupils study Latin. International aspects are introduced through topics which draw together features in geography, history, art and music. Pupils acquire a wide range of knowledge and skills. Their numeracy and literacy skills develop well, they use increasingly advanced vocabulary and can express themselves clearly. They enjoy reading and apply their mathematical skills in an increasing range of contexts. Pupils understand British values, such as mutual respect and tolerance of others.
22. Schemes of work are planned effectively to build on pupils' prior learning. Teachers demonstrate a secure knowledge of their subject. They make links between subjects in order to increase pupils' understanding by applying their knowledge in different contexts. Pupils in Year 8 use their understanding of the differences between a bacterium and a virus in topics about staying healthy, drawing readily on previously learned material.
23. Pupils' prior learning and individual needs are usually well understood by teachers, and teaching strategies and lesson planning are adapted in response to these. Teachers use effective questioning to check pupils' understanding and provide helpful feedback to improve their future work. As a result, pupils make good progress overall from their starting points. In a few lessons, activities are not well matched to the prior attainment and needs of individual pupils, and progress is not as consistent.
24. Leaders have created a well-planned assessment framework. Pupils' progress is tracked so that support can be provided if required. Pupils take regular standardised assessment tests which allow leaders to monitor their progress against their individual starting points, helping them to maintain good progress. Pupils' work is marked regularly so they understand how they are progressing and their next steps in learning.
25. Parents are kept informed of their child's progress and achievement termly through regular parents' evenings and written reports.
26. Leaders and teachers take effective action to support pupils who have SEND. Their needs are assessed and their progress is reviewed regularly. Their teachers and parents are provided with helpful information about individual pupils. Teachers use this information to make appropriate adaptations in lessons and target the support from teaching assistants effectively. As a result, pupils who have SEND, including those with EHC plans, make good progress.
27. Pupils who speak EAL are supported with tailored resources such as vocabulary sheets. Teachers understand pupils' individual needs. They typically make rapid progress in increasing fluency in English.

28. Teachers encourage pupils to ask questions to improve their understanding. Teachers' behaviour management strategies are effective and pupils apply themselves well in lessons. The school's resources and facilities are utilised effectively by teachers to enhance pupils' learning.
29. Early years leaders provide carefully planned activities which are linked to children's individual interests. As a result, children engage in their learning. Their communication and language skills develop well during their time in the setting. Both indoor and outdoor learning environments are well resourced with a wide range of materials to encourage exploration and curiosity about the world around them. Adults plan imaginative activities and the children engage enthusiastically in their learning as a result. Staff record children's progress with care to plan their next steps in learning, matching activities to their individual needs. Almost all children reach the expected level of development by the end of their time in the early years.
30. Leaders provide pupils with a wide range of extra-curricular activities which allow them to develop new skills and interests including choir, coding, robotics, cooking and chess clubs. Pupils develop physical skills in a range of sporting activities such as badminton, tennis, gymnastics and taekwondo.

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

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

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

32. Leaders promote kindness, honesty and respect as the school's core values and pupils understand and seek to follow these principles. Leaders listen and respond to pupils' ideas and model these values in their daily interactions. Pupils demonstrate self-esteem and self-confidence and take pride in their achievements at school. Pupils feel safe and are treated fairly.
33. The school works effectively to promote pupils' physical and emotional wellbeing and provides support for pupils' mental health needs. Staff regularly monitor pupils' emotional wellbeing and provide pastoral support where required, including weekly drop-in sessions. Staff communicate pastoral information effectively. Several staff are trained in mental health first aid and pupils know who to approach for support with their emotional wellbeing.
34. In the early years, staff promote children's personal, emotional and physical development effectively in their planning. As a result, the children grow in independence, develop considerate manners and co-operate well with each other as they learn and play. Staff create a nurturing environment which encourages children's curiosity and resilience. Children are not afraid to take risks and learn from their mistakes.
35. Leaders promote pupils' physical health and development well. All pupils, from Nursery children upwards, take part in physical education (PE) and sport every week. This covers a range of different sports which seek to appeal to pupils' individual interests. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle. All older pupils are involved in a wide range of sports fixtures, and the opportunities to represent their school increases their self-esteem.
36. The PSHE curriculum across the school, alongside the assembly and tutorial programmes and lessons in theology, philosophy and religion (TPR) for older pupils, supports the development of pupils' spiritual and moral knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils discuss the ethics related to the finances of sport and their charitable fundraising choices.
37. The well-planned relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum is delivered by well-trained teachers. Pupils develop an age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of the topics, including the concepts of respect and consent. Parents are consulted on the content of the curriculum and have an opportunity to view the teaching resources. Leaders regularly review the content to ensure it reflects the evolving needs of pupils.
38. Staff maintain a good standard of behaviour in the school. Pupils are typically respectful and considerate towards one another, and they will challenge poor behaviour. New procedures have been introduced to enhance the pastoral care for pupils. In a few cases, these are not fully embedded. For example, until recently, different behaviour monitoring procedures operated in separate sections of the school. The new leadership team have identified some inconsistencies in recording and responding to some types of behaviour and are working to embed the new procedures for rewards and sanctions, so pupils understand expectations as they move through the school.

39. Leaders have developed an effective anti-bullying strategy, in line with the school's values of respect and kindness. All bullying incidents are carefully logged and appropriate actions taken, including support for all parties involved. Pupils recognise bullying and know how to report incidents.
40. Effective health and safety arrangements are in place. The premises are well maintained and provide a safe environment for pupils. Staff are well trained in their roles and communicate any issues to maintenance staff, who address them promptly. Hazardous substances are securely stored and suitable records are kept. Fire arrangements comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Regular practice drills take place. Leaders ensure that fire alarms are tested as required and exit routes are clear and well marked.
41. First aid arrangements are effective. School nurses are suitably trained. Staff provide first aid and administer medication. Numerous well-stocked first aid kits are available and staff are trained to support any specific medical conditions. Staff in the early years undertake paediatric first aid training.
42. Leaders ensure there is suitable supervision in place for pupils, both on the school site and during trips and outings. Staff are deployed effectively to monitor activities on the school site and those staff leading trips have to undertake additional training in their role.
43. The school has updated its attendance and admissions arrangements in line with recent statutory guidance. Leaders use effective recording systems to monitor pupils' attendance. Leaders follow up instances of poor attendance, providing support when required. Reports to the local authority take place when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition points and in instances of poor attendance.

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

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

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

45. Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for the transition to their next stage of education and life in modern society. They actively promote British values such as democracy, the rule of law, mutual respect and tolerance and individual liberty through a well-planned series of activities and assemblies, and they are reinforced through PSHE lessons and tutorials. These also align with the school's own core values. Pupils understand these values and they are reflected in their interactions with each other. They show respect for individual characteristics and understand that people are naturally different. Pupils recognise right from wrong and will acknowledge when they make poor decisions.
46. Through a well-planned PSHE programme, enhanced by assemblies and talks from visiting speakers, pupils of all ages gain an understanding and respect for different cultures and traditions. They enjoy celebrating different festivals and they become increasingly aware of the diversity of the world around them.
47. Staff in the early years introduce children to the concepts of respect, kindness and tolerance, modelling these in their interactions and rewarding positive behaviour. Children understand the importance of listening to the views of those around them. During classroom activities, children learn to share responsibility, take turns and to listen attentively to their peers. Children show positive social skills. When children progress from Nursery to Reception and then into Year 1, staff support them to make smooth transitions.
48. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their initiative within the school community. As heads of school, digital leaders and in other roles, pupils contribute enthusiastically to school life. Older pupils mentor younger peers to help them deal with any anxiety over forthcoming examinations. This provides support for the younger pupils and enhances the social development of the older ones as they welcome the opportunities for responsibility which this provides.
49. Connections with the local community are fostered through activities such as the choir singing at a local concert and joint learning alongside pupils from a nearby school. Pupils, led by the heads of school, choose which charities they could support, and vote for their final choice. This increases their sense of social responsibility and understanding of the work of these charities.
50. Leaders provide older pupils with careers education lessons. Pupils are also given the opportunity to take part in a careers fair and receive talks from parents. Pupils use an online tool to help develop their understanding of potential career options. This allows them to start to make informed choices about their next steps in education or employment, or their subject options at their senior schools.
51. Pupils' financial awareness is developed through the PSHE programme, where pupils learn how to manage money and prepare a budget. In addition, there are activities such as an enterprise club which provides an opportunity for pupils to make and sell items to raise money for their nominated charity.
52. Pupils learn about public institutions and the rule of law in British society as part of their PSHE studies. They develop their understanding of democracy through participation in elections for the

school council and eco-committee representatives. Leaders ensure they are presented with a balanced view on political issues. For example, they debate issues relating to the environment showing an understanding of differing viewpoints, such as potential conflicts between urban expansion and the natural environment.

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

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

## Safeguarding

54. Leaders and governors place a high priority on safeguarding, and procedures are robust. Governors maintain a thorough and well-informed oversight of procedures and receive regular and detailed reports on all aspects of safeguarding. They conduct a detailed annual review of the policy and arrangements.
55. Staff are well trained and knowledgeable about safeguarding, including any contextual risks related to the school. They attend regular update training, which is assessed. Staff recognise their responsibility to promote pupils' safety and wellbeing. New staff undergo a detailed induction process which includes role-specific safeguarding training.
56. Staff know what to do if a pupil shares a concern, and what their responsibilities are regarding the prevention of extremism and online safety. They understand the staff code of conduct and report any low-level safeguarding concerns.
57. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and a large and well-trained team of deputies provide oversight of safeguarding across all areas of the school and its operations. When safeguarding concerns arise, leaders are swift to respond. Effective communication of safeguarding concerns promotes pupils' safety and wellbeing. All staff are appropriately informed regarding any safeguarding matters relating to pupils. Safeguarding records are detailed and securely stored.
58. There are appropriate links between the school and outside agencies to support families. Referrals are made when required, with appropriate levels of detail. Leaders ensure that external advice is sought where relevant.
59. Pupils learn how to stay safe through lessons in online safety, assemblies and a whole-school focus week, which includes talks from the police. Pupils have a range of ways in which they can seek support including an online reporting tool. Younger pupils use 'colour monsters' to signal their feelings and will readily approach trusted adults if needed.
60. Leaders and governors implement thorough recruitment procedures. The required checks on staff and other adults are well understood, followed in practice and monitored by leaders and governors. All checks are accurately detailed on the single central record (SCR) of appointments.
61. There is an effective system for monitoring and filtering online activities within the school. There are regular tests of the effectiveness of the system and suitably trained staff are notified of any concerns.

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

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	Lochinver House School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	919/6201
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1091045
<b>Address</b>	Heath Road Little Heath Potters Bar Hertfordshire EN6 1LW
<b>Phone number</b>	01707 653064
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:schooloffice@lochinverhouse.com">schooloffice@lochinverhouse.com</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lochinverhouse.com">www.lochinverhouse.com</a>
<b>Proprietor</b>	Lochinver Board of Governors
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Nicholas Gilbert
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jonathan Wadge
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 13
<b>Number of pupils</b>	326
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	08 November 2024

## Information about the school

63. Lochinver House School is an independent day preparatory school for male pupils, situated in Potters Bar, Hertfordshire. The school is owned by a charitable trust and overseen by a board of governors. Following approval from the Department for Education, the school will enrol female pupils from September 2025.
64. The school comprises four sections: Early Years; Years 1 and 2; Years 3 and 4; and Years 5 to 8.
65. There are 44 children currently in the Early Years, which comprises two Nursery classes and one Reception class.
66. The school has identified 73 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
67. The school has identified English as an additional language for 57 pupils.
68. The school states its aim is to provide pupils with a rich and comprehensive education, fostering a global mindset that empowers them to make a meaningful impact on the world. Its core values are stated as kindness, honesty and respect. It seeks to nurture well-mannered, morally courageous individuals who are confident, inclusive and appreciative of diverse perspectives.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

25 to 27 February 2025

69. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

70. Inspection activities included:

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

71. 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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