

School inspection report

11 to 13 February 2025

St Mary's School (Senior) and St Margaret's School (Prep)

63 Curzon Street

Calne

Wiltshire

SN11 0DF

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. Governors take an active role in supporting, monitoring and challenging leaders to ensure the school effectively implements its policies and is self-reflective. The merger of the senior and prep schools has led to a thorough review of values and aims, resulting in a community that is cohesive.
2. Pupils behave well and relationships across the community are characterised by respect, tolerance and inclusion. At St Mary's Calne, boarding houses are horizontal, accommodating pupils of the same year group. Pupils are allocated to companies, which support pupils in all year groups. This structure helps enable strong friendships and mutual support both across year groups and between older and younger pupils. There are many opportunities for pupil leadership which are undertaken with enthusiasm by pupils.
3. Boarding is central to St Mary's Calne, with well-furnished and homely accommodation that welcomes both boarders and day pupils. Supervision is unobtrusive but supportive, on a secure site. All senior teaching staff undertake a duty in a boarding house to enable a high degree of support to be provided by tutors each week.
4. Leaders have developed a self-evaluation framework and school development plan which reflect the context of the school and its pupils' needs. Staff develop their skills through well planned training.
5. The safeguarding team is proactive and responds quickly to any safeguarding concerns, supporting pupils and staff as part of this process. Staff understand the importance of being vigilant and work to create a proactive safeguarding culture. Effective links have been established with external agencies and are utilised well by leaders.
6. Pupils make good progress overall because planning and teaching supports their learning. The curriculum covers all required learning areas. At times, opportunities are missed in planning to further develop pupils' technological skills.
7. Pupils' wellbeing is reviewed weekly in relation to any emerging academic and pastoral needs, with a 'team around the child' approach being taken by staff in all areas of the school to help support pupils. There are many opportunities for pupils to express concerns about each other or seek help for themselves.

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 pupils' technological skills are developed consistently.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Governors and leaders promote a welcoming and kind ethos, which is known and understood by pupils and staff. The school's provision is carefully evaluated to ensure pupil wellbeing is at the heart of the development planning. Leaders are reflective and understand the needs of pupils.
9. Governors maintain an effective oversight of the school through subcommittee meetings. They ensure that school leaders have all the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their responsibilities so that the school consistently meets standards. Published policies are reviewed at least annually by Governors. They visit the school frequently to meet with staff and pupils.
10. Leaders implement a suitable complaints policy and maintain records effectively. They respond promptly and within published timescales.
11. The early years provision is well led and effectively supports the development of the children. Staff know the needs of children well and adjust their support accordingly.
12. Leaders across the school understand their responsibilities to identify, manage and mitigate risk. Staff are trained to complete risk assessments and these are scrutinised before being authorised by senior staff.
13. Suitable information is provided to parents through the website. Parents are informed of their child's progress and attainment each half term. The local authority is provided with the required information relating to any pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan, whom they fund.
14. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and a comprehensive accessibility plan is in place and being actioned to ensure access to the site, information and the curriculum is improved. Links with other agencies are effective, well established and utilised at appropriate times, such as with the local authority designated officer (LADO).
15. Boarding is effectively led, with meaningful communication between all parts of the school to promote the wellbeing of individual pupils. Leaders work to promote consistency across houses whilst also taking the age and needs of pupils into account.
16. Leaders and governors ensure that there is an effective induction and monitoring programme for teaching staff to ensure teaching meets the required standards. Appropriate training is provided for staff to support pupils.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Pupils experience a wide-ranging curriculum that helps develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in all the required learning areas. The planning of the teaching of pupils' technological skills is not always consistent and so pupils' digital literacy is not always as well developed as it could be as evidenced in lesson observations
19. Pupils are engaged in their learning and keen to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding to teachers. In the prep school, the curriculum has enabled pupils to make links between subjects and topics thus enabling them to develop a deeper understanding of ideas and concepts. Because of the teaching strategies used, St Mary's Calne pupils work well together and demonstrate strong critical thinking skills. This promotes a range of opinions being aired in a positive manner.
20. Teachers plan well-structured lessons that take into account pupils' prior attainment and they use a variety of strategies to support the needs of pupils. Academic enrichment is used to provide opportunities for the cross-curricular development of skills and exposure to different subjects. In the prep school, the interdisciplinary approach to developing core skills in literacy and numeracy with an array of extra-curricular activities supports pupils learning well.
21. The extensive extra-curricular programme is regularly reviewed and reflects the interest of the pupils. There is a range of societies for senior school pupils, including sport, the performing arts and volunteering opportunities. These help pupils to develop leadership and collaboration skills. Prep school pupils can become involved in eco initiatives or join the debating club as well as participating in sporting activities as part of their extra-curricular programme, which helps support pupils to develop broader interests and work alongside peers.
22. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress because their needs are identified promptly and are met with suitable support. In the senior school, pupils receive individual support which is informed by effective communication between subject and learning support teachers. In the prep school, adjustments in lessons are supplemented by some individual and small group work.
23. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress because of the support strategies used in lessons to help them develop their fluency and understanding of language. Key word lists, additional explanation by teachers and access to small group support help ensure that pupils who speak EAL can fully access the curriculum.
24. Prep school leaders have developed the use of analytical assessment data to track progress and pupil achievement over time. This enables the provision for pupils to be monitored and any adjustments to teaching and learning to be made in response. In the senior school assessment data is also used to help inform the curriculum, especially where adjustments may need to be made for individuals or groups within a cohort who require additional support.
25. Children in the early years are well supported. Clear communication skills are encouraged and adults model a wide range of vocabulary, such as quickly, gently, fast and accurate when ten pin bowling with a small group. Speech and language therapy sessions are arranged by the school where appropriate.

26. Parents are provided with regular feedback on their child's progress through written reports, parent consultation evenings and rewards recorded on a parent portal. Pupils in the senior school have individual weekly meetings with their tutor who gives feedback and support on academic or pastoral issues.
27. Boarders are actively involved in devising their programme of recreational activities, some of which involve pupils in different year groups. Off-site trips and other activities are enjoyed by pupils and these help to develop their interests, with a good balance of free time available to pupils.
28. The sequencing of lessons, use of suitable resources and good subject knowledge of teachers help enable pupils to make progress. Pupils who require additional help are identified by staff and suitable strategies are used to support them.

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. Staff are continually alert to the evolving needs of pupils and make adjustments to the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum to address issues. In the prep school, a neurodiversity group meets weekly to help pupils develop social skills and understanding. Senior school pupils talk warmly about the supportive structures that are in place to enable them to develop as individuals.
31. The site and premises are well maintained. The approach to health and safety is proactive, with regular checks and meticulous logs kept alongside staff training records. Suitable risk assessments are undertaken, clearly recorded and effectively implemented. A suitable fire risk assessment is in place and action is taken to reduce the risks identified. Pupils understand what to do in the event of a fire as a result of frequent evacuation drills.
32. The boarding accommodation is well maintained and offers a comfortable environment. It provides well-furnished social spaces for pupils to relax and socialise, along with some smaller more intimate areas for quiet time. Both day and boarding pupils have access to well-equipped kitchen facilities to prepare their own snacks and drinks. Food is nutritious and varied with specific dietary needs supported.
33. Supervision of pupils is effective. Staff presence in the houses is visible without being intrusive. Younger pupils are supported to dress appropriately in boots and coats to play outside as often as possible, with appropriate oversight from staff. Pupils feel safe at school and appropriate systems are in place for town visits and the use of the school sports centre.
34. Appropriate arrangements and accommodation are provided for first aid, illness or pupils who have specific medical needs. The school health centre is staffed by suitably qualified medical staff when pupils are on site. Boarding staff also provide support for healthcare needs and work closely with the medical team, who do regular checks on medication and record keeping in boarding houses. Pupils are able to access medical care quickly.
35. The school ensures that admissions and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with statutory requirements. Leaders inform the local authority of any pupils leaving or joining the school at non-standard times of transition. Attendance is regularly monitored by leaders and absence is followed up on the same day where no parental notification has been received.
36. The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum is carefully planned, using guest speakers to complement the programme delivered by staff, and parental support is provided through webinars. As part of the wider personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum, pupils are encouraged to talk about issues that may impact them such as eating disorders and drug awareness, as well as learning practical skills such as plumbing and car maintenance.
37. The PSHE programme in the prep school promotes the development of pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence using role play, pupil opinions and experiences. Parents are kept informed of what is covered through the weekly newsletter. Across the school, spiritual and moral understanding is promoted through chapel and assembly delivery.

38. Incidents of bullying are rare but when they do occur, they are dealt with swiftly. Leaders keep detailed logs of any bullying concerns and monitor these to identify any patterns. The response to bullying and discriminatory language helps to foster an inclusive community. Suitable steps are taken to help and support pupils involved in such incidents. Pupils learn about different types of bullying and are confident in understanding when to seek help. The annual wellbeing survey helps leaders to identify any trends in behaviour across year groups. Restorative conversations are used effectively to promote understanding and address any issues between pupils at the earliest opportunity.
39. Expectations around behaviour are clear and frequently reinforced by staff. Pupils are kind and courteous towards each other. When misbehaviour occurs, it is swiftly addressed and any communication with parents is undertaken in a timely manner. Mechanisms for pupils to report concerns include an online report function, suggestions boxes and a drop-in with the wellbeing practitioners. Pupils challenge unkindness and take pride in the friendly atmosphere in their school. Pupil leaders have appropriate specific duties and responsibilities for which they are suitably trained. They collaborate well with school leaders to help promote good behaviour.
40. Pupils benefit from an extensive range of physical education and sports activities, developing their skills effectively over time. They appreciate the value of exercise and being outdoors, which enables them to develop their physical skills. In the early years, exciting and interactive outside spaces help promote physical development and exploration of the environment.

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

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

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

42. The school promotes pupils' understanding of moral principles and the difference between right and wrong through the curriculum and themes that are raised in chapel and assemblies. Boarders and day pupils socialise seamlessly and conversations about different cultures and beliefs are actively encouraged by both staff and pupils.
43. Leaders ensure that pupils are effectively prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experience of life in British society. Mechanisms for pupils sharing their views with leaders, such as the school parliament, prep school council and head girl hustings, help enable pupils to experience and understand democratic processes. Pupil leadership opportunities enable pupils to participate fully in the school and to develop respectful attitudes to one another.
44. Pupils across the school understand the importance of tolerance, respect and inclusion, which are reinforced through PSHE lessons and in chapel and assemblies. They are encouraged to look outside their school community and raise awareness of issues such as modern slavery with their peers. Pupils appreciate the enrichment opportunities provided by the school, which equip them with relevant knowledge and understanding of current events.
45. A detailed and appropriate programme of careers provision is fully integrated into the pastoral system, providing independent, up to date and age-appropriate advice to pupils throughout the senior school. A broad range of external speakers, including recent alumni and advisors, complement the support provided by the school. Pupils progress to a range of university and other courses, having been shown the breadth of steps that are available to them as part of the weekly 'Futures' programme in the upper years.
46. Teaching enables pupils to deepen their understanding of complex social, cultural and moral issues at all ages. Younger pupils are involved in giving assemblies, such as the eco-council presenting issues around sustainability, where they display balanced views in response to questions.
47. The school encourages pupils to think about the local and international community through a calendar of cultural events and opportunities to fundraise for charities of their choice. Pupils make meaningful contributions to the local community through structured volunteering at schools and hospitals.
48. Working out tax, budgeting for university and participating in a mock stock exchange all help prepare pupils to be financially aware and to be prepared for their future.
49. Pupil engagement with a comprehensive PSHE programme supports the development of tolerance and understanding across the school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) curriculum is clearly threaded throughout both academic subjects and extra-curricular opportunities for pupils, and helps pupils to have an understanding of and respect for all. Relationships across the school are characterised by their warmth, mutual respect and inclusion from an early age.
50. In the early years, children are encouraged to notice and communicate with each other to help promote their personal development. They are provided with opportunities to collaborate on tasks such as selecting tools to build a shed or setting up a picnic blanket. In the senior school, company or

house events mean a great deal to the pupils as they come together as a community. Events and competitions such as the annual 'Strictly Calne Dancing' are talked about with excitement. In the prep school, pupils compete in houses across a range of activities.

51. The senior school encourages pupils, including boarders to develop social skills of collaboration and teamwork through horizontal boarding houses that also include day pupils, and school 'companies', who compete against each other each year. In the prep school, pupils belong to houses and opportunities for pupil leadership are provided, such as being prefects.

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

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

Safeguarding

53. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and wider safeguarding team are suitably trained for their roles. They respond quickly and effectively to any concerns that are raised, including liaison with relevant external agencies. The DSL maintains appropriate records, which detail the rationale for the school's responses, and these records are held securely. The school's safeguarding procedures are effective, including in relation to allegations and concerns against staff.
54. Governors receive frequent safeguarding training and they monitor safeguarding procedures and records appropriately. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding visits each term to meet with pupils, staff and the safeguarding team. There is an annual safeguarding review, and safeguarding is on the agenda for all governor sub-committees, as well as meetings of the full board.
55. A robust system of internet filtering and monitoring is in place and incidents are followed up promptly by staff. In PSHE lessons pupils receive guidance on how to keep themselves safe, including online and they are able to report their concerns in a range of ways and know these will be taken seriously by staff. Appropriate measures to reduce the risk of extremism are taken by leaders.
56. Staff, including those in the early years and with boarding responsibilities, receive regular training and a thorough induction when they start work in the school. They are alert to pupils' needs and understand the need to report their concerns as soon as possible. The contextual risks to pupils are understood by staff and they take suitable steps to mitigate these.
57. Safer recruitment checks are completed on adults prior to them starting work or volunteering at the school. These checks are accurately recorded in the single central record, which is frequently scrutinised by governors.
58. Guardianship arrangements are closely monitored by pastoral leaders. Pupils complete a short survey after each holiday or stay and are asked about their experience by staff. Where a concern is raised, staff take suitable steps to ensure pupils are safe.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

59. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	St Mary's School (Senior) and St Margaret's School (Prep)
Department for Education number	865/6016
Registered charity number	309482
Address	St Mary's School 63 Curzon Street Calne Wiltshire SN11 0DF
Phone number	01249 857200
Email address	office@stmaryscalne.org
Website	www.stmaryscalne.org
Proprietor	The Governors St Mary's School
Chair	Mr Svante Adde
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Wakefield
Age range	2-19
Number of pupils	497
Number of boarding pupils	290
Date of previous inspection	January 2022

Information about the school

60. St Mary's, Calne, is a selective independent day and boarding school. It is an Anglican foundation, established in Calne in 1873, and moved to its present site in 1909. The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. In November 2023 St Mary's Calne and St Margaret's Prep School came under the management of one Head, having previously shared a site and governing body.
61. The senior school accommodates female boarders in seven houses, one for each year group in the school from year 7, with a small number of year 6 boarders. The prep school is co-educational to year 6. There are 49 pupils in the early years which has two Nursery classes and one Reception class.
62. The school has identified 54 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A small number of pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
63. The school has identified English as an additional language for 42 pupils.
64. St Mary's Calne aims to offer the highest quality teaching and learning, pastoral care and breadth of opportunities to those who will benefit from them the most. The values of the school are ambition, community, innovation and opportunity. St Margaret's Prep seeks to inspire excellence in all its pupils.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

11 to 13 February 2025

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

66. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of academic enrichment week activities
- observation of registration periods and chapel
- 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
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

67. 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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