



PitsfordSchool

4th December 2025

Re: Pitsford School Inspection, 2025

Dear Parents,

As you know, the school was inspected by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) in the final week of the last half-term.

We have now received the report which is published on our website and on the ISI website today. I am very pleased to inform you that it is a superb report. Unfortunately, I must also share with you that there is one disappointment and I want to explain it to you so as not to overshadow the remarkably positive account of the school contained herein.

Summary

The overall feedback was astoundingly positive – and I will discuss that in more detail on the next pages – but, before that, I want to relay to you that the report identifies that two standards that are 'not met' and explain to you what happened and what will happen next.

As part of the Inspection, the school's staff employment register is scrutinised. In the process of doing so only one reference for only one member of staff in the whole school had an error. This was put right as soon as it was brought to the school leaders' attention but, despite this, we accept that it means that the school has formally not met the standard.

However, I want to stress to you that despite this, that member of staff, like every member of staff in the school, had two checked references, and was cleared through the Government's DBS system, and was therefore entirely safe to work in the school. This is in line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education mandates of the government; we take our record-keeping and its role in keeping children safe deadly seriously. Nonetheless, we accept that in only one reference for only one member of staff, there an administrative error (as opposed to something more substantial), and strictly speaking, the inspectors are correct.

Having not met any one standard means that the school automatically does not meet the standard for 'Leadership and management, and governance'. Therefore, strictly speaking, two standards are not met.

However, as I will describe below, it is clear from the report that in every other way the inspectors found the leadership and governance to be very strong.

The language used by ISI on the standards is taken verbatim from the Independent School Standards Regulations (ISSRs) and should not be read as editorialising by the inspectors. The language reads much more seriously than the incident merits because when most schools do not meet this standard it is because they have egregious and systemic failures. This does not apply to Pitsford.

What happens next is that the school will have another inspection (this time one day only) to ensure that the changes that were made to our staff employment register following the administrative error



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coming to light in October have been applied consistently. We have invited ISI to return as soon as possible so that we get the official clean bill of health. We expect that to be in the new year.

Recommendations

Every inspection comes with recommendations. We were delighted with ours as they demonstrate the exceptional quality of the school and I would like to explain their context to you.

The first recommendation is: 'ensure that the required information related to the number of formal complaints made in the previous year is made available'. This referred to the school's complaints policy (which is on our website), which was described as comprehensive, but lacked one line that the inspectors wanted to find. This single line (in a document of almost 2,500 words) was added to the policy as soon as this issue was raised by the inspectors. The line was 'If parents would like to know how many level 2 or level 3 complaints the school has had in the last year please email head@pitsfordschool.com'.

Therefore recommendation one is already met. In the feedback the inspectors noted that this was the case (see paragraph 9).

The second recommendation is: 'ensure that leaders' recording of the handling of complaints fully and consistently reflects the school's policy and practice'. This referred to the school's confidential complaints log, which did not date every step that was taken to resolve any issues (the vast majority of which were informal). The log had always clarified when things were finally resolved, and described stages, but did not always date the steps in between. It now does, so this recommendation is already met, and this was accepted by the inspectors (also paragraph 9).

The third recommendation is: 'ensure that careers education fully meets the needs of pupils from Year 8 onwards, including consideration of pupils' own views about the quality of the programme'. The inspectors accepted that, as part of the whole school's strategic development, the school leadership had identified careers provision below Sixth Form as an area for development (indeed the inspectors noted that support and provision in Sixth Form was exceptionally good), and had already taken steps to change its delivery, and to source better materials to embed careers education in the years 7-11 curriculum. However, as this is the first year of this, the recommendation urges the school to continue to develop what it had already started.

Read as a whole, the recommendations are a ringing endorsement of the school as they are, by any standards, minor and almost all completed already. It is also worth noting that the inspectors made clear that the recommendations from the Inspection in 2022 (to standardise marking across the school so that the excellent practice identified became the norm; to implement data in lesson delivery to support students over-achieve; to introduce ICT elements across the senior curriculum) had all been addressed and the improvements were evident throughout the school.

Highlights

The rest of the report is simply outstanding and my recommendation to you is to read it as it was reported to the Headmaster and I during the oral feedback session with inspectors on the 16th of October (which is the running order of how all inspection reports are verbally reported to school leaders and proprietors/governors).

That is: start with Section 2 'Quality of education, training and recreation' (pages 7 and 8), then read Section 3: 'Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing' (pages 9 and 10), then read

Section 4: 'Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society' (pages 11 and 12), then 'Safeguarding' (page 13) and then Section 1: 'Leadership and management, and governance'. I will summarise the contents below.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

All eight paragraphs are glowing in their praise. The inspectors noted:

- The quality of the curriculum design throughout the school which ensured the development of core skills and impressive cross-curricular collaboration (paragraph 17);
- The quality of GCSE and A level performance based on ability and the strength and impact of our new 'Pitsford Diploma', added to the Key Stage 4 curriculum this year (paragraph 18);
- The quality of the teachers' knowledge and lesson planning. How 'sequenced and carefully structured tasks and expertly crafted questioning [help] to deepen pupils' reasoning skills and conceptual awareness (paragraph 19);
- The excellent use of data by staff to support well the students' outcomes which the inspectors summarised thus: 'They [the students] learn and achieve well, including in public examinations at the end of Year 11 and Year 13' (paragraph 20);
- The quality of early years provision and teaching and how it ensures that 'children are ready to transition successfully to Year 1' (paragraph 21);
- The outstanding support for SEND (paragraph 22);
- The outstanding support for students for whom English is not their first language (paragraph 23)
- The quality of our extra-curricular provision, which noted the range and markedly high participation rate (paragraph 23).

Section 3: Pupil's physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- The school was praised for having invested time and effort to support mental health and emotional wellbeing, and to create student mentors (paragraph 26);
- The school has taken care to provide a wide range of spiritual education, which is woven through the curriculum and supports diversity and inclusion (paragraph 27);
- School leaders 'maintain a culture of support and kindness', noting the creation of the Station in the Michael Robinson Memorial Library to support wellbeing and how staff from the leadership down model best practice in interpersonal relationship (paragraph 28);
- Robust procedures and policies are in place to combat bullying and to create 'an inclusive school community' (paragraph 29);
- A well-designed PE curriculum is in place which supports pupils' physical wellbeing, as do other activities and lessons. There is 'high participation' in the 'extensive fixture programme' (paragraph 30);
- PSHE is well-planned and consulted on, and regular student feedback is sought and acted on (paragraph 31);
- In early years, staff prioritise 'children's physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing'. They develop independence and resilience, and their fine motor-skills are developed through 'well-planned physical activities' (paragraph 32);
- Grounds are maintained, supervision is appropriate and First Aid and medical care is 'well organised and administered effectively by trained staff' (paragraph 33);
- Admission and attendance is monitored closely and leaders take care to ensure that statutory responsibilities are executed (paragraph 34).

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

- Pupils learn about important aspects of British society, such as law, equality and respect, and also learn about other political views and ideas in an appropriate way (paragraph 36);
- Pupils are provided with 'an array' of opportunities to learn about different backgrounds and belief systems. The school supports students to be aware of world issues, and celebrates other cultures (paragraph 37);
- Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong from early years up. Respect for each other is the key to the school's culture (paragraph 38);
- Pupils enjoy contributing to the betterment of communities around them and the value of Charity, and they relish being given the chance to take a lead in this. 'Leaders support pupils to gain a deeper understanding of complex social and economic issues' (paragraph 39);
- Economic education is part of PSHE which helps to prepare pupils for the future, and the Pitsford Diploma adds to this. (paragraph 40);
- Career provision for Sixth Form is 'personalised... accurate, up-to-date and impartial'. Career provision for the earlier years (year 7 and above) is not as good [but as noted above, this is part of the school's development plan, already started in September 2025] (Paragraph 41).

Safeguarding

- Paragraph 43 addresses the error in one reference for one member of staff as discussed above.
- Governors scrutinise the school's safeguarding procedures, including regular visits, meeting staff and pupils, and reviewing documentation. They receive termly reports from school leaders (paragraph 44);
- Leaders with safeguarding responsibilities are 'trained and knowledgeable about how to be vigilant to the wellbeing of pupils'. They are 'responsive, proactive and reflective' (paragraph 45);
- Leaders ensure that staff are well-trained in their safeguarding responsibilities (paragraph 46);
- Pupils are taught to take care of themselves and have a wide range of adults to whom they can turn for succour and advice. The school's internet is filtered and monitored (paragraph 47);
- Early years staff are well-informed and knowledgeable and 'children are kept safe in a vigilant, caring environment where their welfare is prioritised' (paragraph 48).

Leadership

- Governors visit school regularly and scrutinise policies and meet staff and pupils. However, as noted above, an error in one reference for one member of staff was not identified, and there were 'some minor administrative omissions in [the leaders'] reporting and recording of complaints' [as described above] (paragraph 7);
- Governors and leaders 'prioritise pupils' wellbeing in the decisions that they make'. This has informed policies which resulted in increased spaces for pupils to give them 'more opportunities and spaces to talk about their emotions'. Leaders have increased capacity to 'further support pupils' holistic needs and ability to record their concerns' (paragraph 8);
- Appropriate policies are in place and publicly available. There were some administrative gaps in the complaints policy and log [as noted above] 'these omissions did not reflect the

high-quality practice in the school. These were rectified before the end of the inspection' (paragraph 9);

- Leaders ensure regular feedback to parents and, where appropriate, report information to the local authority 'in line with statutory responsibilities' (paragraph 10);
- Risk assessments are detailed and up-to-date and risks are mitigated. Training for staff is appropriate and frequently updated (paragraph 11);
- Leaders in early years have appropriate knowledge and skills and work closely with families to ensure they support children's 'holistic needs and development' (paragraph 12);

This is an overview of what is lavish praise, and on your own reading you may find other phrases or points which, were I more exhaustive, I would have included.

As noted above, the school has already taken steps to address the ISSRs not met, and has invited the ISI to revisit the school as soon as possible to confirm that this is done. When that happens I will update you.

The report can be accessed on the ISI's website and on the school's site at this address: [ISI Inspection Reports | Junior & Senior School | Pitsford School](#)

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me (via the Clerk to Governors, Mr Holmes on mholmes@pitsfordschool.com).

Yours sincerely,

S Phipps
Chair of Governors