

School inspection report

1 to 3 April 2025

Huddersfield Grammar School

Royds Mount

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Marsh

Huddersfield

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The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders are skilled and knowledgeable and fully understand their responsibility to actively promote pupils' wellbeing. They have established a school environment in which pupils are respected as individuals and where leaders want to hear their views and ideas.
2. Leaders have developed a coherent strategic plan informed by effective self-evaluation. Local governance arrangements are used by the proprietor to ensure comprehensive oversight of the planning work of leaders and the effective implementation of policies to promote pupils' wellbeing.
3. The curriculum is age-appropriate and provides extensive opportunities for pupils to enrich their own learning through a number of elective courses. Teachers' delivery of the curriculum enables pupils' skills in independent and collaborative learning to develop rapidly. As a result, pupils develop an enthusiastic and highly engaged approach to their academic work.
4. Leaders have embedded a clear and well-planned teaching and learning strategy which is consistently applied by teachers. The oversight of teaching by leaders, as well as the training provided to teaching staff, is highly effective. These ensure that pupils receive consistent and tailored support for their learning and consequently make rapid progress. The teaching and learning strategy is a significant strength of the school.
5. Leaders actively promote the wellbeing of pupils through a well-managed system of pastoral care which supports pupils on an individual basis. Across all ages, class teachers and form tutors have a detailed understanding of the needs of their pupils, enabling appropriate support to be put into place when required. This has a positive effect on the growth of pupils' personal development.
6. The school has a well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme which is successful in teaching the importance of mutual respect and of treating all people as equals. The effective delivery of PSHE, together with a broad range of assemblies and messages delivered through the curriculum and by external speakers, helps pupils to develop empathy and an understanding of the views of others.
7. The extra-curricular programme is available throughout the school week at lunchtimes and after school. It includes a range of academic, sporting and performing arts opportunities. However, the oversight of the extra-curricular programme is inconsistent, with the result that some pupils do not participate effectively in the learning opportunities on offer.
8. Pupils are well prepared for their post-16 educational pathways. They develop a clear understanding of their social responsibilities, which is informed by their voluntary work in the local community. The school develops pupils' understanding of everyday financial matters, as well as their recognition of the importance of taking responsibility for looking after their own mental and physical health. The school effectively supports pupils' decision-making about their future pathways through well-planned age-appropriate careers guidance.
9. Safeguarding procedures are implemented effectively. Staff have a clear understanding that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Appropriate training is provided for staff so that they fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Leaders ensure that recruitment checks are carried out and recorded correctly in line with statutory requirements.

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 the monitoring of the extra-curricular programme in order to increase pupils' participation in the learning opportunities on offer.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders fulfil their responsibility to ensure that the school supports and enhances the wellbeing of pupils. They have a deep understanding of the needs of pupils which constantly informs their decisions and planning. Leaders consistently demonstrate the skills and knowledge required to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
11. The proprietor maintains effective oversight through the school's local governance arrangements. Governors regularly visit the school, carry out rigorous external audits, receive termly reports on many aspects of school life and meet with school leaders. Consequently, they are able to scrutinise all areas of the school and provide appropriate challenge for leaders. The governors are able to assure themselves that the work of leaders ensures that policies are effectively implemented so that the Standards are consistently met.
12. Leaders have established a culture of continuous improvement which is informed by a rigorous approach to self-evaluation. They place high importance on actively seeking and listening to the views of pupils. This enables them to fully understand the possible impacts, including any unintended consequences, of their decisions. In addition, leaders conduct regular surveys and discussions with staff and parents to ascertain their views. This process informs the school's annual improvement plans, which are regularly reviewed using clear targets and success criteria, such as with regard to the recent enhancements in tracking pupils' mental health.
13. The school's values of inclusivity and individualised learning are understood and promoted by staff. Leaders ensure that there is equality of opportunity across all aspects of school life and that everyone is treated equally and without any discrimination. An appropriate accessibility plan is in place. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.
14. Leaders adopt a rigorous approach to the mitigation of risk and ensure that the school's risk assessment policy is implemented effectively. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained and produce suitable risk assessments that identify and manage potential risks to pupils, including with regard to school trips, the school site and activities, and individual pupils' welfare. Leaders have drawn up a comprehensive risk register which identifies current and potential contextual risks, including those of possible radicalisation and extremism, and review this on a regular basis. They identify and mitigate such risks to minimise any possible adverse effects on the safety and welfare of pupils.
15. Leaders in the early years are well trained and have the appropriate levels of skill and knowledge for their roles. They have developed a curriculum that meets the requirements of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework. Staff in the early years are supported well, including through regular meetings about their professional practice and training needs. Safeguarding, health and safety, first aid and risk assessment policies are implemented rigorously to ensure the wellbeing of children in the early years.
16. Leaders liaise and collaborate effectively with a range of external agencies, including safeguarding partners and external professionals, who support various aspects of the school's provision, such as by carrying out health and safety audits. Leaders also work closely with the local authority, such as with regard to seeking advice about supporting pupils where there are concerns.

17. Leaders effectively manage any parental concerns or complaints that the school receives. They maintain clear records of complaints and actions taken by the school in response to these. Leaders respond constructively to parents within the timeframes stated in the school's policy.
18. The school regularly provides parents, including those of children in the early years, with information and reports on the progress of their own child throughout the school year. Other required information such as policies and required contact details are provided on the school website or otherwise made available to parents.

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' aspirations for pupils' learning have led them to develop a wide-ranging, age-appropriate and ambitious curriculum. The curriculum is designed to promote pupils' love of learning by providing planned opportunities for pupils to take a lead in developing their knowledge through what the school terms its 'Ignite' programme. Pupils are able to enhance their learning by studying, for example, creative writing, media studies and political philosophy. The curriculum is continuously reviewed to ensure that it provides consistent opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical, literary, scientific, creative and technological skills. Pupils are also able to follow their interests across the curriculum, as illustrated by pupils in English requesting to research the poets of Yorkshire, in order to broaden their understanding of different local literary genres. Opportunities for pupils to develop their communication skills are wide-ranging. Pupils consistently demonstrate their ability to debate, engage in class discussions and express their own ideas articulately.
21. Across all subjects, teachers consistently follow the whole-school strategy on personalised learning in the classroom. This leads to pupils having high levels of ambition and engagement in lessons. Pupils make rapid progress regardless of their starting points. The impact of leaders' strategic planning for teaching and learning is monitored using an effective framework for assessment. Data is analysed systematically to track pupils' progress and, when needed, individualised support and encouragement is put in place. Leaders ensure that pupils' academic progress is monitored in parallel with oversight of their emotional wellbeing. This informs the individualised approach to learning that each pupil experiences. As a consequence, pupils' attainment levels at GCSE are well above the national average. Pupils' levels of attainment in national tests in Year 6 are above the national average.
22. Leaders' rigorous oversight of teaching and learning across the age range of pupils ensures a consistency of approach that reflects the school's strategic plan. The quality assurance process informs a well-planned and highly effective programme of professional development for teachers as well as an ongoing review of subject performance targets. Leaders provide teachers with ongoing support in using the most effective teaching strategies to enable pupils to progress well.
23. Teaching is highly effective. Teachers have wide-ranging subject knowledge and encourage pupils to think deeply about how different concepts link together. Teachers challenge pupils with deep questioning to apply their knowledge and understanding to solve problems. Lessons build on pupils' prior knowledge and teachers adapt their teaching to respond to pupils' questions. This enables pupils' misconceptions to be addressed and their understanding to be taken to a higher level. Pupils' progress is enhanced by precise and clear verbal and written feedback from their teachers that informs them of how they can develop their work further.
24. The school effectively identifies the learning requirements of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Subject teachers and learning support specialists work together to put in place appropriate support, both during and outside of lessons. Pupils respond positively to this targeted support and consequently make rapid progress from their starting points. Currently, no pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) require additional support for their English.
25. Leaders in the early years provide opportunities for children to learn through play and exploration of the world around them. The well-planned curriculum enables children to develop their spatial awareness, agility and fine motor skills, including through outdoor learning, supported by the

effective use of well-chosen activities and resources. Children are encouraged to express themselves confidently using a range of age-appropriate vocabulary. They consistently make good progress relative to their starting points.

26. The extra-curricular programme is well planned, with opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in sport, music, drama and many different clubs and societies, some of which are led by pupils. Those pupils who are actively involved benefit from enhanced self-confidence, which has a positive effect on their wellbeing. The programme is optional for pupils and there is no overall oversight of participation. As a consequence, the school does not ensure that pupils do not miss out on this range of learning opportunities.

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

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

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

28. Pupils' spiritual and moral understanding grows through well-planned assembly and enrichment programmes which encompass topics and events such as the Holocaust and Ramadan. Whole-school events are organised around different faith celebrations, for example when parents and pupils from all faiths celebrate the breaking of the fast, Eid al-Fitr, to mark the end of Ramadan. Pupils are taught about different faiths in subjects such as religion, philosophy and ethics. This helps them recognise and value diversity and respect each other's backgrounds, beliefs and identities. In many creative areas of the curriculum, pupils are able to reflect on the non-material aspects of their lives, which enhances their own spiritual development.
29. The school actively promotes pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. A well-structured pastoral support system supports pupils' emotional wellbeing effectively. Tutors and class teachers know their pupils well and this is enhanced by the tutorial at the start of every day. Every week, on 'Wellbeing Wednesday', pupils have dedicated time to focus on their feelings and emotions. Staff have been well trained in understanding the needs and interests of their pupils. There is a clear commitment to the individual success and wellbeing of each pupil, with regular meetings between staff and leaders devoted to considering how best to support those who may be struggling or lacking motivation. The 'wellbeing hub' provides an additional space for pupils to receive individual help and support.
30. The school has developed an extensive and age-appropriate programme for PSHE which incorporates suitable relationships and sex education (RSE). Teachers are trained to deliver PSHE effectively, incorporating regular opportunities to assess pupils' understanding. Feedback from pupils enables the PSHE course content to evolve to meet pupils' changing needs. The impact of opportunities to reflect on and discuss issues such as consent in relationships, the effect of discrimination, handling peer pressure and stress management have a positive effect on pupils' self-awareness and their sense of moral responsibility towards others.
31. The well-planned physical education (PE) and games programme facilitates the growth of pupils' physical fitness and skills through a range of individual and team sports such as netball, hockey and athletics. Teachers ensure that pupils gain a clear understanding of the inherent link between physical activity, nutrition and mental wellbeing, for example building their resilience through running longer distances.
32. Leaders in the early years have established a calm and welcoming setting in which positive relationships and kindness between children is prioritised. Children learn how to self-regulate and express their feelings in a supportive and caring environment. Well-planned physical activities enable children to develop collaborative skills which enhances their personal development.
33. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to take on positions of age-appropriate responsibility. Pupils take on roles such as prefects, form captains, mentors and buddies to younger pupils. Many pupils are also elected to represent their peers by taking roles on the prep and senior school councils, which are effective channels for the views of pupils. The school's focus on pupils' development of leadership skills also enhances their self-esteem and self-confidence.

34. Leaders have put in place a clear and well-understood behaviour policy. Leaders track pupils' behaviour on a daily basis, with rewards and sanctions recorded and analysed. Leaders identify any trends and patterns and take appropriate actions when required. Teachers ensure that, when needed, lessons are learnt through a process of reflection and contrition alongside the application of sanctions.
35. Leaders and staff respond to any reported issues of bullying in a timely manner in line with the school's anti-bullying policy. Pupils are educated about the prevention of bullying through the PSHE programme, assemblies and the work of trained pupil anti-bullying ambassadors. When incidents occur, appropriate action is taken, including the provision of suitable support for victim and perpetrator.
36. Health and safety procedures are robust and implemented effectively through methodical checks and maintenance. Appropriate precautions are taken to minimise the risk of fire, with frequently updated staff training, systematic checks on fire equipment and regular fire drills. Leaders' and proprietors' oversight of health and safety matters is informed by annual external audits carried out by specialists. The school site is well maintained with high levels of security to ensure a suitable environment in which pupils can learn, play and socialise.
37. The school has suitable medical facilities to support pupils who are injured or require medical assistance. First aid provision is appropriate and effective. Suitable numbers of staff are appropriately trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid for those who work in the early years.
38. Leaders ensure an appropriate level of supervision is in place throughout the school, including during breaks and lunchtimes. Leaders maintain suitable staff-to-child ratios in the early years.
39. The school's attendance and admission registers are accurately maintained in line with current statutory guidance. Leaders inform the local authority of any pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard transition points, or whose level of attendance at school is causing concern.

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

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

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

41. The school's curriculum enables pupils from an early age to learn about the values of equality and inclusivity. Pupils learn about the importance of respecting people's identity and protected characteristics, such as race, religion or sex. Leaders promote these themes through assemblies, the enrichment programme and PSHE lessons, for example by considering issues such as gender identity and sexual orientation. The school's value of mutual respect is consistently evident in the behaviour and collaborative learning demonstrated by pupils.
42. As pupils move through the school they gain a broad knowledge of diverse cultures. They listen actively to different views that challenge their thinking. Leaders have put in place a co-ordinated programme of assemblies and enrichment activities which include consideration of themes such as Black History Month and issues relating to equality and inclusion. These support pupils' understanding of and respect for diversity, both inside and outside the school community.
43. Leaders and staff discuss world events appropriately with pupils, enabling them to develop their social and political understanding of their effects on society. Assemblies and follow-up discussions on topical issues such as the situation in the Middle East are handled sensitively and impartially by teachers.
44. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern British society through their learning across the curriculum. Pupils learn respect for the rule of law and develop an understanding of the role of public institutions such as Parliament, the rights of people in British society and the principle of free but responsible speech. Younger pupils actively debate the importance of 'golden rules' in the classroom, while older pupils have opportunities to question the local Member of Parliament (MP). The values of democracy and the rule of law are reinforced by the work of the pupil councils who debate and vote on issues to take forward to school leaders.
45. Pupils develop a sense of right and wrong throughout their time at school. The curriculum, through subjects such as PSHE and religion, philosophy and ethics, enables pupils to gain an understanding of complex moral and ethical issues present in modern society, such as the ongoing conflicts and refugee crises around the world. As a consequence, pupils develop an increasingly secure moral compass as they mature.
46. Leaders in the early years implement an effective personal, social and emotional development component of the curriculum. This enables children to develop an understanding of the feelings of others, learn about diverse cultures and appreciate their differences. Children develop an age-appropriate understanding of what is right and wrong, which enables them to play and learn collaboratively.
47. The school's well-planned PSHE programme contains an extensive strand on 'financial decision-making', supported by teaching in subjects such as business studies, which enables pupils to make good progress in their economic understanding. Pupils are taught about financial topics such as the differences between credit and debit cards, how to budget, the contrast between saving and debt, and the dangers of online gambling.

48. A series of well-planned activities enables pupils to contribute to the local community. For example, pupils from the prep school play games with residents in a local care home, take part in litter picking and organise charity fundraising events such as baking competitions. Older pupils volunteer to support local street kitchens and are actively involved in building a community sensory garden. Within the school, many pupils are trained to mentor and support their younger peers such as with reading and sports coaching. Pupils become very conscious of the importance of supporting others and recognise the importance of using their skills for the benefit of others. As a consequence of the school's community programme, pupils' social awareness grows rapidly, as do their leadership skills.
49. The school's careers programme is well resourced and plays an effective role in helping pupils make decisions about post-16 pathways including colleges, apprenticeships and employment. Pupils are taught how to develop a range of employability skills and learn how subject choices can link to specific careers. The lesson-based careers provision is supported by external talks, visits to post-16 colleges and work experience. The effective careers guidance prepares pupils well for the next stage of their lives.

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

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

Safeguarding

51. Leaders have established a transparent safeguarding culture across the school. Staff have a deep understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. This is informed by a clear and appropriate safeguarding policy and procedures which are in line with current statutory guidance. Leaders ensure that the policy and procedures are implemented effectively and consistently.
52. The school's safeguarding team is appropriately trained for its role in line with local procedures. The team liaises effectively with external agencies for training, seeking advice when needed and making referrals when appropriate. The safeguarding team ensures that staff are trained effectively and regularly in safeguarding procedures, including scenario-based problems to review understanding. Staff are confident in knowing how to report safeguarding concerns. Staff are aware of the procedures to follow should there be any concerns about or allegations against adults working at the school. All new staff take part in a well-organised induction programme so that they are clear about the school's safeguarding arrangements.
53. The safeguarding team responds to safeguarding concerns promptly and effectively, ensuring that affected pupils receive appropriate support and that concerns are referred to external safeguarding agencies when required. Safeguarding concerns and incidents are suitably recorded along with information about actions taken, decisions made and subsequent reviews. Child protection records are maintained in line with statutory requirements.
54. The proprietor maintains effective oversight of safeguarding. The school's local governors hold regular meetings with the safeguarding leaders, carry out an annual external review of safeguarding and receive termly reports. This enables the proprietor to evaluate how the school has reviewed its procedures and how it has responded to any safeguarding concerns that may have arisen.
55. The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils develop a clear understanding of what constitutes inappropriate online behaviour and how to protect their privacy. Suitable filtering and monitoring systems are in place and the system is thoroughly tested on a regular basis. The safeguarding team responds quickly to any reports about possible inappropriate online activity.
56. Staff know the pupils well and are able to identify changes of behaviour or signs that could possibly indicate a concern. Pupils also know how to access adult support to share any concerns or worries that they may have. As a consequence, pupils feel well looked after and safe in the school community.
57. The school carries out all required safer recruitment checks in a timely manner on all adults before they commence working with pupils. A suitable central record of appointments (SCR) records these checks accurately and well-maintained staff files include all information required by current statutory guidance.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Huddersfield Grammar School
Department for Education number	382/6005
Address	Huddersfield Grammar School Royds Mount Luck Lane County March Huddersfield HD1 4QX
Phone number	01484 424549
Email address	admin@huddersfield-grammar.co.uk
Website	https://www.huddersfield-grammar.co.uk
Proprietor	Cognita Schools Ltd
Chair	Mrs Nicola Lambros
Headteacher	Mr Stuart Rees
Age range	3 to 16
Number of pupils	520
Date of previous inspection	15 to 18 March 2022

Information about the school

59. Huddersfield Grammar School is an independent co-educational day school located in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire. The pre-preparatory department caters for pupils in Years 1 and 2, while the preparatory department caters for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Years 7 to 11 make up the senior school. The school is owned by Cognita Schools Group who provide the governance of the school. The current headteacher took up his post in September 2023.
60. There are 29 children in the early years setting, comprising one Nursery and one Reception class.
61. The school has identified 129 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
62. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for six pupils.
63. The school states its aims are to encourage its pupils to be inspired by and adopt a resilient approach to all aspects of their learning, and to be self-aware in order to recognise their strengths and adapt to their weaknesses. The school intends to equip pupils with genuine self-belief and to be inclusive, so that everyone is respected as an individual and is able to make a difference, both locally and globally.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

1 to 3 April 2025

64. A team of five inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

65. 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.

66. 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**.

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