

# School inspection report

18 to 20 November 2025

## **Worksop College**

Cuthberts Avenue

Worksop

Nottinghamshire

S80 3AP

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 ensure that the requirements of the Standards are met consistently. They collectively take a holistic and strategic approach to pupils' wellbeing that is rooted in the school's values of integrity, dedication and compassion. Leaders work collaboratively with staff, parents and governors so that pupils' personal development, physical and emotional wellbeing are prioritised. Governors visit regularly to meet with senior leaders, staff, pupils and parents to understand the school context and different perspectives. This enables them to provide appropriate support and challenge, and to hold leaders to account.
2. Leaders are highly engaged, strategic and evaluative of the school's curriculum offer. They seek constantly to broaden pupils' choice. Changes to the qualification offer, such as the introduction of the BTEC National Diploma, are carefully aligned to pupils' interests, abilities and aspirations, to enhance their potential. Teaching is typically effective in supporting pupils to learn new concepts and skills, apply their learning in more complex ways and develop increasing independence. Pupils learn and achieve well, including the youngest children in the early years and the oldest pupils in their GCSE, A-level and BTEC qualifications.
3. Leaders ensure that pupils' physical, mental and emotional health are well supported. Effective anti-bullying and behaviour strategies support a culture of respect and tolerance among pupils, and between pupils and staff. Comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) programmes equip pupils to understand different perspectives and to make informed personal choices. A strong house identity, both in school and in boarding, fosters a sense of belonging and supports the development of pupils' mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. The introduction of new co-curricular options and the 'active wellbeing' programme have broadened the sporting and wellbeing provision for pupils. These programmes contribute to the growing independence, confidence and maturity of pupils.
4. Leaders ensure effective health and safety, including fire safety, with suitable policies and protocols in place, including in boarding. However, one fire safety recommendation identified by external specialists had not been actioned within a suitable timeframe. Additionally, one boarding house had not completed an overnight boarding drill in a timely fashion. These errors were swiftly rectified, are not systemic, and are not reflective of the effective practice in fire safety.
5. Pupils are well supported to develop an age-appropriate understanding of important values such as respect and tolerance, and to know right from wrong. They are well supported to make informed decisions about their future subject options and careers. Pupils develop economic understanding and are encouraged to understand the importance of service to the community. Many take on active roles in the school. However, the opportunities for older pupils to make a contribution to the local community and wider society are less well developed.
6. Governors and leaders create a culture of vigilance in their safeguarding work. Leaders in boarding, pastoral care, health and safeguarding work collectively to manage the wellbeing and safety of pupils. They work closely with external specialist agencies when required, so that appropriate and timely action is taken to support pupils' needs. Governors and leaders ensure that safer recruitment checks are carried out assiduously on adults before they begin work at the school. These are recorded on the single central record. There were some minor administrative errors which were

rectified quickly and were not reflective of the generally effective practice in recording information accurately.

## 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 the safer recruitment checks on the single central record are recorded with consistent accuracy
- ensure that all recommendations related to fire safety are actioned within a suitable timeframe
- ensure that the nighttime fire drills occur routinely and consistently across every boarding house
- seek to strengthen how older pupils contribute positively to the local community and to society more widely.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

7. Governors visit the school regularly to understand the life of the school, to monitor the work of senior leaders and the impact of their decisions on pupils and staff. Governors review policies and other school documentation, and work with leaders to ensure compliance. They are kept well informed through reports, committee meetings and focused day visits. They oversee leaders' work relating to pupils' welfare and on planned developments in whole-school strategy. They ensure that leaders are well trained and have the knowledge to lead effectively.
8. Despite effective oversight by governors, they do not always precisely identify some relative weaknesses in leaders' work. For example, there were some minor administrative gaps in the recording of recruitment checks on the single central record. One recommendation relating to a fire risk had not been acted upon in a timely manner and a nighttime fire drill had not taken place within a suitable timeframe for one boarding house. These issues were not reflective of the effective practice in the school and were rectified quickly.
9. The proprietor body and leaders are reflective and work together to evaluate the school's relative strengths and weaknesses. They ensure that strategic plans support pupils' welfare, strengthen educational provision and that the school's values are embedded in development plans. For example, leaders review the curriculum offer as well as teaching and learning through regular lesson visits, book scrutiny and discussion with pupils. They test the reliability of their evaluations against assessment data, pastoral information and the individual education plans for pupils. The self-evaluation process enables leaders to target support, refine the curriculum and maintain a nurturing environment.
10. The school provides appropriate information to parents about its policies, ethos and approach, often through the school's website. They are given information on the school's curriculum, early years framework, relationships and sex education (RSE) programme and careers provision. There is an appropriate complaints process in place, underpinned by the school's policy. Parents receive regular feedback on their child's progress via in-person meetings, interim reports, and written, summative reports. Leaders see parents as partners in their child's educational development and seek to involve parents in discussions relating to their child's progress and wellbeing.
11. Leaders liaise closely with relevant external agencies to support pupils' wellbeing and safety. For example, they seek guidance and make referrals to the local authority. They inform the local authority when pupils join or leave at non-standard transition points. They work closely with the local authority advisor on matters relating to child safety. They stay up to date with new guidance so that prompt and effective action is taken at all times. Leaders provide appropriate information about pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), including information related to finance and funding.
12. Leaders work hard to ensure that the two school sites at Ranby House and Worksop College are clean and maintained effectively. There are well-established and embedded processes for risk assessment, which result in a range of high-quality risk assessments and practices across both sites and during off-site activities. Policies and processes related to risk are reviewed regularly, and action taken when needed so that pupils are kept safe. The school's accessibility plan is reviewed and implemented effectively so that it fulfils leaders' duties under the Equality Act 2010.

13. Leaders ensure the early years statutory framework (EYFS) and the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for boarding are implemented effectively. For example, in the early years, practice has been updated to include a full and comprehensive risk assessment for food and nutrition. In boarding, there is appropriate supervision for boarders and effective arrangements to care for boarders who are sick or injured. In both the early years and boarding provision, leaders have ensured suitable accommodation and a rich and varied experience in which to develop children's and boarders' skills in an age-appropriate way.

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

14. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

15. Leaders ensure a broad curriculum to develop pupils' intellectual, aesthetic, creative skills and independent thinking across the school. The sixth-form course offer has been broadened to include a range of BTEC National Diploma subjects alongside A levels. Leaders have also developed a unique Worksop Diploma, endorsed by the University of Sheffield, which motivates older pupils to study a series of elective courses on special interest areas, for example oceanography and film editing and streaming. This enables pupils to broaden their academic enrichment and tailor their chosen studies to their interests.
16. Pupils benefit from a wide range of recreational and enrichment activities, many of which encourage leadership opportunities. For example, pupils engage enthusiastically in choir and congregational singing, playing in the orchestra, leading chapel services and designing sets for school productions. Leaders have developed their own 'active wellbeing' programme to give pupils a range of sports and physical activities they can enjoy. Collectively, these opportunities build pupils' knowledge and skills, as well as confidence in their own abilities.
17. Teaching staff are knowledgeable in their subject specialism and deliver well-planned lessons that take into account pupils' prior knowledge and attainment. Teachers use a variety of resources to engage pupils, including information technology, scaffolded material and adept questioning. Typically, teaching ensures that pupils are suitably challenged to apply their learning in more complex ways. For example, younger pupils apply their learning from science and technology in practical activities linked to real-life topics. In English lessons, pupils are encouraged to be precise in the use of language and the meaning of phrases. Older pupils in mathematics lessons apply their learning to solve complex problems.
18. Leaders identify pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make suitable provision in lessons and track their progress regularly. Teachers make suitable adaptations in lessons, when needed, for example using dual-coded resources, which combine words and images, vocabulary cards, and wobble cushions. The inclusive approach in lessons ensures that pupils who have SEND access the curriculum successfully alongside their peers, and over time, learn, develop and achieve well.
19. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) access the curriculum with support from their subject teacher. Pupils who are learning English are also supported in small group sessions and are encouraged to immerse themselves in activities with all pupils that enable them to practise English. This builds their confidence and proficiency in learning English and enables them to speak, read and write with increasing fluency.
20. There are positive relationships among pupils, and between pupils and their teachers. Pupils listen to each other's perspectives, are attentive, articulate, and work hard. For example, younger pupils created high-quality independent artwork when inspired by their research on Andy Goldsworthy. Older pupils articulate their understanding of liberal theology in religious studies. Pupils use artistic media, digital and research tools confidently to support their learning, enabling them to become increasingly skilled in their independent learning.
21. Teachers use well-conceived and regular assessments to identify how well pupils are faring across subjects. Teachers provide pupils with precise and informative guidance and feedback that helps

them to improve. Leaders regularly review assessment information related to pupils' progress, identifying and supporting pupils who need extra help or support. Effective teaching, targeted strategies and individualised support enable pupils to learn and achieve well, including the youngest children who are well prepared for Year 1, and for the oldest pupils in their GCSE, A-level and BTEC qualifications.

22. Teachers provide a well-resourced early years environment and support children to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Children are supported in their reading through structured systems, such as book bands, enabling them to build fluency and confidence, including those who previously lacked self-assurance. Teachers plan activities that enable children to develop their communication, writing and number skills, such as storytelling activities, which successfully encourage children to communicate well.
23. Teachers and boarding staff facilitate flexible routines, such as supporting pupils to complete their homework in supervised study areas or the art studio. This approach supports pupils' academic and creative development. They are provided with experiences that support their independence and preparation for adulthood.

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

- 24. All the relevant standards are met.**

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

25. Leaders promote pupils' social, moral and cultural development through inclusive relationships, respectful behaviour and shared community experiences. Provision such as weekly eucharists, singing together, and opportunities for celebration of other faiths support pupils' reflection on values and strengthen the sense of community. Staff model respect for difference, and leaders articulate an inclusive culture rooted in the school values. Co-curricular opportunities, including the John Driver Award and sports performance programmes, support pupils' confidence, resilience and wider personal development.
26. The personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme is planned and delivered effectively. Pupils learn about a range of important topics, such as food influences and how to make healthy food choices. In relationships and sex education (RSE) lessons, pupils explore the concept of consent in age-appropriate ways. They engage openly and respectfully with each other, listening to different perspectives to inform and deepen their own understanding. This ensures that pupils have the necessary knowledge and skills to make informed decisions.
27. Pupils' physical, emotional and mental health are well cared for. Children in the early years benefit from regular opportunities for physical activity that support healthy routines and choices. They learn to interact socially at snack times and with their class teacher in daily emotional check-ins. There is a well-planned and taught physical education (PE) curriculum. Continued investment in the PE and Games curriculum includes an 'active wellbeing' programme, allowing students to select from a wide range of options, including yoga and Pilates, as they grow older, so they can find what best matches their interests and needs. Effective pastoral systems, the 'Wellbeing Hub', anonymous drop boxes, and pupil self-referrals enable pupils to access help to support their positive mental health.
28. Effective approaches to behaviour and anti-bullying encourage pupils to develop an awareness of their behaviour, take responsibility for their actions and practise emotional self-regulation. Pupils are taught about the consequences for poor behaviour and have a solid values framework and rewards system in which to learn right from wrong. Older pupils have contributed to the school's pupil charter which is widely displayed and reinforces positive behaviour. Leaders follow up on any incidents of poor behaviour and bullying promptly. They maintain effective written records to monitor patterns of behaviour and to determine appropriate strategies. They monitor the support provided to pupils to ensure it is appropriate and effective.
29. Admission and attendance registers are effectively maintained and monitored. Leaders follow up absences promptly and work with parents when concerns arise. Leaders work closely with relevant external agencies when there are concerns about pupils' attendance. There is timely reporting to the local authority for any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.
30. Pupils and boarders access medical care and first aid from qualified staff if unwell or injured, including in paediatric first aid for the youngest children. Medical accommodation is suitable, including for boarders. Effective co-ordination between pastoral, wellbeing, medical and boarding teams ensures pupils' needs are addressed comprehensively.
31. Pupils are effectively supervised during the school day, in the boarding houses at night, and when participating in educational visits. The school's grounds, premises, equipment and boarding

accommodation are suitably maintained in line with health and safety standards. The systematic monitoring and testing of areas including electrical, water and laboratories contribute to a safe learning environment.

32. Leaders' policy and processes related to fire safety are implemented effectively and all essential action is taken. However, there were two omissions in leaders' oversight identified during the inspection. A recommendation made by an external specialist service related to the storage of materials had not been addressed in a timely way. Additionally, one of the seven boarding houses had not completed an overnight boarding drill. These issues were rectified during the inspection, and the omissions were not typical of the high-quality practice in the rest of the school.
33. Boarding leaders promote principles which encourage mutual respect and individual house identities. Boarders are well supported to form relationships with pupils from different year groups. The accommodation is warm, comfortable, well-lit and clean. Boarders are provided with supervision, support and resources to care for themselves, including making snacks, washing their clothes and contacting home, whenever they need to. Boarders' access to many activities and supervised study sessions all contribute to effective provision.

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

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

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

35. Teachers plan learning experiences that develop pupils' economic understanding. Boarding debating activities develop pupils' critical thinking about wider ethical and economic issues impacting society. Pupils are given opportunities to learn how to manage money in PSHE and sixth-form life skills programmes in an age-appropriate way. This includes managing budgets, savings, credit cards and loans as well as understanding finances in the workplace. Pupils gain knowledge about finance, future pathways and independent living, preparing them effectively for economic independence and adulthood.
36. In the early years, children explore 'heroes' in the community such as the armed forces, police and fire brigade, which enable them to gain knowledge of key services that support people and develop their awareness of the importance of public service. Older pupils learn to appreciate the work of members of the school community such as support staff and catering teams. This enables pupils to develop respect for and understanding of different roles and contributions within their immediate environment.
37. Leaders promote an atmosphere of mutual respect, tolerance and inclusion through the school's values, the curriculum and assemblies. For example, older pupils present in a house assembly on the theme of remembrance and its relevance to today's conflicts and the need for tolerance. Pupils share their first language and cultural heritage with the wider school. Pupils learn to appreciate other cultures, for example, Chinese culture in Mandarin lessons, Indonesian batik in Art, and the Mexican Day of the Dead festival in religious studies. Mixed-gender sports participation challenges gender stereotypes. The study of Ukrainian refugees and migration in geography lessons develops pupils' empathy for others. This learning collectively deepens pupils' understanding of respect for difference and the importance of valuing difference.
38. Leaders provide extensive opportunities for pupils to develop leadership roles and responsibilities. Pupils lead school council meetings, plan charity events and gather views from younger pupils. Pupils are successful in influencing menu changes while the Break the Rules Day organisation demonstrates to them that young people can effect real change. Older pupils mentor younger ones while library prefects, sports captains, heads of school and chapel wardens embed the importance of service into daily routines. Collectively, these opportunities enable pupils to become role models for one another.
39. Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to learn about the importance of contributing to society. School council representatives lead other pupils in selecting charities to raise funds for. The senior chapel choir performs services at care homes and local hospices. Younger pupils support local charities by raising money for food banks, the regeneration of community gardens and taking part in voluntary work on an overseas tour. However, the opportunities for pupils in the senior school to volunteer, support local initiatives and engage in charity work are less well developed.
40. Pupils are taught about British values, such as the rule of law and right from wrong. Pupils show respect for each other by apologising quickly when they realise that they have acted inconsiderately. Sixth-form pupils articulate a strong sense of responsibility for younger years by actively helping to resolve friendship issues and modelling appropriate behaviour. The house system encourages pupils to contribute positively to their house community and to value collective achievement.

41. There is a well-planned careers curriculum in place which provides pupils with an array of information about the education and training routes available to them, including through university, apprenticeship and employment. As they get older, pupils receive individualised and impartial guidance about specific future careers to help them make informed decisions about subject choices at GCSE, at BTEC and A level, and their future beyond school. Activities such as the STEM ambassador projects with accompanying RAF involvement provide pupils with real-world links and awareness of future career opportunities.

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

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

## Safeguarding

43. The school's safeguarding procedures are quality assured by the governing body. Governors undertake regular visits to the school, meet with senior leaders, pupils and staff, review policies and receive detailed termly reports. They ensure that leaders are supported to undertake their roles effectively. They check that the safeguarding policy and procedures are in line with statutory requirements and available on the school's website.
44. Staff are well trained in their safeguarding responsibilities, including training related to misinformation, radicalisation and reporting low-level concerns about adults working with pupils. Staff self-refer when appropriate. Staff training is enhanced through NSPCC updates and additional staff briefings. Staff report any concerns appropriately to the school's designated safeguarding leaders, using the school's secure information system, so that pupils are supported quickly and effectively.
45. Leaders are vigilant, proactive and reflective in their approach to safeguarding. They work closely with a range of external agencies, such as the local safeguarding networks, the local authority children's services teams and the local authority designated officer (LADO). They seek advice, understand local safeguarding procedures, and make timely referrals when needed to support pupils' wellbeing.
46. Pupils are taught through PSHE lessons, in an age-appropriate way, about how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils are taught how they can report their concerns, and these methods are also well publicised throughout the school. Effective pastoral systems are in place to support pupils' wellbeing. Leaders operate an effective internet filtering and monitoring system of all online activity on digital devices, which is tested regularly. Staff act quickly and appropriately when any incidents occur to ensure pupils' safety.
47. Effective safeguarding systems are in place to support boarders. Staff are well trained and vigilant to signs of concern. They work closely with school staff to ensure that they co-ordinate and collaborate on any support that boarders need. Boarders have access to an independent listener and advocate, who is well known and well publicised in the boarding houses.
48. Governors and leaders ensure that suitable pre-employment checks are undertaken before adults begin work at the school. There is a single central record of these checks, which is monitored by governors and leaders. However, there were minor administrative errors in the record at the time of the inspection that governors and leaders have not previously identified. These were rectified during the inspection and were not representative of the typically effective work of the school in recruitment and record-keeping.

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

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	Worksop College
<b>Department for Education number</b>	891/6001
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1103326
<b>Address</b>	Worksop College Cuthberts Avenue Worksop Nottinghamshire S80 3AP
<b>Phone number</b>	01909 537100
<b>Email address</b>	head@wsnl.co.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.wsnl.co.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Woodard Schools (Nottinghamshire) Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Jason Barnsdale
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Charles Bailey
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 18
<b>Number of pupils</b>	856
<b>Number of boarding pupils</b>	105
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 November to 1 December 2022

## Information about the school

50. Worksop College is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged two to 18 years old. Pupils aged two to 11 years old are taught at Ranby House School, located on a separate site in Retford, approximately six miles away from the school's main registered address in Worksop. Pupils aged 11 to 18 years old are educated in the Worksop College site. The school is run by Woodard Schools (Nottinghamshire) Limited. Directors provide governance of the school. A new headmaster took on the position in April 2025.
51. The school applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a material change to the school's registration to increase the school's total capacity from 720 to 800 pupils. Inspectors conducted an inspection at the request of the DfE in June 2025 and recommended that the material change be approved.
52. Following the material change, the school made an additional request to increase the numbers on roll to 870. This was reviewed in August 2025 by the inspectors who had conducted the June 2025 inspection at the request of the DfE. Inspectors recommended that the material change be approved.
53. There is one mixed boarding house for flexi and weekly boarding at the Ranby House site for children aged seven to 11 years old. At Worksop College, there are two mixed junior houses, who board together aged 11-12 years old, two boarding houses for female boarders aged 13 to 18 years old and three boarding houses for male boarders aged 13 to 18 years old. There is boarding provision for full, weekly and flexi boarding at all Worksop College houses.
54. There are 85 pupils in early years comprising four Nursery and two Reception classes. A nursery operates on the Ranby House site for children aged from birth to 23 months, but it is not owned or operated by the school. It is separately registered, so did not form part of this inspection.
55. The school has identified 232 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
56. The school has identified English as an additional language for 28 pupils.
57. The school states its aims are to provide a happy, caring, family environment in which all pupils have opportunities to discover their talent, develop their confidence and realise their potential, so they leave as well-rounded individuals with the skills to be successful in life beyond the college.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

18 to 20 November 2025

58. A team of ten inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

59. 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
- 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.

60. 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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For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)