

School inspection report

3 to 5 June 2025

Forres Sandle Manor School

Sandle Manor Fordingbridge Hampshire SP6 1NS

> 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'.

Contents

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS	3
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS	4
Recommended next steps Material change request	4 4
SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE	6
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE	7
SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	8
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	9
SECTION 3: PUPILS' PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	.10
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS' PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	.11
SECTION 4: PUPILS' SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY	.12
The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society	[,] 13
SAFEGUARDING	.14
The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding	.14
SCHOOL DETAILS	.15
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL	.16
INSPECTION DETAILS	.17

Summary of inspection findings

- 1. The well-qualified and experienced board of governors have cultivated a close working partnership with leaders to provide thorough and effective oversight of the school. Governors ensure that leaders have the knowledge and skills to carry out their responsibilities effectively so that the Standards are met consistently.
- 2. Leaders provide a rich and broad curriculum both within and beyond the classroom which enables pupils to develop their self-confidence and to acquire new skills and interests.
- 3. Teachers plan interesting activities. They use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and move their learning on. This enables pupils to achieve well and enjoy their lessons. Pupils are ambitious and welcome feedback from teachers about what they do well and how they can improve.
- 4. Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons are delivered through the school's life skills programme. Lessons are well planned and help pupils to gain a mature understanding of social and economic matters. The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum meets statutory requirements.
- 5. Pupils behave well. They are kind, courteous and respectful in their interactions with each other and between staff. Pupils understand the importance of rules to help keep themselves safe and the reasons for sanctions.
- 6. Leaders use a range of measures to gather information about the school's performance. However, not all data is analysed and evaluated in sufficient depth to precisely identify areas for improvement.
- 7. Early years leaders provide a stimulating learning environment for children to develop and thrive. Children enjoy lessons in music, dance and woodland studies. Older pupils are afforded many opportunities to participate in competitive sports. Pupils of all ages understand that participating in physical activity can have a beneficial effect on their mental health and wellbeing.
- 8. Boarders are supported and cared for by well-trained boarding staff who know pupils well and respond to their needs appropriately.
- 9. The school site, including the boarding house, is well maintained. Risk assessment procedures support pupils' welfare and safety in school and when on school trips.
- 10. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress because of the personalised help they receive from support staff and their class teachers.
- 11. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive timely support that enables them to speak English confidently and access all subject areas.
- 12. The well-trained safeguarding team ensures that staff are kept up to date with the latest statutory guidance. Leaders work well with external agencies, seeking advice as needed and following the appropriate procedures to safeguard pupils. Records of recruitment and pre-employment checks are meticulously kept.

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:

• deepen the analysis of information they gather from self-evaluation processes to identify any trends and the necessary actions needed to improve the quality of education.

Material change request

- 13. Inspectors considered the school's request for a change to the details of its registration to extend the age range of pupils on roll from ages 2 to 14 to ages 2 to 15.
- Leaders plan to admit 20 pupils into Year 10 in two additional classes from September 2025. Subject leaders have developed appropriate schemes of work and detailed plans for all the required areas of learning to meet the ages, aptitudes and needs of older pupils.
- Leaders have made suitable changes to the curriculum, resourcing, staff deployment and staff training. It is likely that these arrangements will remain appropriate for the extended age range.
- Leaders have revised the curriculum and teaching plans for RSE ensuring that the curriculum content is suitable for older pupils. Similarly, the careers programme has been expanded to include one-to-one impartial guidance interviews with a careers advisor, workshops and work experience to help pupils explore and manage their career journey. It is likely that these arrangements will remain appropriate for the extended age range.
- Leaders ensure that teaching considers pupils' prior attainment and that teachers make effective use of resources to plan activities that enable pupils to make good progress. The organisation of teaching is likely to continue to be appropriate for the proposed extended age range.
- Leaders and governors have carefully planned and overseen the construction of a new teaching block dedicated to the teaching of science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM).
 Suitable arrangements are in place to identify and mitigate risk, maintain the school site and to minimise the risk of fire.

- Leaders have taken proactive steps to appoint additional staff with appropriate subject knowledge and experience for teaching the proposed older age range, including experience of teaching GCSE. It is likely that the arrangements for safeguarding and safer recruitment will continue to meet the standards if the material change is approved.
- 14. It is recommended that the requested material change be approved.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

- 15. Governors bring a wealth of relevant experience to the role. They undertake regular monitoring activities, both on-site and remotely to ensure that leaders have the required skills and knowledge to implement policies effectively. They provide effective support and encouragement and hold leaders to account for the school's performance so that there is a focus on continuous improvement. This has resulted in the successful implementation of new initiatives to improve the curriculum, teaching and the construction of a new teaching building specialising in STEAM subjects. Staff are supported well to deliver the curriculum in line with the school's aims to nurture each pupil's potential. Effective collaboration between leaders and governors ensures that the Standards are met consistently, and the wellbeing of the pupils is always promoted.
- 16. Leaders have developed systems to evaluate the success of the school's work. These systems support leaders to understand the quality of the school's provision, including where it is most effective and areas for improvement.
- 17. Leaders gather a wealth of data over time, for example, from progress assessments, pupil surveys and participation rates in extra-curricular activities. However, not all information is analysed in sufficient depth to enable leaders to pinpoint precisely which areas are working well and which need further development to improve the quality of education that pupils receive.
- 18. Leaders have formed effective partnerships with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils' particular needs are identified and understood thoroughly. Leaders work with children's services, the police and other safeguarding partners if needed. This results in a co-ordinated and joined-up approach to safeguard both day pupils and boarders.
- 19. The experienced boarding team are well trained and maintain a close-knit, home-from-home boarding community. Leaders consult boarders regularly and respond swiftly and appropriately to any concerns or suggestions raised.
- 20. Leaders in the early years collaborate closely with staff to promote children's safety and wellbeing. Leaders provide many opportunities for staff to work together to decide how best to support children's wellbeing.
- 21. The school's website provides parents and prospective parents with all the required information, such as policies and procedures and previous inspection reports. Parents receive written reports and regular updates regarding their child's progress and attainment across all subjects. Leaders provide local authorities with the required information about how the school spends the funding it receives for pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
- 22. Leaders have established a systematic approach to managing and mitigating risk across all areas of school life. Staff are trained to identify and minimise risk, especially for high-risk activities such as those that take place in sport, on water or overseas trips. The school maintains a comprehensive risk register which is reviewed regularly by leaders and governors.
- 23. The school's appropriate three-stage complaints procedure is available on the school's website and is implemented effectively. Leaders respond swiftly to any concerns raised and follow procedures closely. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. There is a suitable and up-to-date accessibility plan which ensures pupils are supported to access all areas of the curriculum.

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

- 25. The curriculum encompasses all the required areas of learning and is designed to meet pupils' diverse needs and enthusiasms. Leaders have taken strategic decisions to improve the curriculum such as enhancing the provision of STEAM subjects. The extended project qualification offers older pupils additional academic challenge. In the performing arts subjects, pupils perform well and make a positive contribution to school productions involving dance, drama and music.
- 26. Pupils participate in a wide range of recreational and enrichment activities which supports their personal development. Pupils engage in a variety of activities including stay and play, circus skills, FSM radio, lacrosse, yoga and mindfulness. Pupils acquire new skills, develop their self-confidence and extend their range of interests.
- 27. Boarders enjoy the many activities on offer within the school and boarding house. They participate in evening swimming sessions, wicked Wednesdays, table tennis, supervised prep and weekend outings to places of interest. These experiences encourage a positive boarding house ethos and develop boarders' independence and good habits of organisation and study.
- 28. An effective system is in place to check pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers increasingly use this information to plan lessons, together with their detailed knowledge of pupils' skills and prior learning. Although the system is at the early stages of implementation, staff are accurate in identifying gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge. This enables them to target the right support for pupils, as required.
- 29. Pupils are keen to learn. They are polite and articulate communicators. Pupils readily respond to feedback from their teachers and confidently redraft their work. Pupils demonstrate resilience and determination to be successful in their studies. Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and learning by observing lessons. They provide feedback to teachers and specific training to improve teachers' planning.
- 30. Subject leaders regularly review the curriculum and adapt teaching plans to meet pupils' needs and enhance pupils' outcomes. Teachers draw on their specialist subject knowledge to give pupils clear explanations and correct any emerging misconceptions. Well-taught lessons, using high-quality learning resources help to motivate pupils to acquire and apply their new knowledge and skills to make good progress.
- 31. Children in the early years develop their knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make so that they secure early reading skills. Staff take account of each child's needs and interests in their planning. Teachers' skilful questioning encourages children to use a wide range of vocabulary in their conversations. This helps children to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- 32. In the early years, children develop their understanding of numeracy, for example, by learning how to apply different problem-solving skills and methods when identifying place value. Creative play activities help children to develop their physical skills and their curiosity about the world around them. Practical activities such as exploring the pop art techniques of Andy Warhol and Roy Lichenstein develop children's coordination and fine motor skills which enable them to achieve well.
- 33. Pupils who have SEND make good progress from their different starting points. Their needs are accurately identified through effective screening arrangements. The learning support team provides

teachers with strategies and stimulating resources to support pupils who have SEND and this enables them to fully access the curriculum.

34. Pupils who speak EAL are supported well to improve their speaking and comprehension skills in English. Teachers deploy a range of strategies which help pupils develop their understanding of subject-specific vocabulary. Consequently, pupils become increasingly confident and accurate in using technical vocabulary. Pupils build their literacy knowledge so that they can access all subjects and make good progress.

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

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

- 36. The RSE curriculum, delivered through the school's life skills programme, teaches relevant topics with sensitivity. Pupils are taught about the importance of respecting privacy and consent within relationships. They learn strategies that help them maintain healthy friendships and ways in which to navigate new and unfamiliar social situations. Older pupils understand the importance of maintaining appropriate boundaries and keeping safe in personal relationships.
- 37. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching and coaching across a wide range of sports and co-curricular activities. Pupils value the amount of sporting opportunities within the physical education (PE) curriculum. They understand that regular participation in games and physical pursuits will support their personal fitness, emotional, mental and physical health. Pupils are actively encouraged to discover new sports and interests. This helps them to gain self-confidence and to develop useful strategies to manage and recover from any disappointments and challenges they may encounter.
- 38. The curriculum helps pupils gain a sense of fulfilment. They increase their self-esteem and confidence to express their deeper emotions. Through the experience of performance in music and public speaking, pupils develop both their self-confidence and self-control. When children enter the Nursery, early years staff establish clear routines and expectations so that children feel comfortable and settle quickly into school life. Staff use praise effectively and encourage children to express their feelings and emotions. This builds children's self-knowledge and helps them to develop their social and communication skills, such as when they meet visitors before participating in their activities.
- 39. Pupils are taught about different religions and spiritual perspectives. Staff provide many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their thoughts and the beliefs, insights and the values that influence them. These, and other experiences, help pupils to develop an appreciation of the spiritual and moral dimensions of life, particularly in art, dance, music and religious studies (RS).
- 40. Suitable staff-to-child ratios are maintained in the early years. Throughout the school, staff are appropriately deployed to supervise pupils during the school day. Pupils are carefully supervised during breaks and lunchtimes with staff readily available to help and interact with pupils.
- 41. The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to have their voice. An anonymous reporting system allows pupils to report any worries or concerns. This has been successful in addressing individual and group issues.
- 42. Through the school's life skills programme, pupils learn about the harmful effects of bullying, including cyber bullying. Incidents of bullying are rare. If they do occur, pastoral leaders act swiftly and encourage pupils to reflect on their behaviour. Staff provide timely support for both victims and perpetrators.
- 43. The provision for first aid and the administration of medicines are appropriate. Experienced and qualified staff manage the medical facilities well, including those in the boarding house. Staff working in the early years are suitably trained in paediatric first aid.
- 44. The school's buildings and grounds, including the boarding house, are well maintained. Regular health and safety checks are undertaken to keep all areas of the school safe and secure for

everyone. Leaders ensure that appropriate arrangements for the prevention of fire are in place. Regular fire drills take place, including for boarders, in line with statutory requirements. Fire exit routes are signposted clearly and fire safety equipment is well maintained.

- 45. Boarders are provided with comfortable and well-resourced accommodation. Boarding leaders provide a calm environment where pupils can relax, feel at home and participate in a range of social events. Boarders know and follow the school's expectations regarding high standards of behaviour. Leaders regularly seek boarders' views on a range of issues. For example, boarders have recently requested better lockers which will be installed over the summer holidays. Boarders have regular opportunities to contact their parents on their own devices in communal spaces. They also have access to school devices to call home when necessary. Boarding leaders check with guardians that all has gone well when boarders return from half-term breaks or exeat weekends. This contributes to boarders' sense of wellbeing as well as keeping their parents and guardians up to date with their life at Forres Sandle Manor.
- 46. Early years staff in the Nursery and Reception classes teach children how to develop their social skills. Children learn how to regulate their own behaviour and show consideration to others. They learn how to share and work with each other by taking turns, responding to questions and following instructions. Staff encourage children to interact with each other and use their developing social skills to explore their world, and work and play together successfully.
- 47. Staff teach pupils from a young age that their actions and behaviour have consequences. Pupils learn to appreciate and understand the need for rules, rewards and consequences to protect individual interests and to enable a well-ordered community. Staff model appropriate social behaviour. This enables pupils to distinguish between right and wrong and promotes the school's aims and ethos.
- 48. Attendance and admission registers are suitably maintained in line with the latest statutory guidance. The attendance team inform the local authority when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times of the year.

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

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

- 50. Pupils develop their understanding of monetary and financial matters through the carefully planned curriculum. Children in the Nursery and pre-prep are taught about the concept of coins and how to exchange money for items they would like to purchase. They learn to calculate any change they are owed. Pupils in the prep school develop their financial literacy skills and understand the benefits of making wise financial decisions. In mathematics, prep school pupils use their rounding techniques to assess if they would have enough money to pay for goods at the checkout. They understand that while cash usage is declining, knowledge of money is an important life skill. Pupils participate in a range of activities to develop their skills to navigate real-life economic scenarios, such as budgeting and ticket-buying. Older pupils gain valuable insights into socioeconomic issues when they consider the benefits and disadvantages of online banking apps. Participation in these activities enables pupils to acquire important life skills in interpreting data and logical reasoning to make financially responsible decisions that help to prepare them for life in British society.
- 51. Pupils gain an understanding of British values by studying democracy, laws, legislation and political systems in philosophy and life skills lessons. They explore the themes of fairness, justice and social responsibility and then apply this knowledge to topical issues. For example, pupils consider how groups of people may be affected by climate change and increased carbon emissions. Leaders ensure that in planning and teaching their lessons, teachers are careful to present any political information in a balanced and impartial manner.
- 52. Pupils gain an understanding of British institutions in modern society. Younger children visit local shops and the post office, and teachers introduce *Paddington Bear* stories that describe historic London buildings. Older pupils visit Salisbury Cathedral, and boarders visit the British Museum. Through these outings pupils learn the importance of legislation for the smooth running of a range of public institutions and in addressing any inequality.
- 53. Throughout the school, the curriculum provides a range of activities, both in and outside of lessons which nurture pupils' appreciation and understanding of different groups of people. In the early years children learn about different cultural traditions. In geography lessons, older pupils learn how people live in different parts of the world. In RS lessons pupils learn about different faiths.
- 54. The life skills programme enables pupils to learn to respect and celebrate uniqueness and individuality, particularly characteristics such as age, disability, gender and race. Pupils understand not to judge people based on stereotypes, such as disability in sports. Pupils listen to one another carefully and are understanding, tolerant and respectful of differences between people. Pupils fully appreciate that not everyone thinks or acts as they do, and everybody is entitled to a point of view. Boarders demonstrate tolerance and respect for individual differences. Boarders welcome and celebrate the many cultures that reside within the boarding house.
- 55. Despite it not being a statutory requirement for primary aged pupils, leaders and governors have made the decision to provide a careers programme. This age-appropriate programme includes visiting speakers who share information about their professions. Older pupils complete an online skills audit to identify their strengths and enthusiasms and begin to relate these to potential career paths.

56. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles in the school, such as digital leaders, prefects, school council and eco representatives. These posts of responsibility help pupils to appreciate the views and opinions of others as well as developing their own leadership skills. For example, older pupils demonstrate service and helpfulness to others by mentoring younger pupils. The two senior and two junior heads of boarding are specially trained to help assist leaders with the smooth running of the boarding house.

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

Safeguarding

- 58. Leaders and governors promote an effective safeguarding culture. The safeguarding policy is firmly in place. Procedures are reviewed regularly by the safeguarding team supported by knowledgeable governors to ensure that the school's systems meet current statutory guidance.
- 59. Suitable staff supervision arrangements are in place across the school's extensive site, including in less visible areas. Information about how pupils, staff and visitors can contact members of the safeguarding team is displayed across the school. Boarders are well supervised throughout the day, evening and before they go to bed. Boarders are made suitably aware of the school's expectations for visits into town, including responsible behaviour and time for boarders to return to school.
- 60. Pupils' physical and mental health are important to staff. Pupils are safe in school because there is a range of staff, including mental health first aiders and councillors to whom they can seek support throughout the school day if they have any concerns.
- 61. Comprehensive and robust filtering and monitoring systems help to keep pupils safe when using the internet. Pupils' digital safety is promoted through the life skills programme. Pupils learn how to stay safe and mitigate potential dangers when using digital platforms and apps. An effective online system for recording and managing safeguarding concerns is in place. This enables relevant staff to retrieve and use information quickly which helps to keep pupils safe. Staff understand and follow the agreed protocols regarding the use of mobile phones.
- 62. All recruitment checks are carefully recorded on a central record of appointments and meet statutory requirements. Safeguarding leaders and governors are closely involved in monitoring the recruitment process at all stages.
- 63. Safeguarding leaders, including those in the early years, are well qualified and knowledgeable about their roles. They have formed effective working partnerships with external agencies. This enables leaders to draw on professional advice and guidance, as required.
- 64. The designated safeguarding lead ensures staff receive regular safeguarding training throughout the year so that staff have the confidence, knowledge and skills to safeguard pupils in their care. All staff and governors receive training for 'Prevent' duty so they are alert to the risks of extremism and radicalisation. Following training, staff undertake short quizzes to test their understanding of safeguarding protocols and practice. This reinforces the school's culture of vigilance and accountability. Staff know they must refer any concerns about a member of staff to the headteacher.
- 65. Leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of safeguarding requirements for boarders and have established a range of mechanisms for pupils to seek assistance. There is an independent person available for boarders to contact. Robust procedures are in place for checking the suitability of staff and family members of boarding staff resident in the boarding house. Safeguarding procedures for the welfare of boarders are well understood and effective. Regular communication between the medical, pastoral, safeguarding and boarding house teams ensures that pupils' welfare is prioritised.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

School details

School	Forres Sandle Manor School
Department for Education number	850/6042
Registered charity number	284260
Address	Forres Sandle Manor School Sandle Manor Fordingbridge Hampshire SP6 1NS
Phone number	01425 653181
Email address	office@fsmschool.com
Website	www.fsmschool.com
Proprietor	Forres Sandle Manor Ltd
Chair	Mrs Catriona Stone
Headteacher	Mr Mark Howe
Age range	2 to 14
Number of pupils	227
Number of boarding pupils	52
Date of previous inspection	16 January 2024

Information about the school

- 67. Forres Sandle Manor School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school located in the town of Fordingbridge, on the edge of the New Forest, Hampshire. The school is a limited company, based in China, owned by the proprietor and overseen by a board of governors on his behalf. The school is divided into four sections: the Nursery for children aged 2 to 4; the pre-prep school for pupils aged 5 to 7; the prep school for pupils aged 8 to 11; and the senior school for pupils aged 11 and above.
- 68. Pupils from the age of eight years and above may board, either on a flexi, weekly or full-time basis. All pupils are accommodated in boarding areas segregated by gender in the main school building.
- 69. There are currently 47 children in the early years in one Nursery and one Reception class.
- 70. The school has identified 24 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are very few pupils in the school who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
- 71. The school has identified English as an additional language for 28 pupils.
- 72. The school states its aims are to inspire pupils to discover and become their best version, be happy with who they are and feel equipped for the world they are entering and be successful in achieving outcomes beyond what they thought were possible.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

3 to 5 June 2025

73. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

74. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods, and a sample of extra-curricular activities
- observation of mealtimes, including those for boarders
- observation of boarders' free time
- discussion with the chair and two other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils and examination of samples of pupils' work
- visits to the boarding house accompanied by pupils and staff
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- examination of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school
- scrutiny of leaders' plans for the proposed material change.
- 75. 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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For more information, please visit isi.net