

School inspection report

4 to 6 March 2025

Gloverspiece School

Gloverspiece Minifarm

Ladywood

Droitwich

Worcestershire

WR9 0AJ

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. The proprietor and school leaders have a clear vision for the school, which is implemented effectively. Leaders have a secure understanding of pupils' needs. The proprietor ensures that leaders have the knowledge and skills required to manage the school well. Leaders actively promote the aims and ethos of the school.
2. Leaders and staff promote positive behaviour effectively. Pupils behave well and show high levels of respect for people in the school and the wider community and understanding of the differences between people. The mutual respect between staff and pupils helps pupils to understand how to be encouraging and supportive of each other.
3. Leaders provide a school environment which prioritises pupils' physical and mental health. Levels of supervision are appropriate to promote pupils' safety and all staff understand and implement safeguarding procedures in line with the school policy. The large school site is secure and the proprietor and leaders take a proactive and effective approach to managing risks.
4. Leaders effectively deploy skilled staff to support both the academic and therapeutic needs of pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This ensures a well-regulated, focused and calm school day. They take pride in fostering pupils' personal development, helping each pupil to reach their potential. Leaders create a respectful environment where pupils can express their ideas and feelings confidently.
5. Pupils manage themselves well in the learning environment, showing patience and attentiveness. The school's flexibility in teaching ensures that every pupil receives personalised support. Pupils' movements around the school are managed effectively to ensure smooth transitions between lessons. Pupils make most progress in lessons and activities where they are engaged in and around the school farm. This is less evident when the resources used for learning are not as well matched to pupils' needs.
6. The development of life skills to enable pupils to thrive when they leave school is a core part of the school's aims and ethos. This approach is integrated into lessons and extra-curricular activities. For example, during life skills intervention lessons, pupils work out a budget to buy the ingredients to make popular recipes.
7. Weekly career lessons form part of the curriculum and are effective. The older pupils visit a careers fair annually, which enables them to learn about a wide variety of career opportunities. Staff support pupils in completing applications for college.
8. Leaders have introduced a new system to help provide feedback to pupils and support them to understand the next steps that they have to take in their learning to improve their skills in key subjects. However, this is not fully embedded.
9. Leaders ensure that the safeguarding policy is implemented appropriately and adheres to statutory guidance. Pupils have trusted adults they can turn to if they need to raise concerns.

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 assessment system is used more effectively so that pupils have a clearer understanding of what they need to do to achieve their next steps in learning.
- ensure that staff more effectively use resources for their lessons, such as the outdoors, to better match learning to pupils' needs.

Material change request

10. Inspectors considered the school's request for a change to the details of its registration to increase its capacity from 25 to 41 and to amend the age range from 4 to 16 to 4 to 18.
- Safeguarding practice in the school is effective and leaders are rigorous in checking the suitability of staff to work with pupils.
 - Leaders have carefully considered the extension of the age range to 18 so that the school continues to promote the wellbeing of all pupils.
 - Leaders maintain effective procedures so that health and safety and fire safety requirements continue to be met. Leaders assess and address risks effectively, including risks relating to an increase in the number of pupils.
 - Staffing and supervision are appropriate to support the increase in pupil numbers across two sites. Leaders have appropriate plans in place to ensure that the quality of education is maintained if the school adds an additional site, such as deploying additional staff when appropriate.
 - The environment, including classroom space, toilet facilities and outdoor space, is suitable to accommodate the proposed increase in pupil numbers.
 - The school implements a suitable curriculum policy which is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work. Leaders have considered the needs of older pupils, such as ensuring that careers guidance is included as part of the curriculum.

- The proprietor and school leaders actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Leaders and staff effectively promote pupils' understanding of and respect for the democratic process. The school encourages respect for other people, paying particular attention to their own and others' cultural traditions.

11. It is recommended that the requested material change be approved.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. The proprietor ensures that leaders demonstrate the relevant knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Leaders conduct an effective self-evaluation process, which helps them to define a clear vision for the school's future development.
13. The proprietor and school leaders ensure that across the school there is a clear ethos of inclusion and acceptance. They promote a positive restorative approach to all aspects of behaviour and each individual pupil is supported relative to their own special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
14. Leaders effectively organise the school and implement policies and procedures that prioritise pupil wellbeing and nurture. Proactive pastoral care, personalised interventions and robust risk management are evident. A safe and supportive environment is fostered, enabling pupils, including those with complex needs, to access education and make good progress.
15. Suitable risk assessments are in place to help keep pupils safe, including during off-site activities. Risk assessments take into account each pupils' needs and the risks they face. For example, there are clear procedures in place to support pupils' safety during pick-up and drop-off times. Sensible and proportionate mitigation strategies are in place, which are reviewed as pupils' needs develop.
16. Leaders respond appropriately to any concern raised through a suitable three-stage complaints procedure. They respond to complaints promptly and within the published timeframes. The school keeps an accurate record of any complaints submitted, including of any actions taken in response to these.
17. Leaders ensure that the school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. They promote an ethos of inclusion and acceptance through the school. A suitable accessibility plan is implemented effectively.
18. Leaders maintain an easily accessible website, which provides relevant key information for parents of current and prospective pupils. Parents receive an annual report on their child's progress.
19. Leaders ensure that the education, health and care plans (EHC plan) of all pupils funded by a local authority are reviewed annually. Leaders provide relevant local authorities with the required information and a statement on how public money is spent to support pupils with EHC plans.
20. The proprietor and senior leaders ensure there is a culture of shared responsibility for health and safety, safeguarding and risk assessments, through effective induction and regular staff training.
21. School leaders keep in regular contact with the local authority designated officer (LADO) and make timely referrals. Low level concerns are logged appropriately, and advice is sought from the LADO if required.
22. School leaders establish an effective school ethos, which helps to promote the welfare of the pupils.

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

23. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

24. The proprietor and school leaders have created a suitable curriculum that is designed around the individual needs of the pupils. Staff identify these needs through pupils' EHC plan targets and baseline assessments. Leaders monitor teaching and learning through informal and formal learning walks to help them to identify where and how they need to improve teaching practice in the school.
25. The curriculum is well planned and offers opportunities for pupils to study towards appropriate qualifications. Pupils achieve entry-level and functional skills qualifications. The curriculum, particularly animal care activities, is popular and promotes calmness and happiness amongst pupils.
26. Pupils make good progress in mathematics, English and science. Staff track their progress using a recently introduced system. Staff know their pupils extremely well and adjust the tasks and support needed to effectively meet pupils' needs during lessons and activities. Information about the progress pupils make is shared with parents. However, pupils do not fully understand how to interpret the feedback that they are given within this system in order to help them to develop their skills and knowledge further.
27. Pupils engage well in lessons that incorporate real-life experiences or utilise the school's unique environment. For example, in mathematics lessons pupils time how long animals can walk up or down a path. In English lessons, pupils walk around the farm and then write recounts based on this.
28. Pupils develop their life skills in lessons. For example, during cooking lessons they develop their independence as they learn how to make an omelette from start to finish using basic ingredients.
29. Leaders provide a diverse choice of enrichment activities for pupils. For instance, pupils develop their skills in sport, creative arts and life skills through clubs including cooking, photography, construction and social games. Pupils gain a sense of confidence and achievement through their accomplishments during these activities.
30. Staff across the school know the pupils well. They set tasks appropriate to pupils' current levels of attainment, providing an appropriate amount of challenge and support to help pupils to be successful.

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

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

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

32. Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing. They provide a comprehensive daily programme of activities within the curriculum. Pupils engage well during activities in the outdoors, such as animal care. These help pupils to self-regulate their emotions which helps them to be ready for learning.
33. School leaders have developed an effective nurture programme which gives pupils a means of expressing their emotions. Nurture teaching assistants are readily available for pupils should they wish to share and work through any potential concern or emotion with a trusted adult. Instances of bullying are rare, but, if they do occur, are acted upon swiftly by staff.
34. Leaders implement a personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum which promotes pupils' understanding of how to look after their physical, mental and emotional health.
35. Staff's nurturing approach supports pupils to regulate their feelings and to balance their emotions throughout the day. Pupils acquire a variety of strategies that help them to develop self-knowledge and self-confidence. For instance, pupils are encouraged and supported to share important updates about looking after the farm animals in whole school situations.
36. Leaders have established a comprehensive personal development programme which includes relationships and sex education (RSE). RSE follows a well-planned structure and adheres to the requirements of statutory guidance. Pupils learn about consent and the characteristics of positive and healthy friendships and relationships.
37. The attendance and admission registers are properly maintained and leaders ensure that any lateness is quickly followed up in line with school policy. The school reports pupils who leave or join at non-standard transition points, as well as any attendance concerns, to the relevant local authorities. Staff establish positive relationships with parents and local authorities and communicate with them openly to promote good levels of attendance at school.
38. Health and safety arrangements are effective and staff ensure that the premises are suitably maintained, with regular checks made on equipment and, for example, the quality of water. Leaders ensure that there is effective supervision across the site at all times of the day through careful deployment of staff. Staff are trained in fire safety and arrangements for fire evacuation are suitable. Robust processes are in place for the delivery and management of first aid.
39. Pupils participate in a broad range of physical activities as part of the physical education (PE) curriculum, including basketball, yoga and the daily mile. These help to develop pupils' physical skills as well as their teamwork and resilience.
40. Pupils are well supervised at all times, including lunchtimes. There is suitable staff presence to enable pupils to explore designated areas. Pupils are able to express themselves verbally and physically in the open space available to them.

41. Leaders support staff in establishing positive behaviour strategies and implement these well both in and out of lessons. Leaders oversee behaviour well, with regard to individual cases, and access support for behaviour and bullying incidents should these arise.
42. Staff manage behaviour in lessons well. They identify changes in pupils' moods and take pre-emptive action to avoid a situation escalating. This supports pupils effectively.

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

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

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

44. Pupils are encouraged to show mutual respect for their peers. For example, they are supported to use good manners with others during their day-to-day interactions. Pupils are similarly encouraged to celebrate each other's achievements.
45. Pupils receive relevant and impartial careers guidance. Staff also use their in-depth knowledge of pupils to help them explore possible future careers. Staff provide opportunities for older pupils to attend a careers fair to help them learn more about their future options beyond school. This supports pupils to move on to further education.
46. Pupils develop positive social skills. Leaders ensure that they have opportunities to participate in activities where they need to work together, such as to create a sensory garden trail. Pupils also demonstrate a strong understanding of their role within the school community. For instance, they recognise the importance of working collectively towards shared goals that form part of their reward system.
47. Pupils readily embrace the opportunities that staff provide for them to take on responsibility, for example when looking after animals at the farm.
48. Leaders encourage the pupils to learn about respect and difference. In religious studies and assemblies, pupils learn about diversity, tolerance, different cultures and religious festivals, such as Diwali.
49. Pupils receive effective economic education through lessons such as life skills, where they work together to buy ingredients to make popular recipes on a limited budget. Pupils learn to problem solve and compare prices to find the best value ingredients.
50. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to develop their understanding of British values, such as through participation in mock elections. Pupils similarly learn about democracy as they accept the outcome of votes to determine rewards for reaching targets.
51. Leaders provide a wide range of co-curricular opportunities which enable pupils to engage with, and experience, the community beyond the school in preparation for their future lives. These include work experience at the local leisure centre and fund raising for charities.
52. Pupils form a good understanding of right and wrong through lessons and assemblies. Staff help pupils to reflect on their behaviour and self-regulate. Staff and pupils have good relationships and, through discussions about behaviour, pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility for their actions.

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

53. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

54. There is a well-developed culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Effective procedures and systems are in place for staff to raise concerns and these are recorded and promptly acted on in line with the safeguarding policy. Leaders make timely referrals to children's services and the local authority designated officer when appropriate. Leaders work in partnership productively with external agencies to promote pupils' safety.
55. The school's nurture programme is effective in providing pupils with a trusted adult with whom they can share any concerns. The PSHE curriculum helps pupils develop their own knowledge and understanding of safeguarding risks, such as grooming and exploitation.
56. The safeguarding policy reflects the most recent statutory guidance and is effectively implemented. It is available to staff, parents and pupils on the school website and contains all the necessary contact details.
57. School leaders ensure that all the required pre-appointment checks are completed and recorded accurately in the single central record. The proprietor maintains effective oversight of the single central record and conducts termly quality assurance checks.
58. All staff receive suitable safeguarding training, including about radicalisation and extremism. They understand how to report, record and address any safeguarding concerns that may arise. Staff know the pupils well. This allows them to quickly spot any changes in pupils' behaviour that could signal a potential concern. Staff understand the importance of effective safeguarding and they are aware of their responsibilities under the staff code of conduct.
59. Staff are well equipped to promote pupils' wellbeing, and school leaders effectively identify and mitigate risks, ensuring robust safeguarding measures are in place. The high staff to pupil ratios help to ensure all members of the school community are well looked after.
60. Pupils are taught about online safety and how to protect themselves when using devices. The school's online filtering and monitoring system is effective and protects pupils from accessing harmful content.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Gloverspiece School
Department for Education number	885/6045
Address	Gloverspiece School Gloverspiece Minifarm Ladywood Droitwich Worcestershire WR9 0AJ
Phone number	01905 452343
Email address	officegloverspiece@gmail.com
Website	www.gloverspieceminifarm.co.uk
Proprietor	Mrs Lynne Duffy
Headteacher	Mrs Lynne Duffy
Age range	4 to 16
Number of pupils	25
Date of previous inspection	30 March to 1 April 2022

Information about the school

62. Gloverspiece School is a co-educational day school catering for the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It was founded in 2017 and is owned and governed by the sole proprietor, who is also the headteacher. The school is set in a rural location near Droitwich. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes according to ability and need.
63. The school has identified that all pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, such as autism and social, emotional and mental health conditions, and receive additional specialist support. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
64. The school has identified no pupils for whom English is an additional language.
65. The school states its aims are to provide a secure and happy environment where outdoor pursuits are used to encourage pupils to unlock their talents and to develop their self-confidence.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

4 to 6 March 2025

66. A team of 3 inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

67. 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 proprietor
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

68. 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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