

School inspection report

2 to 4 December 2025

Badminton School

Westbury Road
Westbury-on-Trym
Bristol
BS9 3BA

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 embed the school's core values of curiosity, aspiration, courage and courtesy in all aspects of their work. Pupils in turn uphold these values routinely in daily school life. Pupils' wellbeing is supported through well-considered policies and procedures, which reflect current statutory guidance. Governors provide effective oversight to ensure that the Standards are met consistently.
2. A rigorous process of self-evaluation identifies the school's strengths and areas for further development. Leaders accurately identify potential risks to pupils' welfare and take suitable measures to reduce them. They train staff effectively to manage and mitigate risk. Rigorous risk management reviews ensure that the school's arrangements for protecting pupils are effective.
3. Boarding houses are well run, well maintained and comfortable. Leaders support new boarders to settle quickly and make friends. Boarding staff receive relevant training. They liaise effectively with pastoral, academic and healthcare teams.
4. Leaders in the early years promote a calm and nurturing environment that helps children to build secure foundations for future learning. Teachers develop children's communication, reading and number skills effectively. As a result, children develop confidence and form positive relationships with others through the well-structured early years provision.
5. Leaders have established a coherent and broad curriculum. Knowledgeable teachers plan well-considered lessons, supporting pupils' good progress. Leaders monitor pupils' attainment carefully, providing tailored support for pupils when needed. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) have their needs identified accurately and addressed quickly. A rich programme of enrichment activities and recreational opportunities enables pupils to extend their interests and to develop new skills.
6. Leaders prioritise pupils' emotional wellbeing and mental health. They ensure that pupils can seek help from adults when needed. Pupils feel well cared for as a result. Well-planned relationships and sex education (RSE), alongside personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programmes help to develop pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Leaders promote pupils' physical health through implementing a coherent programme of physical education (PE) and sport.
7. Pupils behave well, supported by the school's well-managed and well-implemented behaviour policy. Any instances of bullying are addressed promptly and effectively. Leaders maintain appropriate systems for maintaining health and safety standards. They respond swiftly to concerns raised by staff or pupils. Suitable arrangements are in place for first aid and for the supervision of pupils, including for boarders and children in the early years. Admission and attendance procedures meet requirements.
8. The school provides effective opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of identity, diversity and different cultural and religious traditions. As a result, pupils show high levels of respect for others and interact respectfully with their peers.
9. Pupils acquire a well-rounded understanding of British values through the curriculum, assemblies and practical experiences, such as mock trials held at the school involving local barristers. However,

pupils' knowledge of public institutions and services in England is less consistent in the sixth form than in other parts of the school.

10. The well-structured careers programme provides pupils with suitable and tailored guidance on their future choices. Pupils develop a secure understanding of finance and enterprise through age-appropriate economic education. They support others in the local community effectively through outreach activity and charitable initiatives.
11. Leaders prioritise pupils' safety. Governors maintain effective oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements. Leaders ensure that staff are suitably trained in safeguarding practice. Consequently, staff are vigilant and report concerns about pupils' welfare promptly. Pupils learn how to stay safe, including online. Leaders review internet filtering and monitoring systems regularly to ensure that they remain effective. The school maintains robust safer-recruitment procedures for new staff.

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 curriculum is further enhanced so that sixth-form pupils develop a consistently broad knowledge of public institutions and services in England.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. Governors evaluate the impact of leaders' work through detailed probing of their decision-making. They visit the school regularly to understand how leaders' decisions influence day-to-day practice, including in the early years and in boarding accommodation. Governors receive well-structured induction so that they understand their responsibilities. Their effective oversight ensures that leaders systematically promote pupils' wellbeing and fulfil their responsibilities. As a result, the Standards, including the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools, are met consistently.
13. The school's core values guide leaders' decision-making. Leaders model these values consistently well. Pupils in turn reflect the values in their daily conduct and uphold high standards of behaviour in an environment characterised by respect and mutual trust. Leaders systematically review the effectiveness of the school's provision in line with these values. They use their findings to shape a comprehensive development plan with clear timescales, actions and success criteria. Governors scrutinise this plan closely, ensuring that it aligns with the wider strategic vision for the school's future.
14. Governors ensure that leaders adopt a systematic approach to risk management. Leaders are knowledgeable about the contextual and less obvious risks. They review national and local guidance, for example, to identify emerging concerns, implementing suitable measures to reduce them. Staff are trained to evaluate and manage risk. Risk assessments are comprehensive, regularly checked and systematically updated.
15. The boarding provision is well led. Policies, handbooks and other guidance for boarding staff are comprehensive. Leaders provide supportive induction for new boarders, helping them to settle quickly into school life and make friends. Boarding staff receive appropriate training. They work effectively with pastoral, academic and healthcare teams to ensure that individual boarders' needs are met. Boarding houses are comfortable, well maintained and homely.
16. In the early years, leaders set clear expectations. They provide staff with well-informed guidance. Consequently, the setting establishes secure foundations for children's future development. Leaders promote children's good progress through a stimulating and nurturing provision that meets individual children's needs. They help the youngest children to feel settled by establishing calm routines and ensuring that staff consistently provide reassuring, attentive support.
17. Pupils routinely receive well-structured support for their mental health and emotional wellbeing. They make sure that pupils access suitable help from adults promptly when needed. Pupils' health needs are met through effective PSHE and PE programmes.
18. Leaders ensure that the school's policies reflect current statutory guidance and remain suited to the school's context. They check that staff and pupils understand policy and procedural expectations, notifying them promptly when requirements change. Leaders maintain a comprehensive accessibility plan and ensure that the school meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010.
19. All required policies and procedures are published on the school's website or made available to parents and others as appropriate. Parents regularly receive useful information about their child's attainment, effort and conduct.

20. Leaders maintain effective relationships with external agencies to promote pupils' wellbeing, including the local authority and safeguarding partners. Leaders notify the local authority when pupils join or leave the school outside the usual transition points.
21. A suitable complaints procedure is in place. Leaders review outcomes carefully and take appropriate action if required, including when complaints are not upheld.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

23. The well-designed and broad curriculum challenges pupils to think deeply as they develop a wide range of intellectual and creative skills. In both the prep and senior schools, the curriculum includes structured opportunities for pupils to extend their learning through independent research projects. Older pupils build on this experience by undertaking research that is assessed for externally validated qualifications. Leaders review the curriculum regularly to ensure that it promotes the school's values, reflects pupils' interests where possible and that it aligns suitably to pupils' ages and aptitudes. Because the curriculum is sequenced methodically, in and across the prep and senior schools, pupils build their learning securely over time. Leaders ensure that the curriculum includes purposeful opportunities for pupils to learn about British values.
24. Teachers are knowledgeable. They plan engaging lessons, which build systematically on pupils' prior learning. Teachers make effective use of incisive questioning to probe pupils' understanding and stimulate pupils' ability to think independently. Throughout the school, teachers use good-quality resources to support pupils' learning, such as using puppets in the prep school to help pupils to explore stories and express ideas. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning effectively, arranging well-structured opportunities for teachers to develop their practice. They ensure that partisan political views are not promoted in any aspect of the school's work.
25. Pupils show high levels of interest in their work, persevere well and collaborate confidently. In the early years, children develop gross motor skills through activities such as dance. These activities also support the development of the fine motor skills required for early writing and other precise movements. Teachers model mutual respect consistently, creating a constructive learning environment that helps pupils to take well-considered risks in their learning. Boarders have access to suitable study facilities during boarding time.
26. The school has an effective framework for assessing pupils' progress. Leaders systematically review the information collected, arranging tailored support for pupils if needed. Teachers implement a comprehensive marking policy, which ensures that pupils receive helpful feedback on how to improve their work. Pupils make good progress from their assessed starting points and achieve well at GCSE and A level.
27. In the early years, children develop effective communication skills. Staff introduce reading by showing children how letters and combinations of letters link to specific sounds. Children develop their understanding of number by ordering and sorting objects. They extend this learning outdoors through practical games that help them to count with increasing accuracy and to recognise quantities.
28. Leaders of provision for pupils who have SEND are knowledgeable. They work effectively with pupils and parents to shape effective individual learning plans (ILPs). Academic and pastoral staff use these plans well to support pupils' needs. As a consequence, pupils who have SEND achieve well from their different starting points.
29. The school checks rigorously to identify the needs of pupils who speak EAL. Leaders provide clear guidance to teachers on how to support pupils who may need help to develop their written and spoken English. This includes, for example, through the use of suitable online resources. Pupils also

develop their English conversational skills during non-teaching time. As a result, they make good progress over their time in the school.

30. Leaders ensure that pupils engage purposefully in a wide range of recreational activities to stimulate and extend their interests. Children in the early years undertake active play in well-resourced outdoor spaces. Older pupils take part in curriculum enrichment options such as The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) and clubs in cross-stitch, climbing, debating and mythology. The school arranges weekend trips and visits for boarders, including ice-skating and cinema outings. Boarders have access to suitably supervised facilities, such as the gym, during boarding time.

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 ensure that pupils know how to seek timely support from adults, including tutors, counsellors and specialist pastoral staff. Pupils have access to trained peer mentors when needed. The PSHE programme teaches pupils how to manage their mental health and to regulate their emotions. This helps them to build self-esteem and self-confidence. In the early years, children learn to express their mood by indicating how they feel on a colour-coded chart in the classroom. Leaders use information from the responses to wellbeing surveys effectively to guide the development of the school's pastoral provision.
33. The curriculum develops pupils' spiritual awareness successfully. In textiles, for example, work inspired by pebbles and seaweed helps pupils to appreciate their connection with the natural world. The religious studies (RS) programme introduces pupils to different faith practices and supports personal reflection. In the early years, children learn about diverse cultural and religious celebrations and practise mindfulness during a wellbeing week.
34. Teachers in the early years develop children's understanding of respect and diversity through activities such as role play. In the prep school, the relationships education programme teaches pupils how to navigate friendships, to recognise discrimination and to respect and value diversity. The senior school's RSE programme engages pupils sensitively with topics such as women's health, fertility and self-defence. The programme takes account of international pupils' needs. Leaders ensure that teachers of RSE are suitably trained. They monitor the quality of the provision effectively.
35. Pupils receive effective health education. Children in the early years learn about the impact of exercise on heart rate and develop their physical health through regular outdoor play. The PSHE programme teaches pupils how to make healthy choices. An inclusive and well-structured PE curriculum develops pupils' fitness and physical skills through body conditioning and a broad range of sports, including hockey, cricket, swimming and tennis.
36. Staff implement an effective behaviour policy, which emphasises respectful interactions and the constructive resolution of issues. Pupils behave well as a result and take responsibility for their conduct.
37. Through the PSHE programme, pupils learn about different forms of bullying and how to report concerns. Staff implement the anti-bullying policy effectively. Leaders maintain accurate logs of any incidents. They respond suitably and promptly if any bullying-type behaviour occurs.
38. The school's prefect system provides pupils with meaningful opportunities to serve the school community. Prefects receive suitable training, understand their duties clearly and carry out their roles responsibly, contributing positively to school life.
39. Leaders oversee effective health and safety procedures. Staff know how to report concerns and leaders respond swiftly to matters brought to their attention. Health and safety records are comprehensive. Staff receive suitable training on health and safety requirements. Leaders schedule regular fire evacuation practices, including during boarding time and act appropriately to reduce fire risks. The school site is well maintained.

40. The school offers effective first aid provision. A suitable number of staff hold first aid qualifications, including for paediatric first aid in the early years. Leaders deploy them appropriately across the site. Records relating to first aid, injuries and individual pupils' needs are comprehensive. The health centre is suitably staffed and equipped. Boarding houses have additional facilities for the care of unwell or injured pupils. Medicines are stored securely and administered in line with the school's procedures. Pupils, including those in the early years, know how to seek help if they are injured or feel unwell.
41. Pupils are supervised well, including at breaktimes and lunchtime, during transitions and in boarding time. Leaders maintain suitable staff-to-child ratios in the early years.
42. Leaders effectively promote and monitor attendance. They review attendance records regularly and act swiftly when concerns arise. Registers are completed accurately. Leaders use attendance information to identify pupils who need support and intervene appropriately to secure improvement.
43. Boarders have sufficient free time each day. Boarding accommodation is of good quality and well maintained. Meals are varied and nutritious, including appropriate provision for pupils who have specific dietary needs. The school meets all the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools.

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

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

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

45. The curriculum encourages pupils to understand, respect and value individual backgrounds and identities. In the prep school, for example, pupils explore the impact of apartheid in South Africa through carefully chosen literature and creative writing. The senior-school fashion club considers the under-representation of people who have disabilities in the fashion industry. Boarding leaders devise activities that draw on the international cultures represented in the boarding houses. These broaden pupils' insight into different traditions and experiences. Cultural days introduce pupils to the food, music, dance, dress and customs of a wide range of cultures. Pupils learn about the festivals and practices of different religions in assemblies where peers present information about their own faith.
46. Leaders develop pupils' cultural and social awareness effectively. Pupils build their collaborative and creative skills through dramatic productions, including plays, musicals and a biennial five-day tour to the Edinburgh Festival. Pupils in all parts of the school take part in musical activity. The school organises visits to galleries, opera houses and theatres to extend pupils' cultural perspectives further. Pupils explore a wide range of cultural traditions across the curriculum, for instance studying the work of Nigerian authors and Welsh poets in English.
47. Pupils develop a secure understanding of British values. Through the PSHE programme, they learn about democratic participation, including the role of the opposition and how debate underpins the work of the Houses of Parliament. Pupils learn about the legal system by taking part in mock trials. In geography, pupils learn about political conflict by studying sectarianism in Northern Ireland. Through assemblies, pupils explore the historical development of British values, including lessons drawn from events such as the Gunpowder Plot. However, sixth-form pupils' knowledge of public institutions and services in England is uneven.
48. Pupils develop a clear understanding of right and wrong. The curriculum provides meaningful opportunities for them to discuss ethical questions and to consider the consequences of choices. Prep-school pupils, for example, examine how everyday decisions can present ethical dilemmas. Older pupils explore the ethical implications of the financial structures that shape people's lives.
49. In the early years, staff consistently model positive social behaviours. Teachers use praise effectively to encourage children to interact confidently and considerately. They create a warm, structured environment in which children learn to take turns, share and play co-operatively. Children develop a sense of social responsibility, for example, by running a toy exchange so others can enjoy the toys they bring.
50. The well-structured careers programme enables pupils to consider their future choices effectively. Pupils learn about a broad range of professions through talks by visiting speakers from diverse sectors. Pupils receive tailored advice that responds to their individual interests and aspirations. Knowledgeable staff provide well-informed guidance on university applications, vocational routes, degree apprenticeships and international higher-education options.
51. The school provides an effective economic education for pupils. In the early years, children take part in fairs where they learn to associate the coins they bring with the toys and other items that they buy. The PSHE programme enables senior pupils to develop a structured understanding of personal

finance, including different types of loans and how to open bank accounts. Pupils develop a clear understanding of enterprise, for instance by creating business ventures to raise funds for school bazaars.

52. The school encourages pupils to contribute responsibly to the wider community to develop their understanding of how they may enhance and support the lives of others. Pupils share their poetry with residents at a local adult care centre. They plan scientific demonstrations which they deliver to neighbouring primary schools as part of a science outreach programme. The pupil-run philanthropic club organises donations for a local foodbank.

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. Leaders maintain effective and well-embedded systems to protect pupils, including boarders and children in the early years. They have an informed understanding of the contextual and individual risks pupils may encounter, implementing suitable measures to address them.
55. Staff at all levels are vigilant about pupils' welfare. They report concerns promptly in line with the school's safeguarding policy, which aligns with current statutory guidance.
56. Safeguarding leaders and staff hold the required training for their roles. Leaders arrange additional training when required, for instance in response to emerging national and contextual safeguarding issues.
57. Governors place safeguarding at the centre of their oversight. They meet leaders frequently to scrutinise practice and to assure themselves that procedures are effective. Governors are trained appropriately in safeguarding. They receive suitable updates to ensure that their knowledge stays current.
58. Safeguarding leaders work effectively with boarding, pastoral and healthcare teams to review concerns. They share relevant information as needed. Records relating to safeguarding matters are clear and comprehensive. They include the rationale for decisions made in response to concerns. Leaders review these records regularly, noting trends and planning appropriate action.
59. Leaders develop suitable support plans for pupils affected by safeguarding issues. They liaise effectively with external agencies, including children's services when required. Leaders check that safeguarding arrangements remain appropriate when external organisations use the school site.
60. Staff know how to report any concerns about the conduct of adults. Leaders act promptly and appropriately on concerns, keeping detailed records of issues raised. They consult the local authority when concerns about the behaviour of adults require external advice.
61. The school maintains suitable internet filtering and monitoring systems. Leaders check the system's effectiveness regularly. Pupils learn how to stay safe, including through the PSHE programme, assemblies and visiting speakers. They develop an age-appropriate understanding of online risks, including digital manipulation and deepfakes.
62. Relevant staff are trained in safer-recruitment procedures. The school ensures that all required safer-recruitment checks are completed before staff begin work. These include suitable checks on adults living in boarding accommodation. Where a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate has not been received, leaders implement a risk assessment and appropriate supervision. The single central record (SCR) of pre-employment checks on new staff is accurate and diligently maintained.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Badminton School
Department for Education number	801/6003
Registered charity number	311738
Address	Badminton School Westbury Road Westbury-on-Trym Bristol BS9 3BA
Phone number	0117 905 5200
Email address	schooloffice@badmintonschool.co.uk
Website	www.badmintonschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Badminton School Ltd
Chair	Dr Steve Wharton
Headteacher	Mrs Jessica Miles
Age range	3 to 19
Number of pupils	527
Number of boarding pupils	182
Date of previous inspection	11 to 13 October 2022

Information about the school

64. Badminton School is a day and boarding school for female pupils, located in Westbury-on-Trym, near Bristol. It was founded in 1858 and moved to its present site in 1924. The school is a charitable company overseen by a board of governors. The current headteacher took up her responsibilities in April 2023. The current chair of governors took up his responsibilities in September 2025.
65. The school has three boarding houses. Boarders in Years 4 to 8 reside in Bartlett House; those in Years 9 to 11 in Sanderson House; and those in Years 12 and 13 in the Sixth Form Centre.
66. There are 14 children in the early years, comprising one Nursery class and one Reception class.
67. The school has identified 109 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan.
68. The school has identified English as an additional language for 204 pupils.
69. The school states its aims are to provide a broad, engaging and challenging education that ignites its pupils' intellectual curiosity, nurtures their personal development and equips them to contribute positively to the wider world.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

2 to 4 December 2025

70. A team of seven inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

71. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of co-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.

72. 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