

School inspection report

18 to 20 March 2025

Dumpton School

Deans Grove House

Wimborne

Dorset

BH21 7AF

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 continually review the school's success in achieving its aims and seek ways to improve provision. They identify and implement new initiatives which are based on their knowledge of pupils' needs and their aspirations for their future success.
2. Leaders prioritise the development of pupils' global awareness and sense of social and environmental responsibility. They understand that by giving pupils agency to reduce their own global footprint they can help to reduce the eco-anxiety that affects their wellbeing.
3. Leaders provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to present ideas for school, local community and global improvement, and give them the tools they need to implement their ideas. They encourage pupils to initiate and lead their own charitable projects. As a result, pupils develop their understanding of global perspectives and their position as members of a wider community. They understand the benefits of the changes they have made to their own wellbeing and to the wider world. Pupils have a well-developed social conscience and feel empowered to make the world a better place. They demonstrate self-confidence and leadership skills and are proud of the positive impact their initiatives have made. This is a significant strength of the school.
4. Leaders provide a curriculum that enables pupils to make progress across all subject areas. There is a broad and well-attended extra-curricular programme that takes place before, during and after the school day and enables pupils to explore their talents and interests. Teachers plan activities which enable all pupils to make progress from their starting points. Pupils achieve success in gaining places at selective senior schools, with several being awarded academic, sporting or arts scholarships.
5. Leaders in the early years are knowledgeable and create a curriculum which is responsive to the children's evolving needs. Well-trained teachers provide opportunities for children to engage in independent learning and explore their own interests. This supports children's progress and lays a solid foundation for lifelong learning and development.
6. Staff promote a calm, respectful and well-ordered learning environment through consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and recognition of positive behaviour, effort and kindness. They provide pupils with opportunities to work collaboratively and to assume leadership roles so that they grow in maturity and develop self-belief. Leaders draw up suitable procedures to promote pupils' physical safety. These are implemented effectively, including checks of the premises. At the beginning of the inspection, a small number of drinking water facilities were not appropriately labelled. This was rectified during the inspection.
7. Leaders ensure that the safeguarding of pupils is a priority at the school and continually identify and mitigate associated risks. Staff receive appropriate and timely training and contribute to a robust and effective culture of safeguarding.

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 all water taps, including in the early years classrooms, are clearly labelled.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Leaders promote pupil wellbeing through the school values and the effective implementation of policies and procedures which take their needs into account. Leaders continually evaluate the school's success in achieving its aims. Middle leaders regularly analyse pupil data, both with regards to academic progress and their wellbeing, and adapt the curriculum and teaching accordingly.
9. Governors work closely with leaders to ensure that the school's aims and ethos are put into practice, offering guidance and challenge when needed. They monitor leaders' success in meeting the Standards effectively, calling on external advisors when required. Governors ensure that leaders of the school take part in regular training and continually improve their skills and knowledge whenever regulations are updated. Governors and school leaders have effective oversight of the implementation and review of policies and procedures. They ensure that they are updated in line with the latest government legislation.
10. Senior leaders have identified pupils' personal attributes, or character, as a key area for development. They have high aspirations for pupils to become active members of the global community, contributing positively to the lives of others. Leaders and staff continually communicate the school's values and evaluate their impact in regular self-reviews and questionnaires to staff and pupils. As a result, these are understood and put into practice by pupils of all ages. Even the very youngest pupils can name the values and strive to fulfil the school's aim to be kind and aim high.
11. Leaders ensure that teachers in the early years are well trained and have a clear understanding of the early years curriculum. They plan activities which encourage children to take the lead in their learning, building confidence and proficiency in a diverse range of skills.
12. The school meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and promotes respect for all. There is a detailed accessibility plan that is updated at least annually. The plan is implemented effectively through adjustments to the physical environment and the curriculum to accommodate pupils' needs.
13. Leaders make information about the school and its policies available to parents and prospective parents on the school's website. Parents receive detailed and informative reports of their child's attainment and progress.
14. The school has a suitable complaints policy. Complaints are dealt with in line with stated procedures and timescales.
15. Leaders maintain effective links with outside agencies and work closely with them when necessary. Leaders share information about pupils who leave and join the school at non-standard transition points as required by current statutory guidance.
16. Leaders ensure that those with oversight of risk management have the appropriate skills to identify, manage and mitigate risks, especially those that are harder to spot. These include risks associated with pupils' physical, mental and emotional needs as well as those relating to the school as a whole.

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

17. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. Leaders develop a broad and balanced curriculum that is reviewed regularly to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to learn and make good progress in all subject areas. Adults throughout the school foster a supportive learning environment where pupils are encouraged to aim high and do their best. Pupils across all sections of the school achieve well and make good progress. Older pupils are successful in gaining places at selective senior schools. They are regularly awarded academic, sporting or arts scholarships.
19. Leaders promote a culture of continuous improvement, collaboration and professional development. They monitor teaching and learning by conducting regular work scrutiny and learning walks and by analysing pupil progress data. Annual subject reviews are shared with the governors, who scrutinise results and offer suitable challenge to subject leaders.
20. Teachers work closely with leaders to identify pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and identify the means by which they can be supported in lessons. Pupils make good progress in response to the effective implementation of tailored strategies. These include personalised seating plans, movement breaks and fidget toys, which help them to self-regulate and remain engaged in their learning.
21. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are provided with extra phonics sessions and individual support where needed.
22. Teachers plan lessons well and motivate pupils to learn. They use assessment data to track academic results and monitor pupil progress. Teachers are furnished with a range of resources and professional development opportunities which they use effectively to meet the diverse needs of their pupils. Teachers manage behaviour well and communicate their secure subject knowledge and enthusiasm so that pupils develop positive attitudes towards learning.
23. Teachers provide pupils with frequent verbal feedback in lessons. Pupils maintain a collaborative dialogue with teachers and respond positively to the guidance provided in their written work. Pupils receive updates on their progress every term and have the opportunity to discuss their work with their class teachers. This timely feedback has a positive impact on pupil progress.
24. Teachers help pupils to make progress in all subjects by learning from their mistakes. Pupils share their ideas readily, confident that misconceptions will be corrected sensitively. Leaders reinforce the importance of showing resilience and courage in lessons and activities, such as sports fixtures, through their recognition in weekly assemblies. This results in a positive learning culture where pupils are confident to challenge themselves.
25. Staff in the early years work together to tailor learning experiences that are both engaging and developmentally appropriate for the children in their care. They plan activities which take account of children's interests and prior learning so that each child receives the support and challenge they need. Staff organise classrooms to encourage exploration, independence, creativity and collaboration. They make effective use of carefully selected materials and resources which cater well for children's needs.
26. Leaders provide a range of extra-curricular activities for pupils to explore their varied interests and develop their skills. These include opportunities to engage in musical and artistic pursuits at a high

level through individual or ensemble performances or participation in school productions. Less formal clubs, such as 'welly Wednesday', junk modelling and Nerf ball enable pupils to engage in activities which help them to grow in confidence and self-esteem.

27. Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress and are provided with detailed reports each term. Regular talks by professionals and curriculum information sessions are held to engage with families across all age groups. These provide parents with guidance as to how they may support their child's learning at home.

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

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

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

29. Leaders create a curriculum that enables pupils to develop high levels of self-esteem and learn to show empathy and care for one another. Adults throughout the school promote the school values of kindness and respect. Older pupils model these expectations to younger ones within a positive and tolerant learning environment.
30. Leaders implement a personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme which enables pupils to develop as responsible citizens who can play a positive part in the world. The PSHE curriculum is supported by a suitable scheme of work, delivered by well-trained staff. Pupils develop a mutual trust and respect for other people and the ways in which they can support others.
31. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 engage in leadership roles which are tailored to their individual interests and strengths, such as helping with particular subject areas like art or sport, or supporting literacy skills by listening to the younger pupils read each week. These experiences enable pupils to engage with the wider school community and foster a sense of responsibility towards others.
32. Pupils of all ages develop self-esteem and independence through practical activities and opportunities to work in collaboration with others, such as when planting and looking after vegetables in outdoor learning lessons. This fosters their appreciation of and respect for the natural world as well as an understanding of how to work safely with specialist equipment. Pupils are confident to discuss personal and social issues. They appreciate the value of activities which promote their mental wellbeing, such as walking in the school grounds and caring for school animals.
33. Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles through science lessons and the PSHE programme. Leaders support pupils in maintaining a balanced diet through the provision of healthy options at lunchtime where pupils readily select from the salad bar and choose fresh fruit desserts. Pupils know how to keep healthy and make frequent use of the school's outdoor space and facilities at breaktimes to engage in physical exercise.
34. Pupils develop their physical and sporting skills in well-planned lessons and through a range of sporting opportunities. Leaders promote their physical health by scheduling daily physical activities for each year group. Teachers provide opportunities for all pupils to take part in competitive fixtures and events. Older pupils have considerable success at both regional and national levels. Pupils who find certain aspects of sport difficult are given encouragement and support so they can achieve and experience success.
35. The relationships and sex education curriculum provides appropriate guidance for pupils of all ages. Younger pupils learn about the values of safety, resilience and friendship. Older pupils benefit from specialist teaching in lessons which address key topics, such as consent, with expertise and clarity.
36. Leaders manage behaviour fairly and consistently, encouraging positive behaviour through individual rewards and public praise. If pupils make poor choices, they are supported by staff in gaining an understanding of how to improve.

37. Leaders in the early years establish a warm and supportive environment in which children develop confidence and self-understanding. They promote children's resilience and courage through rewarding their success in demonstrating these values, such as by being brave at drop-off time. Children learn to support each other in response to frequent reminders of the importance of being a good friend throughout the day. They begin to understand their own feelings through placing their photographs on a coloured mood chart and through teachers' support in talking about their emotions.
38. Leaders ensure that the schools' anti-bullying strategy is understood and implemented effectively. Anti-bullying initiatives take place throughout the school year and pupils are reminded daily to treat others as they would wish to be treated. Bullying is rare and is promptly addressed when it occurs.
39. Admission and attendance are well managed according to government guidance, with clear systems in place. Leaders track attendance carefully and work with pupils and families to ensure good habits. Pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly and are supported if they face difficulties.
40. Leaders identify risks associated with the premises and take appropriate action to mitigate these. Suitable arrangements are in place to prevent risks from fire. Leaders monitor all areas of the school to ensure they are safe and well maintained. They maintain a system of regular checks to promote pupils' physical safety. Leaders have not consistently labelled all drinking water facilities as required. This was rectified during the inspection.
41. First aid is delivered in a timely manner by suitably qualified staff. Medication is stored securely, and clear records are kept of any incidents that take place.

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

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

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

43. Leaders implement a framework for social and economic education which enables pupils to develop a strong sense of responsibility, leadership and community engagement. Leaders continually promote key values of personal responsibility and citizenship through the character education programme, which encompasses the curriculum, assemblies and school events. In PSHE lessons pupils learn about the importance of laws and to respect the public services in England. As a result, pupils have a strong moral compass and a keen sense of the role they play within their local community and the wider world.
44. Pupils make a positive impact on the life of the school through the pupil councils. Pupils have planned and delivered detailed proposals for the implementation of solar panels, including how they could be funded. These have been installed on the school's sports hall roof. Pupils are in the process of producing a similar proposal for a sensory garden. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 engage in a broad range of opportunities to contribute, including within the wellbeing council and eco-council. Through the work of the councils, pupils have initiated the purchase of a composter for the school allotments, increased the number of water fountains on the site, and held a sustainable fashion show with a recycled clothes sale to raise awareness of the negative impact of fast fashion.
45. Pupils understand social values in theory and put them into practice through their everyday actions in response to the school's encouragement to take responsibility for being global citizens. Older pupils regularly join beach clean-ups, take part in tree planting in the local area, and raise money to support communities across the world, such as through the provision of clean drinking water and sanitation systems. The 'Global Citizenship Squad' raise funds with a sponsored cycle ride to purchase bicycles for pupils in Africa who need to cycle to school. Pupils in Year 5 take part in a hardship challenge where they raise money by sleeping on the floor or washing their uniforms by hand.
46. Leaders help pupils to prepare to take their place in society through an understanding of British values. Pupils gain a clear understanding of democratic principles by participating in school council elections and prefect votes, which they confidently relate to wider democratic processes in society. They understand the significance of elections and decision-making, reinforcing their role as active, informed citizens.
47. Pupils learn to respect one another and have a clear sense of right and wrong. They behave responsibly and show kindness and care, especially for those in the younger years. Pupils learn about their rights and responsibilities and the rule of law in PSHE lessons. Tolerance and respect are regular themes in lessons across the curriculum where pupils learn about a range of cultures and traditions. These lessons are reinforced by regular themed assemblies, charity initiatives that involve learning about global issues, and cooking food from different countries.
48. Children in Reception relish the opportunity to be class helpers and are proud to wear the lanyards awarded for showing courage or resilience. Acts of kindness and friendship shown by the children are celebrated on the 'kindness wall' and are shared with their parents. Children in the early years learn about a range of cultures through parent visitors, assemblies and through celebrating religious festivals throughout the year.

49. Pupils benefit from an engaging and practical careers programme that prepares them for future education and employment. Pupils in Year 8 gain an understanding of professional expectations and learn to present themselves formally through participation in a realistic job application process. Visiting speakers and visits to the local area provide insight for pupils of all ages into different career paths within a range of industries and professional opportunities.
50. Pupils develop a thorough understanding of finance, budgeting and entrepreneurship. Younger pupils learn about money management in their mathematics lessons, cake sales and fund-raising activities. Older pupils develop their knowledge further through presenting their enterprise projects, including their budgeting solutions, to a panel of staff who check that the project is viable.

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

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

Safeguarding

52. Leaders put in place suitable arrangements to protect and promote the welfare of pupils. They monitor the effective implementation of school procedures and check that pupils' individual safeguarding needs are met. Governors maintain appropriate oversight of safeguarding policies and their implementation.
53. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding regularly review policies and practice to ensure they meet the needs of the pupils and are in line with statutory guidance. They assess the potential safeguarding risks to individual pupils and take appropriate action to mitigate these.
54. When safeguarding concerns are reported they are dealt with swiftly and are sensitively managed. Staff are given regular and appropriate updates about any pupils that may be at risk. Leaders work effectively with external partnerships and agencies to safeguard pupils. They maintain detailed records of safeguarding concerns.
55. Leaders, staff and governors undertake suitable training for their roles. Staff understand their responsibilities in relation to pupils' safeguarding as well as the school's expectations of their conduct. Regular updates about changes to legislation are provided to staff, along with annual safeguarding training. Leaders check staff understanding through quizzes and provide new staff with appropriate induction training.
56. Leaders provide clear systems for staff to report low-level concerns or more serious allegations about adults in the school. Detailed records are kept appropriately. Staff are confident about the process and leaders understand their responsibility to consult with external agencies when required.
57. Leaders understand that in order for pupils to feel confident in seeking support they need different ways of sharing their concerns. Pupils have a range of options for letting teachers know they have a problem in person, in writing and through non-verbal means. Posters throughout the school and in pupil planners indicate clearly who pupils should go to should they need support from an adult.
58. Suitable monitoring and filtering systems are in place to ensure pupils stay safe when working online. The safeguarding team is alerted if inappropriate searches have been made in school and act swiftly on the associated concerns. Staff are clear about the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism and understand their responsibilities to report any incidents should they arise. Pupils are taught from an early age about online safety, in PSHE and information and communication technology lessons, and know who to turn to should they have a concern.
59. Leaders are diligent in carrying out their responsibilities with regards to recruitment practices and all relevant checks are carried out before staff begin work at the school. Leaders maintain an accurate record of checks on a single central record of appointments. Records of checks are scrutinised by governors and the headteacher.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Dumpton School
Department for Education number	838/6002
Registered charity number	306222
Address	Dumpton School Deans Grove House Wimborne Dorset BH21 7AF
Phone number	01202 883818
Email address	headspa@dumpton.com
Website	www.dumpton.com
Proprietor	Dumpton School Trust
Chair	Mr Neil Brooks
Headteacher	Mr Christian Saenger
Age range	2 to 13
Number of pupils	343
Date of previous inspection	11 January 2022

Information about the school

61. Dumpton School is a co-educational day school for pupils aged two to thirteen, located near Wimborne in Dorset. The school is split into the nursery, pre-prep and prep school. The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. The new chair of governors was appointed in March 2025.
62. The school has identified 31 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
63. The school has identified English as an additional language for a very small proportion of pupils.
64. The school states its aims are to create a nurturing and aspirational environment where every pupil fulfils their academic and personal potential. The school encourages pupils to treat others as they would like to be treated themselves and to develop self-belief and confidence, both in and outside the classroom.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

18 to 20 March 2025

65. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

66. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

67. 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**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

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