

School inspection report

26 to 28 November 2024

Cundall Manor School

Cundall

York

North Yorkshire

YO61 2RW

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	4
SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....	5
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE	6
SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	7
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION	8
SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	9
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING	10
SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....	11
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY	12
SAFEGUARDING	13
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING	13
SCHOOL DETAILS	14
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....	15
INSPECTION DETAILS	16

Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders across the school understand their roles well and fulfil them effectively with commitment. They have the skills and knowledge to prioritise pupils' wellbeing in their decision making.
2. Leaders ensure that all required information is provided to parents and other stakeholders via the website and a range of publications. However, when the inspection was announced, some non-statutory policies, such as the school journeys policy, were not up to date and, whilst they were published, certain contact details were not easily found. This was remedied on inspection.
3. Leaders of boarding ensure that all regulatory requirements for boarding are met. They provide boarders with a welcoming environment and suitable accommodation.
4. Teaching typically enables pupils to make good progress from their starting points. Most lessons are well planned to meet pupils' needs. However, in some lessons, teachers do not extend pupils' learning sufficiently or adapt the provision to suit all pupils. In these instances, progress is more limited.
5. In the early years, the effective balance between children leading their own play and learning, and taking part in adult-led activities allows children to learn independently and to meet challenges which help them develop their focus and resilience.
6. Leaders have established a nurturing school environment. Staff maintain constructive and positive relationships with pupils which develop their self-esteem, self-confidence and self-knowledge.
7. Effective behaviour management and clear communication of the school's values of being kind, confident and respectful are embedded across the school. As a result, pupils of all ages know what is expected of them and behave well.
8. The school supports pupils' social development well, including during activities and trips.
9. There is a well-developed and effective culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff and pupils know how to raise a concern. Leaders and staff receive suitable safeguarding training and respond to any safeguarding concerns appropriately.

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 policies and contact information available to parents are always current and easily accessed
- ensure that all teaching extends pupils' learning and meets the needs of all pupils sufficiently to enable pupils to make consistently good progress.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. The acting headteacher and leaders at all levels work successfully and with commitment to support and develop pupils' wellbeing in all its aspects. They communicate clearly about the rationale for key decisions to all stakeholders across the school community. Leaders at all levels influence the nature of the provision, such as curriculum choices and assessment methods, to ensure that it meets pupils' needs. They ensure that neither the curriculum nor teaching undermine the positive values of the school.
11. Leaders of boarding maintain a suitable and friendly setting with clear expectations for pupils so that boarders understand how to conduct themselves and are able to enjoy their boarding experience.
12. Leaders in the early years ensure that warm relationships between staff and children are built and so children feel safe, secure, happy and motivated to engage in their learning and make progress. Staff know the children well, understand their interests and plan next steps appropriately to support their learning and development.
13. Leaders consistently communicate the school's aims for pupils to be happy, confident, resilient and kind. These values are modelled by staff and reflected in the teaching strategies which allow pupils to learn for themselves and to appreciate how using mistakes constructively strengthens learning.
14. Leaders' effective oversight of policies ensures that they reflect the school's ethos and are implemented effectively. Leaders regularly review policies and procedures to ensure that they reflect any changes to statutory guidance, such as that relating to admissions and attendance. However, at the start of the inspection, not all non-statutory policies available to parents, such as the policy about school trips, were up to date, and some relevant contact details were not easily available. Leaders rectified these issues during the inspection.
15. The school provides all required information to parents, mostly by way of its website. The school provides parents with regular reports about their child's progress and learning. Leaders provide the local authority with the required information relating to any pupils, including those who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan, whom they fund.
16. Leaders work well with external agencies, including consultants for health and safety, to strengthen strategic planning to achieve the school's long-term goals. They liaise effectively with local safeguarding partners with regard to any safeguarding concerns that may arise.
17. Leaders use their understanding of the importance of identifying and addressing risk to inform a wide and effective range of risk assessments, including ones for lessons involving the school's live animals, and activities in the school's wood such as axe throwing. There are risk assessments for individual pupils with heightened vulnerability. Risk assessments also consider and identify measures to mitigate potential risks related to the school site, offsite visits and activities and residential trips. Leaders take appropriate preventative and remedial action when potential risks are identified, such as improving lighting and using non-slip paint on fire escapes.
18. A suitable complaints policy is in place. While formal complaints are few, all complaints, including those settled informally, are recorded appropriately and the policy is implemented effectively within agreed time frames and with all communications noted in detail.

19. Governors maintain effective oversight of the school, challenging leaders where necessary. Governors keep themselves well informed about the workings of the school through regular visits, meetings with staff and pupils and a range of committees to which leaders report
20. The school fulfils its duty under the Equality Act 2010. It implements a suitable accessibility plan and works with the local authority to assess the site and make any required reasonable adjustments, such as the recent addition of painted yellow lines, to support any visually impaired children.

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

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

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

22. The school provides a broad curriculum which allows pupils to explore a wide range of subjects such as food and nutrition, business and textiles Specialist teaching, including for languages, is in place for the youngest pupils upwards. Leaders plan the curriculum to enable pupils to make connections between their subjects. For example, pupils utilise geographical and historical understanding in English when it enhances their understanding of particular authors or texts. Pupils develop their aesthetic and creative skills through well-informed teaching and effective support for work, including individual projects, in subjects including art, music and textiles.
23. Effective teaching in English means that pupils in the prep school learn the key aspects of successful writing of different types such as description. Appropriately challenging lessons allow older pupils to develop their analytical skills and understanding of how literary effects and devices affect the meaning and impact of text. Discussions are managed and led to enable pupils to become fluent communicators who share their interests and explain their work with understanding and engagement.
24. Warm and respectful relationships between teachers and pupils encourage pupils to want to learn well and make good progress in lessons across the curriculum. Pupils participate in discussions and take risks with answers, because they know not to fear being wrong, such as in mathematics where teachers' clear explanations and effective planning encourage pupils to attempt a difficult problem. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress in mathematics, such as when working on averages, owing to well-judged individual support from teachers.
25. Most lessons are well planned and sit within a clear sequence of lessons designed to develop knowledge and understanding methodically. However, sometimes teaching misses opportunities to challenge and extend the learning of pupils of all abilities and accepts more elementary responses from pupils in response to tasks and questions. In these circumstances, pupils' progress is more limited than is typically the case. Most lessons adapt the material as necessary to meet pupils' individual needs. When this is not the case, not all pupils make good progress.
26. Early years staff teach children about letters and the sounds they represent clearly and effectively. This results in the children developing a clear understanding of how letters and sounds relate to each other, which supports them in developing their writing and literacy skills. Teachers have the skills and subject knowledge to develop the children's understanding of numbers and numerical patterns so that they make good progress in their mathematical development.
27. There is a clear assessment framework throughout the school. Leaders monitor pupils' progress effectively, such as through termly tracking and interim checks, with reference to subject-specific assessment grades and teachers' predictions. Leaders and staff utilise this information to provide targeted additional support when required. Feedback from teachers enables pupils across the age range to understand how they are progressing academically.
28. Leaders identify the specific needs of individual pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively, and put in place appropriate individual support plans. These plans are shared with staff who, together with the support of teaching assistants, utilise carefully chosen and effective teaching strategies to ensure that pupils who have SEND make good progress. There are

currently no pupils at the school who speak English as an additional language (EAL) who require additional support for their English.

29. The school provides a diverse enrichment programme which changes the extra-curricular opportunities open to pupils every half term. This programme offers activities tailored for pupils of different ages, including in the early years. The activities provided range from horse riding to illustration and enable pupils to develop a wide range of skills.

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

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

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

31. Leaders ensure that pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing are supported across the school community. Pupils are provided with emotional support from a range of adults, including a dedicated wellbeing support teacher. Staff continually discuss how to best support the pupils' wellbeing, including during regular staff meetings.
32. The school enables pupils to develop resilience and self-confidence. Staff provide pupils with opportunities to develop their confidence in a range of activities from cookery to water polo and respond to their efforts with encouragement and appreciation. An effective induction programme helps boarders settle quickly and develop their self-confidence as members of a welcoming boarding community.
33. The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education contains suitable content that is taught effectively. The programme teaches pupils about themes such as the importance of mutual respect, healthy eating and the dangers of drug misuse.
34. Leaders have shaped provision to develop the pupils' spiritual understanding. The 'Mindful Mondays' programme encourages pupils to focus on non-material aspects of life. More traditional religious understanding comes with visits to Cundall church and age-appropriate services there. Lessons in religious studies across the age range teach pupils about the key beliefs of different religions and viewpoints so that they develop their appreciation of cultural diversity.
35. The inclusive approach to the physical education curriculum offers all pupils opportunities to represent the school. Leaders give pupils experience of a wide range of physical activities, including dance, gymnastics and basketball, so that pupils develop their understanding of key skills and are encouraged to find a sport that suits them. Demonstrations by teachers help children in the early years develop their gross and fine motor skills in a range of activities from swimming to pompom making.
36. An effective relationships and sex education (RSE) programme reflects the requirements of current statutory guidance. It is delivered through age-appropriate sessions on topics including body image, consent and developing healthy relationships. Leaders review the programme regularly to ensure its continued suitability.
37. Leaders and staff communicate clear behavioural expectations and model the positive behaviour that they encourage. They implement the behaviour management policy fairly, and should there be a need, sanctions are applied consistently in a way that is understood by pupils.
38. The anti-bullying strategy is effective and bullying is rare. Pupils are taught about the difference between bullying and unkindness and are comfortable to report any bullying to teachers. The school takes appropriate actions to address any issues raised and supports any pupils affected by them.
39. Premises and accommodation are maintained to an appropriate standard. Outdoor space is ample and offers suitable opportunities for recreation and play including dedicated areas for the youngest children and pupils. Specialist facilities such as those for design technology and ceramics are suitably

managed and site security is appropriate, with keypad locks, and fob access for restricted areas. Boarding accommodation is comfortable and well maintained.

40. Suitable fire safety procedures are in place. Fire exits and fire doors are well signposted, and alarms and extinguishers are well maintained. Fire evacuation drills take place regularly, including at least termly during boarding time.
41. Leaders deploy staff effectively to ensure that pupils are supervised well, including during break and lunchtimes, with designated areas for different year groups. Clear rules are in place for boarders so that they always know where they are allowed to be. Boarders can always access adult support if needed, including during boarding hours.
42. Admissions and attendance registers are appropriately kept and in line with recent changes to statutory guidance. The school notifies the local authority as required when any pupil joins or leaves the school at non-standard transition times.
43. Leaders consult with external specialists to audit health and safety thoroughly. All required maintenance and checks are carried out methodically.

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. Leaders implement a PSHE curriculum in which weekly discussions complement assemblies when social and civic issues including questions of equality and the limits of individual liberty are discussed. Pupils develop their level of social awareness as a result,
46. Pupils are prepared for life in British society through taking responsibility for fund-raising activities, team building, volunteering and charity work as well as through enrichment activities and lessons in the PSHE curriculum.
47. Leaders ensure that pupils develop an appreciation of diversity and a positive attitude towards different cultures. In lessons for PSHE pupils learn about human rights, the importance of respect and the dangers of harmful stereotypes. In the early years, staff draw children's attention to cultural diversity and the importance and fairness of inclusion. They capture opportunities to celebrate diverse religious festivals and cultures through activities such as making rangoli patterns.
48. Assemblies and PSHE lessons actively promote British values, such as those of mutual respect, democracy and the rule of law. Pupils learn about key institutions and the rule of law in lessons on topics from consumer rights to legal approaches towards young offenders. Pupils experience the democratic process in holding a mock election Early years staff share with children such British values in an age-appropriate way and provide the children with opportunities to vote for their favourite story. Teachers model democracy in many contexts such as in managing a start of day discussion, Teachers take care to guard against bias in their planning and delivery and when inviting visiting speakers into school.
49. Respect for the law and institutions is incorporated into the PSHE curriculum as well as assemblies and activities. Younger children talk about rules for the early years setting and why they are needed, developing their understanding of the difference between right and wrong. History lessons on topics including the Holocaust and the life of Martin Luther King develop pupils' awareness of the ways people have treated those who are different from themselves. Pupils develop their understanding of how issues of fair treatment and equality are dealt with under the law.
50. Careers guidance is provided through the PSHE curriculum and the use of an online platform. A careers week, where subject teachers highlight potential careers in their specialist areas, and a careers fair ensure pupils have the tools and information available to make informed decisions about their future. This is complemented by annual work experience for Year 10 pupils. Teachers offer individual guidance through discussions and interview practice for older pupils as they prepare to move onto their chosen sixth form provider and make choices about which educational pathways to follow.
51. Pupils of all ages readily take on roles of responsibility, from form representatives to heads of school, to chicken monitors. Many pupils, including boarders, take on positions of responsibility which help members of the school and wider communities, including roles as choristers at Ripon Cathedral and volunteering at a local community centre.
52. Pupils are encouraged to consider how they can contribute to the whole school and wider community. Children in the early years are encouraged to think about how they can support others.

Pupils collect food as part of the harvest festival for the Salvation Army and carry out events such as a bun sale to raise money for a range of charities such as those training guide dogs for the blind. Year 10 pupils help referee younger pupils' games and prefects provide a listening ear at lunchtimes. Beyond school, pupils support the local park run and volunteer with a range of sport and youth clubs.

53. Leaders begin economic education with the youngest children when they role-play shops, progressing to teaching about financial topics such as saving and avoiding debt. Enrichment activities like 'money matters' in the senior school explore aspects of personal finance such as budgeting and taxation in addition to broader issues such as what constitutes fair trade. Pupils can opt to study business studies at GCSE where lessons on economic themes including franchising allow them to understand how society works and help prepare them to make their own contribution.

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

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

Safeguarding

55. Leaders have established a robust culture of safeguarding. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and to whom they should report if they have a concern.
56. All staff are trained in safeguarding appropriately and any missed training is followed up. Leaders check and test staff's understanding of safeguarding procedures and current statutory guidance. Appropriate training is in place for the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and the wider safeguarding team to equip them to carry out their roles.
57. The safeguarding policy identifies suitable procedures and is regularly reviewed. It provides information for a range of incidents and is updated to reflect current statutory guidance. It includes suitable procedures for raising allegations and low-level concerns about adults working with pupils that are understood and implemented by staff.
58. The safeguarding team responds quickly and effectively to any safeguarding concerns that arise. Safeguarding records are detailed and include timelines which show that the school responds quickly and appropriately should there be a concern.
59. Pupils feel safe in school and know who to contact should they need adult support. The independent person for boarding is well known to pupils and holds fortnightly drop-in sessions. An online system linked to codes in pupils' planners enables pupils to raise concerns anonymously.
60. Leaders develop pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when online, through focused lessons and assemblies. Pupils articulate strategies for keeping safe online. They understand the importance of questioning unknown identities and protecting personal information. The school implements an effective filtering and monitoring system.
61. Staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities work well with relevant external agencies including North Yorkshire children's services and the local authority designated officer (LADO), seeking advice as appropriate. The LADO visits the school and trains staff.
62. A suitable single central record of appointments (SCR) records all necessary safer recruitment checks that are undertaken before a member of staff or governor begins work at the school. Staff files are maintained in line with the requirements of current statutory guidance.
63. Governors oversee the school's safeguarding policy and procedures effectively. The designated governor for safeguarding visits the school regularly to meet staff and pupils and ensures that the board receives updated safeguarding information in a timely fashion.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Cundall Manor School
Department for Education number	815/6022
Registered charity number	529540
Address	Cundall Manor School Cundall York North Yorkshire YO61 2RW
Phone number	01423 360200
Email address	hmpa@cundallmanor.org.uk
Website	http://www.cundallmanorschool.com
Proprietor	Cundall Manor Ltd
Chair	Mrs Rachel Powell
Acting headteacher	Mrs Rachel Powell
Age range	2 to 16
Number of pupils	269
Number of boarding pupils	11
Date of previous inspection	24 November 2021

Information about the school

65. Cundall Manor School is a day and boarding school situated in rural North Yorkshire where it was founded in 1959. The school is divided into a pre-preparatory school for children from Nursery to Year 2, a prep school for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and a senior school for pupils in Years 7 to 11. The school is a charitable trust whose trustees are the school's governors. The current acting headteacher was appointed in April 2024. The school plans for a new headteacher to take up their post in January 2025.
66. There is one boarding house for male and female pupils located in the main school building. Daily, weekly and flexi boarding options are offered.
67. There are 33 children in the early years, comprising three Nursery and two Reception classes.
68. The school has identified 72 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Very few pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
69. English is an additional language for four pupils.
70. The school states its aims are for its pupils to be happy and so develop confidence and resilience. It seeks to encourage pupils to explore their creativity, to take risks in their learning, and to be proud of their achievements and each other. The school aims for its pupils to emerge as confident, caring, intelligent and independent young adults, ready to take on the challenges of the world.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

26 to 28 November 2024

71. A team of five inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

72. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the head, 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.

73. 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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