

School inspection report

3 to 5 February 2026

Reigate St Mary's Preparatory and Choir School

Chart Lane

Reigate

RH2 7RN

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 leaders of Reigate St Mary's Preparatory and Choir School have a clear focus on the promotion of the school's values and respectful behaviour. The result is a community where pupils are articulate, principled and compassionate, guided by a clear moral framework that mirrors the school's aims and ethos.
2. Governors meet with the school leaders and maintain effective oversight of the school. They regularly challenge the school's leaders to ensure that suitable policies and procedures are implemented effectively to promote pupil wellbeing.
3. The curriculum is broad, well planned and age-appropriate. It is designed to promote the school's key values. Combined with a varied extra-curricular programme and physical activity, through music, sport and physical education (PE), this ensures that pupils' academic, emotional, physical and social needs are well supported.
4. Teachers provide creative and engaging learning activities and make effective use of both indoor and outdoor classrooms to promote learning. Pupils are confident about asking questions for clarification, supported by staff, who have a positive relationship with them and genuine interest in their learning. Pupils develop their ability to express ideas clearly and challenge opinions respectfully, deepening their understanding of the importance of listening to others. Teaching motivates pupils to apply genuine effort in their learning. Pupils are well motivated, confident, articulate and responsible, all of which contributes to their attainment and good progress.
5. Leaders track pupils' skills and progress and share information about these with parents through written reports. Teachers provide pupils with meaningful verbal and written feedback, including about their next steps, helping pupils to understand and evaluate their own learning. Senior leaders and heads of department monitor curriculum planning and assessment to ensure suitable subject coverage and progression.
6. There is a well-designed programme of study in the early years, covering both the prime and specific areas of learning and personal development. Staff in the early years maintain partnership between parents and ensure that children are well prepared for the next stages of their lives.
7. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified early through robust assessment. The leader of provision for pupils who have SEND works in collaboration with teachers and specialist staff to adapt provision, ensuring that pupils who have SEND make good progress.
8. Pupils' behaviour and conduct are consistently good, underpinned by class charters devised and signed by pupils, which promote accountability. These expectations are translated into daily behaviour where pupils are able to explain what respect looks like and consistently put it into practice in lessons and around the school. Positive behaviour is reinforced through shared values and high expectations, and pupils show empathy, courtesy and maturity in their interactions. They develop spiritual and moral understanding through assemblies, form times, religious education (RE) lessons and opportunities for reflection on the school's values.
9. The effective and well-organised personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme is age-appropriate and responsive to pupils' needs. Pupils are taught about suitable themes such as

relationships, consent and respectful behaviour in an inclusive and accessible way. Health and safety procedures and supervision and medical arrangements are robust, contributing effectively to promoting pupils' physical and emotional wellbeing.

10. Pupils have the opportunity to take on leadership roles such as members of environmental and school council committees, engendering a sense of responsibility and care for people and the world around them. Staff provide pupils with some early guidance about potential future roles in society. However, pupils' early knowledge and understanding of potential jobs in society is not developed as much as pupils would like.
11. Safeguarding arrangements and all safer recruitment checks are implemented in line with current statutory guidance. There is a robust internet filtering and monitoring system in place. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe online.

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:

- strengthen pupils' early knowledge and understanding of potential jobs in society.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. Governors have a rigorous and detailed oversight of the school through visits and discussions with leaders, staff, parents and pupils. They regularly audit the work of the school to ensure effective leadership. Governors actively ensure that leaders have the required knowledge and skills to be able to carry out their roles, so that the school promotes pupils' wellbeing effectively and that all the Standards are met.
13. Leaders have a definite strategic vision for the school, which is reflected in whole-school policies, procedures and the staff culture. They communicate the school's aims and ethos clearly and effectively to all stakeholders.
14. Leaders ensure that the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are met. A suitable accessibility plan is in place and regularly reviewed to ensure that pupils who have SEND can access the curriculum and the premises appropriately.
15. Leaders work closely with external agencies to support pupils' wellbeing effectively. School leaders with specific duties consult with experts in the local authority, particularly with regard to safeguarding, attendance and the implementation of the early years framework.
16. Leadership in the early years is effective. Leaders have a clear understanding of the statutory early years framework and support children's progress across the seven areas of learning. Those who work in the early years are well supported by leaders, so that children's academic and pastoral needs are recognised and addressed.
17. Leaders carry out careful self-evaluation informed by surveys that reflect the views of pupils, staff and parents. This ensures that policies are effectively enacted and informs the development of academic and pastoral provision in line with the school's values. For example, leaders have recently reviewed how best to promote pupils' wellbeing when in the play areas. This review has led to a change in the timings of the day and further promotion of the school's value of respect.
18. Leaders maintain a clear and informative school website, which provides parents with useful information as required. The school provides parents with regular reports about their child's learning and progress.
19. School leaders promote open dialogue between parents and pupils and address any informal or formal concerns swiftly. Leaders implement a suitable written complaints policy and keep an appropriate log of complaints they have received, along with details of any actions taken as a result of these.
20. Leaders understand the importance of effective risk management and consider many national and contextual risks, such as radicalisation and extremism, when making decisions. They maintain detailed and up-to-date risk assessments that identify potential risks, including those related to the school site, educational trips and other activities undertaken by the pupils, and put in place appropriate measures to reduce or mitigate these.

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. Leaders implement a broad and varied curriculum through all phases, which is appropriate to the different ages and aptitudes of the pupils. Leaders plan the curriculum to enable pupils to develop their practical and thinking skills to a high standard, particularly in the core subjects, reflecting the school's high expectations for its pupils. Staff provide pupils with schemes of work that contain subject content beyond national age-related expectations and enable pupils to make cross-curricular links in their learning, such as in their cross-curricular projects about India and China.
23. Pupils make good academic progress, especially in English, mathematics and science. Well-planned, enthusiastic and knowledgeable teaching throughout the core subject areas enables pupils to make consistent progress across other areas of the curriculum. Pupils learn to listen thoughtfully and respond sensitively to different viewpoints, developing resilience, self-control and the capacity to handle disagreement constructively.
24. Teachers use effective methodology and a well-chosen range of resources and facilities, including the outdoor area, to promote pupils' learning. Teaching enables pupils to speak confidently about their progress and how their work has developed in areas such as handwriting, problem-solving and creative projects. Pupils show genuine enjoyment in learning new things. They demonstrate independence and resilience through repeated small steps that develop understanding, through project-based learning and collaborative tasks that apply knowledge to real-world contexts. Teachers are quick to identify opportunities to provide appropriate challenge for pupils in relation to prior attainment. Teaching enables pupils to progress well and attain above national age-related expectations.
25. Leaders in the early years ensure that the children have a well-developed and balanced curriculum. Supported by senior leaders, early years staff plan thoroughly and teach children skilfully, resulting in children's highly developed communication and language skills. Children develop linguistic skills through modelling by staff of accurate vocabulary and opportunities to take part in conversation with their teachers. Children become equally proficient in counting and number work through daily practice of their skills in this area.
26. Teaching does not discriminate against any pupils. Leaders and staff make sure that all pupils have equal opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge. Teaching promotes the school's aims and values, such as respect for others and tolerance.
27. A robust assessment framework is in place. This includes teachers' observations and evaluations of pupils' effort and work, as well as school-based and commercial tests, which compare pupils' attainment against national norms. Leaders meticulously track pupils' progress and the resulting information informs future planning and adaptation of teaching strategies to provide pupils with additional support where necessary.
28. Teachers provide pupils with detailed verbal and written feedback and targets. These help pupils to know how to progress and improve their work further. Pupils are keen to follow advice and achieve and feel that they can always ask their teachers for help.
29. Provision for pupils who have SEND is effective. Pupils' specific needs are identified early through careful monitoring and data review. Leaders of provision for pupils who have SEND work closely with teachers to identify and adapt support for these pupils as required. Pupils who have SEND access the

full curriculum alongside their peers, benefiting from practical adjustments, such as flexible seating and sensory equipment, when useful. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points.

30. Leaders and staff support pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) when required, so that these pupils make consistent progress with their English. Their needs are identified early and, where necessary, adaptations to teaching and tailored support are provided to promote pupils' linguistic development.
31. Parents receive thorough information about their child's academic and personal development through written reports, parent meetings, communications from teachers and the school's open-door policy. Parents are always contacted promptly should there be any concerns.
32. There is a suitable and varied programme of recreational activities for pupils of all ages that enables pupils to develop their personal interests, and team-building abilities and skills in different areas. For example, in music, pupils can join choirs and ensembles to extend their musical development. Those pupils acting as choristers sing at St Mary's Church and participate in many choral events.

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

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

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

34. Leaders and staff promote respect, emotional support and personal development in line with the school's aims and ethos. Staff provide pupils with effective pastoral care from an early age. Systems such as wellbeing surveys, worry boxes and 'bubbles' ensure that pupils' voices are heard and that support follows swiftly when needed. A therapy dog, counselling and additional support, when required, such as towards the development of social skills, 'draw and talk' therapy and 'SEND wellbeing' clubs enhance pupils' emotional stability and self-regulation. Sensory and wellbeing spaces ensure that all pupils, including those who have SEND, can access calm and structured environments where they feel ready to learn. Leaders' emphasis on understanding neurodiversity, particularly during dedicated awareness events, cultivates acceptance and respect across the community. As a result, pupils feel safe, supported and able to approach staff with trust.
35. The school provides a well-planned and effective PSHE programme, along with suitable relationships education, in line with current statutory requirements. Knowledgeable staff adapt themes appropriate to pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs. For example, pupils learn about features of healthy relationships, respectful behaviour and the importance of consent. The PSHE and relationships education programmes are taught in an inclusive and accessible way, with regular adaptation of the curriculum to address emerging needs for pupils who have SEND. The school informs parents appropriately about the contents of the relationships education programme.
36. Leaders have put into place effective behaviour management and anti-bullying strategies. Senior leaders and staff manage behaviour and bullying through clear messages about behavioural expectations and targeted support, where necessary. As a result, pupils are well behaved and mannerly both in class and around the school. Pupils are self-disciplined and respond promptly and respectfully to the teachers. Staff respond effectively whenever poor behaviour or bullying is reported. Leaders and staff encourage pupils to reflect on their behaviour and work to resolve any differences themselves.
37. There is an extensive religious education (RE) curriculum that teaches pupils about the main world faiths and the spiritual significance that faith can have in one's life. Assemblies and the 'philosophy for children' programme provide further opportunities for pupils to think deeply about spiritual and non-material themes.
38. In the early years, staff guide children to identify and manage their own emotions, and also to become aware of the emotions of others, through play, discussion and stories. Staff create a calm, orderly environment and encourage children to acknowledge and express their feelings.
39. Safety is a priority for the school. Health and safety procedures are robust and include the methodical checks and maintenance carried out, as well as well-kept health and safety records. The school site is suitably maintained. Leaders regularly discuss and review health and safety matters with governors. Suitable safety measures, such as perimeter fencing and effective parking and drop-off systems, are in place. Fire safety is given the appropriate high priority. An up-to-date fire risk assessment is in place. Pupils regularly rehearse how to safely evacuate the buildings, and the alarm system is tested weekly.

40. Suitable first aid procedures are followed consistently. Pupils are well cared for if injured or unwell. Staff are provided with regular training, including in paediatric first aid for those who work in the early years and in other phases. Appropriate records are kept of any administration of first aid or medication.
41. There is effective staff supervision throughout the school day, including during breaktimes. Leaders maintain appropriate staff-to-child ratios in the early years. A warm and empathetic approach by staff fosters a nurturing environment where both pupils and the children in the early years feel safe and confident to engage in playtime activities.
42. School leaders encourage pupils to support their own physical and mental health through the PE programme. Swimming lessons, competitive matches and activities in the woodland learning environment provide many opportunities for pupils to develop physical skills, core strength and co-ordination, as well as leadership and teamwork skills. The school develops pupils' understanding of the importance of healthy eating choices from the youngest age.
43. The school implements effective admission and attendance procedures and maintains suitable registers. Pupils' attendance is generally high and is overseen by the senior attendance champion, who monitors attendance and is quick to take appropriate action if there are concerns. The local authority is appropriately notified of any pupils who leave or join the school at non-standard transition times.

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 and staff enable pupils to develop a thorough understanding of how to act in a respectful and fair way. The school develops pupils' understanding and appreciation of diversity, as well as the importance of inclusion through PSHE and 'philosophy for children' lessons. Cross-curricular topics about countries such as India, China and Japan help pupils develop an understanding of cultural and religious diversity. Leaders and staff consistently model inclusive attitudes through their daily interactions with pupils.
46. The curriculum provides rich opportunities for pupils to explore issues relating to faith, culture, morality and ethics, such as the impact of fake news on people and how to identify it. Lessons and assemblies encourage pupils to reflect on themes such as fairness, compassion and justice. Class discussions address global issues including human rights, environmental stewardship and ethical consumption. Such discussions develop pupils' sense of right and wrong. Pupils learn about diverse role models, from mathematicians of different cultures to former pupils who have overcome adversity, widening their aspirations and developing their ability to recognise and challenge stereotypes. Leaders' inclusive approach creates a respectful culture where all pupils feel comfortable sharing their beliefs. For example, pupils of different faiths confidently talk about their own traditions, underpinning mutual understanding.
47. Pupils talk confidently about British values, such as that of mutual respect, drawing links between these and the school's own values. Staff engage pupils in discussion and dialogue about the importance of tolerance, empathy and having curiosity about the world around them, helping to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Pupils receive some early guidance about possible future roles in society. However, this does not develop pupils' early knowledge and understanding of potential jobs in society as much as pupils would like.
48. From the early years and across the curriculum, carefully planned links between pupils' learning about global citizenship and themes such as equality, diversity and inclusion help pupils develop as responsible and socially aware individuals. Collaborative and investigative activities build social skills such as teamwork, communication and empathy. Pupils' engagement in local charity projects and fundraising nurtures their sense of social responsibility. Initiatives such as 'plastic changemakers' and eco-committees give pupils a sense that their actions can influence change within their community and the wider world.
49. Through assemblies and the pupil leaders, pupils learn about democracy, British institutions and how laws are made. Leaders and staff ensure that any discussions that reference political themes or content are conducted impartially and in a non-partisan manner.
50. Staff enable children in the early years to demonstrate growing confidence when working and playing together, such as when designing and building pretend robots to clean the oceans. They enable children to develop a sense of social responsibility and effective social skills, including through collaborative and role-play activities where resources are shared and children are encouraged to take turns.
51. The school develops pupils' economic understanding appropriately. Children in the early years role-play in the greengrocer's shop, counting and sorting coins and giving change. For older pupils, a

'financial education week', along with lessons about managing money, budget-based mathematics tasks, and mortgage calculations provide age-appropriate insight into economic responsibility and decision-making.

52. Leadership roles, such as 'wellbeing ambassadors' and 'eco-leaders', help pupils to act on behalf of others and develop a sense of social responsibility. Pupils acting as 'wellbeing ambassadors' help teach British Sign Language (BSL) to others to help ensure that any pupils who have hearing impairment can feel included in the school.

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 ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective and maintain a proactive safeguarding culture throughout the school. All governors have safeguarding training and carry out oversight of the safeguarding policy and procedures, including by a governor with designated safeguarding responsibilities.
55. Leaders are trained in safer recruitment and oversee all recruitment processes. All pre-appointment checks required by statutory guidance are carried out appropriately and recorded accurately in a suitable and well-maintained single central record of appointments (SCR).
56. Members of the safeguarding team are suitably trained for their role. All staff receive regular training on safeguarding issues and reporting safeguarding concerns, starting with their induction into the school and continuing with refresher training at least annually. This training includes updates to statutory guidance as well as local and national contextual risks to pupils. Staff understand how to report any low-level concerns or allegations about adults, should they arise.
57. Members of the safeguarding team respond effectively to any safeguarding concerns that are raised. They consult with relevant external agencies and refer concerns on to the appropriate safeguarding partners when required. The safeguarding team maintains suitable and detailed safeguarding records that are securely stored. The leader with responsibility for safeguarding attends regular meetings with external agencies so that the school's knowledge of contextual risks and local procedures remains current.
58. The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Robust internet filtering and monitoring systems are in place and leaders ensure that filtering arrangements are tested frequently.
59. Leaders and staff encourage pupils to share any worries that they might have, including by approaching trusted adults or using 'worry boxes' to express concerns.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Reigate St Mary's Preparatory and Choir School
Department for Education number	936/6531
Registered charity number	1081898
Address	Reigate St Mary's Preparatory and Choir School Chart Lane Reigate Surrey RH2 7RN
Phone number	01737 244880
Email address	office@reigatestmarys.org
Website	www.reigatestmarys.org
Proprietor	The Governors of Reigate Grammar School
Chair	Mr Mark Elsey
Headteacher	Mr Marcus Culverwell
Age range	2 to 11
Number of pupils	369
Date of previous inspection	7 to 9 February 2023

Information about the school

61. Reigate St Mary's Preparatory and Choir School is an independent co-educational day school located in Reigate, Surrey. It was founded in 1950 as a choir school for St Mary's Church in Reigate and this remains part of its role today. In 2003, it became the preparatory school of Reigate Grammar School. Both schools run as a single charitable trust, administered by the same board of governors. Reigate Grammar School was inspected separately at the same time.
62. There are 100 children in the early years setting, comprising three Reception classes, two Nursery classes called Kindergarten, and one Nursery class called Green Shoots.
63. The school has identified 52 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
64. The school has identified English as an additional language for 65 pupils.
65. The school states its aims are to seek to make every pupil feel valued and safe and provide an environment where they can be recognised for their individual strengths, talents, effort and progress.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

3 to 5 February 2026

66. A team of four 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 chair and another governor
- 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.

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**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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

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