

School inspection report

3 to 5 February 2026

Plumtree School

Church Hill
Plumtree
Nottingham
NG12 5ND

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. Proprietors have a clear vision for the school. This ethos influences all aspects of school life. Leaders create a friendly community where staff know pupils as individuals. Pupils enjoy being at school.
2. Leaders use an effective self-evaluation process, continually reflecting on what is going well and identifying areas for improvement. Pupils' wellbeing is central to decision-making, and any actions taken.
3. Leaders provide an inclusive learning environment in line with the Equality Act 2010. Pupils' needs are identified. Suitably experienced and qualified staff provide tailored support.
4. Leaders map the progression of knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Teachers understand what pupils need to learn next. Teachers build effectively on pupils' prior learning and maintain high expectations. They provide appropriate challenge. Pupils understand their current progress and know the next steps in their learning.
5. Typically, children in the early years achieve a good level of development. They benefit from learning in a language-rich environment, with an appropriate balance of child- and adult-led activities. They grow in independence as they are able to make choices in their learning. They are well prepared for the transition to the next stage of their learning.
6. Leaders use effective systems to identify each pupil's needs at an early stage. Staff plan personalised support that matches the specific requirements of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Clear communication between teaching and support staff supports an understanding of each pupil's needs. This enables a co-ordinated approach across the school.
7. Leaders create a close-knit community where pupils are valued and recognised as individuals. This helps pupils to develop as polite and confident individuals who express themselves clearly.
8. The detailed personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculums, supported by an effective assembly programme, promote pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing. Pupils build positive relationships and know how to seek help when needed.
9. Religious studies (RS) lessons build pupils' knowledge. However, opportunities for reflection are limited and, as a result, pupils' spiritual awareness is not nurtured as fully as it could be.
10. Leaders implement effective health and safety procedures in line with medical, fire and statutory guidance. All staff hold full paediatric first aid qualifications and are focused on pupils' wellbeing.
11. Leaders help pupils to develop a mature sense of responsibility and service. Pupils are actively involved in the daily running of the school, for example by leading clubs. Leaders value pupils' opinions and take them into account in their decision-making. Leaders create a supportive and secure environment.
12. The PSHE curriculum helps pupils to develop an understanding of fundamental British values. The school promotes mutual respect for all people. These experiences help prepare pupils for life in British society.

13. There is a secure culture of safeguarding within the school. The safeguarding team is aware of local thresholds and has effective links with external agencies. Leaders deal swiftly with any matters that arise.
14. Safer recruitment measures are effective and include thorough induction training. Regular safeguarding updates are delivered by leaders so that all staff understand changes in both the local context and statutory guidance.

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 pupils have regular opportunities for reflection so that they develop their spiritual awareness.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

15. Leaders have a clear vision for the school based on actively promoting pupils' wellbeing and academic achievement. The school's 'ROOTS' values, which encourage pupils to strive to be resilient, original, outstanding, thoughtful and supportive, are well embedded. These create a close-knit, friendly community in which each pupil is known as an individual. Leaders encourage pupils to develop a sense of responsibility and play a meaningful role in the school.
16. The proprietors, as headteacher and bursar respectively, are engaged in the school's day-to-day activities while also maintaining strategic oversight. They are supported by an active advisory board with expertise in education, marketing and business. Proprietors provide challenge as well as advice and support for leaders.
17. Leaders implement an effective professional development programme, including coaching and careful monitoring and support of teaching, so that staff have the knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles.
18. Leaders undertake an effective self-evaluation which includes feedback from a wide range of stakeholders. This includes identifying positive aspects of provision as well as areas for development as a whole school and in individual subject areas. Leaders put plans in place which are monitored and reviewed to ensure there is a continual emphasis on improvement. Leaders make decisions with pupils' interests at heart.
19. Leaders develop a clear and shared understanding across the school of the need to identify, assess and mitigate risk effectively. A suitable risk management policy is in place. Risk management procedures are applied consistently across the school and embedded in daily practice. Leaders demonstrate an awareness of less obvious and emerging risks and take timely action to address them. Staff apply risk management procedures consistently and embed them in daily practice. Leaders update risk assessments regularly or whenever the context changes. Leaders provide well-tailored risk management training to staff. This results in confident and informed practice.
20. The school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 through a detailed three-year accessibility plan. The plan focuses on four areas: the curriculum, training, the site and policies. It sets out improvements in provision for pupils who may have dyslexia by introducing screening, widening the scope for visual learning for pupils who have autism and embedding basic Makaton signs into the curriculum to support those who have communication difficulties. Leaders demonstrate a sustained commitment to inclusion.
21. Leaders implement a structured programme of review so that all policies are in place and take into account statutory updates. Leaders use external advisers to support quality assurance processes.
22. The school provides parents with all required information, such as policies and previous inspection reports, primarily through the school's website. Parents' evenings and regular detailed reports inform parents about their child's progress, targets and attendance.
23. Leaders are visible to parents at the start and end of each day. This ensures that they deal with any concerns quickly. The complaints policy meets all requirements, and leaders implement the complaints policy effectively.

24. Leaders maintain working relationships with external agencies to promote pupils' wellbeing. For example, the school works with speech and language therapists to help provide pupils with the communication and language support that they need. Leaders liaise with the local authority regarding pupils who leave and join the school at non-standard transition points. Leaders maintain links with the local community such as the parish council and the cricket club so that pupils are able to access wider sporting and performance venues.

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

25. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

26. Leaders design a broad curriculum. It covers all required areas, including linguistic, mathematical and scientific studies. Specialist teaching starts from Reception and increases in later years. Subjects taught by specialists include French, computing, music, physical education (PE) and art. Pupils are well motivated and have a positive attitude towards acquiring new knowledge.
27. The early years curriculum covers all seven areas of learning, with a variety of child- and adult-led activities. Adults adopt a range of communication and language strategies, encouraging children to listen and respond. Leaders plan well so that children engage in independent learning that supports all areas of their development.
28. Leaders define how topics and themes are sequenced in subjects and provide opportunities for pupils to make links between subjects. This helps teachers to extend and challenge pupils in their learning. Leaders design the curriculum so that it promotes the development of core skills in literacy and numeracy.
29. Daily reading lessons across the school are successful in developing pupils' reading ability, confidence and love of literature. Children in Reception can read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending. They can write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed, and spell words by identifying sounds in them.
30. Pupils develop skills as they move through the school, so that pupils in Year 5 are able to compose texts in different styles. They use dialogue to describe characters and confidently use figurative language, such as metaphor and personification, to enrich their writing.
31. In mathematics, children in the early years have a deep understanding of numbers up to 10, including the composition of each number. Pupils in Year 5 can tackle multi-step problems and confidently represent fractions as decimals. They identify the most appropriate methods to use in mathematics and can clearly explain their reasoning.
32. Initiatives promoting critical-thinking skills, such as the use of open-ended questions, enable pupils to better articulate their reasoning and enhance and deepen their understanding. Teaching helps pupils to become independent learners and to retain previous knowledge. Pupils draw on information on working walls and accessible resources. As pupils' understanding deepens, their confidence and curiosity grow.
33. Subject leaders closely monitor the delivery of the curriculum through learning walks and scrutiny of pupils' work. This leads to consistency in teaching. Teachers plan and deliver lessons which respond to pupils' individual needs and interests. Pupils apply themselves in lessons. They are motivated by teachers' subject knowledge and the effective support of teaching assistants. Pupils enjoy the challenges teachers provide and make good progress.
34. Leaders use a regular and thorough assessment framework to track progress. Pupils are aware of their targets and work hard to achieve them. Pupils demonstrate high levels of attainment across the curriculum. The majority of pupils exceed age-related expectations and are prepared effectively for their next steps.

35. The school caters effectively for those who have SEND, including dyslexia, autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Leaders put in place a wide range of support which supplements pupils' work in the classroom, such as phonics and spelling groups and 'what do you need' boxes. Pupils who have SEND make good progress.
36. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are assessed on entry to the school. This determines the provision required. Teachers place pupils in groups that match their skills in expressive language and grammar. This supports their learning so that they make good progress.
37. A wide range of clubs supplement the curriculum, including drama, magical maths, chess, gardening, tag rugby, netball, robotics and music. These clubs help pupils develop new skills and interests.
38. Visitors to the school, trips and residential enhance the curriculum, deepen pupils' understanding and help them to develop resilience.

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

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

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

40. The school aims for each pupil to be known, nurtured and celebrated. Leaders create a sense of community. Pupils are positive about coming to school and are confident in building friendships. The rewards system recognises pupils who reflect the school's 'ROOTS' values in their behaviour. Leaders provide opportunities for each pupil to perform in public in nativities, concerts and musicals. As a result, pupils grow in confidence and become more resilient.
41. Leaders design a broad PSHE curriculum to promote diversity and inclusion. Pupils gain a balanced understanding of individual differences and learn to respect all people. In the early years, children learn about different faiths from visiting speakers. In RS and assemblies, older pupils learn about Christianity, Islam and Hinduism.
42. Leaders implement a PSHE curriculum that includes a comprehensive RSE programme. Pupils broaden their understanding of how to build respectful relationships and make healthy lifestyle choices. The programme explores areas such as healthy relationships, mental and physical wellbeing and the importance of staying safe and responsible online.
43. Religious studies lessons provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge. However, pupils have limited opportunities for reflection.
44. Leaders place an emphasis on emotional literacy from the early years onwards. Pupils grow in self-awareness as they move through the school. Children can identify their feelings and those of others, and teachers help them to interpret these. Older pupils empathise and solve low-level issues that occur in the playground. Staff and playground leaders also help pupils to navigate friendship issues. Pupils understand that support is always available. They know how to speak to a trusted adult or self-refer to staff responsible for mental health should they need to.
45. The school has a robust anti-bullying policy that is effectively implemented, with clear procedures in place should bullying occur. Whole-school events such as 'friendship week' remind pupils of steps to take should they encounter any bullying.
46. Staff implement the behaviour policy consistently. Leaders have high expectations for behaviour and pupils have a good understanding of these. The school maintains a culture of positive behaviour and kindness. Pupils are respected and valued.
47. Lessons in PE help pupils to develop a healthy attitude towards exercise. Children in Reception can negotiate space and obstacles safely. They demonstrate strength, balance and co-ordination when using PE equipment. Older pupils learn to swim and develop strategy, teamwork and decision-making as they participate in numerous sports, including football, hockey, tag rugby and netball, as well as the school's own 'flags' game. Competitive fixtures and clubs provide additional opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills and resilience.
48. Leaders maintain effective oversight of first aid procedures. All staff hold full paediatric first aid qualifications, which ensures timely treatment when it is needed. Older pupils also receive basic first aid training. School activities are well supervised by suitably qualified staff, including in the early years where required staff-to-child ratios are maintained.

49. The school has secure measures in place to ensure that the school's premises and accommodation are suitable and well maintained. Proprietors provide effective oversight of health and safety through the implementation of a comprehensive policy, which includes a detailed fire risk assessment. Leaders implement effective routines to ensure that staff carry out equipment checks and service equipment promptly.
50. Admission and attendance registers are accurately maintained in line with statutory requirements. Leaders follow up any absence promptly and thoroughly.

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

51. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

52. Leaders design the curriculum so that pupils learn to respect and value different cultures and backgrounds. Topics in geography broaden pupils' understanding of diverse cultural backgrounds. For example, children in the early years learn about India's culture, including important festivals, traditional dress and daily life. Pupils in Year 5 study the Mayans. The school's link with a school in Taiwan further enriches pupils' cultural awareness.
53. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills. In the early years, children learn to play co-operatively and take turns with others. They form positive attachments to adults and build friendships with their peers. Teachers carefully design class activities so that through working in teams, older pupils learn to co-operate, listen to their peers and value their opinions. They develop a mature approach to social interactions for their age.
54. Pupils develop an economic understanding through the PSHE and mathematics curriculums. Children in the early years learn about coins and their value as they engage in role-play activities. Older pupils take part in entrepreneurial activities such as planning, budgeting and evaluating the success of the school Summer fair. Pupils develop financial literacy, organisation and problem-solving.
55. The PSHE curriculum and assembly programme include learning about British values. Pupils learn about the parliamentary system and the rule of law, supported by visits from the high sheriff and the police, which deepen their understanding of these roles in society.
56. Pupils understand the school rules and recognise their importance. Teachers use behaviour charters, stories that explore moral themes and regular discussion in PSHE to ensure that pupils develop a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. These experiences support their growing sense of fairness and respect for others.
57. Teachers manage discussions in class well. They ensure a balanced perspective is provided in response to any political issues that pupils raise.
58. Pupils learn about democratic processes and take part in voting for their school council and other leadership positions. The council provides feedback to leaders and contributes to improving the school. For example, they assist in staff recruitment and have influenced the design of the new uniform and toilets. Pupils understand that the school council's work has an impact on their community.
59. The 'ROOTS' values of being thoughtful and supportive help pupils to develop a sense of responsibility. Teachers encourage pupils throughout the school to take on leadership roles such as classroom monitors and eco-warriors. Through a democratic process, each pupil in Year 5 applies for and takes on a leadership role such as team captain or music prefect. Teachers encourage pupils to play a meaningful role in school life. For example, older pupils lead clubs and pupils in Year 4 listen to and read to younger children. Pupils in Year 5 help to promote the school's values by nominating younger pupils for the weekly praise assembly.
60. Pupils' thoughtfulness extends to the local community. For example, pupils in the gardening club plant bulbs in local residents' gardens and the choir sing for the community's Christmas fair. Leaders

plan events such as the school's 'spring stroll'. Through this, pupils raise money for local organisations. Individual pupils show initiative in making a difference, for example by writing to their local councillor about litter issues.

61. Teachers prepare pupils well at every stage for transition. Pupils spend time with their new teacher and comprehensive handover discussions take place between staff. Teachers help pupils in Year 6 to prepare for entrance examinations. This support helps pupils to develop resilience and confidence.
62. An annual 'aspirations' week successfully introduces pupils to a wide range of career opportunities and develops their awareness of public institutions. Activities include talks from professionals such as a judge and a doctor and visits to local businesses. Children in the early years learn about the different roles people play in society through their 'people who help us' topic.

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

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

Safeguarding

64. The school has an effective safeguarding culture. Leaders have a clear understanding of contextual safeguarding risks through effective liaison with the local authority and adapt training and procedures accordingly.
65. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are appropriately trained. They ensure staff are confident in their responsibilities to safeguard pupils. Staff are aware of signs of risk. They use appropriate channels to raise concerns swiftly.
66. Staff understand what constitutes a low-level concern and are clear on the required reporting actions to take. Leaders provide regular safeguarding updates to refresh the knowledge of staff. Leaders use quizzes to check their understanding and to guide future training.
67. Leaders implement robust safer recruitment procedures. They use external advisers to review their procedures. Leaders carry out all the required statutory checks for adults working with pupils and maintain an accurate single central record of staff appointments (SCR). Newly appointed staff undergo a thorough induction programme so that they are fully aware of the school's safeguarding procedures.
68. Leaders keep detailed records of any incidents and liaise effectively with external agencies. Leaders brief staff about any welfare issues on a weekly basis, ensuring pupils receive individual monitoring and support when needed.
69. Pupils are confident in the steps they can take to receive support. They know that the members of the safeguarding team are familiar with the self-referral system to the wellbeing lead and are aware that they can talk to a trusted adult. Pupils feel safe at school.
70. Pupils learn to stay safe online through the PSHE and computing curriculums. For example, they are aware that they should keep personal information safe, that they should not accept emails from people they do not know and that someone online might be lying about their identity.
71. Suitable internet filtering and monitoring systems are in place and are regularly checked by the safeguarding team. Any alerts are acted upon swiftly, and staff take appropriate action.
72. The school provides information to parents on safeguarding matters such as online safety, to encourage a consistent approach between home and school.
73. The advisory board receives annual updates from the safeguarding team to assure themselves that the Standards are consistently met. The proprietor with responsibility for safeguarding oversees the safeguarding policy and meets regularly with the safeguarding team.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Plumtree School
Department for Education number	891/6014
Address	Plumtree School Church Hill Plumtree Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG12 5ND
Phone number	0115 937 5859
Email address	plumtreeschool@outlook.com
Website	www.plumtreeschool.co.uk
Proprietors	Plumtree School Ltd
Chair	Mr Philip Simpson
Headteacher	Mr Philip Simpson
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	101
Date of previous inspection	14 to 16 March 2023

Information about the school

75. Plumtree School is an independent co-educational day school situated in Plumtree, south of Nottingham. The school operates as a limited company and is overseen by two directors. The school is organised into three sections: the early years, for children aged 3 to 5 years; the infants, for pupils aged 5 to 7 years, and the juniors, for pupils aged 7 to 11 years. Since the previous inspection, two proprietors have retired, and a new chair of proprietors has been appointed.
76. There are 29 children in the early years, comprising one Nursery and one Reception class.
77. The school has identified 22 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
78. The school has identified English as an additional language for 10 pupils.
79. The school states its aims are to provide a supportive environment where pupils are seen and treated as individuals. The school aims for pupils to grow into confident, well-rounded and kind young people because they are known, nurtured and celebrated. Each pupil is encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility and to play a meaningful role.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

3 to 5 February 2026

80. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

81. 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 proprietors
- discussion with a member of the advisory board
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the facilities for physical education and performances
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

82. 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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