

# School inspection report

23 to 25 April 2024

## **Longridge Towers School**

Berwick-upon Tweed

TD15 2XQ

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

<b>SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS .....	5
<b>SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....</b>	<b>6</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE .....	7
<b>SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....</b>	<b>8</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....	9
<b>SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING.....</b>	<b>10</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....	11
<b>SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....</b>	<b>12</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY .....	13
<b>SAFEGUARDING .....</b>	<b>14</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING .....	14
<b>SCHOOL DETAILS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>INSPECTION DETAILS .....</b>	<b>17</b>

## Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders have good knowledge, skills and understanding of their role so that the school meets the Standards. They seek to promote a culture that focuses on care and support for individual pupils, based on the school's stated values. Mutual respect and a sense of care for others are modelled by staff and evident in pupils' interactions with each other.
2. Governors monitor the work of the leaders, checking that all the required school policies are in place and properly implemented. Governors and leaders have together drawn up appropriate plans for the school's future, which give due consideration to risk.
3. Leaders make appropriate arrangements for the welfare of boarding pupils. The accommodation is well maintained and the boarding environment has a homely feel. Pupils value their boarding experience, and the opportunities provided to live and learn alongside their peers.
4. Pupils make good progress and leave school well prepared for their next steps in life. Pupils nearly all proceed to first choice courses in higher education, some of which have demanding entry requirements. Pupils enjoy the wide range of sporting activities which allow them to develop their talents and interests.
5. The school provides an appropriate curriculum for the age range, including in the early years. Pupils are engaged in their lessons and are keen to do well. Teachers skilfully use a range of methods and resources to promote pupils' progress and are notably supportive of pupils in their learning. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively, so they achieve on a par with their peers. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) also make good progress in their fluency in English.
6. Leaders' plans to raise attainment are having a positive effect on many pupils' progress, but the impact on more able pupils is more limited. Consequently, some of these pupils do not make the best progress. Leaders have recently modified the systems for tracking pupils' progress, to be able to identify any underachievement more easily, but this information is not always readily available to help teachers to plan consistently for their needs.
7. The school prioritises care for pupils' mental health and wellbeing. Leaders actively seek and listen to pupils' views. Suitable procedures for the prevention of bullying and the promotion of good behaviour are in place, and pupils behave well. Leaders deal promptly and decisively with urgent matters.
8. However, the co-ordination and categorisation of the pastoral information is disjointed, constraining leaders' ability to see patterns or identify trends. For example, teachers do not always apply the behaviour policy consistently. As a result, some pupils who have SEND receive too many sanctions for minor misdemeanours.
9. Leaders effectively develop pupils' social and economic awareness and encourage them to contribute to wider society, through well-planned programmes for careers and for personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils develop an understanding of diversity and show empathy for others, such as through raising funds for charity.

10. Leaders and governors fulfil their duty to safeguard pupils and promote their wellbeing. The school implements an appropriate written policy and procedures for safeguarding that meet statutory guidance. The school conducts all the required recruitment checks on staff. Staff and governors are suitably trained and understand their duty of care. Leaders take prompt and effective actions on concerns, seeking advice where necessary. Health and safety is managed effectively, and careful records are maintained.

## 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:

- raise the attainment of more able pupils further in order to identify and address any underachievement, making best use of the assessment information available
- strengthen the sharing and categorisation of the pastoral information so it is more readily accessible and enables leaders to better monitor overall patterns of behaviour or bullying
- ensure that teachers apply sanctions more consistently, especially for pupils who have SEND, with appropriate regard for individual pupils' context.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Leaders fulfil their duty to safeguard pupils and actively promote their wellbeing. Staff are well trained, including in understanding and applying the school's policy for safeguarding.
12. There are suitable mechanisms for listening to parents, encouraging them to share any concerns at an early stage. The school has a suitable written policy and procedure for complaints. Parents receive all the required information, including for the early years, mostly through an informative school website.
13. Leaders in the early years provide a well-organised environment that promotes children's wellbeing, their learning and development. Routines are well established and children are happy in the setting. Supervision is effective and children make good progress.
14. Leaders consider risk well, including any unintended consequences of their decisions. Leaders assess risk thoroughly to ensure that pupils, staff and visitors are protected from harm as far as possible. Suitable risk assessments are completed for the site, activities and visits. There are effective risk assessment arrangements and checks for fire safety.
15. The school development plans have identified raising attainment overall as a school target. Leaders have begun to restructure the senior school systems for assessing pupils' progress over time. This involves more formalised assessments to inform teaching and provides improved information to parents, but it is not fully implemented. Some more able pupils could be making faster progress.
16. Leaders promote the school's stated values, emphasising the importance of effective care for pupils. Broader pastoral oversight is not always consistent as leaders have limited time and resources for this aspect of their work. Leaders always attend to urgent pastoral matters, and manage behaviour and bullying effectively overall and take appropriate actions. However, the sharing and categorisation of pastoral information is disjointed. As a result, it is not easy for leaders to have an effective overview of patterns and trends, to inform their strategic, longer-term decision-making. For example, staff are not always consistent over the use of sanctions.
17. Governors monitor and hold leaders to account through their various committees. The governing body has a diverse mixture of backgrounds and expertise, to inform their monitoring and evaluation responsibilities. School leaders provide detailed information to governors, enabling them to evaluate the work of the school. Leaders and governors work includes a proper consideration of risk, including any unintended consequences of decisions taken. Governors ensure that pupils' health needs are met and their physical and emotional wellbeing promoted, for example through enabling leaders to provide a wide ranging co-curricular programme of sports and the recent appointment of counsellors, as an additional element of support for pupils.
18. The school meets its duty under the Equality Act, as demonstrated by leaders' inclusive stance on admissions to the school and on access to all parts of the curriculum. The school makes reasonable adjustments where needed to facilitate this. The school implements suitable policies for admissions and attendance, and makes the required reports when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard points.
19. Leadership of boarding is effective. Boarding house parents have created a family ethos much appreciated by pupils, providing effective care, including to those pupils who board on a flexible

basis. Premises are well maintained and homely, and efficient records kept on all aspects of boarding provision. Close communication with teaching and pastoral staff ensures a suitable flow of information that supports pupils' wellbeing. Routines for meals, prep, and leisure time are well-established, including an interesting programme of visits out of school.

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

**20. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

21. The curriculum covers all the required areas of learning. A stimulating early years curriculum enables children to develop their emotional, intellectual, creative, social and physical skills. Children typically engage in activities such as counting games and hopscotch, practising numbers up to ten and telling the time with *“What’s the time, Mr Wolf?”* Their evident enjoyment reinforces and advances their learning.
22. Pupils’ basic literacy, numeracy and social skills develop steadily in the junior department. Teachers know their pupils well, and plan well for their needs. As a result, they make good progress. Pupils’ evident enjoyment in learning was seen in a practical science and design lesson when building a lava lamp that fizzed, helping their understanding of chemical reactions. Pupils develop their creative skills well across a range of activities.
23. The senior school curriculum is broad, promotes pupils’ academic knowledge and skills and takes account of their needs. Pupils are prepared effectively for the next stage in their education and lives. Pupils are successful in public examinations at GCSE and A level, their results showing good progress from their starting points. Results are above the national average for all pupils. Nearly all pupils proceed to higher education, to a range of institutions, some with demanding entrance requirements.
24. Leaders choose to offer courses in three modern foreign languages for all pupils when they join the senior school. Pupils apply their elementary language skills thereafter to those they choose for examination. As a result, their language skills are well developed. Teachers typically tailor their methodology to suit different learning styles and abilities. In English, pupils have confident oral skills and develop their literacy skills from an early age. Written work is typically carefully presented, with attention to style, fluency and accuracy.
25. In the senior school, pupils develop their skills in mathematics and sciences, together with an understanding of humanities through the study of history and geography, as well as creative and aesthetic skills in art, music and drama. Pupils acquire effective numeracy skills and Information technology (ICT) skills and apply these competently across other subjects, for example when datalogging in science and in robotics.
26. Teachers generally plan their lessons well, taking into account pupils’ ages, aptitudes and needs, to ensure that pupils acquire new knowledge and that all groups of pupils make good progress. Leaders provide training to enhance staff skills, including ways to match lesson planning more closely to the range of pupils’ needs in each lesson. This supports the school’s aim to raise the minimum levels of attainment for all pupils. The resulting targets are matched to the needs of most pupils, but do not always take into account the abilities of more able pupils. For them, the targets are not always sufficiently ambitious, and their progress is not as strong. In the senior school, the system for tracking pupils’ progress over time does not allow them to easily identify pupils who may be underachieving. Leaders have recently introduced more regular, formal assessment which provides better information for pupils and their parents and for the setting of aspirational, individual targets.
27. Leaders actively encourage teaching staff to support individual pupils in their learning. As a result pupils, including those who have SEND, receive regular, individually well-targeted feedback and support from their teachers on how to improve. Teachers go out of their way to offer extra support,



through regular extra classes, additional work and guidance, holiday catchups and consolidation sessions online. Teachers support EAL pupils well to develop their English skills, for example through additional lessons and tailored resources.

28. Leaders provide a wide range of co-curricular opportunities and activities, especially for sport, including hockey, rugby, cricket, cross-country and tennis. Pupils enjoy these and learn about the importance of team work to success, as well as developing new skills and interests. Pupils develop their social skills through participation, including competitions and fixtures with other schools.
29. Pupils across the school learn to respect and enjoy the environment through the programme for outdoor education. A suitable programme of visits is arranged for boarders at weekends, developing their cultural awareness and knowledge of the local area.

### **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. School leaders effectively promote pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing. The curriculum, activities and care provided to children in the early years promotes their personal and social development. Children take turns, share resources and develop resilience and independence, such as in learning basic hygiene routines. Children display increasing focus and attention and behave appropriately. Leaders reinforce their expectations through a well-planned programme of assemblies and talks on topics such as healthy eating and manners.
32. The extensive programme for sports across the school helps all pupils acquire both physical skills and recognise the enjoyment of regular exercise. Pupils achieve a measure of success in competitions with other local schools, for example in cross-country, hockey and rugby.
33. Pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence grow as staff encourage them to participate fully in school life and to apply themselves well in lessons. The positive relationships between staff and pupils foster pupils' self-belief. Pupils are encouraged to self-assess their work as a routine part of all lessons, across the school, helping them to grow into independent learners.
34. The school provides a well-planned PSHE programme that suits each age group. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and are well prepared for the world outside and their next steps. Religious education (RE) lessons and the assembly programme effectively develop pupils' spiritual and moral knowledge and understanding, as well as the importance of respect for the faith and values of others.
35. The school has a suitable programme for relationships education in the junior department and for relationships and sex education (RSE) in the senior school. The content is age-appropriate and conforms to the latest statutory guidance. The RSE programme contains the required information to help pupils keep themselves safe and prepare for their future lives. Leaders periodically review the programme, striving to keep it as up to date and relevant to pupils needs as they can. For example, leaders have recently enhanced the teaching on consent, following feedback from older pupils.
36. Staff supervise pupils effectively, including children in the early years. Pupils say they have someone to turn to if they have concerns. The appointment of counsellors reflects both governors' and leaders' focus on promoting and supporting pupils' wellbeing. Pupils appreciate this additional, longer-term support which is now available if they require it.
37. Due attention is paid to the safety and wellbeing of boarders, through the close attention of the house parents and other staff. Staff support flexible boarders to integrate easily into the boarding environment. Pupils are appropriately supervised. The house is homely and well maintained, with comfortable rooms which pupils can personalise and store their belongings safely. Pupils enjoy spacious common room areas, with facilities for making snacks, and for leisure time. They are provided with well-balanced meals. Through additional support, boarding pupils who have EAL progress well in their English skills, helping them to interact positively with their peers.
38. Pupils typically behave well and show keen interest in their lessons. Occasionally, pupils' attention wavers in lessons when activities are not well matched to their abilities. For the most part, teachers manage behaviour well. However, the management of behaviour in the senior school is inconsistent.

Some pupils get repeated sanctions for misdemeanours. Teachers do not always take each pupil's personal context sufficiently into account, for example pupils who have SEND.

39. For the most part, the school has an effective anti-bullying programme and strategies. However, there is insufficient monitoring and categorisation of the patterns and impact of different types of behaviours, that the school may not label as bullying, but still need action to address. Key staff meet regularly to discuss pastoral issues. However, the written information across the various records is not well co-ordinated to provide an easy overview beyond this, in order for leaders to identify wider trends and issues.
40. The premises and accommodation are well maintained. Records show that all the required checks for health and safety are conducted and are carefully noted. The school maintains accurate admissions and attendance records and acts upon any issues identified. For example, leaders have identified that the attendance of some pupils who have SEND could be improved and are working actively to address this.

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

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

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

42. Pupils' social and cultural knowledge and understanding develop well through the promotion of leaders' values. These are reinforced by staff and supported by a well-designed, comprehensive scheme of work for PSHE. Leaders encourage mutual respect, and an awareness of the needs of others from different backgrounds, cultures or with different viewpoints. This is evident in how pupils relate one to another in and around school, and the respect shown in discussions in PSHE lessons.
43. In the early years, leaders plan a range of collaborative activities to promote children's social development, through play-based tasks in groups, for example in outdoor education lessons, requiring sharing and planning together. Children work and play collaboratively with one another, demonstrating patience, understanding the feelings of other children, and developing friendships.
44. Through the school council, pupils in the junior department take the initiative for fundraising for charity, extending their understanding of the needs of others and how they can support them. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong from an early age. Elements across the curriculum planned to reinforce this. For example, in a sixth-form drama lesson on aspects of morality, pupils showed their insight in analysing the characters' response and actions.
45. Some senior school pupils undertake The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which fosters the idea of service to others. Through co-curricular activities pupils work well in teams and develop a social conscience which they carry forward into adult life.
46. The school's leaders actively promote pupils' understanding of diversity and the wider world, for example through the co-curricular clubs and through trips out of school, in the UK and abroad. A diversity club in the junior department seeks to develop further younger pupils' understanding of others. Sixth-form pupils spoke eloquently about their experiences on trips to Borneo and Central America, developing their empathy and understanding of other cultures. Such experiences have spurred them on and encouraged other pupils in fundraising, such as for a charity which provides computing equipment.
47. Leaders encourage pupils to accept responsibility. Pupils are expected to reflect on their own academic performance and how they can improve, helping them to prepare for their next stage of education or later life. Pupils take on the challenge of leadership roles as prefects, with appropriate training. In this way, pupils contribute to the organisation of school life, whilst developing their understanding of the importance of reliability and service to the community.
48. Pupils receive suitable careers advice that covers university, apprenticeships and employment options. The programme includes elements on university life and on financial awareness. Pupils comment that this helps prepare them well for the transition to independent living, as it develops their economic understanding and awareness. In the junior department, PSHE lessons encourage older pupils to talk about their dreams and goals at an early age, as a means to begin to think ahead towards their futures and what steps might be needed to achieve these. This consideration also includes the financial implications of the choices they make.

49. Through the PSHE and assembly programmes, leaders prepare pupils well for life beyond school, and for life in British society, with an appreciation of the law, duties and rights and an awareness of public services. Boarders are similarly encouraged to be able to contribute positively as citizens in their home country. Leaders actively promote British values. Pupils learn about democracy, mutual respect and the importance of tolerance of those with different views or religious beliefs through their PSHE lessons and through speakers invited into school. Pupils see democracy in action through their school councils, where their views are actively considered. Leaders check that teaching does not discriminate and that teachers present a balance of views to pupils when discussing political or controversial issues.

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

**50. All the relevant Standards are met.**

## Safeguarding

51. Leaders fulfil their duty to safeguard pupils and have the requisite knowledge, skills and understanding to fulfil their duty effectively. Safeguarding has a high priority in the school, where the prevailing ethos is one of care for pupils, reflecting the school's stated aims and values.
52. There is a suitable written policy for safeguarding available to parents on the school website. This follows the latest statutory guidance. Staff training on safeguarding is up to date. Staff show a secure knowledge and understanding of the school's procedures and apply these appropriately to protect pupils from harm, including considering contextual risks, such as presented by pupils who have SEND.
53. Safeguarding concerns are brought to the notice of the designated safeguarding lead, who is assisted by several deputies. Pastoral leaders, two counsellors and a staff safeguarding steering group provide additional support. Staff understand how to report concerns, including any child-on-child abuse, and follow all advice given. Prompt and suitable action is taken when concerns are raised, including low-level concerns about staff. Parents are involved where appropriate and suitable support is offered to all parties.
54. Leaders works effectively with other partnerships and agencies, including social services and the police, and make prompt referrals when required, using the support and advice of the local authority safeguarding officer.
55. Governors methodically monitor the arrangements for safeguarding and conduct an annual audit. They check the school's recruitment practices. Staff recruitment procedures are robust, the school conducts all the required checks on the staff it appoints, and other adults, in a timely fashion. The school keeps a suitable single central register that records the checks it makes on staff, governors and other adults, prior to their appointment or close involvement with pupils. Staff are periodically reminded of their code of conduct. The school deals promptly and appropriately with any instances of alleged misconduct.
56. In the junior department pupils learn how to be safe online, including the non-sharing of personal information and the risks of unknown users of the internet who could pose as another child.
57. Pupils in the senior school learn about safeguarding in a wider context, of how to keep themselves safe as young adults, including online, largely through the PSHE and RSE programmes. Pupils are alerted through these programmes to the dangers of extremist views and behaviour.

### The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	Longridge Towers School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	929/6001
<b>Registered charity number</b>	513534
<b>Address</b>	Longridge Towers School Berwick-upon-Tweed Northumberland TD15 2XQ
<b>Phone number</b>	01289 307584
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@lts.org.uk
<b>Website</b>	lts.org.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Longridge Towers School
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Thomas Bramald
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jonathan Lee
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 19
<b>Number of pupils</b>	331
<b>Number of boarding pupils</b>	11
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 February 2020

## Information about the school

59. Longridge Towers is an independent co-educational day and boarding school in a rural setting near Berwick-upon-Tweed. Originally founded in the 1880s as a convent school for girls, the school became co-educational in 1983. It is overseen by a board of governors.
60. The senior school and boarding accommodation are located in a listed Victorian mansion house. The school offers full, weekly and flexible boarding. Boarders include some pupils who stay at school when tidal conditions for Holy Island are adverse.
61. There are 16 pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The EYFS and the junior department are located in adjacent buildings.
62. The school has identified 48 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Two pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
63. English is an additional language for 24 pupils.
64. The school states its purpose is to 'provide a holistic education where our pupils can fulfil their potential as confident, independent and lifelong learners'. The school's values are care and respect for others, achievement, perseverance and excellence.



## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

23 to 25 April 2024

65. A team of five inspectors and a shadow inspector 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 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 house accompanied by pupils and staff
- 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](http://www.isi.net)**.

**Independent Schools Inspectorate**

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

For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)