

School inspection report

23 to 25 September 2025

Stamford Junior School

Kettering Road

Stamford

Lincolnshire

PE9 2LR

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 school provides an inclusive environment where pupils are known as individuals, supported to thrive and encouraged to take pride in their learning. Leaders effectively promote a sense of community and belonging, which underpins the school's nurturing ethos and contributes positively to pupils' wellbeing.
2. Governors maintain effective oversight of the school's operations through regular visits, participation in committees, scrutiny of procedures and professional challenge of leaders. They collaborate with leaders through reflective self-evaluation to create a clear long-term strategic plan. Their oversight supports effective risk management and contributes to a vigilant and responsive leadership culture.
3. Pupils develop secure knowledge and skills across subjects, supported by well-planned and taught lessons and the effective use of academic data. Teachers effectively use assessment information to inform planning and adapt activities to meet individual needs. As a result, pupils make good progress and engage positively with their learning.
4. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress from their starting points. Leaders implement effective strategies that identify pupils' individual needs early and ensure appropriate support. Staff are provided with comprehensive pupil profiles that inform planning and enable targeted support. As a result, pupils engage meaningfully with their learning.
5. Leaders have embedded a suitable personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and physical education (PE) curriculum that promotes health, emotional literacy and resilience. Pupils develop the skills to manage challenges and build positive relationships with others. Behaviour is relaxed, calm and well managed by staff.
6. The school offers an extensive co-curricular programme that complements and deepens pupils' learning across the curriculum. Activities are varied and well attended, providing opportunities for pupils to build on prior learning, apply skills in new contexts and pursue personal interests. As a result, pupils develop confidence, teamwork, and demonstrate high levels of engagement both in and beyond the classroom.
7. Pupils show inclusive attitudes and a strong sense of mutual respect, supported by curriculum content and school events. However, opportunities to deepen cultural awareness and engagement with diverse communities are limited.
8. Leaders in the early years and foundation setting (EYFS) create a well-organised and engaging environment that successfully supports children's early development. Provision is carefully planned to meet individual needs, and supervision is consistently maintained. Children make a confident and positive start to school, including those who speak English as an additional language (EAL).
9. Boarding provision is well organised and contributes positively to boarders' personal development and wellbeing. Boarding staff maintain calm routines, and leaders ensure appropriate supervision and pastoral care are in place. As a result, boarders thrive within a supportive and inclusive community.

10. Safeguarding leadership is robust and underpins all aspects of school life. Policies are implemented consistently, and staff demonstrate vigilance and confidence in responding to concerns. Governors provide informed oversight, and links with external agencies support pupil wellbeing.
11. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

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:

- develop pupils' cultural awareness more effectively to ensure they gain a broader and deeper understanding of different faiths and world views.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. School leaders are highly successful in promoting the school's aims to offer a nurturing, home-from-home environment for children to learn and grow. Pupil wellbeing is a clear priority, promoted by leaders' effective decision-making, clear routines and visibility. This results in an inclusive learning environment where pupils display a clear sense of belonging.
13. Leaders demonstrate a thorough understanding of their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Through a comprehensive accessibility plan and inclusive admission procedures, they make sure that all pupils can take part fully in school life and learning, whatever their needs.
14. Governors know the school well through their regular visits and participation in the different committees. This enables them to have effective oversight of educational provision. Governors collaborate closely with school leaders and receive detailed reports that inform strategic decision-making. Governors rigorously scrutinise policies and procedures to ensure they are clearly understood by staff and pupils, reflect statutory guidance, and prioritise pupils' needs at the centre of school development.
15. School leaders have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to fulfil their roles effectively. Recent reviews of senior leadership roles have enhanced oversight across key areas, including safeguarding, SEND, boarding, and teaching and learning. These changes have led to clearer lines of responsibility, resulting in positive outcomes for pupils.
16. Leaders undertake regular and rigorous reviews of the curriculum to ensure that it reflects breadth of learning and preparation for life in British society. For example, recent reviews and updates to the English and mathematics curriculums have placed greater emphasis on skill acquisition and retention, resulting in improved fluency, accuracy and confidence in pupils' application of core concepts.
17. Leaders are highly effective in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, resulting in greater rigour and consistency across the school. As a result of regular collaboration between staff, lesson visits and scrutiny of planning and assessment, teaching is effective and engaging.
18. Through the use of assessment data and observations, leaders responsible for pupils who have SEND implement effective strategies to identify pupils' individual needs early and ensure that appropriate support is in place. Leaders implement comprehensive pupil profiles, sharing them with staff to inform planning and enable targeted support.
19. School leaders implement an effective complaints policy that is applied consistently. When a concern or complaint is raised, leaders conduct suitable investigations and maintain comprehensive records of actions and outcomes. Leaders inform governors of any emerging trends or patterns, enabling them to monitor provision and address any deficiencies.
20. Governors maintain effective oversight of the school's premises and facilities through regular visits and engagement with leaders. Leaders operate robust systems to identify and manage a range of potential risks, including those related to health and safety, safeguarding, fire safety, supervision, and site security. Risk assessments are adapted to specific activities, environments and pupil needs, including off-site visits and boarding provision. Staff receive appropriate training to implement risk

mitigation strategies, helping to ensure that the school is well managed and responsive to potential risks.

21. Boarding leadership is well established and contributes positively to boarders' wellbeing and academic development. Houseparents ensure that the boarding house is well organised and contributes to a purposeful and enjoyable experience. Leaders in boarding have the appropriate experience and understanding to oversee the needs of boarders, ensuring that routines, supervision and pastoral care are managed effectively. As a result, boarders thrive within the boarding community.
22. Leaders in the early years are effective in developing a well-organised and engaging environment that supports children's early development. Provision within the setting is carefully planned to consider the individual needs of the children, including children who have SEND. Leaders ensure that suitable levels of supervision are in place, and that staff are deployed effectively to monitor routines and support children.
23. Safeguarding leadership is knowledgeable and robust, underpinning all aspects of school life. Leaders demonstrate secure understanding of statutory guidance and local procedures, ensuring that policies are implemented consistently and reviewed regularly. Governors maintain informed oversight through regular scrutiny and engagement with safeguarding leaders.
24. The school website is well-maintained and provides up-to-date information on policies and procedures. Parents are suitably informed about their child's progress through written reports and regular face-to-face contact.

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 have established a well-planned curriculum that reflects the school's aims to promote a love of learning through independence and intellectual curiosity. It effectively develops pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, aesthetic and creative disciplines.
27. Academic leaders have developed a comprehensive assessment framework that effectively monitors pupil progress, identifies trends, informs curriculum development and targets support. Pupils make good progress from varied starting points, and those not meeting expectations receive timely personalised support. Individual pupil learning passports promote collaboration between staff and pupils, who take responsibility for their own learning as a result. In the early years, progress is closely tracked through ongoing staff review with targeted support to address any gaps in children's learning.
28. Pupils have well-developed literacy skills and attain well from their starting points. The updated English curriculum with a focus on skills enables pupils to write with greater structure. Pupils have extensive vocabularies developed through the importance placed on phonics and reading. In the early years, children's initial writing is developed through activities to highlight pencil grip. Older pupils write extended creative pieces highlighting their knowledge of different sentence structures.
29. Leaders have updated the mathematics curriculum, which has successfully promoted pupils' numeracy skills with a greater emphasis on fluency and reasoning. Pupils demonstrate increased confidence in manipulating numbers, applying methods accurately and selecting strategies appropriate to different tasks.
30. Teachers' planning is comprehensive and responsive to pupils' individual needs, resulting in good progress. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, enabling them to explain topics clearly and extend pupils' thinking. Teaching is effective, and focused questioning, well-managed pace, informative resources and clear routines lead to high levels of pupil engagement and curiosity.
31. Pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points. Leaders have a clear understanding of individual needs informed by assessment data, regular observations and links with external agencies. Teachers adapt planning to ensure learning is accessible and inclusive. Learning development assistants are effectively deployed to reinforce key concepts and promote independence. Support for pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan) is targeted and impactful, with local authority funding used appropriately in collaboration with families and external agencies.
32. Pupils who speak EAL are well supported through tailored provision informed by initial assessments. Teachers adapt planning to reflect pupils' language needs, using appropriate strategies to promote access and participation. For example, individual vocabulary lists are provided to make lessons accessible. As a result, pupils who speak EAL develop their language skills effectively and make good progress across the curriculum.
33. Pupils reinforce their classroom learning through regular engaging homework tasks. Boarders benefit from structured homework routines and access to academic staff support, ensuring continuity in their learning beyond the school day.

34. Children in the early years demonstrate secure knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning. They engage confidently in structured and exploratory activities, enabling them to build on prior learning. For example, children recall their previous learning around greeting people in Spanish. Children have secure age-appropriate vocabularies that are strengthened through a focus on phonics. Leaders create a calm, well-organised environment that supports children's independence, communication and personal development.
35. Pupils have well-developed creative skills, supported by extensive opportunities to perform in music, sport and drama. Pupils benefit from the specialist teaching which enables them to make good progress. In the early years, children sing enthusiastically and enjoy sharing ideas through 'show and tell.' Through the engaging music and drama curriculums, pupils are expressive when applying their creativity and performing with enjoyment and confidence.
36. Leaders have implemented a comprehensive and inclusive co-curricular programme that enhances pupils' learning across the curriculum. Pupils make independent choices about their additional learning opportunities that fulfil the school's aims to create curiosity in the pupils' learning. For example, they make choices within the broader categories of academic, creative, performance, sport and music for their termly activities that support the learning within the curriculum such as abstract art club or gymnastics. Boarders enjoy accessing a lively programme of evening and weekend activities as part of their leisure time.

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

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

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

38. Leaders actively promote the school's child-centred ethos through pastoral care that supports pupils' emotional wellbeing and personal development. Pupils develop confidence and self-esteem through opportunities to perform, take risks and learn from mistakes in a nurturing environment. They speak with confidence in assemblies, engage positively with visitors and take pride in their achievements. Celebration assemblies, pupil-led councils and leadership roles contribute to a clear sense of belonging, motivation and responsibility.
39. Pupils develop emotional literacy, resilience and self-awareness through a well-structured PSHE curriculum. They begin to recognise and regulate emotions, supported by learning about mindfulness, sleep and brain function. Pastoral leaders have introduced 'all about me' books for all pupils, to encourage reflection and self-expression, while external input from a local charity equips pupils to manage challenging conversations. Mindfulness reflections at the end of assemblies and clubs such as 'little troopers' provide safe spaces for emotional processing and peer support.
40. The school promotes a calm and respectful culture where pupils behave in a relaxed and natural manner, underpinned by clear expectations and consistent staff role-modelling. The behaviour system, shaped through the school council, provides clarity and fairness. On the occasions when pupils display negative behaviour, staff respond promptly and calmly. In boarding, behaviour is managed with sensitivity to the home environment, and strong communication between academic and pastoral staff ensures cohesive support.
41. Leaders develop pupils' spiritual awareness through weekly assemblies and the updated religious education (RE) curriculum. Assemblies provide opportunities to celebrate the achievements of others and end with a period of quiet reflection that reinforces the shared values and emotional connections. Religious education lessons encourage pupils to explore philosophical questions from both religious and non-religious perspectives that extend pupils' thinking and cultural awareness. In the early years, children's appreciation of non-material aspects of life are developed through seasonal displays and natural play in their daily activities.
42. Leaders foster a culture of respect and tolerance, equipping pupils with the understanding and language to recognise and respond to unkindness and bullying. Through PSHE, assemblies, relationships education and initiatives such as 'Girls on Board' and kindness awards, pupils learn about personal boundaries and positive relationships. On the occasions when bullying incidents occur, staff respond promptly with suitable investigations and apply appropriate sanctions where necessary.
43. Leaders implement a broad and inclusive PE programme. Knowledgeable staff deliver well-planned lessons and clubs with high levels of participation. Pupils engage in a wide range of sports through a comprehensive inter-school fixture programme, where they have notable success. As a result, pupils participate confidently, challenge themselves physically and understand the importance of regular activity for their wellbeing.
44. Leaders ensure that first aid and medical provision are well organised and responsive to pupil needs. Pupils and boarders who feel unwell are cared for sensitively in a well-resourced medical room. Staff receive regular training, and all early years staff hold paediatric first aid qualifications, ensuring age-

appropriate care. Records of accidents and injuries are accurately maintained and monitored. Boarders benefit from access to a registered school nurse and local GP services, supporting their continuity of care.

45. Leaders effectively deploy staff throughout the day to provide appropriate levels of supervision for the pupils, including boarders during boarding time.
46. Admission and attendance records are accurately maintained and stored. Registers are completed consistently each day, enabling leaders to monitor pupil attendance and respond swiftly to any concerns. The school shares details of pupils joining or leaving at non-standard times with the local authority.
47. The school environment, including boarding accommodation, is well maintained and fit for purpose. Fire safety procedures are routinely practised, and staff are well informed of their responsibilities. Leaders have established effective systems for identifying and managing risks, ensuring that health and safety protocols are consistently applied across the school.
48. Boarding staff look after boarders effectively. They create a home environment where boarders feel safe and secure. The boarding house is spacious and well maintained, with clear routines and access to a kitchen for snacks. Meals are balanced and tailored to dietary needs. Boarders personalise their spaces and have suitable storage for belongings.
49. In the early years, children take part in regular exercise with specialist sports staff. They have a good range of motor skills which are developed through fun and engaging activities. Children develop independence with activities like learning to put on shoes and socks after sport. Relationships are warm and secure, and routines build independence and confidence.

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

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

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

51. Pupils across the school demonstrate high levels of personal development underpinned by the school's culture of respect, responsibility and care. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive and nurturing, contributing to a calm and purposeful learning environment. In the early years, staff know the different needs of the children and respond with sensitivity. They recognise when to offer support and when to step back, allowing children to develop independence, resilience, and confidence in their own decision-making. Boarders demonstrate increasing levels of independence and resilience through the routines and responsibilities embedded in daily life. They take ownership of tasks such as managing their own laundry, organising their belongings and preparing for the school day without prompting
52. Leaders promote fundamental British values through the curriculum and wider school life. These values are embedded through thematic units such as 'me, my school, my world', as well as through assemblies, PSHE lessons and cross-curricular links. Pupils develop an understanding of these values through active participation in the different councils and leadership roles. They engage in democratic processes by nominating themselves for council positions and taking part in whole-school voting, which fosters a sense of responsibility and belonging.
53. Pupils are confident in distinguishing right from wrong, as shown in their contributions to anti-racism posters and discussions about the need to have respect for all people, which is promoted through the 'word of the week' focus in assemblies. Pupils understand the importance of treating others with kindness and fairness and are equipped to respond appropriately should they encounter negative behaviour.
54. The school's sense of community is developed through one of the core values of teamwork. Pupils collaborate in sporting events, house competitions and shared responsibilities, which fosters a sense of belonging and pride. The house system provides regular opportunities for friendly competition, and pupils value the chance to act as buddies for new joiners, demonstrating care and empathy.
55. Pupils contribute positively to the local community and wider society through charitable initiatives such as food bank collections, the Salvation Army 'Giving Tree', and performances at local churches and fairs. The school eco-council encourages pupils to take part in litter picking and energy-saving practices in the local area. Through the curriculum, including history and RE, pupils develop an understanding of public institutions and democratic processes, such as the role of parliament and how voting works.
56. Leaders have recently reviewed and updated the economic wellbeing curriculum to develop pupils' understanding of financial concepts. Beginning in the early years, children start to learn about different forms of money and its value and use money through purposeful play. For example, children take part in regular role-play activities like running a shop or café to help them understand basic transactions. As pupils progress through the school, economic themes are revisited through PSHE and cross-curricular links. In RE, older pupils discuss moral perspectives on charitable giving, considering the impact of financial choices on others. Boarders use different systems of paying for items during their weekly shop visits within the local town.

57. Transitions between different key stages are managed effectively. Staff collaborate across phases to ensure familiarity and continuity, particularly for children moving up from the early years. Shared spaces such as playgrounds and dining halls, along with joint activities, help younger pupils feel secure and confident as they prepare for the next stage. Older pupils benefit from regular visits to the senior school and are taught in selected subjects by senior staff, which fosters familiarity with routines and expectations.
58. Leaders adequately promote cultural awareness through assemblies, curriculum themes, and some enrichment activities. Pupils have some opportunities to engage with different cultures through events such as 'Brazil day' and visiting speakers, which spark interest and begin to broaden their understanding of global perspectives. These experiences are well received and contribute to pupils' appreciation of diversity. However, opportunities to explore and celebrate a wider range of faiths and cultures are limited and not yet consistently embedded across the whole school environment.

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

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

Safeguarding

60. Safeguarding arrangements at the school are rigorous and effective to promote the wellbeing of pupils. Leaders prioritise pupil wellbeing through well-established procedures and an embedded culture of vigilance and care. There is a clear understanding among the staff that 'it could happen here.'
61. Leaders with designated safeguarding responsibilities have the necessary knowledge and experience to oversee safeguarding and respond effectively to issues when they arise. They draw upon the shared expertise across the Stamford Endowed Schools group to support the needs of the pupils. Leaders liaise effectively with external safeguarding agencies to manage concerns and ensure the pupils receive timely and co-ordinated support. Safeguarding records are comprehensive and well maintained, providing clear evidence of decision-making and the actions taken to protect pupils.
62. The school's safeguarding governor brings relevant professional expertise to their role and provides effective strategic oversight of the safeguarding procedures. Through regular contact with the safeguarding leads, including termly meetings and consultation on serious incidents, the governor ensures that safeguarding is effectively scrutinised at board level.
63. Staff have the necessary knowledge and understanding to safeguard pupils effectively. Leaders ensure that all staff, including those in the early years and boarding, receive regular and appropriate safeguarding training. Staff are confident in identifying, reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns, including low-level concerns relating to colleagues. Safeguarding is given high prominence in staff meetings and through the new staff induction process.
64. School leaders have effective oversight of safer recruitment procedures, resulting in robust systems that ensure the suitability of staff appointed by the school. Leaders involved in recruitment are knowledgeable and have relevant training and experience. All required pre-employment checks are carried out and accurately recorded on the single central record, which is monitored and scrutinised by governors.
65. School leaders ensure that pupils are kept safe online through the implementation of effective filtering and monitoring systems, which are also in place to protect the boarders during boarding time. Leaders regularly review and monitor these systems to ensure their effectiveness, look for any patterns and to respond to emerging risks.
66. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe through a well-structured programme of PSHE, assemblies and co-curricular activities. They understand the importance of protecting personal information online, and how to report any worries they have. Pupils have a suitable range of adults they can turn to for any problems or concerns they may have. They have access to worry boxes in each room, and around the boarding house, and they can record anonymous concerns through an online system that is monitored by safeguarding leads. Younger children in the early years learn about body awareness and personal boundaries through the NSPCC's 'Pants' programme.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Stamford Junior School
Department for Education number	925/6045
Registered charity number	527618
Address	Stamford Junior School Kettering Road Stamford Lincolnshire PE9 2LR
Phone number	01780 484400
Email address	sjsoffice@ses.lincs.sch.uk
Website	www.stamfordschools.org.uk
Proprietor	Stamford Endowed Schools Trustee Ltd
Chair	Mr Thomas Cartledge
Headteacher	Mr Matthew O'Reilly
Age range	2 to 11
Number of pupils	304
Number of boarding pupils	4
Date of previous inspection	9 to 10 November 2022

Information about the school

68. Stamford Junior School is a co-educational independent day and boarding school located in the town of Stamford, Lincolnshire. The school consists of the junior school, which is set within the main school buildings, and an early years setting located in a different building on the same site. The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new chair of governors. The school is part of Stamford Endowed Schools, comprising Stamford Junior School and Stamford School.
69. Boarding pupils, aged between 8 and 11 years, are accommodated in a single boarding house beyond the main school grounds within the town of Stamford. The boarding house has separate accommodation for male and female boarders.
70. There are 73 children in the early years which comprises three Nursery classes, who have their own dining facilities, and two Reception classes, housed in an adjacent building.
71. The school has identified 36 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
72. The school has identified English as an additional language for 12 pupils.
73. The school states its aims are to offer a nurturing, home from home environment for children to learn and grow. Leaders aim to work in partnership with parents to raise confident and down-to-earth children, who are curious and engaged in the world around them. They aim to give children the opportunity to become the best version of themselves. They strive to help every child reach their full potential, focusing on understanding how each child learns and building the right support around them.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

23 to 25 September 2025

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

75. Inspection activities included:

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

76. 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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For more information, please visit isi.net