

School inspection report

11 to 13 March 2025

Mylnhurst Preparatory School and Nursery

Button Hill

Ecclesall

Sheffield

S11 9HJ

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. Leaders make effective use of information about the progress that pupils make to plan initiatives to refine and improve teaching and learning at the school. Directors assure themselves that the Standards are met through regular meetings with leaders and consideration of written reports.
2. Leaders assess and mitigate any risks to the welfare and safety of pupils at the school. Staff have appropriate training to carry out their roles and responsibilities.
3. Staff provide children in the early years with a suitable programme of activities that enable the children to develop their communication and motor skills. Children make good progress towards their early learning goals and are ready for the transition to their next stage of schooling by the end of their Reception year.
4. Teachers are knowledgeable and dedicated to helping pupils to make progress. In most lessons they plan their teaching so that the needs of the pupils in the class are met effectively. Pupils benefit from the support and challenge provided and are motivated to work hard. As a result, pupils make good progress.
5. In a few lessons, teachers' planning is less effective and pupils are set work which does not take into account their prior attainment or individual learning needs. This affects the engagement of the pupils in those lessons and their progress is not as consistent.
6. Many pupils engage with the suitably broad range of extra-curricular clubs which further develops their interests and skills. These include musical and sporting activities.
7. Pupils develop confidence because teachers provide them with regular support, praise and encouragement. Pupils demonstrate positive behaviour as well as a respect for one another and for their teachers, because leaders have clear expectations in line with the school's ethos and apply the behaviour policy consistently.
8. The teaching of physical education (PE) promotes an appreciation of the value of exercise and healthy living in the pupils. A number of pupils demonstrate high levels of proficiency in a range of individual and team sports because of the skilled coaching provided to them. Pupils learn a range of skills such as financial planning which help to prepare them for their future adult lives.
9. Pupils learn about different cultures and world religions. Leaders promote the pupils' understanding of and respect for cultural and faith traditions in their personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and religious education (RE) lessons.
10. Pupils are appropriately prepared for their transition to senior school because leaders have carefully considered how to promote greater personal independence and responsibility in the oldest pupils, as well as ensuring the necessary academic preparation. Leaders consider the views of recent leavers and their parents to refine this programme so that it is relevant and helpful to the pupils.
11. Safeguarding is effective because leaders ensure that staff are appropriately trained, and directors oversee the implementation of the safeguarding policy. All the necessary checks are undertaken on staff and directors before they commence their roles. However, the Department for Education had

not been informed of the election of a new chair of directors, which is required by guidance issued by the Secretary of State. This was rectified during the inspection.

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 and proprietors should:

- ensure that teachers consistently plan lessons so that the needs of all pupils in the classroom are met more effectively
- ensure that the election of a new chair of directors is appropriately communicated to the Department for Education so that the appropriate checks can be countersigned by the Secretary of State.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

12. Leaders demonstrate that they have the appropriate knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They develop and enact plans and initiatives to improve pupil wellbeing, for example by extending the range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Leaders implement educational improvements, such as the use of adaptive technologies, to support individual pupils' learning and reading, and then evaluate their effectiveness. Leaders refine the use of data to monitor the progress pupils are making over time.
13. Leaders identify and manage risk both strategically and in the day-to-day operation of the school. They respond promptly to mitigate risks from any issues which arise. The risks associated with any public use of the school facilities are appropriately managed. Risk assessments for visits away from school are prepared thoroughly and effectively evaluated at the conclusion of the trip. A plan is in place to support pupils with severe allergies.
14. Directors check that leaders carry out their role effectively. They read written reports which are then discussed during meetings with leaders. Directors visit the school regularly to assure themselves that the school's aims are being appropriately delivered and that the standards are being met. Directors monitor leaders' evaluation of initiatives and appropriately oversee the implementation of safeguarding.
15. Leaders fulfil their duties under the Equality Act 2010. An appropriate accessibility plan is in place to promote improved access to the curriculum and school buildings for those with additional needs. Leaders make reasonable adjustments for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which are reviewed on a regular basis. For example, leaders rearrange classrooms based on short- or long-term mobility issues.
16. Leaders provide, or make available to parents, all the required information, either via the school website or in the regular reports of pupil progress which are shared directly. Leaders in the early years share progress updates and curriculum information with parents regularly, for example through photographs of their child's activities and in newsletters.
17. Leaders liaise appropriately with outside agencies to support pupils and their families. Leaders provide the required information to the local authority relating to pupils who have education, health and care (EHC) plans.
18. Leaders ensure that a complaints procedure is in place which conforms to regulatory guidance. Leaders respond promptly to any parental complaints and keep a suitable record of any such concerns together with the school's response.

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

19. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. Pupils are taught a balanced and suitable curriculum. Leaders' focus on literacy and mathematical understanding supports pupils in their learning across other subjects. Pupils develop skills and knowledge in scientific, aesthetic, technological and creative disciplines, as well as modern foreign languages, because of the well-planned subject-specific schemes of work. Teachers make links between curriculum areas which enable the pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter they are being taught. The teaching of RE is in line with the school's Catholic ethos and includes the study of other world religions.
21. Children in the early years experience an appropriate programme of activities which promotes their learning of communication and language skills. Children in the Nursery experiment with food shapes which they confidently offer to adults and explain how mixing different colours of plasticene will result in new colours. In Reception, children collaborate effectively with one another as they sequence shapes of various sizes and colours. Children make good progress towards their early learning goals.
22. Teachers are dedicated to helping pupils to make progress in their learning. They are knowledgeable about their subjects and use a range of resources effectively to support their teaching. In most lessons, teachers understand the individual needs of pupils and implement careful planning and teaching to meet those needs. They offer different levels of challenge in the work provided, and implement consistent, effective strategies to promote appropriate behaviour and to encourage pupils to engage with the lesson. For example, in mathematics pupils often complete exercises of varying complexity on the same topic and some pupils are supported using physical resources such as number lines and counters to promote their understanding. As a result, pupils make good progress from their various starting points in those lessons.
23. In a few lessons teachers are less effective in planning to meet the needs of all pupils in their classroom. As a result, activities are not sufficiently adapted to their prior attainment and pupils are not always fully engaged in their learning, so that their progress is not as consistent.
24. Teachers assess the progress pupils are making using a range of methods. They use this information to inform their planning so that pupils can maintain good progress. For example, teachers regularly check children's reading and understanding of the sounds that letters make in the early years, which helps them to identify the stage at which younger pupils can be encouraged to read more independently. Teachers use resources effectively to develop older pupils' reasoning, reading, grammar and comprehension skills. In mathematics, teachers use the outcomes of pre-topic assessments to adapt their teaching strategies.
25. Pupils who have SEND are suitably supported by their teachers, teaching assistants and learning support teachers. Staff give assistance in the classroom and in additional individual and group learning sessions, for example to explain topics in a way which promotes their learning more effectively. Learning support teachers ensure that teachers are aware of each pupil's individual needs. Where appropriate, pupils are given access to assistive technologies to help them interpret and record their work. As a result, pupils who have SEND make good progress.

26. A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language and additional support is provided to aid their learning, including adult assistance where necessary, for example to ensure that pupils understand instructions, using translation tools if required.
27. Pupils develop the knowledge and skills they need to be successful and to gain entry to senior and secondary schools. Pupils regularly gain awards in academic, sporting and creative disciplines.
28. Many pupils take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer, from baking to French club, which allow them to develop their interests. Music ensembles, choirs and sporting activities such as swim squad and marathon club give pupils the opportunity to develop their skills further.

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

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

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

30. Pupils develop appropriate levels of confidence and self-knowledge because of the support given to them throughout their time at school. For example, pupils are taught how to use language to explain how they are feeling and to articulate what might cause them anxiety, and teachers are quick to encourage and praise pupils both for their efforts and their positive behaviour.
31. Leaders build pupils' self-esteem by celebrating their achievements, such as making presentations in assembly. Pupils value being chosen as the pupil of the week, known as 'class captain', in each form in recognition of their positive attitude, which further encourages all pupils to aspire to this award. Older pupils derive confidence from the positions of responsibility they hold, such as prefects.
32. Pupils understand how their actions and behaviours have a direct impact on their learning. Pupil behaviour around school is considerate and thoughtful and they are attentive to instructions from their teachers. For example, they enter and leave assembly appropriately, listening to a pupil performing music, and they take part reflectively in acts of collective worship. Pupils reflect on their actions when they make mistakes because staff are clear, consistent and supportive in their application of the behaviour policy.
33. The school's anti-bullying policy and procedures are appropriate. Staff are vigilant and act on any issues which may arise. On the occasions when leaders need to take action, they do so promptly and effectively. Leaders keep detailed records of any behavioural concerns and use these records to monitor and track any trends or recurring issues.
34. Children in the early years experience a range of activities which promote their physical and emotional development. They develop their fine motor skills using play apparatus as well as equipment such as rolling pins and scissors. They create dance moves involving a play rope and pretend to make cakes in their mud kitchen. Children and adults use shared language to explain how they are feeling, and how other children might feel as a result of their actions.
35. Pupils are taught an appropriate programme of PE which encourages them to develop their fitness, co-ordination and teamwork skills. Many pupils demonstrate a high degree of mastery in a range of sports because of the skilled coaching they receive. Pupils understand how physical fitness is also conducive to their mental wellbeing through their PE lessons as well as in their PSHE lessons and special events such as 'wellbeing weeks'.
36. The teaching of relationships and sex education (RSE) is delivered in accordance with statutory guidance, as part of the PSHE curriculum. Parents are consulted and informed about the topics the children are taught. Pupils learn that it is important to be kind to everyone and be accepting of difference. Teachers develop pupils' understanding about both positive and unhealthy relationships, and important topics such as consent. Sex education is taught to older pupils in an age-appropriate way, including how bodies grow and change.
37. Teachers supervise pupils appropriately during the school day, for example during periods of recreational play. Leaders implement up-to-date statutory guidance and monitor pupils' attendance to look for and act on any patterns of absence which might unduly affect pupils' learning. The school

promptly informs the local authority of any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.

38. The school premises are suitable and well maintained. Health and safety policies and procedures, such as electrical and water safety checks, are robust. Fire risk assessments are carried out by a competent person and leaders ensure that any action points arising are addressed. Staff receive appropriate fire safety training and evacuation drills are regularly carried out to ensure that everyone knows what to do in case of an emergency.
39. First aid is carried out appropriately and parents are informed if their child has been ill or injured. There is always at least one adult trained in paediatric first aid present in the early years department. Suitable records are kept of any first aid given to pupils, as well as any prescription medication administered. The school provides an appropriate facility for ill or injured pupils to use in the short term.

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

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

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

41. Pupils understand that everyone should be treated equally and they learn to respect individual characteristics. This is borne out by the positive relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff. Children in the early years demonstrate that they know the importance of equality and fairness, which are modelled effectively by staff. Pupils are taught how societies and communities use rules to function effectively, through their own school rules as well as learning about laws in Britain and elsewhere in the world. Older pupils visit a courtroom and take part in a mock trial which enables them to understand how the judicial system operates.
42. Pupils hold mock elections when general elections are taking place, and they vote for the school council by filling out voting cards at polling stations. As a result, pupils learn about democracy and British institutions such as Parliament. Teachers are careful to ensure that any discussions regarding political issues are conducted fairly and without bias.
43. Pupils of all ages develop an appropriate understanding of and respect for different cultures through their RE lessons, assemblies and a range of other planned learning experiences throughout the school year. Pupils visit places of worship and learn about the celebrations of world religions. For example, Year 3 pupils learn about the relevance of colour to the Hindu festival of Holi. Older pupils present to the school in assembly about aspects of their own faith which are important to them.
44. Children in the early years receive visitors from a range of professions, and role play in their dressing up activities. Visitors talk about their work to older pupils, which enables the pupils to begin to consider the range of work opportunities they might consider in the future.
45. Pupils are suitably prepared for their next stage of schooling. Children in the early years take part in events with older pupils and develop positive relationships with their Year 6 'buddies' which gives them confidence as their school journey continues. The oldest pupils are thoroughly prepared for their transition to senior school, both in terms of academic preparation and developing greater independence and personal organisation. Leaders interview recent leavers and their parents to review the effectiveness of this programme so that they can make improvements to ensure that it appropriately meets the needs of all pupils.
46. Pupils develop their economic understanding. For example, children in the early years take part in role-play activities where they exchange money. Younger pupils handle currency in mathematics lessons. Older pupils participate in a business project, starting with seed money and selling products or services. Pupils in Year 6 independently plan their spending, including travel costs, for a local trip. As a result, pupils gain practical skills in budgeting and decision-making.
47. Pupils who are elected to the school council or eco-council suggest improvements for the benefit of all pupils. They propose adjustments to the school menu, which are usually accepted, and work together to successfully apply for an environmental award. Pupils in Year 6 can become prefects and house and sports captains, performing a range of duties to help teachers, such as administrative support or welcoming visiting sports teams to the school. Pupils apply for these roles and have to present their ideas to the school as part of the selection process.

48. Pupils engage in many activities which encourage them to contribute to wider society, for example by participating in charitable fund raising, some of which is motivated by an appreciation of the experiences of members of the school community. These activities help pupils to learn that they can have a positive influence on the lives of others.

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

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

Safeguarding

50. Leaders put in place appropriate policies and procedures to promote an effective culture of safeguarding within the school, in line with current statutory guidance. Safeguarding leaders receive the required level of training to have the knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities, and have suitable seniority and independence to carry out their roles appropriately.
51. Staff can recognise signs that a pupil's welfare might be at risk because they have been appropriately trained and understand the need to be vigilant. Staff understand how to share their concerns in a timely manner. They know the importance of sharing concerns about the behaviour of other staff, including low-level concerns. Staff understand the need to be alert to extremism.
52. Leaders ensure that pupils can share any concerns they have with adults at school. This includes worry boxes and a postbox, which can be used anonymously if pupils so wish.
53. Leaders take prompt action and liaise effectively with external agencies when necessary to support pupils and their families. Leaders maintain detailed records, including any actions taken, and monitor any ongoing concerns effectively.
54. Directors exercise appropriate oversight of the school's safeguarding practices by discussing anonymised cases, reading reports and discussing any emerging trends or issues with leaders.
55. Pupils are confident about using the internet appropriately because they learn about online safety. Their access to the internet whilst at school is suitably monitored and filtered.
56. Leaders put in place suitable processes to ensure that the regulations are met with regard to the appointment of new staff. This includes the accurate recording of required information on a single central record (SCR). The Department for Education had not been informed upon the election of a new chair of directors, as is required by the guidance. However, this was rectified during the course of the inspection, and all the appropriate safeguarding checks had already been undertaken on the new chair of governors in their existing role as a director.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

57. All the relevant Standards are met.

School details

School	Mylnhurst Preparatory School and Nursery
Department for Education number	373/6017
Registered charity number	1056685
Address	Button Hill Ecclesall Sheffield S11 9HJ
Phone number	0114 236 1411
Email address	enquiries@mylnhurst.co.uk
Website	www.mylnhurst.co.uk
Proprietor	Mylnhurst Ltd
Chair	Dr Alex Rawlings
Headteacher	Mr Michael Hibbert
Age range	2 to 11
Number of pupils	184
Date of previous inspection	22 to 25 February 2022

Information about the school

58. Mylnhurst Preparatory School and Nursery is an independent co-educational day school in Ecclesall, South Yorkshire. Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher was appointed in September 2022 and a new chair of directors was elected in September 2023.
59. There are 79 children in the early years comprising two Nursery classes and one Reception class.
60. The school has identified 34 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
61. The school has identified English as an additional language for a very small number of pupils.
62. The school states its aims are to provide a nurturing and secure environment that places wellbeing at its heart. It seeks to inspire pupils in their learning through rich, broad and balanced experiences within and beyond the classroom, and to instil in pupils a sense of responsibility as local, national and global citizens. It aims to enable pupils to achieve their goals by cultivating confidence, resilience and a growth mindset within a challenging and supportive Christian community.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

11 to 13 March 2025

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

64. 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
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

65. 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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