

School inspection report

27 to 29 January 2026

Milton Keynes Preparatory School

Tattenhoe Lane
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK3 7EG

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 proprietor and governors maintain effective oversight of the school through regular visits, policy updates and audits. They evaluate the impact of leaders' work to ensure that the Standards are met consistently. Leaders conduct regular checks on provision to ensure that pupils' wellbeing is promoted effectively. Early years leaders provide thorough staff induction and supervision so that children's learning and developmental needs are met. Leaders keep parents well informed through up-to-date statutory information and regular reports about their child's progress. They work constructively with external agencies, including the local authority. This includes safeguarding, pupils with education, health and care plans (EHC plans) and attendance matters.
2. Governors and staff demonstrate secure awareness of risks. They act promptly when concerns arise. Daily checks by staff mitigate hazards. However, some premises-related risk assessments lack detail. This means that identified risks and mitigating actions are not always fully communicated. Leaders review accessibility arrangements regularly. They meet their duties under the Equality Act 2010. A clear complaints procedure is in place. Leaders respond swiftly to concerns. They maintain appropriate records of issues raised and actions taken.
3. Leaders provide a broad and balanced curriculum that is reviewed regularly to reflect pupils' interests and aptitudes. Consequently, it ensures pupils' good progress across subjects. Teaching is monitored closely. Lessons typically feature clear explanations, effective questioning and the use of purposeful resources. This promotes pupils' confidence and independence. Systematic checks on pupils' learning identify pupils' needs accurately. Leaders provide effectively targeted support, so pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress.
4. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive suitable support to enhance their language skills and vocabulary development. This means that they access the curriculum successfully with their peers.
5. In the early years, children benefit from an engaging learning environment. They establish secure foundations, including in early reading and numeracy. This approach supports children's continued good progress as they move through the school. A suitable extra-curricular programme extends their learning, broadens interests and promotes collaboration with their peers.
6. Leaders and staff foster a nurturing, inclusive atmosphere through well-planned PSHE lessons, assemblies and outdoor activities. Pupils learn to appreciate diversity, to respect differences and to reflect on spirituality and moral issues. Opportunities to lead assemblies and to participate in discussions build pupils' confidence and self-knowledge. Staff are approachable and accessible. Pupils express any concerns confidently in the supportive environment. Regular physical education, the effectively implemented behaviour policy and timely first aid arrangements contribute to pupils' physical and emotional wellbeing. In the early years, carefully planned activities and caring relationships promote children's independence and personal development.
7. Leaders ensure that fundamental British values are embedded across the curriculum. PSHE, religious education (RE), assemblies and wider school events teach pupils about diversity, democracy and social responsibility. The school council provides a structured forum through which pupils can influence school life, including through wellbeing and sustainability initiatives.

8. Engagement in charitable activities develops pupils' understanding of their role in the wider community. Positive staff role modelling, clear expectations and opportunities to take responsibility support pupils' social development. Programmes such as 'Ready to lead the way' develop teamwork, leadership and enterprise skills. Economic education ensures pupils develop awareness of personal finance. These experiences prepare pupils effectively for their future lives in modern British society.
9. The proprietor, governors and leaders maintain effective oversight of safeguarding through regular audits, reporting and policy review processes. Staff receive comprehensive safeguarding training. They understand how to report concerns promptly. Designated safeguarding leaders and governors respond promptly. They record the actions they take clearly. Robust safer recruitment procedures are in place. Effective online safety measures in the school ensure that pupils are protected when using technology.

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 written risk assessments are consistently detailed enough to clearly identify potential risks so that mitigating actions can be matched and implemented effectively.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. The proprietor maintains a consistent presence in the school. Close working with governors helps to sustain effective oversight of the quality of the school's offer. Governors visit regularly. They meet with leaders and staff, review policies and conduct audits in areas such as health and safety and safeguarding. In these ways, the proprietor and governors assure themselves that leaders have the appropriate skills and knowledge to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. This means that the Standards are met consistently.
11. Leaders engage in an effective process of continuous review. This ensures that pupils' wellbeing and the values of kindness, courtesy and respect are at the centre of all decisions. They analyse pupils' achievement information regularly, as well as the views expressed in regular pupil surveys. In response to reviews, leaders implement changes which improve and develop the school's provision. The wellbeing room, for example, was created to provide a quiet space for pupils. The 'Ready to lead the way' initiative was introduced to continue to improve the effective framework for pupils' personal development.
12. Leaders ensure that the required up-to-date statutory information and policies are available to parents on the website. Parents, including those in the early years, receive regular reports about their child's progress and welfare.
13. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to seek advice and support quickly when required, especially in relation to safeguarding. They provide appropriate information to the local authority about pupils who have an EHC plan. They also inform the local authority of any pupils whose attendance raises concerns or who join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.
14. Governors and staff have a secure understanding of the risks facing the school. Effective measures are implemented to mitigate these. They respond swiftly to any concerns raised by members of the school community. An additional front door was installed, for example, as a result of feedback from parents. Staff routinely assess indoor and outdoor hazards daily, including for the youngest children. Leaders maintain a range of relevant risk assessments. Risk assessments for trips, visits and events are typically suitably detailed and well managed. However, some that relate to the premises and accommodation are not detailed enough or evaluated effectively. This reduces the precision with which appropriate mitigating actions can be identified and implemented.
15. Leaders in the early years are knowledgeable about their responsibilities for the youngest children. Staff access comprehensive induction, ongoing training and regular supervision meetings. In this way, leaders ensure that staff are confident to support children's learning and development, so their needs are met, including their social and emotional needs. Consequently, children receive a positive start to their education.
16. Leaders ensure that they fulfil their obligations under the Equality Act 2010. A suitable accessibility plan is reviewed regularly. Support staff are deployed effectively to meet pupils' changing needs. Pictorial and symbolic representations are used to present information as required. This means that those who have a disability can access written information, the curriculum and the physical environment of the school.
17. Leaders implement a clear complaints policy. This is available on the school's website. It outlines the three stages of the process as well as expected timescales. Leaders respond quickly when concerns

are raised. They maintain clear communication with parents throughout the process. Appropriate records are kept of any complaints. These include the decisions and actions taken. The number of formal complaints received in the previous year is made available as required.

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

18. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

19. Leaders provide a broad and balanced curriculum. This is subject to ongoing evaluation so that the school's offer continues to reflect pupils' aptitudes and interests. Leaders plan carefully to ensure that pupils develop secure knowledge and skills in literacy, numeracy, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), languages, the arts and sports. Outdoor activities and exploration of the natural world in the environmental studies centre enable pupils to think independently, investigate confidently and articulate their findings effectively.
20. Leaders monitor teaching closely through lesson observations and reviews of planning to maintain consistently high standards. Additional support is deployed effectively so that all pupils develop secure knowledge, skills and understanding across subjects. Teachers' assured subject knowledge, well-planned activities and high expectations promote pupils' engagement in learning. Clear explanations and open questioning promote pupils' curiosity and deeper understanding. Lessons build on prior learning and use resources creatively to sustain pupils' interest. Pupils of different ages, for example, study the skeleton and joints in age-appropriate contexts to extend their learning.
21. The assessment framework ensures systematic checks on pupils' learning. Consequently, leaders track pupils' progress effectively, identifying those pupils requiring targeted support. These regular assessments and leaders' effective analysis of the information collected support curriculum and lesson planning, as well as any adaptations needed. This means that individuals' and groups of pupils' needs are met consistently. Weekly progress meetings ensure timely additional support is provided when required. This includes, for example, individual assistance, reading programmes, specific resources, enrichment clubs and subject-specific drop-in sessions.
22. From the early years onwards, the well-planned English curriculum develops pupils' literacy. As a result, pupils develop confident reading, writing and speaking skills. Discussion of varied texts strengthens their comprehension. The teaching of rich vocabulary and literary devices such as simile, metaphor and personification enables pupils to write imaginatively in different genres. The mathematics curriculum promotes pupils' secure conceptual understanding and competence in mathematical procedures. Consequently, pupils grasp methods quickly, applying skills confidently in problem-solving and across subjects such as engineering and design. Enrichment through, for example, national mathematics challenges and mathematical leadership opportunities, builds pupils' interest and motivation to learn. As a result, pupils demonstrate secure knowledge and skills, as well as enthusiasm for both English and mathematics.
23. Staff in the early years provide an engaging and appropriate curriculum closely matched to children's learning and development needs, including in early reading and numeracy. A wide range of indoor and outdoor activities reflect children's interests and reinforce their understanding. Children make good progress and transition confidently to the next stage. Numeracy is introduced through practical games and stories, such as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, to help children explore size and quantity. Positive staff interactions support children's language development, self-expression and listening skills. Phonics teaching develops children's knowledge of the sounds that letters make to support early reading and writing skills. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
24. Leaders identify the needs of pupils who speak EAL on entry. Teachers adapt lessons and provide resources such as visual images and translator pens. Speaking, reading and writing development is closely monitored, with group or individual support provided as needed. Pupils gain confidence

quickly in written and spoken English. This allows them to access the curriculum fully and to make good progress.

25. Leaders assess and identify individual needs effectively, ensuring appropriate support for pupils who have SEND, including pupils with an EHC plan. Teachers adapt lessons and strategies to ensure accessibility for all learners. Specialist support, such as speech and language therapy, is provided, as well as resources such as coloured overlays, where required. Learning targets are reviewed regularly with parents and recorded on individual education plans. As a result, pupils who have SEND make consistently good progress.
26. The extra-curricular programme is well matched to pupils' ages and interests. Activities allow pupils to develop skills and explore new pursuits, including board games, design and crafts. Teamwork is promoted appropriately through sports, instrumental ensembles, choirs and drama clubs.

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

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

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

28. Leaders and staff foster a nurturing environment characterised by respectful relationships and kindness. The well-planned programme of PSHE lessons and assemblies teaches pupils about diversity, as well as the importance of celebrating and respecting differences including gender, age and disability. As a result, pupils show respect, support and care towards one another.
29. Religious education, stories and assemblies introduce pupils to world religions. Pupils participate enthusiastically in music, explore art and enjoy quiet spaces to sit and think. Activities in the environmental learning centre, such as growing vegetables, encourage pupils to enjoy and reflect on the natural world. These experiences help pupils to develop spiritual awareness and to appreciate the importance of taking time to reflect.
30. Opportunities to lead assemblies and respond to school surveys enable pupils to express their views clearly, helping them to develop self-knowledge and confidence. Theme days, including World Mental Health Day, strengthen pupils' understanding of mental wellbeing and the value of sharing concerns. Staff encourage pupils to speak to an adult if they are worried. In addition, the wellbeing room provides a quiet space for pupils to discuss any concerns. The PSHE curriculum teaches pupils to recognise emotions and to manage uncomfortable feelings. Individual tutorials encourage pupils to appreciate their own positive qualities.
31. Physical Education (PE) and sports lessons develop pupils' physical co-ordination, fitness and tactical awareness. Pupils learn about the benefits of regular exercise and healthy eating. Teachers use clear explanations and supportive feedback. As a result, pupils develop skills, build confidence and collaborate effectively in teams. In the early years, stimulating activities, such as running and climbing, strengthen children's stamina, balance and fine motor skills. This supports their physical development. In these ways, pupils are encouraged to lead healthy, active and confident lives.
32. The comprehensive PSHE curriculum provides age-appropriate relationships education. This teaches pupils about different families, consent and inclusion. Pupils learn how to build positive relationships and to make responsible personal decisions. They understand healthy, respectful friendships. This learning prepares pupils effectively for their future lives.
33. Leaders implement effective behaviour and anti-bullying policies through assemblies and form discussions. Staff set clear expectations. They recognise positive behaviour, hard work and respect through praise and rewards. As a result, pupils are courteous, well-behaved and considerate in their friendships. When incidents occur, leaders act swiftly, investigate thoroughly and support all pupils involved. Detailed records are maintained and analysed to identify and address any emerging patterns. Teachers apply sanctions fairly, engaging pupils in constructive conversations that help to maintain a calm, respectful environment.
34. Leaders ensure that health and safety procedures are implemented effectively so that the school is well maintained. Regular checks are carried out and reviewed by the proprietor and governors. Evacuation drills and staff training ensure that pupils know how to respond in an emergency. Leaders act promptly when issues arise. They typically maintain detailed records to ensure the premises remain safe and compliant with regulatory requirements.

35. Appropriate levels of supervision are secured throughout the school day, including during break times and off-site activities. Suitable staff ratios are maintained in the early years, including during mealtimes, so that pupils are supervised effectively.
36. Admission and attendance registers are kept accurately in line with statutory guidance. Leaders monitor and analyse attendance patterns closely. They take prompt action when concerns arise and ensure pupils' regular attendance is supported effectively.
37. Leaders ensure timely and appropriate arrangements for first aid and medical needs. A qualified matron and trained staff, including paediatric first aiders in the early years, provide prompt care. Medication is stored securely, with records of injuries and treatment maintained and reviewed.
38. Staff in the early years form trusting, caring relationships with children, balancing support with encouragement of independence. Well-planned activities develop personal skills such as managing snack time and changing for outdoor play. The nurturing environment enables children to express ideas confidently, follow routines and interact positively.

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

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

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

40. Leaders review curriculum planning to ensure that fundamental British values are embedded in all subjects. Pupils learn about individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs through PSHE, RE and assemblies. Events such as International Day and Black History Month broaden pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. As a result, pupils develop a deeper understanding of different cultures and the importance of respecting diversity in the wider community. In this way, they are prepared well for life in modern British society.
41. Discussions in PSHE, activities during UK Parliament Week and participation in school elections promote pupils' understanding of democratic processes. Pupils elect representatives to the school council. This provides a structured forum for their views to be heard on matters such as menus, extra-curricular activities, sustainability and wellbeing. Pupils vote on charitable initiatives, further strengthening their sense of social responsibility. Such experiences help pupils to recognise how their decisions influence school life, reinforcing the principle that everyone has the right to be heard.
42. Leaders and teachers promote pupils' social development through assemblies, form-time discussions and PSHE lessons. Staff model courtesy and respect in their interactions, fostering positive relationships across the school. As a result, pupils communicate confidently and courteously. They collaborate effectively in lessons and contribute positively to the school community.
43. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to understand others' needs. Pupils, for example, support charities that assist families with limited resources. They contribute to food distribution charities and learn about charitable work through talks from visiting speakers and visits to the local foodbank. Pupils participate in themed charity days, which broaden their understanding of national and international causes. Consequently, pupils develop an understanding of the value of charity work and learn how to contribute effectively to their local and wider community.
44. The courtesy policy, school rules and classroom expectations are reinforced through assemblies, form time and PSHE. From the early years, children are guided to make positive behaviour choices and to develop a secure understanding of right and wrong. Across year groups, pupils learn the value of respect, teamwork, good sportsmanship and adherence to rules, which underpin a supportive school environment. Teaching about legal processes and visits to local council offices extend pupils' understanding of the rule of law and public institutions.
45. Leaders offer pupils structured opportunities to take on responsibilities, developing leadership skills and supporting them to contribute actively to school life. The 'Ready to lead the way' programme supports older pupils in developing teamwork, communication and community responsibility. Pupils undertake roles such as class monitors, prefects, head pupils, sports leaders, house captains, wellbeing ambassadors and school councillors. Staff guidance supports them in carrying out these roles maturely and effectively. These experiences help to prepare pupils for the next stages of education.
46. Economic and financial education is integrated into the PSHE and mathematics curriculums. Younger pupils learn to handle coins. They explore exchanging them for goods through role play. Older pupils develop an understanding of budgeting, spending and saving. They learn to differentiate between

wants and needs. Pupils in Year 6 organise enterprise activities, including Christmas fair stalls and pop-up shops. They learn to budget, calculate profit and loss and experience financial decision-making. This develops pupils' understanding of personal finance and the world of work.

47. In the early years, staff model positive behaviour. They provide carefully planned opportunities to promote children's social development. Children work together frequently. During outdoor sessions, for example, they learn to share, collaborate and resolve disagreements. Children follow clear routines, including preparing for outdoor learning and tidying resources. In doing so, they develop independence and understand expectations for their behaviour. As a result, children strengthen their social skills and are friendly towards each other.

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

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

Safeguarding

49. The proprietor and governors work closely with leaders to maintain effective oversight of safeguarding arrangements across the school, including in the early years. They check routinely to ensure that the safeguarding policy is up to date and review reports from those with designated safeguarding responsibilities. Annual audits monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures. Regular visits and discussions with staff assure the proprietor and governors that the school maintains a robust safeguarding culture. Consequently, safeguarding is effective. The required Standards are met consistently.
50. Leaders ensure that staff and governors receive comprehensive safeguarding training when they join the school. This includes training linked to the 'Prevent' duty, which aims to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Regular training and reminders in staff meetings ensure that staff recognise and report issues quickly using the school's reporting system. Staff are equally confident in raising wider concerns, including low-level concerns, about adults.
51. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL), deputy DSLs and the designated safeguarding governor are appropriately trained for their roles. They provide well-informed guidance for colleagues. Safeguarding leaders respond promptly to safeguarding concerns and provide appropriate support for pupils.
52. Leaders work effectively with external safeguarding agencies, including the local authority multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). They seek advice when concerns are raised, making referrals when required. The safeguarding team maintains comprehensive records, clearly documenting the school's response to any safeguarding concerns.
53. Leaders implement robust safer recruitment procedures. They complete the required pre-employment checks promptly for new staff. This ensures that they are suitable to work with children. The results of the checks are entered accurately on the single central record (SCR), which is reviewed by the DSG each term. Leaders ensure that personnel files include the required information and are stored securely. Appropriately trained interview panel members consistently apply safeguarding principles to all new staff appointments.
54. Pupils learn how to stay safe online through assemblies, lessons and specific online safety teaching. They are taught about potential dangers of the internet, so they understand the need to behave responsibly when online. Effective internet filtering and monitoring systems are in place to protect pupils when using school technology. Leaders investigate and take appropriate action swiftly if alerts about attempts to access unsuitable online material are made.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Milton Keynes Preparatory School
Department for Education number	826/6004
Registered early years number	EY284818
Address	Milton Keynes Preparatory School Tattenhoe Lane Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK3 7EG
Phone number	01908 642111
Email address	info@mkps.co.uk
Website	www.mkps.co.uk
Proprietor	Milton Keynes Preparatory School Limited
Chair	Mr Simon Driver
Headteacher	Mr Simon Driver
Age range	0 to 11
Number of pupils	363
Number of children in the early years registered setting	44
Date of previous inspection	21 to 23 March 2023

Information about the school

56. Milton Keynes Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day school comprising three sections: a registered nursery unit for children aged under two, the pre-preparatory department for those aged three to seven years, and a preparatory school for pupils in Years 3 to 6. It is managed by its proprietor and an advisory board of governors.
57. The early years is made up of five nursery classes and two Reception classes. An inspection of the registered nursery provision for children under the age of two took place at the same time.
58. The school has identified 61 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small proportion of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
59. The school has identified English as an additional language for 43 pupils.
60. The school states that its aims are to foster a positive environment that enables pupils to reach their full potential. It seeks to encourage academic excellence, a broad and engaging curriculum, and the development of social skills such as courtesy and respect. The school further aims to prepare pupils for their senior education by equipping them with confidence and secure academic and personal foundations.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

27 to 29 January 2026

61. A team of four inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

62. 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 proprietor and chair of 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.

63. 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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