

# School inspection report

24 to 26 February 2026

## **St Peter's School**

52 Headlands

Kettering

NN15 6DJ

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 promote the school's aims and values consistently through all aspects of school life. Pupils are known, supported and valued as individuals in the caring school community. Pupils benefit from continuity of care and develop a strong sense of belonging, which supports their personal development and engagement in learning.
2. Collectively, governors and leaders make informed strategic decisions that actively promote pupils' wellbeing. Through regular self-evaluation and development planning, they take effective action to support ongoing improvement. They fulfil their statutory duties and ensure that the requirements of the Standards are met consistently. They ensure that there is a full array of policies in place that are well implemented. However, at the start of the inspection, the attendance policy published on the school website did not reflect current statutory guidance or the established effective practice within the school. This was rectified during the inspection.
3. Leaders ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum is provided. The curriculum promotes curiosity from the earliest years and prepares pupils appropriately for the next stage of their education. A co-curricular programme extends opportunities for pupils to develop wider interests and skills. Teachers plan well and use suitable methods and resources to support pupils in acquiring knowledge and developing skills. However, in a small number of subjects, assessment systems are not as well embedded and used. Where this is the case, teachers and leaders do not know whether pupils are achieving as well as they should.
4. In the early years, leaders provide the youngest children with a well-resourced and planned indoor and outdoor environment. Skilled teachers support children's communication and language, early literacy and mathematical understanding. Children's early social, emotional and physical development is supported appropriately. Children learn and develop well. They are well prepared for their transition to Year 1.
5. Leaders promote pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing through effective pastoral care and a coherent programme that includes personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and physical education (PE). Staff know pupils well and provide support matched to individual needs. Consequently, pupils develop self-knowledge, confidence and respect for others, contributing positively to school life.
6. Leaders promote pupils' social and economic education effectively and prepare them for life in modern British society. Through the curriculum, assemblies and wider opportunities, pupils develop an understanding of responsibility, fairness and mutual respect. Democratic processes, including elections for pupil leadership roles, enable pupils to contribute to decision-making and to represent the views of their peers. Pupils report that adults listen to their views and respond constructively. As a result, pupils accept responsibility willingly and engage positively within the school community.
7. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are suitably trained. Safeguarding arrangements reflect current statutory guidance and are implemented effectively. Timely and appropriate action is taken to keep pupils safe, including appropriate liaison with external agencies where required. Staff receive regular safeguarding training, including in recognising and reporting low-level concerns, contributing to a vigilant safeguarding culture. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online, supported by effective internet filtering and monitoring systems. Safer recruitment

procedures meet statutory requirements, and leaders maintain an accurate record of these pre-employment checks.

## 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 the attendance policy accurately reflects up-to-date statutory guidance and the established effective practice within the school
- develop the use of assessment across some subjects, so that teachers and leaders can identify and support pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

8. Governors provide effective oversight of leaders' work through a range of regular monitoring. They ensure that leaders have appropriate knowledge and skills, and that decision-making promotes pupils' wellbeing. Through this oversight, governors ensure that statutory responsibilities are fulfilled and that the requirements of the Standards are met consistently.
9. Leaders ensure that strategic priorities are implemented effectively and that the school's values are reflected in practice across academic and pastoral provision. Leaders evaluate provision through established self-review and development planning processes. Leaders identify priorities accurately and ensure that these are addressed thoroughly. Governors' ongoing monitoring and review contribute to leaders' understanding of strengths and areas for development.
10. Leaders have embedded an effective approach to the identification and management of risk. They manage the risks of on-site and off-site activity. Risk assessments are detailed and proportionate, supporting pupils' safe participation in school activities. Leaders' oversight covers a range of areas, including safeguarding, behaviour, health and safety, and pupils' emotional wellbeing. Leaders routinely review the effectiveness of their approach to risk management. This enables them to take effective action where necessary and contributes to a safe and orderly environment.
11. Parents receive regular reports about how their child is achieving. Most other required information is made available to parents and external agencies via the school's website. Leaders fulfil their responsibilities effectively through the consistent implementation of policies and procedures. For example, leaders respond appropriately to concerns when they arise and complaints procedures are implemented effectively, ensuring that matters are managed fairly and resolved in a timely manner. Leaders fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 through a well-considered and routinely reviewed accessibility plan.
12. However, the attendance policy referenced out-of-date information. Leaders and governors had not identified this prior to the inspection. This policy did not accurately reflect the high-quality practice of leaders in their work to support attendance. The policy was updated during the inspection.
13. Leaders maintain effective links with safeguarding partners and external professionals so that pupils receive appropriate support. Leaders work effectively with external agencies, such as safeguarding partners, when needed. They also inform the local authority of any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition points. They provide the local authority with appropriate information related to pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan), including information related to funding.
14. Leaders in the early years are effective, demonstrating secure knowledge of statutory requirements. Staffing ratios, supervision arrangements and safeguarding procedures are implemented consistently. Effective pastoral care supports children's safety, wellbeing and development. Provision is monitored regularly by leaders to ensure that children's needs are met, and that appropriate support is provided when required.

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

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

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

16. Leaders ensure that there is a broad and balanced curriculum which reflects pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs. The curriculum is designed to develop knowledge and skills progressively over time and to promote curiosity and engagement in learning from the earliest years. Speaking and listening, along with numeracy, are promoted effectively across subjects, ensuring that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. A wide-ranging co-curricular programme, including educational visits, workshops and clubs, further enriches pupils' experiences and supports the development of their wider interests and skills.
17. Teachers implement the curriculum through well-structured lessons, supported by secure subject knowledge. Clear explanations, purposeful activities and appropriate resources help pupils to acquire knowledge and develop skills. Teachers structure learning so that pupils practise new concepts with guidance before applying them independently. Opportunities for discussion and collaboration support pupils in engaging thoughtfully with their learning and developing increasing independence.
18. As a result of the curriculum and teaching, pupils develop secure knowledge, skills and understanding across subjects. Pupils engage well in lessons and co-curricular activities. They apply effort to their work, collaborate effectively with others and demonstrate increasing independence in their learning. From their starting points, pupils achieve well and develop the knowledge and skills required for future learning.
19. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is inclusive and well-co-ordinated. The leader of provision for pupils who have SEND works closely with teachers, families and external agencies to ensure that provision meets pupils' needs. Teaching is adapted through practical adjustments, targeted support and appropriate resources so that pupils who have SEND access the curriculum successfully and make good progress.
20. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are identified through baseline assessment and teacher observation. Where pupils are in the early stages of learning English, appropriate support is provided so that pupils can access the curriculum effectively. Teachers adapt their practice so that pupils develop confidence in reading, writing and speaking skills, and access their learning fully in lessons.
21. Leaders use a range of assessment information effectively across many subjects to identify how well pupils are progressing, adapt teaching and provide additional support where required. However, in some subject areas teachers do not use assessment information precisely enough and adapt their teaching accordingly. In these subjects, leaders do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of how well pupils are progressing or where teaching could be strengthened to support pupils in making the progress of which they are capable.
22. Leaders in the early years provide the youngest children with a well-planned curriculum and opportunities to learn effectively through play. Well-trained staff support children to develop vocabulary, language and communication through high-quality interactions. Children's early reading, mark making, letter formation and understanding of number develop appropriately. Leaders use a range of assessments to monitor children's progress and identify where some may need additional support. Working closely with parents, leaders identify children's needs promptly and appropriate

support is introduced swiftly. As a result, children make good progress from their starting points and are well prepared for Year 1.

23. Across the school, pupils engage positively in learning and recreational activities, including choir and a wide range of sports. They apply themselves well, work collaboratively and take responsibility for their learning. As a result, pupils develop secure knowledge, skills and understanding, and are well prepared for future learning and life beyond school.

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

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

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

25. Leaders promote pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing through well-established pastoral systems and a coherent programme of PSHE and PE. Staff know pupils well and respond sensitively to individual needs, ensuring that support is timely and appropriate. In the early years, children benefit from secure relationships with key adults and well-organised environments, which supports their emotional development. Staff encourage independence and support children in recognising and managing their emotions.
26. Pupils feel safe, valued and confident within an inclusive environment where positive respectful relationships underpin daily life. Leaders promote mutual respect through curriculum provision, assemblies and wider experiences, which support pupils' spiritual and moral understanding. Pupils demonstrate respect for others and engage thoughtfully in opportunities to reflect on shared values. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and supportive. There is a strong sense of belonging within the school community.
27. Pupils are supported to develop their confidence and self-esteem and to reflect on the important things around them. Opportunities for leadership enable older pupils to contribute positively to school life and act as role models for younger pupils. Structured opportunities for pupils to share their views ensure that they are heard and able to contribute to aspects of school life, supporting the development of independence and personal responsibility over time. Daily quiet reflection time during assemblies gives pupils opportunities to recite the school prayer or observe a moment of peace and quiet. This supports pupils' sense of spirituality.
28. The PSHE programme, including relationships and sex education (RSE), is suitably planned by teachers and is age appropriate. Pupils develop an understanding of important topics, such as healthy relationships, personal safety and emotional wellbeing. They learn how to keep themselves safe, including online.
29. Leaders' chosen approaches to behaviour and anti-bullying are implemented consistently. Pupils behave calmly in lessons and around the school and show consideration for others. Incidents of bullying are uncommon. Concerns are addressed promptly, and incidents are recorded in detail. Leaders review behaviour and bullying information to inform their next-step actions, such as curriculum adaptations and pastoral support.
30. There is a well-planned and taught PE curriculum. Teachers plan PE lessons and fixtures that contribute positively to pupils' physical development and wellbeing. Pupils participate readily in a suitable range of activities which promote fitness, teamwork and enjoyment of sport. This includes in the early years, where children's physical development is well supported. Here, children access a range of activities that support their fine and gross motor skills, and co-ordination. They learn about healthy eating, sleeping and hygiene habits.
31. Leaders ensure that health and safety arrangements promote pupils' welfare successfully. The site is well maintained. Leaders ensure that all legal requirements, including those related to fire safety, are adhered to. Where needed, leaders seek external specialist support to ensure that the site is safe for pupils and staff. First aid and medical provision is suitable, supported by trained staff and

clear systems for recording accidents and administering medication. Pupils are well supervised throughout the school day.

32. Admission and attendance registers are maintained appropriately, and attendance procedures operate securely in practice, supporting pupils' regular participation in school life. Procedures within the school operate and comply fully with current requirements. The school's policy was updated to reflect this work during the inspection.

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

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

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

34. Through curriculum learning, assemblies and shared experiences, pupils learn the importance of fairness, co-operation and consideration for others. The school's values are reflected consistently in daily life, enabling pupils to form positive relationships based on kindness and respect. This contributes to a harmonious community in which pupils work and socialise confidently together.
35. Respect and tolerance are promoted effectively through opportunities to learn about different cultures, traditions and beliefs. Curriculum topics and whole-school events broaden pupils' understanding of diversity within modern society. Pupils engage thoughtfully in discussions about equality and inclusion and show sensitivity when considering the experiences of others. Pupils demonstrate an appreciation of differences between people and show respect towards those from a range of cultural, religious and social backgrounds.
36. Leaders ensure that pupils undertake responsibilities within the school community. For instance, many pupils of different ages take opportunities to work and spend time together, promoting co-operation and mutual understanding. Older pupils readily support younger pupils in shared activities, contributing to the positive relationships evident across the school.
37. Leaders provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to contribute to the local community and to support others beyond the school. Participation in charitable initiatives and community events develops pupils' awareness of the needs of others and encourages a sense of service. Pupils understand that their collective efforts can have a positive impact. Involvement in local events and partnerships with community organisations strengthen pupils' sense of belonging and deepen their understanding of their role within the wider community.
38. Important values are promoted successfully through the curriculum and through opportunities for pupils to experience these values in practice. For instance, pupils develop an understanding of democracy through participation in elections for positions of responsibility within the school. They recognise that decisions can be reached fairly through discussion and voting and understand the importance of listening to differing views. Teaching across subjects supports pupils' understanding of the rule of law, individual liberty and the responsibilities associated with living in a community. Engagement with visitors and community representatives strengthens pupils' awareness of important public institutions and services and their role within society.
39. Provision supports pupils in developing an appropriate understanding of economic matters. Through planned activities, pupils learn about money, budgeting and decision-making. Practical experiences enable pupils to apply this understanding in realistic contexts, helping them to recognise the value of resources and the importance of careful planning. Older pupils participate in activities requiring organisation, teamwork and evaluation, supporting growing awareness of how financial and practical decisions influence outcomes.
40. In the early years, children begin to develop social understanding through structured play and carefully guided interaction. Staff support children in learning to share, take turns and resolve minor disagreements. Adults model respectful behaviour and help children recognise the feelings of others. These early experiences establish secure foundations for co-operation, independence and positive relationships as children move through the school.

41. Leaders support the development of older pupils' social skills so that they are well prepared for their next stages in education. Opportunities to engage with experiences beyond their immediate surroundings broaden pupils' understanding of the wider world and encourage curiosity about future possibilities. By the time they leave the school, pupils take responsibility for their actions, show maturity in their attitudes towards others and possess the social awareness and understanding needed for the next stage of their education and for participation in contemporary British society.

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

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

## Safeguarding

43. Safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively. Leaders have created a strong whole-school culture that prioritises pupils' welfare. Leaders promote a shared understanding among staff that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding policies reflect current statutory guidance and are appropriately implemented, enabling pupils to feel safe and well supported. Governors and leaders provide appropriate oversight of safeguarding arrangements through regular review of procedures and records.
44. Leaders know pupils well and respond promptly when concerns arise. Leaders maintain clear systems for identifying, recording and monitoring safeguarding concerns. Records are detailed and reviewed regularly so that appropriate action is taken without delay. Leaders work effectively with external agencies when required, such as children's services and the local authority, enabling pupils and families to access appropriate support.
45. Staff receive safeguarding training at induction and through ongoing updates aligned with statutory guidance, including training in recognising and reporting low-level concerns. These arrangements ensure that staff remain vigilant and confident in responding to safeguarding matters. They report concerns using the school's agreed system in a timely manner, including any concerns related to adults working with pupils.
46. Leaders encourage pupils to seek help and ensure that suitable channels are available for them to raise concerns. Pupils demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Curriculum teaching reinforces safe behaviours and supports pupils in recognising and managing risk. As a result, pupils develop a secure understanding of safe online conduct.
47. Leaders maintain appropriate internet filtering and monitoring systems to safeguard pupils when using digital technology. These systems are reviewed regularly, and leaders respond promptly where concerns are identified.
48. Safer recruitment procedures comply with statutory requirements. Leaders undertake appropriate pre-employment checks and maintain an accurate single central record of appointments (SCR). Those involved in recruitment are suitably trained, ensuring that safeguarding considerations are embedded throughout recruitment processes.

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

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	St Peter's School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	940/6002
<b>Registered charity number</b>	309914
<b>Address</b>	St Peter's School 52 Headlands Kettering Northamptonshire NN15 6DJ
<b>Phone number</b>	01536 512066
<b>Email address</b>	STPSoffice@st-peters.org.uk
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-peters.org.uk">www.st-peters.org.uk</a>
<b>Proprietor</b>	Sunnylands Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Symon Dawson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mark Thomas
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	104
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 January to 2 February 2023

## Information about the school

50. St Peter's is an independent co-educational day school, located in Kettering. The school comprises: the Preschool, for children of three and four years of age; the Lower School, for children in Reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2; and the Upper School, for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The school is run by a charitable trust. Trustees also provide governance in the school. The chair took up his position in March 2023.
51. There are 31 children in the early years, comprising one Nursery class (called the Preschool) and one Reception class.
52. The school has identified seven pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A very small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan.
53. The school has identified English as an additional language for 16 pupils.
54. The school states that its aims are underpinned by its motto, 'Give me a wise and understanding heart', and reflected through its values of curiosity, creativity, confidence and community. These promote a love of learning, independence, reflection and respect for others and the wider world. The school aims to educate the whole child within a safe and appropriately challenging environment, fostering academic, emotional, physical and moral development, promoting mutual respect informed by Christian values, and providing a broad range of opportunities that enable pupils to achieve and contribute positively to society.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

24 to 26 February 2026

55. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The on-site inspection was quality assured by a monitor.

56. 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.

57. 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

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