

School inspection report

17 to 19 June 2025

Branwood Preparatory School

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Monton

Eccles

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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. Governors have established close working relationships with leaders. They provide encouragement and robust oversight to hold leaders accountable for the quality of the school's work. Governors make sure that leaders have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their responsibilities effectively, so that the Standards are met consistently.
2. Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Where teaching is most effective, teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan stimulating activities that ensure pupils achieve well. However, there is some variation within and between subject areas. In some lessons, teaching activities are not always sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs and abilities and consequently pupils do not always learn as well as they should.
3. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is well planned and helps pupils gain an understanding of social and economic matters. The provision for relationships and sex education (RSE) meets statutory requirements. Pupils recognise and appreciate the uniqueness of individuals, demonstrating respect and tolerance for everyone.
4. Early years leaders provide a welcoming learning environment in which children can develop and thrive. Children enjoy outdoor lessons, drama and dance. Older pupils are afforded many opportunities to participate in competitive sports. Pupils of all ages understand that taking part in physical pursuits can have a beneficial effect on their mental health and wellbeing.
5. Pupils behave well, are kind and respectful, and cultivate positive relationships with each other and with staff. They recognise the need for having rules and appropriate consequences that help to keep them safe. Effective pastoral care contributes to an environment that is secure, where pupils achieve well and are prepared for the next stage of their education.
6. The school's premises are suitably maintained and meet health and safety requirements. Risk assessment procedures are thorough and effective in promoting the welfare and safety of pupils in school and when on school trips.
7. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress because of the effective individual support they receive from staff. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive intensive support that helps them to quickly achieve proficiency in English so that they can confidently access the curriculum and communicate across all subject areas.
8. Safeguarding leaders ensure that staff are kept up to date with the latest statutory guidance. They have formed productive working relationships with external agencies so that appropriate procedures to safeguard pupils are implemented effectively. Staff are methodical in carrying out pre-employment and recruitment checks in a timely and robust manner.

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 quality of teaching across the school is consistently high so that pupils learn as well as possible.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Experienced governors bring a wealth of relevant knowledge and skills to their roles. Together with senior leaders, they have an ambitious and clear vision for the future development of the school. Governors visit the school regularly and undertake a range of monitoring activities. This gives them first-hand understanding of the day-to-day working of the school, which in turn informs their strategic planning. Successful co-operation between leaders and governors ensures that the Standards are met consistently and the wellbeing of the pupils is promoted effectively. Leaders are committed to delivering the curriculum in line with the school's aims to maximise each pupil's potential.
10. Leaders have formed successful partnerships with many external agencies, so that pupils' particular needs are identified early and understood thoroughly. Collaborative working with children's services and safeguarding partners ensures a joined-up approach to safeguarding pupils.
11. In the early years, leaders promote children's safety and wellbeing through effective and collaborative working with staff. They provide many opportunities for staff to work together to plan interesting activities that best support children's learning.
12. The school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Leaders ensure that pupils are treated fairly and promote an inclusive ethos that celebrates individuality and difference. A suitable accessibility plan is in place that enables pupils to access all curriculum areas and includes addressing the physical development of the site.
13. Parents are provided with information about policies and procedures on the school's informative website or by request. A suitable three-stage complaints policy is in place which leaders implement effectively, operating within the published timeframes. Parents receive an appropriate blend of written reports and regular face-to-face updates regarding their child's progress and attainment across all subjects.
14. Leaders have established robust procedures for identifying and managing potential risks across all areas of school life. Staff are well trained to identify and implement effective risk-mitigation strategies, for example, for higher-risk activities such as those involving water or overnight stays. Leaders are vigilant about the contextual risks associated with the school being located close to the city centre.

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. Pupils are taught a balanced range of subjects across all year groups. Leaders review the curriculum annually and have taken strategic decisions to broaden the curriculum while also focusing on maintaining pupils' high levels of attainment in English and mathematics. Additional subjects such as drama, reasoning, Spanish, swimming and woodland studies are designed to expand pupils' experiences and to meet their diverse needs.
17. Leaders provide a wide range of recreational and enrichment activities that support pupils' learning and personal development, such as coding, cross-country running, French, karaoke, lacrosse and philosophy. Annual residential trips provide further opportunities for pupils to acquire new skills, build their self-confidence and extend their range of interests.
18. Pupils develop a range of skills, knowledge and understanding across all subject areas, particularly in English and mathematics, in preparation for assessments for entry to senior schools. By the time they leave the school in Year 6, pupils are successful in gaining places at senior schools.
19. Subject leaders are knowledgeable and passionate about their subjects. Positive and friendly relationships are successfully promoted between teachers and pupils. In the most effective teaching, teachers draw on their specialist subject knowledge which enables them to give clear explanations and correct any emerging misconceptions. Teachers use creative techniques such as using songs to help pupils remember key ideas and recall important content. Typically, lessons are well planned and well taught. Teachers use high-quality learning resources to help motivate pupils to acquire and apply their new knowledge and skills and to make good progress and achieve well. However, in some lessons, pupils do not always learn as successfully as leaders intend because teaching activities are not always sufficiently well matched to their needs.
20. The carefully planned and ambitious early years curriculum supports children's learning well. Children acquire secure early reading skills because they learn letters and the sounds that they make effectively at an early stage. Staff consider children's needs, interests and enthusiasms in their planning. They question children skilfully and encourage them to talk to each other whilst playing so that they develop communication skills effectively.
21. Children in the early years develop their understanding of mathematical concepts, for example by learning about the principle and vocabulary of symmetry through studying butterflies. Outdoor activities help children to develop physical co-ordination skills and curiosity about the world around them as well as social skills as they participate in activities together. These experiences enable children to meet their developmental goals and to achieve well.
22. Leaders and teachers across the school demonstrate a secure understanding of pupils' progress and attainment. They use constructive comments, success criteria and target-setting when giving feedback to pupils so that pupils know how to improve. Standardised tests, together with more informal classroom-based assessments, are used to identify pupils who may require additional support. This information, together with staff's detailed knowledge of pupils' individual skills and aptitudes, helps staff to design and deploy effective strategies to assist pupils in their learning.
23. Pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points. Effective screening arrangements enable SEND leaders to identify any additional needs that pupils might have. They use

this information to design stimulating resources and to provide teachers with effective strategies to support pupils who have SEND in lessons.

24. Pupils who speak EAL receive effective support to improve their speaking and comprehension skills in English. Teachers use appropriate resources, such as topic word cards and writing frames, that help pupils gain language fluency so that they can understand subject-specific vocabulary. Over time, pupils become increasingly confident communicators, enabling them to access all subject areas and make good progress.

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

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

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

26. Pupils benefit from a comprehensive programme of physical education (PE) lessons, competitive sports and extra-curricular activities, delivered by specialist staff. Pupils are taught how to improve their skills in sport through carefully planned practice drills. For example, pupils learn how to pass and shoot in structured football training sessions before putting these skills into practice in competitive match situations. Pupils understand that participation in sport and physical pursuits supports their mental health and emotional wellbeing. They also learn to appreciate the values of fairness, integrity and respect, and the importance of displaying graciousness in victory and defeat.
27. Early years children benefit from a wide range of physical activities which actively promote their wellbeing and physical development. Participation in woodland studies helps children explore their sensory needs and develop their fine- and gross-motor skills. Specialist sports coaching helps to develop children's agility, balance and co-ordination, as well as their core strength and stability. Children collaborate and co-operate well during arts and crafts activities and develop warm and supportive relationships with each other and their teachers. Participation in these activities helps children to develop their self-knowledge and self-esteem and approach unfamiliar situations with confidence.
28. The RSE programme is an integral part of the curriculum, promoting pupils' personal development, self-esteem and confidence in making and sustaining suitable relationships. Pupils respect individual differences. Older pupils appreciate and understand the importance of maintaining healthy relationships and personal safety.
29. Pupils are carefully supervised throughout the school day. Appropriate staff-to-child ratios are maintained in the early years. Staff ensure that they are always available to listen to pupils and to support their wellbeing.
30. Pupils are taught from an early age that their actions and behaviour have consequences. Leaders incentivise positive behaviour by implementing a well-considered rewards system that fosters a team spirit of responsibility among pupils. Staff demonstrate positive social behaviours which pupils emulate. This helps pupils to distinguish between right and wrong, and to be the best version of themselves.
31. Leaders ensure that the school's anti-bullying strategy is implemented effectively by staff. Leaders' careful monitoring enables them to respond swiftly to the very few incidents of bullying that occur. Pastoral leaders deploy suitable restorative approaches effectively to encourage pupils to reflect on their behaviour and provide timely support for both victims and perpetrators.
32. The curriculum includes content about different world religions and spiritual perspectives. This helps pupils to develop an appreciation of the spiritual and moral dimensions of life, as do their studies in art, dance and music. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to reflect on the thoughts, beliefs and values that influence them.
33. The school site is suitably well maintained. All necessary health and safety checks and servicing are implemented regularly, including appropriate arrangements for the prevention of fire. Regular fire drills are undertaken, exit routes and fire safety equipment are signposted effectively and fire safety

equipment is well maintained. Pupils who are sick or injured are cared for by suitably trained staff in a dedicated space. Staff working in the early years have received training in paediatric first aid. Medical staff inform parents of any administration of first aid or medication in a timely manner.

34. Attendance and admission registers are appropriately maintained and meet statutory requirements. Leaders follow up any non-attendance effectively and notify the local authority of any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard transition times.

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

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

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

36. Pupils develop their economic literacy through the carefully planned curriculum. Children in the early years learn how to exchange money for items they would like to purchase both in role play and then by visiting local shops. Lower school pupils use coins and notes to learn how to calculate any change they are owed. They also use money to compare and explain the values of two numbers by using the mathematical terms *less than* and *more than*. Older pupils develop their financial literacy skills further by learning about the advantages and disadvantages of using banking apps and how to spot fraudulent behaviours. Pupils gain valuable insights into socioeconomic issues when they organise and raise money for charity events. Participation in these activities helps pupils to develop important life skills that prepare them for life in British society.
37. Pupils study the importance of British values in modern society. In PSHE lessons, pupils regularly take part in debates that consider themes of fairness, justice and social responsibility and apply these to topical issues. For example, complex issues such as those related to conflict in parts of the world are sensitively presented and considered. Staff understand that any political discussion is conducted fairly and without bias.
38. Careful planning by school leaders enables pupils to deepen their understanding of local and national British institutions and services in contemporary society. Younger children visit local shops and the post office. Older pupils visit the local church, Liverpool Museum and the Jodrell Bank observatory. Through these outings, pupils learn that public institutions are critical for the smooth running of society.
39. In PSHE, teachers guide pupils to appreciate and understand the need for rules, and rewards and consequences, to protect individual interests and maintain a well-ordered society. Staff demonstrate appropriate social behaviour that helps pupils to distinguish between right and wrong. Pupils learn how to navigate new social situations and how to build respectful relationships. They understand the benefits and protections that society offers when its citizens respect democracy, abide by the law and contribute positively to their community.
40. The school provides a structured programme of early careers guidance. This age-appropriate programme includes assemblies and talks from outside speakers and parents about their different careers. Children in the early years begin to consider what they may wish to do when they grow up. In mathematics, older pupils learn about the range of salaries that different professions attract, and the skills and knowledge needed to follow such career pathways. By the time they leave the school, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
41. Early years staff carefully plan interesting activities so that children learn a range of social skills. Staff deploy effective strategies that help children to regulate their emotions and behave with consideration towards others. Nursery children learn how to wait their turn and control any immediate impulses. They collaborate with peers and adults by taking turns and responding to questions and instructions, demonstrating their developing social skills. By practising these skills during interactions with staff, visitors and their friends, children learn how to work and play together effectively.

42. Pupils are keen to take on leadership roles, including as prefects, members of the school parliament and eco-representatives. These posts of responsibility help pupils to appreciate the views and opinions of others as well as develop their leadership skills. For example, older pupils demonstrate service and helpfulness to others by engaging with parents and younger children while hosting and sharing a special lunch.
43. The curriculum provides a range of activities, both in and outside of lessons, which nurture pupils' appreciation and understanding of all groups of people. Children in the early years learn about different cultural traditions, while older pupils learn about how people live in different parts of the world in their geography lessons.
44. In PSHE and RSE lessons, pupils learn to celebrate difference and individuality, particularly characteristics such as age, disability, gender and race. Pupils understand not to judge people based on stereotypes, such as gender preferences relating to certain types of jobs. Pupils are tolerant and understanding of the differences between people. Pupils fully appreciate that not everyone thinks or acts as they do, and that everyone is entitled to their view.

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

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

Safeguarding

46. Leaders implement and maintain suitable safeguarding policies which reflect the latest statutory guidance. Governors provide diligent and regular oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements.
47. The well-trained safeguarding team, including those in the early years, are knowledgeable about their roles. They have cultivated positive and effective working partnerships with external agencies, including safeguarding partners and the local authority designated officer (LADO). This enables them to draw on professional advice and guidance, as required.
48. Comprehensive record-keeping is in place. Leaders' decision-making is clearly documented and actions taken are recorded and securely held on the school's designated online platform.
49. In PSHE lessons and assemblies, staff teach pupils how to stay safe, including online. Pupils understand the variety of risks they may encounter while using the internet. Pupils are taught not to share any personal information and to regularly change their passwords. Leaders liaise closely with local agencies to understand any emerging risks to pupils in the local area so that they can mitigate any risk and protect pupils.
50. A range of staff, including counsellors, are available for pupils to speak to about any concerns they may have. Pupils know they can speak to any trusted adult at the school, and they do so with confidence. The emotional wellbeing of pupils is supported well.
51. Suitable filtering and monitoring systems are in place to prevent pupils accessing harmful or inappropriate internet content. These are regularly tested by safeguarding leaders. Any alerts are quickly investigated and recorded, including details of any actions taken. Records confirm that any incidents are resolved swiftly and effectively.
52. The staff code of conduct clearly sets out leaders' expectations about how staff should conduct and present themselves, both online and in person. Staff know that it is their responsibility to share any safeguarding concerns about adults working with them, and to do so swiftly. Safeguarding leaders respond quickly and take suitable action when required.
53. Those responsible for safer recruitment ensure that all the required pre-employment checks on adults are carried out methodically before staff commence working at the school. These checks are recorded appropriately on a suitable single central record of appointments (SCR), which is regularly reviewed by leaders. Staff involved in recruitment receive specific training for their roles. The school's safer recruitment procedures are thorough.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

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

School details

School	Branwood Preparatory School
Department for Education number	355/6004
Registered charity number	515073
Address	Branwood Preparatory School Stafford Road Monton Eccles Manchester M30 9HN
Phone number	0161 7891054
Email address	office@branwoodschoool.co.uk
Website	www.branwoodschoool.co.uk
Proprietor	Branwood School Trust Ltd
Chair	Mr Mark Fletcher
Headteacher	Mrs Tanya Davie
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils	142
Date of previous inspection	6 December 2022

Information about the school

55. Branwood Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day school. The school was founded in Eccles, Manchester, in 1928 and moved to its current purpose-built site in 1984. Branwood School Trust is a charitable trust administered by a board of trustees and governors. In September 2024, a new headteacher was appointed to the school.
56. The school is divided into three sections: the early years for children aged three to five; the lower school for pupils aged five to seven; and the upper school for pupils aged seven to eleven.
57. There are currently 37 children in the early years in one Nursery and one Reception class.
58. The school has identified 14 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There are no pupils in the school who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
59. The school has identified English as an additional language for 52 pupils.
60. The school states its aims are to encourage each child to explore and develop their interests, gain confidence in themselves and in their abilities, and seize life's rich opportunities to be the best they can be.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

17 to 19 June 2025

61. A team of three 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
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair of trustees and the 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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