

# School inspection report

13 to 15 May 2025

## **Laxton Junior School**

East Road

Oundle

Peterborough

Northamptonshire

PE8 4BX

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'.

## Contents

<b>SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS THE STANDARDS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS .....	5
<b>SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE.....</b>	<b>6</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNANCE .....	7
<b>SECTION 2: QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....</b>	<b>8</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND RECREATION .....	9
<b>SECTION 3: PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING.....</b>	<b>10</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING .....	11
<b>SECTION 4: PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY.....</b>	<b>12</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO PUPILS’ SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY .....	13
<b>SAFEGUARDING .....</b>	<b>14</b>
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SCHOOL MEETS STANDARDS RELATING TO SAFEGUARDING .....	14
<b>SCHOOL DETAILS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>INSPECTION DETAILS .....</b>	<b>17</b>

## Summary of inspection findings

1. Governors provide effective oversight, ensuring that the school meets regulatory requirements and maintains high standards across all areas of provision. Governors visit the school, meet with staff and pupils, and consider leaders' reports to ensure that they fulfil their roles well.
2. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is effectively planned and delivered so that pupils develop knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects. The Reception curriculum is appropriate to the needs of young children. The nurturing and supportive early years environment helps enable children to make rapid progress.
3. The curriculum and resources are adapted well to meet the needs of pupils. Leaders monitor teaching and learning to maintain consistent high standards. Effective teaching enables pupils to achieve well and move confidently to the next stage of education.
4. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive effective support and make good progress.
5. The cycle of suitable assessments allows leaders to track pupils' achievements and respond to individual needs. However, leaders do not fully make use of this data to assure themselves of the progress that different groups of pupils are making.
6. Leaders enable pupils to take the initiative and actively contribute to those around them extremely well by encouraging them to put forward their views and ideas to make meaningful improvements to school life. Leaders have established proactive pupil councils and committees and provided suggestion boxes and regular pupil surveys so that all pupils can contribute. Staff and leaders listen carefully to pupils' responses and suggestions, consider them fully and ensure that they see the results of their ideas. Pupils' suggestions have led to substantial changes that have had a positive impact across the school. As a result of being enabled to contribute to the school in such ways, pupils develop a clear sense of their responsibility towards others. The school enables pupils to become proactive, positive contributors to their school community and to understand that by expressing their opinions and ideas they can make a positive difference to British society. This is a significant strength of the school.
7. Leaders implement effective anti-bullying and behaviour policies to create a calm environment. Leaders address the rare incidents of poor behaviour promptly when they occur. The nurturing approach of leaders and staff supports pupils' emotional wellbeing. Pupils are taught the importance of healthy living, including diet, exercise and relaxation, and how to ask for help if it is needed. Children in Reception are taught to express their emotions, including through representing them in colours, so that they begin to recognise and manage their feelings. There are a variety of systems through which pupils can communicate any concerns, including access to trusted adults, which supports their emotional development.
8. The 'learning for life' (LfL) curriculum promotes inclusivity, health and respectful relationships from Reception onwards. Leaders promote British values through the curriculum and school ethos, fostering pupils' understanding of the importance of mutual respect and of diversity and life in British society. Relationships and sex education (RSE) lessons develop pupils' understanding of different types of healthy relationships. The physical education (PE) programme is well planned

across the whole school, including Reception. It develops pupils' fitness, confidence, teamwork skills and resilience.

9. The LfL curriculum prepares pupils effectively for their future lives through topics such as finance and business skills. Roles of responsibility enable pupils to contribute to their school and wider community.
10. Leaders maintain a robust safeguarding culture. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) deals with concerns swiftly and maintains suitable safeguarding records. Leaders seek and act on advice from external agencies when needed. The school carries out all required recruitment checks before employment begins. The safeguarding team monitors online safety measures closely.

## 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:

- strengthen their use of assessment data to evaluate the impact of teaching and learning.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

11. Leaders provide a broad curriculum and a wide range of experiences within a caring, supportive environment. They regularly review the school's effectiveness to ensure that it continues to promote all aspects of pupils' wellbeing. Governors and leaders monitor the school development plan to identify priorities and ensure continual improvement. For example, leaders revised the tutor system to provide additional pastoral support to groups of pupils.
12. Governors maintain effective oversight of the school, including the Reception setting, through regular visits, meetings and analysis of reports. They observe lessons, speak with pupils and staff, and monitor provision closely to ensure that the school meets the Standards. Governors undertake regular training to remain informed about current legislation and statutory guidance so that they can check that the school complies with these. Leaders provide governors with detailed updates on procedures, achievements and any issues that arise, helping them to understand pupils' daily experiences. Governors provide appropriate challenge and support to ensure leaders apply their knowledge and skills to perform their roles effectively. Governors assure themselves that the school's values of love of learning, care, opportunity, community and quality remain central to its ethos and are communicated effectively to all.
13. Leaders foster an inclusive school environment, ensuring all policies and practices comply with the Equality Act 2010. They implement a suitable accessibility plan so that all groups of pupils can access the curriculum and premises effectively. This has resulted in adjustments to classrooms, including in Reception, to ensure the accessibility of resources and the introduction of sensory equipment for pupils to access if required. Leaders make temporary adaptations such as providing wheelchairs or modifying the curriculum when required.
14. Leaders ensure that key information is readily accessible to parents, primarily via the school's website. This includes the required information and relevant policies on safeguarding, behaviour, anti-bullying and the curriculum. Parents receive regular reports and updates about their child's progress and welfare.
15. Leaders work closely with external agencies to support pupils' education, safety and wellbeing. They seek and act on professional advice, especially from the local authority, to inform decisions about safeguarding. Leaders collaborate with therapists and educational psychologists to provide appropriate provision for pupils who have SEND.
16. Leaders identify and address potential risks effectively, including those that may be less obvious. Risk assessments are detailed, reviewed regularly and carried out for on-site and off-site activities, including trips and sports. Regular training ensures that staff respond quickly and appropriately to potential risks in areas for which they are responsible. Governors and leaders review incidents and near misses to inform planning and improve future safety measures. In Reception, staff assess indoor and outdoor hazards with care on a daily basis.
17. Leaders implement a clear and effective parental complaints policy, ensuring concerns are addressed promptly. They respond proactively to resolve informal complaints and manage formal complaints within defined timeframes, involving governors appropriately when required. Leaders maintain detailed records of complaints securely. They analyse complaints to identify lessons learned and make improvements where necessary.

## 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 review the broad curriculum regularly to ensure that it plans pupils' development of knowledge, skills and understanding across academic, sporting, technological, linguistic and creative areas effectively. Schemes of work are carefully planned to develop pupils' subject knowledge and skills methodically and thoroughly. Leaders observe lessons and look at pupils' work to ensure that the curriculum is delivered effectively and consistently so that pupils make good progress.
20. Teachers' specialist expertise in a range of subjects such as Latin, science, computing, the arts and PE sparks pupils' interest and encourages critical thinking. Teachers plan lessons carefully, set high expectations and maintain a calm, focused environment that supports pupils' positive behaviour and sustained effort. As a result, pupils make good progress. They attain highly and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
21. Leaders embed the school's positive values across the curriculum. For example, pupils' investigations in different subjects promote curiosity and enquiry. Art, music and drama lessons encourage pupils to develop creative skills. They study techniques used by a range of artists, applying them in their own work. Pupils learn to play stringed and woodwind instruments in class music lessons. They sing and play with accuracy and expression.
22. Staff provide children in Reception with a stimulating curriculum built around exploration and play. This fosters a love of learning and supports good progress. Adults engage with children warmly and use storytelling and conversation to introduce and reinforce vocabulary. Interactive games help children quickly learn the sounds that letters make. They apply their knowledge of letter sounds and descriptive language to write about experiences and stories in sentences. Regular handwriting practice supports accurate letter formation. Children learn to count to at least 40, starting from different numbers. Activities such as shopping games and discovering shapes in sand help children establish early mathematical skills.
23. Effective teaching helps pupils become confident and thoughtful readers who are able to interpret and cite evidence from a range of texts. Pupils develop writing skills using rich vocabulary and sophisticated sentence structure across a variety of genres.
24. The well-planned mathematics curriculum enables pupils to become capable mathematicians and problem-solvers. Careful planning of lessons, knowledgeable teaching and regular practice of skills enable pupils to master mathematical concepts and apply them to different scenarios. Younger pupils grasp the four operations of mathematics quickly and apply them to number games with confidence. Older pupils learn to handle shape rotation, translation and decimal calculations competently.
25. Leaders have created a well-planned assessment framework. Regular standardised tests enable leaders to monitor pupils' individual progress so that effective and appropriate support and challenge is provided. However, leaders do not make full use of assessment data to evaluate the progress of different groups of pupils over time.
26. The leader of the provision for pupils who have SEND identifies needs early through assessments and observation. Individual learning plans are updated regularly so that tailored support and realistic targets enable good progress. Resources such as fidget toys, visual aids and movement breaks are provided if required. Early morning sensory circuits support pupils' readiness for learning and also

contribute to the development of coordination, fine and gross motor skills, core strength and balance.

27. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) benefit from individualised support in reading comprehension. When required, teachers adapt lessons to build vocabulary and improve understanding. Regular monitoring and targeted teaching help pupils make good progress in speaking, reading and writing English.
28. A wide range of extra-curricular activities including sports, crafts, languages, chess, music technology, choirs and ensembles allow pupils to broaden their skills, explore interests and enjoy learning beyond the classroom.

### **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. Leaders and staff create an inclusive and nurturing environment that promotes care and kindness so that pupils trust that support is provided when needed. The LfL curriculum, assemblies and visiting speakers provide a programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education in which pupils explore topics such as mental health and the importance of sharing concerns. Children in Reception learn to relate emotions to colours, which helps them to recognise, express and manage their feelings independently. Leaders provide pupils with worry boxes, 'worry monster' toys, and regular surveys to support emotional expression and development of self-knowledge. Staff listen attentively and respond promptly with appropriate guidance or specialist support and therapy, if needed.
31. Pupils are taught about protected characteristics, including age, religion and disability. Assemblies feature talks from Paralympians and people of various faiths. Pupils engage in themed events such as Black History Month and visit places of worship. In these ways, leaders ensure that pupils appreciate diversity, challenge discrimination and contribute to an inclusive, respectful school culture.
32. Leaders ensure that the RSE curriculum meets statutory requirements and is age-appropriate in its content. Topics include different family structures, positive friendships, puberty and human reproduction. The guidance provided by the RSE programme helps pupils develop respectful relationships and prepares them for future life.
33. LfL lessons highlight the importance of healthy eating, exercise, rest and relaxation. The well-structured PE programme includes hockey, netball, cricket and swimming, which support physical development and fitness. Sports activities help pupils to develop teamwork, self-confidence, resilience and perseverance, as well as a variety of sport-specific skills.
34. The Reception learning environment encourages indoor and outdoor learning. Effective use of resources such as climbing frames, a woodland garden and indoor role-play areas promote active exploration. The Reception curriculum balances play-based learning with physical development experiences that help build children's self-confidence and activity levels. Children receive lessons in areas such as gymnastics, games and swimming which develop their co-ordination, stamina and fitness.
35. The religious education (RE) curriculum, assemblies and LfL lessons promote pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils learn about world religions and reflect on their beliefs and the impact of their actions. Leaders provide a quiet space for pupils who fast as part of their religion and for spiritual reflection.
36. Leaders implement clear and consistent behaviour and anti-bullying policies, resulting in high standards of behaviour. Assemblies, class discussions and positive role modelling by staff reinforce expectations and encourage respectful behaviour. Pupils understand and respect the consistently applied system of rewards and sanctions. They take responsibility for their actions and bullying is rare. When incidents occur, staff act swiftly, provide appropriate support and encourage pupils to reflect on their actions. Leaders keep detailed behavioural records and review them regularly to identify and address any behavioural patterns.

37. The school premises are well maintained. Leaders regularly review health and safety arrangements to ensure that all required checks and servicing are carried out when required. Staff carry out routine fire risk assessments and checks on fire doors, escape routes, systems and equipment. Fire evacuation and lockdown drills take place regularly to ensure that pupils are prepared for emergencies.
38. Leaders ensure effective supervision is in place throughout the school day and during trips. Appropriate numbers of staff supervise pupils at break and lunchtimes and escort them to off-site venues. Suitable staff-to-child ratios are maintained in Reception.
39. Leaders maintain admission and attendance registers in line with current statutory guidance and inform the local authority of any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard times of transition. They follow up absences quickly and work closely with families to promote attendance, with the result that attendance remains high.
40. There are clear and effective procedures for administering first aid and medication. Qualified staff, including paediatric first aiders in Reception, respond quickly to pupils when they feel unwell or suffer injury. Medicines are securely stored and administered appropriately. Leaders keep accurate records of medical incidents and actions taken.

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

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

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

42. The LfL programme promotes British values effectively. Pupils explore topics such as democracy, respect and different faiths and beliefs through engaging activities and discussions. An online platform also enables pupils to discuss real-life issues and scenarios and contribute their views to a national forum. As a result, pupils deepen their understanding of these. Assemblies on topics such as International Democracy Day, studies of how Parliament works and elections for school committees teach pupils about democratic processes. Pupils express views confidently and respectfully, knowing their opinions are valued. Leaders ensure that political-themed discussions are balanced and impartial, to support informed pupil participation from an early age.
43. The LfL and RE programmes enable pupils to explore and learn about diverse cultures and human rights. Assemblies, well-planned lessons and discussions develop pupils' understanding that everyone has the right to life, education and freedom from discrimination and that children's rights include privacy, education and shelter.
44. Children in Reception learn to take turns and share resources in role-play areas and PE lessons. This supports children's social development and helps them build positive relationships through interactive, play-based learning.
45. LfL lessons and assemblies encourage pupils to consider ethical dilemmas. They discuss what the right thing to do might be in given situations and how actions can affect others and cause consequences that merit ethical consideration. Staff and leaders promote understanding of rules consistently. Clear expectations, reinforced by the LfL curriculum and assemblies, help pupils understand that they are responsible for their own actions and choices. Pupils create class charters to reflect their understanding of how rules support a positive and safe learning environment. Through these experiences, pupils develop a mature sense of right and wrong and appreciate that laws are important for a positive and safe society.
46. Pupils receive age-appropriate economic education through the LfL programme. Topics include budgeting, financial risk and distinguishing between needs and wants. In Reception, children explore money through role play in the class shop. Older pupils gain practical experience by creating businesses such as a car wash. Careers fairs and visits from professionals broaden pupils' aspirations and understanding of the working world.
47. Leaders develop pupils' sense of responsibility towards others and their ability to take the initiative and actively contribute to their community extremely well. Pupils share suggestions through the school council, eco-committees, suggestion boxes, regular surveys and conversations with staff who ensure that they all feel able to contribute. Children in Reception discuss ideas for activities, resources and topics with their teachers. Leaders and staff engage thoughtfully, ensuring that pupils know they have been heard and see the full impact of their input. Pupils have put forward suggestions that have impacted substantially on the school. These include ideas for playground design to make play time more enjoyable, a sensory room for moments of calm, menu changes to reflect foods that pupils enjoy, new clubs to support pupils' interests and systems to enable sharing of play equipment. Leaders systematically invite and consider pupils' views and take actions that show pupils that they can actively affect society around themselves. As a result, pupils develop a

mature sense of social responsibility and understanding that by being a positive contributor they can make an important difference to their community and society.

48. Roles of responsibility develop pupils' sense of leadership and ability to help and support others. Pupils undertake roles as house captains, eco-monitors, play leaders, digital leaders and wellbeing ambassadors responsibly and show empathy, mature leadership and communication skills. Pupil leaders take assemblies, promote initiatives like 'walk to school week', and support the school community in house events.
49. Leaders also encourage pupils to contribute to the local community outside the school. Pupils support a local foodbank and raise funds for local charities including the Air Ambulance. They participate in events such as the Lord Mayor's celebrations and the Remembrance Day service. Such experiences help develop pupils' empathy and social awareness.

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

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

## Safeguarding

51. Leaders maintain robust safeguarding arrangements and a school culture of care and vigilance. The safeguarding policy and procedures reflect the requirements of current statutory guidance.
52. The DSL is a member of the executive group of leaders. The DSL and deputy DSL are trained appropriately for their roles. They deliver comprehensive induction training on safeguarding policies and procedures to all new staff and volunteers, ensuring they are confident in fulfilling their responsibilities. Regular updates and ongoing training are delivered by school leaders and external safeguarding specialists to cover areas such as the 'Prevent' duty, which concerns radicalisation and extremism, and the staff code of conduct. As a result, staff understand how to identify and report safeguarding concerns, including any allegations or low-level concerns about staff that may arise.
53. Leaders liaise effectively with external agencies for safeguarding advice and make timely referrals to the local authority when necessary. Safeguarding records are detailed, securely stored and monitored regularly.
54. Governors receive safeguarding training. They maintain close oversight of safeguarding arrangements, including through receiving termly reports from the DSL and keeping appropriately informed of the nature of any referrals made to children's services or other safeguarding partners. Governors review the safeguarding policy and procedures annually. They visit the school regularly and meet with safeguarding leaders to ensure that arrangements are appropriate and implemented effectively.
55. Leaders complete all required pre-employment checks before any adults begin work at the school. The single central record of appointments (SCR) records these checks accurately and is well maintained. It is reviewed regularly by leaders and governors to ensure compliance with the Standards. Personnel files are maintained appropriately and checked systematically.
56. The computing and LfL curriculums, assemblies and visiting speakers teach pupils how to stay safe, including online. For example, they learn to protect their passwords and be cautious about communications from unknown people. Pupils also develop an understanding that not all online content is accurate or trustworthy. A suitable filtering and monitoring system supports online safety. Leaders review its effectiveness regularly and respond swiftly to any alerts.
57. Pupils have several ways to seek help, including worry boxes, 'worry monster' toys and surveys, and by speaking to trusted adults. They are confident that staff will listen and respond appropriately to their concerns.

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

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	Laxton Junior School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	940/6051
<b>Registered charity number</b>	309921
<b>Address</b>	Laxton Junior School East Road Oundle Peterborough Northamptonshire PE8 4BX
<b>Phone number</b>	01832 277275
<b>Email address</b>	info@laxtonjunior.org.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.laxtonjunior.org.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Governing body of Oundle School
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Timothy Coleridge
<b>Chair of Laxton Junior School Sub-Committee</b>	Mrs Debbie McGregor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lydia Waller
<b>Age range</b>	4 to 11
<b>Number of pupils</b>	259
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 to 17 June 2022

## Information about the school

59. Laxton Junior School is an independent co-educational day school. The school is an integral part of The Corporation of Oundle School, which was founded in 1556. Laxton Junior School was founded in 1973 and moved to its current site in 2002. The Corporation of Oundle School is a charitable trust, and both Laxton Junior School and Oundle School are administered by the same governing body, which includes a Laxton Junior School sub-committee. The current chair of governors took up his responsibilities in July 2024, and the current headteacher took up her position in September 2023.
60. There are 38 children in the early years comprising two Reception classes.
61. The school has identified 41 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
62. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for nine pupils.
63. The school states its aims are to provide a high-quality and inclusive education, with pupils' happiness at the heart of its approach. The school aspires to ensure that the culture of the school is built upon its core values of love of learning, care, opportunity, community and quality. The school endeavours to support children to become kind and respectful, confident and resilient, and in doing so to develop the qualities necessary to succeed and thrive in all aspects of their future lives.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

13 to 15 May 2025

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

65. 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.

66. 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)**.

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