

# School inspection report

4 to 6 November 2025

## **Rendcomb College**

Rendcomb

Cirencester

Gloucestershire

GL7 7HA

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 know the school well and provide effective oversight of the school's operations. They scrutinise detailed reports of the school's operations and visit the school frequently to observe how policies work in practice in all areas of the school, including boarding and the early years. Governors ensure that leaders have appropriate skills and knowledge so that all the Standards are met.
2. The school provides the necessary information for pupils and parents on its policies and procedures. However, at the start of the inspection the school's website did not include all of its previous inspection reports as required. This was remedied during the inspection.
3. Leaders have a clear vision for teaching and learning throughout the school. Teachers use effective teaching techniques to challenge pupils and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers know their pupils well and provide effective feedback and support. Teachers adapt their lessons effectively to provide individual support to pupils who may require it. Pupils make good progress.
4. Pupils develop their skills and knowledge in a wide range of after-school clubs, activities, visits and trips. Boarders have access to a variety of recreational activities in the evenings and at weekends.
5. Leaders and teachers create a respectful, inclusive environment for pupils. Teachers have high standards for pupils' behaviour and communicate these clearly and consistently to pupils. Pupils behave well and treat adults and their peers with courtesy and respect.
6. Leaders in boarding understand their responsibilities well and provide a comfortable and welcoming environment for boarding pupils. Staff support pupils living away from home and boarders are able to seek help whenever they need it.
7. Pupils develop a clear sense of social responsibility. They volunteer regularly in their local area and raise money for national and international charities. Lessons and after-school clubs give pupils the opportunity to develop their awareness of the environment and take action to improve their environmental footprint.
8. Leaders provide programmes of careers and economic education throughout the school. Pupils learn about managing their finances and the types of jobs they can apply for in the future. However, these programmes are not consistently effective as pupils progress through the school.
9. Leaders in the early years understand the needs of the children in their care. They plan appropriate activities that support children's academic, physical and social development. They provide opportunities for children to play and learn with older pupils. Children in the early years are well prepared for the junior school.

## 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 school's website includes all previous inspection reports so that it provides a clear and accurate picture of the school
- strengthen the careers and economic education programmes so that pupils develop their understanding of these areas more consistently as they progress through the school.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Governors maintain close oversight of the school's educational activities. Leaders provide them with clear and detailed reports which they consider in formal committee meetings. They supplement these meetings with regular visits to the school through the 'governor of the month' programme. These visits enable governors to observe the school's operations and speak to staff and pupils. These visits cover all areas of school life, including the Nursery and boarding settings, and enable governors to ensure that leaders have the skills and knowledge to consistently promote pupils' wellbeing.
11. Leaders and governors actively promote the school's aims and use its values to guide decision-making. For instance, recent changes to teaching approaches successfully integrate the values of thoughtfulness and adventurousness into the classroom environment.
12. Leaders are committed to self-evaluation and reflect regularly on the effectiveness of the school's operations. They analyse relevant data and seek the views of parents and pupils through surveys and discussions. Leaders use this information to adapt educational provision to the pupils' needs, for instance by changing the sports available in games afternoons or providing additional gym equipment.
13. Leaders understand the risks to pupils at the school and take effective action to mitigate them. Staff undertake training in assessing risk and draw up appropriate risk assessments for the school's activities. Leaders make appropriate use of external expertise to provide additional quality assurance for these processes.
14. Leaders understand the regulatory requirements and the latest statutory guidance, including for boarding and the early years. They draw up clear and appropriate policies and procedures which guide the school's operations. Regular staff briefings ensure that staff understand these policies and implement them consistently.
15. The school's website and various documentation provide staff, pupils and parents with the required information on the school's activities. Teachers in the early years communicate regularly with parents through formal parents' evenings and at the start and end of the school day. Teachers provide parents with regular reports on their child's academic progress and pastoral wellbeing. However, at the start of the inspection the school's website did not include some of the required reports of previous inspections. This was remedied during the inspection.
16. Leaders promote an inclusive environment within the school. They provide a suitable accessibility plan which is regularly reviewed. Leaders consider the needs of those with disabilities whenever planning works to the school premises. The school meets all the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
17. Leaders maintain close links with local agencies and other educational and health partners. They share required information with local authorities, for instance regarding the use of funds provided for pupils with an educational, health and care plan (EHC plan).
18. Leaders implement a suitable complaints policy. There is a clear process for parents and pupils, including boarders, to raise concerns about the school. Leaders respond promptly to any concerns and take effective action where necessary. Governors maintain active oversight of any significant concerns. Leaders keep an appropriate record of complaints and any action taken in response.

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

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

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

20. Leaders throughout the school provide a curriculum that meets the pupils' needs. Children in the early years follow a curriculum based on the early years framework, supplemented by outdoor learning and additional language activities. As pupils progress through the junior school, they study a broad selection of subjects that develop their knowledge and skills and prepare them for study in the senior school. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 study a core syllabus as well as a rotation of subjects which develop their practical life skills and creativity. The sixth-form curriculum provides a mixture of A levels and vocational courses, enabling pupils to choose qualifications which meet their needs.
21. In the early years, teachers ensure that the curriculum consistently promotes the children's development, for instance by including communication skills in physical education and outdoor play. Subject leaders in the senior school collaborate across departments to ensure a consistent approach, for instance by introducing the science skills passport in Year 7. Pupils in Year 10 study towards the 'Rendcomb project qualification' which successfully develops their research skills and ability to undertake extended projects.
22. Teachers use a range of effective teaching techniques to promote pupils' learning. Teachers use their high levels of subject knowledge to plan lessons which engage and challenge the pupils. They develop resources which take into account pupils' aptitudes and current level of understanding. In class, teachers use targeted questioning to probe pupils' understanding of ideas and challenge them to think more deeply. Teachers know their pupils well and take time to provide them with individual support inside and outside of lessons. Pupils across the school make good progress and perform above national averages in public examinations.
23. Throughout the school, teachers successfully promote pupils' literacy. In the early years staff use a systematic approach to teach children phonics effectively. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 build on this approach and develop the ability to write fluently. In the senior school, teachers use clear explanations and model the use of language well to help pupils develop their understanding. Older pupils learn to express their ideas clearly in discussions and on paper.
24. Pupils develop high levels of numeracy as they progress through the school. In the early years, teachers provide opportunities for children to learn through play, for instance when counting crystals into a cauldron to make a potion. Mathematics teaching for older pupils is well planned to develop pupils' understanding. Teachers encourage pupils to solve problems independently and provide them with a range of strategies to do this.
25. Pupils learn to express themselves creatively across the curriculum. Teachers provide an encouraging environment for pupils to experiment, for instance by providing thoughtful positive feedback on artworks. Pupils of all abilities perform to their peers in the supportive environment of the 'coffee concerts' series. Pupils in design technology lessons combine theoretical understanding with practical skills to design and create imaginative products, for instance when competing to produce the fastest pontoon boat.
26. Teachers provide high-quality, personalised feedback to pupils on how to improve their work. Pupils respond positively to this feedback and are able to track their own improvements over time. Teachers encourage pupils to reflect on their progress and develop an understanding of the most effective way to approach tasks.

27. Leaders monitor pupils' progress effectively throughout the school. At key transition points pupils take a set of standardised tests which accurately measure their current level of attainment. Subject leaders then monitor pupils' progress from these starting points and provide additional support to any pupils whose work falls below expectations. Teachers invite pupils who are achieving at a high level to additional discussions and events so that they are challenged inside and beyond the classroom.
28. Teachers provide effective support for pupils who have SEND. Specialist teachers assess pupils' needs using standard assessments and combine these with teachers' observations to produce bespoke plans for support. Teachers adapt their lessons so that they consistently meet the pupils' needs. Where necessary, additional support is available outside of lessons. Teachers engage positively with the annual reviews for pupils who have EHC plans and communicate regularly with parents.
29. Teachers provide well-structured support for pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Specialist teachers create detailed plans for developing pupils' English language skills and make use of effective resources to develop their analytic and technical language skills. In lessons, teachers provide additional support for these pupils, for instance by providing specific language support when giving pupils feedback. Specialist teachers work closely with boarding house parents to support boarding pupils who speak English as an additional language.
30. Pupils further develop their skills in after-school clubs and activities. They develop their physical skills in sporting activities such as golf, mountain biking and clay pigeon shooting. Pupils learn to work together on projects such as crafts in the barn and growing vegetables in the market garden. Pupils in the sixth form take part in competitive and recreational sport, helping them develop their skills and supporting their physical and mental health. Children in the early years learn to play with children of different ages in the outdoor learning environment. At the weekend, trips and activities offer boarders choice and variety, for instance trips to cultural events or recreational activities such as go-karting.
31. A range of trips and visits enables pupils to explore and understand their local area and beyond. Children in the early years visit local attractions and learn about the Cotswolds, giving them an insight into local geography. Older pupils learn about local history, for instance the experiences of child evacuees during the war. Pupils explore local nature and wildlife in art lessons and develop a detailed understanding of the different landscapes in this part of the country.

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

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



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

33. Leaders maintain a respectful and inclusive atmosphere in the school. In assemblies and tutor times, teachers help pupils understand the importance of everyone feeling part of the school community and the harms caused by exclusion or discrimination. Teachers expect pupils to treat adults and their peers with respect and they model this in their interactions with pupils. Pupils form trusting relationships with adults and their peers.
34. Staff and pupils understand the school's clear behaviour policies. Teachers are consistent in their expectations and reward good behaviour. Where pupils' behaviour falls below expectations, teachers respond consistently to support them so that they learn from their mistakes. Pupils develop self-confidence and emotional security.
35. Leaders ensure there is an effective anti-bullying strategy in place. During assemblies and lessons in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) pupils learn the characteristics of bullying, including online abuse. Pupils understand the importance of reporting any concerns about bullying to their teachers. Staff respond promptly to any instances of bullying to support the individuals involved.
36. There is a well-planned and progressive curriculum for physical education (PE) throughout the school. In the early years children learn movement skills and to roll and throw balls of increasing size. For older pupils, a core PE programme teaches pupils key skills and develops their physical fitness. The games programme provides a range of competitive sports and pupils develop an understanding of teamwork as well as individual confidence and resilience. The athletic performance programme provides structured training for pupils who wish to compete at the highest level. Pupils also learn the importance of nutrition to their physical health, for instance the role of protein in building muscles.
37. Pupils follow a PSHE programme which is appropriate to their age and stage of development. They learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy, for instance learning about the importance of sleep and the risks associated with illegal drugs. Staff teach pupils how to monitor their mental health and talk accurately and sensitively about their emotions. In the early years, teachers support the children's personal and emotional development by using careful questioning during activities. Teachers encourage and reward the children who act well towards others and gently correct those who do not.
38. The PSHE curriculum includes all of the statutory requirements for relationships and sex education (RSE). Teachers create a respectful classroom environment which encourages pupils to speak openly about more sensitive topics. Younger pupils learn about the characteristics of positive relationships. Older pupils study more sophisticated ideas including consent and coercion. Pupils develop an understanding of the emotional and ethical aspects of different types of behaviour.
39. Leaders encourage pupils to develop their spiritual understanding. Regular chapel services give pupils of all faiths and none a time to reflect on spiritual and moral issues. In religious education lessons pupils learn about different faiths and spiritual practices. The school chaplain encourages pupils to reflect on religious and secular festivals and invites discussion on challenging topics such as considering how wars can be justified.

40. Staff ensure that the premises, including boarding accommodation, are well maintained. The estates team carries out regular maintenance and systematic safety checks. Staff make use of clear reporting systems for problems and the estates team carry out any remedial works promptly. Regular, independent fire risk assessments ensure facilities meet the required standards. Staff carry out regular fire drills to assess the effectiveness of evacuation plans and ensure that pupils know what to do in the event of an emergency. Evening fire drills ensure that boarders know what to do should this occur in boarding time.
41. The boarding houses provide pupils with good quality sleeping and social accommodation. The integration of day pupils into the social areas of the boarding house develops a strong and inclusive whole-school community. House parents provide boarders with a clear induction programme so that they feel comfortable in the boarding environment. They form positive relationships with the pupils and pupils are able to ask for any help they may require.
42. Leaders ensure that appropriate supervision is in place around the school site, including during the evenings and at weekends. There are clear processes in place for boarders to access adult support at any time of day or night.
43. Leaders maintain robust systems for monitoring pupils' attendance. Staff report any unexplained absence quickly and take appropriate action in response. Leaders monitor attendance to identify any concerns and support pupils appropriately should it be necessary. Leaders share the required information with the local authority, including informing them of any pupils who join or leave the school at non-standard times.
44. A well-appointed medical suite with suitably trained staff provides care for any pupils who are unwell. Staff ensure that any medication is stored securely and its distribution accurately recorded, both in the medical centre and the boarding houses. There are appropriate numbers of staff available with first aid training, including paediatric first aid training for those supervising the early years.

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

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

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

46. Leaders place the concept of service at the heart of school life. Pupils of all ages are involved in volunteering. For example, in the junior school pupils perform ballet for the local care home and older pupils visit local primary schools to help with reading and sporting activities.
47. Pupils' social awareness includes understanding the importance of protecting the environment. Pupils understand that their actions have environmental consequences and accept responsibility for their environmental impact. They undertake projects such as improving recycling rates and saving energy within the school. Pupils learn about how technology can improve environmental outcomes and put this into practice when designing an electric car.
48. Pupils learn about and celebrate other cultures in assemblies and PSHE lessons. They learn about international secular and religious events such as Ramadan and traditional European festivals. Pupils lead equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives to promote their peers' awareness of social responsibility, for instance by celebrating Black History Month.
49. Leaders ensure that the curriculum prepares pupils for the next stage of their education. Children in Reception have opportunities to learn and play with pupils in Year 1 and 2. Teachers and form tutors provide pupils with impartial and helpful advice when choosing their GCSE and sixth-form subjects. The annual 'moving on week' provides Year 12 pupils with clear guidance on applying to university or apprenticeships.
50. Pupils learn about the history and public services of modern Britain. In PSHE lessons pupils learn about the functioning of Parliamentary democracy and the role of the MP. Teachers adapt the curriculum to reflect recent events, for instance in response to the lowering of the voting age. Leaders develop links between subjects; for instance, pupils learn about the campaign for women's suffrage in history alongside modern forms of indirect discrimination in PSHE. Pupils gain a rounded understanding of contemporary social issues.
51. The curriculum provides pupils with appropriate economic education. Staff introduce children in the early years to the concept of money when they play at running a corner shop or ice-cream van. Pupils in the junior school learn to calculate interest rates in mathematics lessons. In the senior school, pupils learn about university finance and managing budgets. However, this programme is not always adapted to the current needs of the pupils and so is not consistently effective for all year groups in the school.
52. Leaders provide a suitable programme of careers education throughout the senior school. Younger pupils learn about different career pathways and develop skills such as CV writing. Year 12 pupils attend a careers fair and gain an insight into different jobs through a sequence of external presentations. However, the careers programme is not consistently adapted to the pupils' needs nor integrated throughout the curriculum so that pupils are not informed about future careers as effectively as possible.
53. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop the skills to live independently when they leave school. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 learn about food and nutrition, including food hygiene and safe knife skills. Teachers provide specific support for pupils who have SEND to help prepare them for living

independently after school. Older pupils take part in the 'garden house experience' where they live independently in a house on the school site for a week. Pupils learn to plan, budget and prepare their meals and collaborate on household chores during the week. In this way they gain independence and confidence about life beyond school.

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

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

## Safeguarding

55. Leaders maintain an effective safeguarding culture. They have established clear policies and procedures which staff implement effectively. Staff understand how these policies apply to different settings within the school, for instance in the early years and in boarding houses.
56. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding undertake appropriate training with the local authority. They supplement this with more detailed training on topics that are pertinent to pupils in the school. Leaders run regular training sessions for staff, which meet the statutory requirements and include the management of emerging risks such as those around artificial intelligence.
57. Staff are vigilant about any risks to pupils and report any concerns promptly. Leaders respond appropriately to these reports and take effective action. They maintain clear records of any issues and the action taken. Staff understand the importance of reporting any concerns they may have about other adults.
58. Where safeguarding concerns arise, leaders work with teachers and specialists within the school to support pupils. Where necessary they work closely with local partners to provide additional support and promote positive outcomes.
59. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. In PSHE lessons and in assemblies, pupils learn about personal safety and avoiding online harm. Teachers ensure that this information is up to date and lessons are supplemented by talks from visiting speakers.
60. Staff in the boarding houses understand the risks to boarding pupils. Staff provide a range of ways for pupils to share any concerns they may have. They develop positive relationships with pupils, who are able to report concerns to any member of staff.
61. Pupils' access to the internet is suitably filtered and monitored; the systems for this are regularly tested according to government guidance. Staff respond promptly to any attempts to access inappropriate content online. When staff identify any trends in internet use, they adapt the curriculum to provide pupils with additional training.
62. Leaders maintain effective processes for checking the suitability of staff and they ensure that all relevant pre-employment checks are carried out correctly. Leaders carry out appropriate checks on any other adults living on the school premises. Staff keep accurate records of these checks in well-organised files and on a suitable single central record of appointments.

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

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

## School details

<b>School</b>	Rendcomb College
<b>Department for Education number</b>	916/6017
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1115884
<b>Address</b>	Rendcomb College Rendcomb Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 7HA
<b>Phone number</b>	01285 831213
<b>Email address</b>	info@rendcombcollege.org.uk
<b>Website</b>	www.rendcombcollege.org.uk
<b>Proprietor</b>	Governors of Rendcomb College
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Nicholas Ford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Andrew Murphy
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 18
<b>Number of pupils</b>	331
<b>Number of boarding pupils</b>	49
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 to 13 May 2022

## Information about the school

64. Rendcomb College is a co-educational day and boarding school located in Rendcomb, Gloucestershire. The school consists of a Nursery, junior school and senior school which includes a sixth form, all located on the same site. The school is a charitable company overseen by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection a new headteacher was appointed in August 2025.
65. Boarding accommodation is provided in two separate single-sex boarding houses.
66. There are 22 children in the early years, which comprises a Nursery and Reception class.
67. The school has identified 75 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A small number of pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
68. The school has identified English as an additional language for 22 pupils.
69. The school states its aims are to develop thoughtful, adventurous and ambitious lifelong learners with the confidence, character and skills to succeed in the ever-changing world after school. The school aims to give pupils the freedom to experience, explore and enquire about the world around them. It strives to encourage independence and inclusivity in a safe, caring community and stimulating natural environment.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

4 to 6 November 2025

70. A team of five inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

71. 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
- visits to boarding houses accompanied by pupils and staff
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

72. 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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For more information, please visit [isi.net](http://isi.net)