

Material change inspection report

10 to 11 June 2026

Westminster Under School

Adrian House
27 Vincent Square
London
SW1P 2NN

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'.

Inspection outcome

The school has submitted a material change request to extend the age range from 7 to 13 to 4 to 13. The school's request is also to become co-educational in an incremental process beginning with Reception, Year 3 and Year 7 in September 2026, with all year groups becoming co-educational from September 2029. In addition, the school has submitted a request to increase capacity from 288 to 380 from September 2026.

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school Standards if the material change is implemented. It is recommended that the material change be approved.

Inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

ISSR paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4

1. Leaders have established a broad curriculum which includes classical languages and covers all required areas of learning suitably. Subject leaders ensure that the curriculum content is appropriate to pupils and that it provides suitable challenge to pupils with high levels of prior attainment. Leaders of the curriculum have reviewed materials in anticipation of the proposed material change to ensure that content is fully representative for a co-educational school and for younger pupils.
2. Leaders in the early years have a good understanding of the learning and development requirements for Reception. They have planned extensively for the new provision while allowing flexibility to follow the children's interests. Leaders have plans for specialist teachers to work with the Reception class to foster continuity in subjects such as languages, music and sport.
3. Pupils make good progress across the curriculum. They work on high-level extension activities to challenge and extend their thinking.
4. Pupils show highly developed habits for learning, including focus, engagement and effective collaboration with each other. They are fluent communicators who listen respectfully to the opinions of others.
5. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified early. Specialist staff draw up personalised learning plans which share effective teaching strategies with staff. Teachers in the specialist department have undertaken further training to anticipate the proposed material change, such as with regard to how neurodiversity presents in female pupils.
6. Leaders ensure that pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are supported through appropriate strategies, such as the use of vocabulary builders to develop academic writing skills. Specialist staff have the knowledge and experience to teach younger pupils who speak EAL and have suitable plans in place to work with parents in supporting their child's acquisition of language skills.
7. Teachers use an effective range of resources and teaching strategies. Leaders in the early years have carefully planned the future design of teaching spaces and the range of resources to be employed for children in Reception.
8. The effective personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme is arranged thematically. Pupils learn about health and wellbeing, relationships and the wider world in age-appropriate ways. The lessons enable pupils to make useful connections to topics discussed in other subjects, such as theology, philosophy and religion (TPR). The effective programme employs scenarios so that pupils understand the different aspects of an individual's identity. Leaders'

planning ensures that no pupil is discriminated against, and leaders have identified how this will be developed following the proposed material change.

9. Leaders ensure that pupils receive appropriate careers education. Staff draw on the experience of parents to introduce pupils to a range of careers, including through a careers fair and talks as part of the 'future Fridays' programme.
10. Suitable lessons for relationships and sex education (RSE) give pupils an age-appropriate understanding of consent and the basis of healthy relationships. Leaders have suitable plans in place to adapt this for co-educational groups and younger pupils. Parents are consulted about the programme and are made aware when they have the right to withdraw their child.
11. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to respond appropriately to challenging questions from pupils. They plan lessons effectively to meet the different needs of pupils. Teachers establish warm and constructive relationships with their classes as a result of specific and focused feedback and awareness of individual success.
12. An effective assessment framework is in place. Teachers use detailed tracking to target any required further support for pupils. Leaders have suitable plans in place for assessment of younger pupils and for ensuring that they carefully track the progress of male and female pupils.
13. Leaders have designed an extensive provision of extra-curricular activities, with appropriate plans for accommodating the different range of pupils for the proposed material change. There are high levels of engagement. In participating, pupils enrich their range of skills and their social understanding.
14. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

ISSR paragraph 5

15. Pupils learn about British values so that they can understand democracy and appreciate the various facets of identity. They understand the importance of respect for individual difference in a diverse community. This is enhanced by leaders providing opportunities to discuss and celebrate the range of pupils' backgrounds and languages.
16. Teachers have suitable plans in place for children in the early years to read a range of texts to support positive cultural identity and connections between people.
17. Pupils develop their spiritual awareness through the study of other faiths in TPR lessons and in experiencing shared community and reflection during weekly church services.
18. Pupils benefit from opportunities to take responsibility. They lead charitable initiatives. In the effective enterprise programme, they develop an awareness of ethical matters associated with entrepreneurship.
19. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

ISSR paragraphs 7(a), 7(b), 11, 12, 14, 16

20. Leaders have established a robust and comprehensive culture of safeguarding. Staff know that safeguarding is everyone's prime responsibility. Safeguarding is regularly discussed so that knowledge is refreshed and enhanced. The school's processes for safeguarding are subject to

continual reflection and renewal, including how processes will be adapted for the proposed material change.

21. The safeguarding team work well with external agencies, such as the local authority designated officer (LADO) and the police. Leaders ensure that any extended absences are reported to the local authority as required.
22. Leaders provide suitable safeguarding training, including for new staff as part of their induction. Their understanding is assessed through quizzes. Members of the safeguarding team have suitable higher-level training. Staff know how to respond to a concern and understand the urgency of doing so. They understand the contextual factors for the school, including the relevance of the 'Prevent' duty to combat radicalisation and aspects of safeguarding associated with a central London setting.
23. The school's management of low-level concerns is suitable. Staff know the code of conduct and understand the importance of sharing a concern or making a self-referral.
24. Pupils know their trusted adults and the members of the safeguarding team so that they can raise any worries. Pupils can share concerns anonymously if they wish via the 'talking space' box. Leaders have carefully considered how they develop systems for younger pupils to raise any concerns.
25. Leaders ensure that pupils understand the importance of online safety and are able to explain protective behaviours around online contact. The school is smartphone free, and pupils understand the basis of this policy for their wellbeing. Pupils use school devices, and these are subject to effective internet filtering and monitoring. Members of the safeguarding team are alerted immediately and respond swiftly should anyone try to access unsuitable material online.
26. The school has a robust approach to the management of health and safety. Staff receive suitable training. The health and safety team monitor the site with daily checks and keep suitable records. They are responsive to any requirements for maintenance. Staff communicate effectively about health and safety across departments.
27. Fire prevention equipment and processes are suitable. Fire risk assessments are in place for classrooms and all areas of the new building. Leaders ensure that any recommendations from an external audit are carried out efficiently. Pupils understand how to react when an alarm rings, and leaders have ensured that they are confident in how to exit the school's new building. Evacuation procedures have been updated to suit the needs of younger pupils.
28. Supervision is well managed. Leaders have established effective procedures for the crossing of local roads, balancing supervision and responsibility appropriately. Staff are visible around the main building throughout the day. Pupils know how to find an adult at any time and feel safe on site. Staff are present at all arrival and departure times to ensure that these are managed safely. Leaders have suitable plans for the supervision of pupils in Reception to match statutory ratios and to follow guidance for safer eating.
29. Leaders assess and manage risk appropriately. They understand the importance of mitigating risk in the school and have assessed risks associated with the proposed material change. Staff receive training on risk assessment and review risk management as needed. Risk assessments are in place for the site, classrooms, specialist activities and educational visits.
30. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

ISSR paragraphs 18, 19, 20, 21

31. Staff with responsibility for recruitment ensure that all necessary checks are completed before an adult begins work or volunteers at the school. The single central record for recruitment checks (SCR) is well maintained. Governors exercise suitable oversight of the recruitment process.
32. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

ISSR paragraphs 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

33. The medical room is appropriate and provides privacy for pupils. There is suitable locked medicine storage. Medical staff keep suitable records.
34. Water temperatures are carefully controlled and suitable. Drinking water is clearly identifiable, and there are sufficient water fountains across the site.
35. Leaders have ensured that there are sufficient toilet facilities to meet the needs of the proposed increased capacity and introduction of female pupils. Changing accommodation and showers have been expanded to ensure suitable provision for increased co-educational capacity.
36. Suitable internal and external lighting is in place. The acoustics are appropriate. These requirements have been well managed in the new building.
37. The school's premises are clean and well maintained. The school's new building opened in February 2026 and has the facilities to meet the needs of the proposed increased capacity and younger pupils.
38. Outdoor space is suitable and well used for recreation and physical education. Leaders have appropriate plans to develop its use for children in the early years. The repurposing of the school's oldest building includes the utilisation of an outdoor space adjoining the Reception classroom for outdoor learning.
39. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 6. Provision of information

ISSR paragraph 32(1)(c)

40. The school's policy for safeguarding and child protection is updated regularly in line with statutory changes. Leaders ensure that the policy is available on the website.
41. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools

ISSR paragraph 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

42. Governors exercise appropriate oversight of the work of leaders to meet the Standards consistently.
43. Leaders have the skills and knowledge to actively support pupils' wellbeing. They prioritise this in their decision-making. They have established a culture where staff know each pupil, and staff and pupils develop constructive relationships based on trust and support.
44. Leaders and governors have planned extensively for the material change. Their oversight of the new building and facilities for the younger pupils is appropriate. They have expanded the facilities to meet the needs of increased capacity. Staff have undertaken further training in preparation for co-education and for teaching younger pupils. Leaders have reflected on all aspects of the provision and

consulted widely with staff, parents and pupils to identify possible areas for development for the purposes of co-education.

45. The school is likely to continue to meet the Standards if the material change is implemented.

School details

School	Westminster Under School
Department for Education number	213/6182
Registered charity number	312728
Address	Westminster Under School Adrian House 27 Vincent Square London SW1P 2NN
Phone number	020 7821 5788
Email address	pa.master@westminster.org.uk
Website	www.westminster.org.uk
Proprietor	The Governing Body of Westminster School
Chair	Mr Mark Batten
Headteacher	Mr Michael Woodside
Age range	7 to 13
Number of pupils	271
Date of previous inspection	19 to 21 November 2024

Information about the school

46. Westminster Under School is a day preparatory school for male pupils aged 7 to 13. It is located in Westminster, Central London. The school is a registered charity. Its governance is shared with Westminster School.
47. Since the previous inspection a new headteacher has been appointed. He took up his post in April 2026. The school's newest teaching building opened in February 2026. It is located next to the school's existing buildings.
48. The school has identified 26 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.
49. The school has identified 187 pupils for whom English is an additional language.
50. The school states that its aims are to inspire in its pupils a love of learning, an ability to question and a desire to serve others.

Purpose of the material change inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection following an application made by the school to the Department for Education to make a material change to the school's provision. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about whether the school is likely to meet the Independent School Standards and the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements if the material change is implemented.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

10 to 11 June 2026

51. Two reporting inspectors visited the school for two days.

52. Inspection activities included:

- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school and information available on the school's website
- a tour of the school site to view facilities
- discussions with members of the governing body
- discussions with the headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work.

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- 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.
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