

# School inspection report

23 to 25 September 2025

## Truro School

Trennick Lane

Truro

Cornwall

TR1 1TH

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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## Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders and governors ensure that the requirements of the Standards are met. Governors undertake suitable training and maintain effective oversight of all aspects of the school. Leaders are successful in upholding the school's aim to foster a culture that prioritises pupils' wellbeing and encourages pupils to grow intellectually, personally and spiritually.
2. Leaders have put in place a suitably broad and balanced curriculum. Teachers are knowledgeable and skilled in the subjects that they teach. They plan, resource and deliver effective lessons which encourage pupils of all ages and abilities to persevere, collaborate purposefully with their peers and think for themselves. Pupils achieve well, including in a range of qualifications at GCSE and A Level.
3. Boarding leaders have created a warm and welcoming boarding community in which boarders of all ages are encouraged to regard their boarding house as a 'home from home'. Leaders ensure that a varied programme of weekend boarding activities is available.
4. Through a very wide range of timetabled activities, pupils across the school enjoy many opportunities to develop different skills and knowledge. Leaders ensure that there are options to suit all, including music composition, surfing and community volunteering. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have to mix with different year groups as they develop commitment and courage in trying something new.
5. Leaders make sure that pupils receive high-quality support for their physical and mental health, and emotional wellbeing. The curriculum supports pupils' understanding about the importance of these areas. Policies and procedures related to behaviour and bullying are in place. However, some pupils' behaviour does not always consistently reflect the school's clear commitment to respect for all.
6. Leaders ensure that they manage the site effectively. They provide a safe environment for pupils, and suitable arrangements are in place to provide medical care for both day and boarding pupils.
7. Through their curriculum coverage, pupils develop a clear understanding of the importance of public services and values such as democracy and the rule of law, as well as a broad economic understanding. They take on responsibilities and contribute positively to the wider local area. Leaders have ensured that a suitable curriculum for careers, supported by associated activities such as visiting speakers, is in place. As a result, younger pupils plan their subject choices as they progress through the school and older pupils are able to consider a range of options for their future education and careers.
8. Together with governors, leaders prioritise the safeguarding of pupils. All staff and governors complete suitable safeguarding training on joining the school; this is augmented by regular updates to ensure current knowledge of safeguarding. Leaders with safeguarding responsibilities work with relevant external agencies, as required, to make sure pupils have suitable support. As a result, there is an effective culture of safeguarding.

## 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 recently reviewed behaviour management policy is clearly understood and implemented consistently throughout the school.

## Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. With the support of governors, leaders have established a school culture that has pupils' wellbeing at its heart. Leaders and governors prioritise the key values of creativity, curiosity, confidence, courage and compassion, and encourage all pupils to have an awareness of their obligations to others. Pupils take these values onboard and thrive as a result.
10. Leaders have a well-defined strategic vision for the school's development based on thorough annual self-evaluation against the Standards, which informs decision-making. Leaders set appropriately ambitious goals in all areas of school life such as health and safety, academic excellence and pastoral care. They create an annual action plan with clear targets for any planned developments.
11. The governing body is actively involved in ensuring that leaders have the capacity, skills and knowledge for the regulatory Standards to be consistently met and for pupils to flourish. Well-informed governors monitor leaders' work through on-site visits and termly focused committees and provide suitable levels of challenge. Governors have a clear understanding of leaders' ideas for school development, in line with its aims and ethos, and they support these as appropriate.
12. Boarding is well led. Boarding leaders ensure that boarding arrangements meet the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools (NMS). Boarders are well known and appropriately supported and enjoy a safe and comfortable environment within the boarding community. Boarders have access to an independent listener who they know how to contact.
13. Leaders ensure that the school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Careful planning by school and cathedral leaders allows choristers to benefit from a newly structured programme that offers equal opportunities for male and female choristers. The school has a suitable accessibility plan which focuses on the curriculum, the physical environment and accessibility of information, and is updated regularly. Practices are in place to allow everyone, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to access school provision successfully. Pupils learn the importance of active social justice through valuing everyone, in line with the school's Methodist principles.
14. Leaders undertake effective risk management to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff. There are systems in place to check all areas of the school and to identify potential risks. Leaders and staff put in place risk assessments that identify suitable measures to ensure a secure environment, and these are acted on to keep pupils safe. These include risk assessments for boarding houses, design and technology lessons, out-of-school activities such as the 'Ten Tors' hiking challenge, and overseas trips, as well as individual care plans for specific pupils' needs. Leaders ensure that staff with responsibility for assessing and managing risk are appropriately trained.
15. Leaders provide appropriate information to parents, pupils, staff and relevant external agencies. Information related to policies and procedures is provided on the school website. Parents are provided with regular personalised reports on pupils' academic and pastoral progress, as well as annual parents' meetings.
16. The school has a suitable complaints policy. When complaints arise, leaders respond within appropriate timeframes and record these methodically and in detail. Leaders and governors review complaints regularly to identify any trends and address areas of concern as necessary.

17. Leaders with safeguarding responsibilities are suitably trained. They liaise effectively and in a timely manner with external agencies, such as local children's services, so that pupils receive appropriate support as needed. Leaders report to the local authority when any pupils join or leave the school at non-standard transition points.

**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 have developed a balanced curriculum across a suitably wide range of subjects so that pupils have many opportunities to gain knowledge and develop skills. As pupils move up through the school, they can access a suitable variety of academic choices and qualifications which reflect their abilities and interests and equip them effectively for their futures. An appropriate choice of GCSEs is offered. In the sixth form, there is a wide range of A-Level subjects on offer, as well as the Leith's cookery diploma, a Cambridge Technical (CTEC) sports qualification and the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). Leaders consider the curriculum strategically and regularly review it for suitability, and to ensure that it is appropriately resourced.
20. Leaders include a wide range of creative arts subjects within the curriculum, with suitable space and equipment. They celebrate pupils' achievements through the display of many artefacts across the school site. Academic lessons are enriched through co-curricular opportunities in art, ceramics, drama, design, music and dance. There are regular exhibitions, performances and concerts throughout the year as well as a full choral programme, planned and delivered by cathedral staff. As a result, pupils have many avenues for self-expression, social connection and emotional wellbeing as they learn new skills and gain knowledge.
21. Teachers have a detailed understanding of examination requirements and prepare pupils effectively for them. Most pupils attain results at GCSE and A level in line with their starting points, including those who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and pupils who have SEND. Some achieve more highly, particularly at A level. Leaders and governors scrutinise examination results against national norms. This process informs decisions for academic improvement at a strategic level, such as the introduction of greater reflection, improvement tasks and adaptive teaching.
22. Leaders have assessment and tracking processes in place which are regular, robust and comprehensive. Data gathered is reviewed by managers and a structured monitoring system allows pupils at all levels to receive timely support. As a result, pupils make good progress.
23. Teachers have extensive and detailed subject knowledge and use assessment data to inform lesson planning, choosing resources to support pupils' learning successfully. Teaching methods are well matched to pupils' stages of development. This results in lessons that typically maintain pupils' application and interest. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are positive and purposeful. As a result, pupils are keen to do their best and are well supported. Teachers encourage pupils to think across subject boundaries and apply their learning in a wide variety of effective ways. For instance, sixth-form pupils use the experience of an evening walk along the coast to stimulate their responses to darkness in *Paradise Lost*. Pupils collaborate well, exploring hypotheses in discussion with each other and combining previous and new knowledge when undertaking science practical work.
24. Leaders with responsibility for pupils who have SEND scrutinise pupils' profiles on entry and ensure that any support required is targeted and effective. Leaders provide specific advice to teachers so that they are aware of individuals' academic and pastoral needs. Teaching meets these needs well, so that pupils who have SEND make good progress alongside their peers. Where needed, leaders organise suitable, tailored strategies for support, including personalised individual sessions.

25. Leaders make sure that pupils who speak EAL are well supported linguistically so that they make good progress from their starting points. Teachers are aware of pupils' needs, which are clearly documented in individual profiles. Consequently, pupils who speak EAL receive suitable assistance through the provision of glossaries, word banks, knowledge organisers and individual support as necessary. Leaders monitor pupils closely to ensure that levels of support are appropriate.
26. Leaders provide pupils with a very wide programme of activities timetabled for all, as well as lunchtime and after-school clubs. Pupils recognise that there is something for everyone. They enjoy being able to vary their choices through a range of activities including ceramics, sailing and gardening. Over time, pupils develop new skills and knowledge and make good progress.
27. Boarders recognise the benefits of the academic support they can access on site during evening study times. Outside of this, activities such as playing games and cooking, as well as taking part in weekend trips, are encouraged by staff and, as a result, pupils benefit socially from learning new skills and mixing across the age groups.

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

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



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

29. Leaders have constructed a well-planned programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and a comprehensive and age-appropriate programme of relationships and sex education (RSE). Pupils study a range of topics, such as developing resilience, online safety and healthy relationships. Leaders adapt the curriculum as needed to react to current global, local or school issues. Pupils value expressing their own beliefs and listening to those of others while becoming well informed. They take up the opportunity to request further information if required. Pupils track and reflect on their wider achievements, giving focus to their personal development, through the 'portfolio' and 'diploma' arrangements that leaders have devised.
30. The school places a strong emphasis on the benefits of physical education (PE). Leaders promote an approach that recognises the importance of balancing participation, learning new physical skills, developing teamwork and resilience and enjoying success as expertise develops. Pupils can access a wide range of well-resourced opportunities in different sports and activities, regardless of gender. They enjoy the challenges of inter-house competition as well as matches against other schools.
31. Staff model positive relationships and leaders ensure that there are strategies in place to manage behaviour, such as the recent decision to lock away mobile phones during the school day. This has had a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing. Pupils' behaviour around the school is mostly positive, friendly and polite. However, pupils are not always clear about how the recently introduced behaviour policy operates or is applied, and some pupils' behaviour does not always match the school's expectation of consideration for others. Bullying is rare, but when it occurs, it is dealt with swiftly and appropriately.
32. Pupils learn about a variety of world religions through religious education lessons and multi-faith services in the school chapel, and as a result they discover how different religions express their spirituality. Leaders encourage pupils to use the chapel as a place for spiritual reflection and familiarise them, through regular illustration, with the moral imperative of the school's motto, 'To be, rather than to seem to be.'
33. Leaders have established comprehensive first aid provision. This includes appropriate training for staff, effective recording and monitoring of medicines and first aid, and analysis of any incidents. Leaders' recent decisions to increase the pastoral support team and to put in place an initiative to help female pupils navigate their friendships have been informed by responses to whole-school surveys. Leaders invest in pupils' emotional wellbeing and mental health needs, including counselling provision in school and access to external specialist expertise, when needed.
34. Leaders have created a mutually supportive boarding community which prides itself on being inclusive. Suitably equipped common rooms in the boarding houses allow pupils to relax and socialise. There is a clear set of expectations for pupils' behaviour, and as a result pupils learn how to live together and understand what is required of them. Boarders, including those who come from overseas, are well known and become familiar with school routines quickly through the comprehensive induction they receive. Boarders' personal possessions are protected, and their privacy is respected. Sleeping arrangements are suitable and boarders can always contact a member of staff, including at night. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is communicated to boarders, parents and guardians.

35. Leaders have put arrangements in place for pupils of all ages to make known their views. Pupils develop self-knowledge and self-confidence by seeking positions of responsibility such as becoming a member of the school council, a chapel steward or a boarding prefect. Using democratic processes, pupils learn to advocate for change. The introduction of specialist speakers for sixth-form PSHE sessions, the presence of pupil mentors at the Year 7 induction day and the introduction of a Christmas charity fair are in place as a result.
36. Leaders, supported by governors, make sure that all health and safety procedures, including those related to fire safety systems, are effectively implemented. A co-ordinated estates plan ensures that premises and accommodation are well maintained. Careful record-keeping and strong links with local agencies are part of an appropriate cycle of health and safety management. Effective use of electronic access to buildings, in addition to a strong staff presence, including during social times, creates a culture where pupils are well supervised.
37. Admission registers are appropriately maintained. Attendance procedures follow statutory guidance, and the school understands the link between attendance and pupils' wellbeing. There are clear processes in place for swift follow-up of any absence, alongside arrangements to support individuals to attend school when difficulties occur. Boarding houses have effective systems for ensuring that staff know the whereabouts of boarders outside lesson times and in the evenings.

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

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

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

39. Leaders ensure that the teaching of fundamental British values is embedded systematically across the PSHE curriculum and other subjects, as appropriate, as well as through tutor time and assemblies. In Year 9 tutor time, pupils discuss what respect means and how to demonstrate this in everyday actions. In Year 7 history, pupils study the development of parliament and how a democracy works, and in Year 9, PSHE pupils learn about the justice system and human rights. Older pupils focus on rights and responsibilities at work, including discrimination and harassment in the workplace. The structured approach ensures that pupils gain a clear understanding of democracy, respect for institutions and the capacity to reflect critically on social and political issues.
40. Underpinned by the school's aims and the Methodist vision of a caring Christian community, pupils develop their understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Leaders and staff champion respectful behaviour. Older pupils act as positive role models for younger members of the school through mentoring roles, valuing the chance to guide them helpfully. Pupils are respectful of the school rules, including boarders, who understand that boarding house regulations are there to protect and support them.
41. The school actively promotes the importance of protected characteristics. Leaders have designed a PSHE curriculum which allows pupils to develop their understanding of race, gender and disability. For example, pupils learn about different aspects of neurodiversity and gender double-standards. Through multi-faith chapel services, advocacy and social justice clubs, and a diversity group, leaders promote the importance of respecting everyone. Boarding leaders foster a family atmosphere in the houses, organising social time so that boarders of all ages and backgrounds mix and learn about each other's cultures and beliefs. Activities during the annual 'World Action in Methodist Schools' (World AIMS) day encourage pupils to look beyond themselves, learn about different cultures and consider the value of connections, near and far. As a result, pupils develop their understanding of difference and learn to appreciate that variety enriches society.
42. Leaders have developed a broad, impartial and well-planned careers curriculum which educates pupils to evaluate their strengths and areas for development and make suitable academic choices in school. Pupils also develop a clear understanding of the university pathways, apprenticeships and other technical and vocational routes open to them. Pupils value the ability to broaden their perspectives by learning about the world of work through a programme of outside speakers. To complement this, leaders make sure that pupils have opportunities to develop skills to help them when completing applications and developing interview techniques.
43. Leaders ensure that pupils develop practical knowledge and transferable skills that will support their transition into further education, employment and adult life. For example, pupils in Years 12 and 13 benefit from learning cookery, touch-typing and emergency first aid.
44. The PSHE curriculum allows pupils to develop age-appropriate financial literacy and an understanding of everyday economics. Younger pupils are taught about bank accounts and learn the importance of being financially responsible and the dangers of gambling. Older pupils focus on topics such as national insurance, tax, pensions and mortgages, ensuring they are prepared for their future financial responsibilities.

45. Leaders encourage pupils to take on responsibilities and make a sustained contribution to the local area and wider society. Many pupils volunteer in primary schools, charity shops, foodbanks and care homes, as part of both the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) and the school's activity programme. Pupils in the eco-club lobby on local traffic concerns. Pupils organise events to raise money for a range of charities. Through these endeavours, pupils develop organisational and communication skills while learning about the lives of others.

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

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

## Safeguarding

47. Leadership and management, supported by governance, successfully promote the safety and wellbeing of pupils. The school's suitable safeguarding policy is implemented effectively. The school protects and supports its pupils diligently.
48. Safeguarding leaders receive the training necessary to carry out their roles successfully. Leaders ensure that all staff and governors receive safeguarding training on joining the school. This is updated at regular intervals and, as a result, staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures.
49. Staff understand how to report any concerns they have about adults, including those that do not meet the harm threshold. A suitable log of these low-level concerns is kept and reviewed by leaders so that any patterns can be identified and acted upon.
50. Pupils know who to go to if they are concerned for their own or others' safety. They are confident that their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon promptly and appropriately. Records show that this is the case. Safeguarding leaders maintain productive relationships with the local authority and external agencies, seeking advice and making timely referrals to children's services, the local authority and the police, when appropriate.
51. Boarding leaders know boarders well. They have created an inclusive boarding community which puts the wellbeing of pupils at the heart of all decision-making. Boarders know that any safeguarding issues they report will be taken seriously.
52. Leaders have in place rigorous systems and arrangements to filter and monitor internet use. They ensure that pupils learn how to keep safe online through PSHE and information and communication technology (ICT) lessons. Staff know how to support pupils' online safety and educate pupils on the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism, including in the context of their community.
53. The recruitment records and the single central record (SCR) of appointments show that all required checks are made in a timely manner. Safer recruitment practice is in place to support the safeguarding of pupils.

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

54. All the relevant Standards are met.

## School details

<b>School</b>	Truro School
<b>Department for Education number</b>	908/6079
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1142794
<b>Address</b>	Truro School Trennick Lane Truro Cornwall TR1 1TH
<b>Phone number</b>	01872 272763
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@truroschoo.com
<b>Website</b>	www.truroschoo.com
<b>Proprietor</b>	Methodist Independent Schools Trust
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian McCaig
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Andrew Johnson
<b>Age range</b>	11 to 18
<b>Number of pupils</b>	785
<b>Number of boarding pupils</b>	45
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 to 10 June 2022

## Information about the school

55. Truro School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school. Founded in 1880, the school became fully co-educational in 1990. The school is part of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust, with authority for governance delegated to a school governing body, which also oversees Truro School Preparatory School. A new Chair of Governors has been appointed since the previous inspection.
56. Boarders are accommodated in two houses on site, with separate houses for male and female pupils.
57. The school has identified 182 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
58. The school has identified English as an additional language (EAL) for 69 pupils.
59. The school states its aims are to be a community of inclusion and excellence, inspiring and supporting its pupils to grow intellectually, personally and spiritually and become individuals who aspire in the development of their academic and wider abilities. It seeks to teach pupils the values of creativity, curiosity, confidence, courage and compassion, and awareness of their obligations to others and to wider society.

## Inspection details

### Inspection dates

23 to 25 September 2025

60. A team of eight inspectors visited the school for two and a half days. The onsite inspection was quality assured by a monitor.

61. 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.

62. 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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