



CASTLE COURT SCHOOL

Over two and a half days in June 2026 a team of inspectors reviewed every aspect of life at Castle Court—from lessons and co-curricular opportunities to pastoral care and governance. They spoke with pupils, staff and governors, examined pupils' work, school policies and records, and drew on the parent, pupil and staff surveys that were completed. Please find below some key highlights from the final ISI report:

Summary and Leadership

Inspectors recognised a strong and united vision across the school's leadership and governance, and stated that it is ***"appropriately informed by rigorous self-evaluation and development planning"*** and as a result ***"they succeed in placing pupils' wellbeing at the heart of their decision-making."*** They commented that ***"the school's Christian ethos is evident throughout the school"*** and praised how ***"leaders create a mutually supportive community where pupils reflect and consider matters together."*** They also praised how leaders of the early years liaise regularly with parents, monitor and assess pupils' progress and plan purposeful and engaging activities which capitalise appropriately on the interests of the children. ***"As a result, children's thinking, learning and communication skills develop effectively as they make discoveries about the world around them through challenging, but age-appropriate, activities and experiences."*** The Inspectors highlighted that Leaders encourage pupils to ***"be active members of their wider community"*** and ***"principles of democracy, respect, kindness, leadership and justice are promoted successfully throughout all year groups."*** They also highlighted that ***"staff manage safeguarding concerns appropriately."***

Quality of Education, Training and Recreation

The inspectors praised our ***"academically ambitious"*** and ***"broad and varied curriculum"***. They noted how our curriculum planning develops not only subject knowledge but also places emphasis on six separate learning skills such as collaboration, independence and leadership which ***"prepare pupils appropriately to mature as effective, efficient thinkers and learners who can work independently"***. Inspectors also praised the ***"academic research"***, ***"scholarly essays, informative displays and oral presentations"*** which are part of our PSPQ project in our senior years. They highlighted that as a result our pupils are ***"well prepared for the next stages of their education, and the world beyond."*** They appreciated how our curriculum emphasises links between subjects ***"which are effective in helping pupils broaden their holistic understanding of the world in which they live."*** Inspectors commented on how our pupils ***"enjoy their lessons, apply effort to their work, act***

responsibly and are highly motivated to succeed." They also highlighted the rich array of clubs and activities, which significantly extend and enrich our timetabled curriculum.

Pupils' Physical, Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

The report acknowledged the central importance placed on pupil wellbeing, and the unique advantages of our rural setting and woodland estate. Teachers **"capitalise on the school's rural location,"** enabling pupils' learning to take place outside. They praised our CAVE programme and acknowledged how it promotes pupils' wellbeing, for example by **"including opportunities for them to work in the woodland or outdoor classroom areas to foster their sense of calm through interactions with nature."** Inspectors also recognised how **"pupils' spirituality is developed effectively through the school's Christian foundation and ethos, which places value on empathising with others."** They noted how the varied topics covered in assemblies, Religious Studies and TPE lessons **"extend spirituality both into studies of other religions and through consideration of secular matters."** They noted that **"pupils typically behave well, demonstrating the school's key principles of compassion and courtesy"** and older pupils **"act as appropriate role models for their younger peers."** In addition, Inspectors commented that **"the school implements effective anti-bullying strategies which emphasise kindness and respect."**

Pupils' Social Development and Contribution to Society

Inspectors highlighted how The Castle Court Way is used appropriately to promote **"excellence, respect, pride and leadership"** and how the school's emphasis that pupils **"should do the right thing – even when no-one is looking"** helped to reinforce **"the moral purpose that is integral to the school's ethos."** Inspectors commented on how the school fosters respect for the democratic process and rule of law, successfully promotes financial understanding, develops respect for diversity successfully, and **"gives pupils access to stimulating careers guidance."** They praised the links the school has made with the local community, enabling pupils to foster **"an appreciation of how they can improve the lives of others and providing effective preparation for life in British society."**

As with any inspection some technical compliance checks are undertaken and in our inspection some points for improvement were identified. These related to some pre-employment checks, an example being medical declarations, which had not been completed on some new staff before they took up post. Since Easter 2025, when Katie Johnson was appointed as Head, it was demonstrated that all pre-appointment medical checks have been completed correctly. The inspectors found that this was not the case prior to her appointment. Although the small number of checks highlighted were rectified swiftly on the day of the inspection, it meant two standards were not fully met on this occasion. ISI will return later this academic year to review this aspect, and we are confident that with the new team in place overseeing these checks the school will be fully compliant.

The overall outcome of the inspection strongly affirms the quality of education, care and breadth of opportunity that Castle Court provides the children and the character, confidence and kindness they develop as a result. The ISI report is overwhelmingly positive about: standards of teaching and academic progress, pastoral care, impressive pupil behaviour, extracurricular breadth, community outreach, a strong and distinctive whole school ethos, amongst many other things.