

# ISI INSPECTION REPORT HIGHLIGHTS


Highlights from our Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) Report 2025



TRENT COLLEGE  
AND  
THE ELMS







Trent College & The Elms was inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) in March 2025. We are pleased to bring you this summary document that looks at some of the key findings and themes from the Inspectors report. The full report can be viewed on our website, or on the ISI website.

This most recent inspection followed the new framework, and as such, we were inspected as one whole school community. Under the previous framework we were inspected separately, and both ends of the school were found to be 'excellent' in all areas. However, this report under the latest framework no longer includes overall descriptors or grades, such as excellent, good or satisfactory, but more nuanced evaluations, with findings given using supporting evidence in five key areas.

We are pleased that the school successfully met the standards required in each of these areas. The report gives a very positive summary of the evidence that the

inspection was able to gather. The quality of what the ten-strong team of inspectors experienced is expressed in the text of the full report.

We are delighted that our report includes a 'Significant Strength' within our school, which is a rare distinction found in only a minority of inspection reports and is subject to very specific criteria. The inspection team chose to include one in this report, with a focus on the range and variety of our co-curricular activities, the involvement of pupils in shaping them, and their role in supporting pupils' wellbeing. We are very proud of this rare distinction and of all the hard work that goes into making our school such a special place.

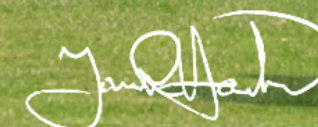
We are equally proud of the many highly positive findings about all areas of the school's provision, and of the fact that we were found to be fully compliant with the large number of regulations that underpin all that we do to operate effectively and safely.

The inspection report includes findings on our early years foundation stage (EYFS) which covers children from birth to four years old. This is a registered setting with OFSTED, so that part of the report does include qualitative, descriptive gradings, as required by the OFSTED framework. We are delighted that our EYFS was judged to be 'Outstanding' in all areas.

We thank all of our pupils, staff, governors and parent community who contributed to such a positive outcome.



Bill Penty  
Head - Trent College



James Hadfield  
Head - The Elms



# Our Vision

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To have an exceptional reputation for providing a first-class all-round education for boys and girls which ensures the best-possible start for their future and enables them to be the best they can be.

# Our Ethos

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We give the highest priority to the quality of our academic provision. We are also proud of our reputation for delivering a fully rounded curriculum, with sport, music, art and drama all being important elements of an education at Trent and The Elms. This, coupled with a focus on the strongest pastoral care, makes us a school that nurtures young men and women to be the best they can be in terms of achievement and character, enabling them to flourish in a changing world. This is what stands at the very core of Trent College and The Elms.

## Inspection Summary: Key Findings

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The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) visited Trent College and The Elms in March 2025 to inspect the whole school.

The key findings of the inspection are:

- ◆ **Trent College and The Elms meet all the relevant standards in the inspection.**
- ◆ **The Early Years provision is 'Outstanding'.**
- ◆ **The schools co-curricular programme promotes pupils' wellbeing particularly effectively and is a 'Significant Strength' of the school.**



# Early Years Foundation Stage – ‘Outstanding’

**“The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.”**

The Elms Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides a happy, safe environment for children aged six weeks to four years old. We give our children the support, encouragement and individual attention they need to flourish.

Within the Trent Schools’ safe and secure 45-acre campus our EYFS provides both first-class contemporary facilities and natural surroundings. Our youngest pupils thrive in a nurturing, stimulating environment where curiosity and independence are celebrated.

## ISI Key Findings

*“Staff provide high-quality and varied learning opportunities meaning that children of all ages are consistently engaged and demonstrate high levels of curiosity, concentration and enjoyment. Children’s attitudes to learning are outstanding.”*

*“Leaders provide a wealth of opportunities for children to celebrate and share their talents.”*

*“Staff understand the importance of promoting children’s independence from an early age.”*

*“Children in the early years quickly learn how to interact and support each other in class and play. Teachers’ thoughtful planning of activities, such as children voting for their choice of story, visiting local care homes and paying for a snack in role play, enable them to develop social and economic awareness.”*

**“...Children are confident learners who explore their environment with ease.”**





# Our Significant Strength

**“The co-curricular programme promotes pupils’ wellbeing particularly effectively and is a significant strength of the school.”**

We know that a top education extends far beyond exam board requirements. Life at Trent College and The Elms is about embracing new opportunities and supporting pupils to become the best version of themselves. We help our pupils uncover skills they never knew they had and to develop and excel where they show promise.

With over 150 activities each week – what will you choose to try?

“

**The co-curricular programme makes a major contribution to the development of pupils’ emotional, social, creative and physical skills.**

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## ISI Key Findings

*“Leaders provide many different opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills, including through The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme (DofE), the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and the junior school ‘Endeavour Award’, with its focus on teamwork and resilience.”*

*“The school provides a notably rich and varied co-curricular and enrichment programme. It enables pupils of all abilities to broaden their interests and develop new skills...many activities are instigated and led by pupils, including those in the junior school.”*

*“Pupils of all ages work effectively together. They are enthused, engaged and achieve highly.”*

*“Leaders and tutors closely monitor individual pupils’ participation to ensure their needs are met and that they are not overloaded or put under undue pressure.”*





# Strong Direction

Leadership & management, and governance

At Trent College and The Elms, leadership is rooted in our core values and vision.

Our governing body works closely with school leaders, ensuring strong accountability and a shared focus on continuous improvement. From regular reviews of policies to hands-on engagement with pupils, our leaders ensure the highest standards of care and education.

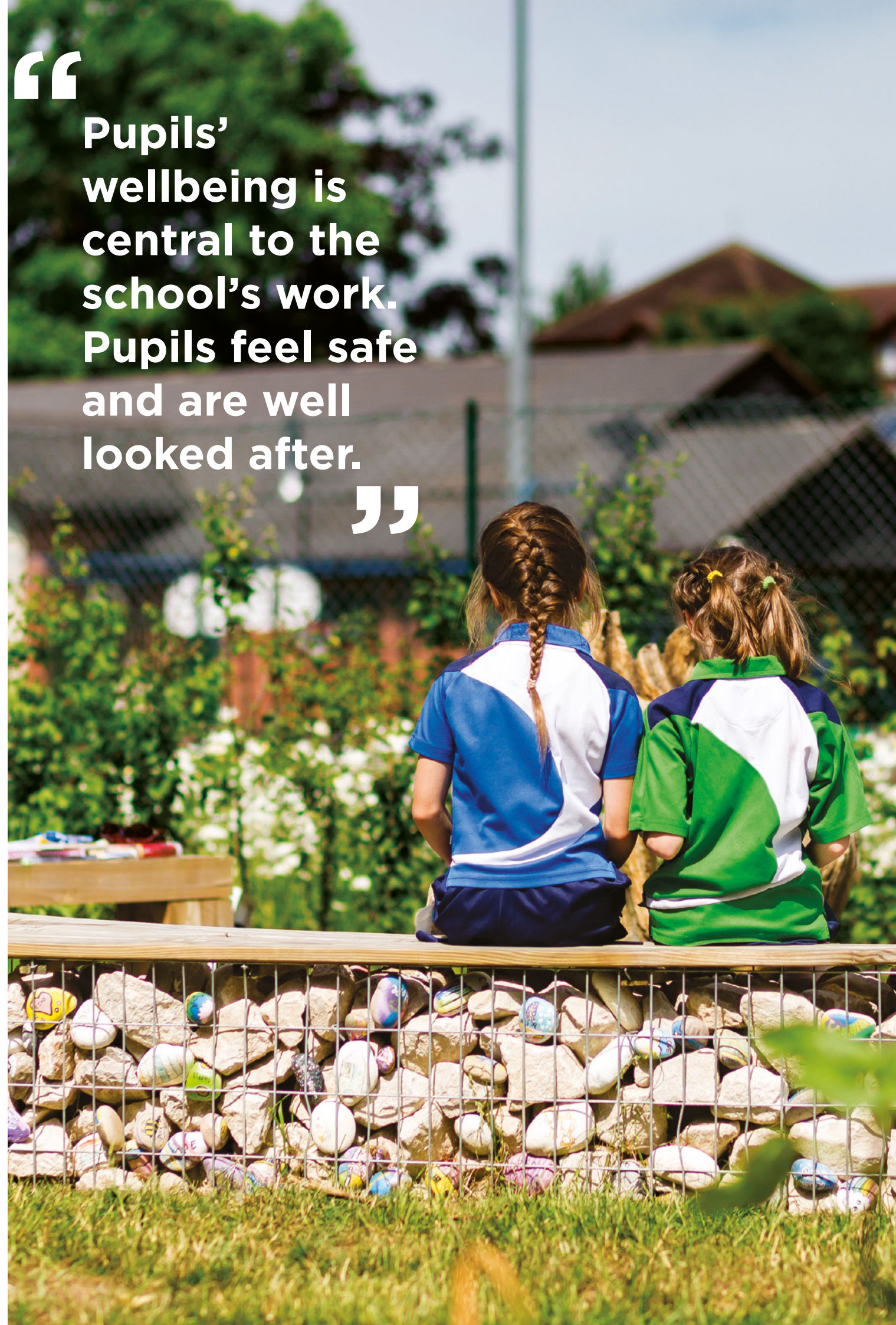
## ISI Key Findings

*“The schools aims are ambitious and well considered. They promote them effectively through the curriculum, co-curricular activities, pastoral systems and boarding.”*

*“Leaders actively promote the wellbeing of all pupils, which lies at the heart of their planning and decision-making. Leaders are highly approachable, so pupils speak with them to air their views.”*

*“Leaders and governors demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement... They evaluate all aspects of the school’s provision regularly and accurately.”*

“Pupils’ wellbeing is central to the school’s work. Pupils feel safe and are well looked after.”



# Keeping Pupils Safe

Safeguarding

Keeping our pupils safe is our top priority.

All staff and governors are fully trained in safeguarding and child protection, and robust policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated.

## ISI Key Findings

*“Leaders promote a positive safeguarding culture throughout the school. There is an awareness that safeguarding issues could arise and that everyone working at the school is responsible for identifying, reporting and acting on concerns, including low-level ones.”*

*“Pupils’ wellbeing is central to the school’s work. Pupils feel safe and are well looked after.”*

*“Safeguarding training for all staff and governors, is rigorous and systematic.”*



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The curriculum is broad, balanced and...designed to encourage pupils to be ambitious and develop a love of learning.”

## Academic Achievement

Quality of education, training and recreation

The driving force behind our academic reputation is experienced teaching staff who are passionate about their fields and committed to sharing that passion with pupils. Guided by our teaching and learning strategy, our teachers aim to inspire the next generation through interactive and engaging learning that opens doors to an exciting future.

### ISI Key Findings

*“The curriculum meets pupils’ needs and interests. It enables them to experience a wide range of subjects from a young age. In the early years and junior school, the curriculum is enriched through outdoor education, music, drama and languages. Senior pupils experience a varied curriculum which prioritises both academic achievement and wellbeing.”*

*“Leaders create a culture where praise is given regularly, and success is celebrated.”*

*“They achieve increasingly well at GCSE, at A level and in BTEC qualifications. Results are well above the national average because of the effective support and guidance provided by teachers. As a result, many pupils gain their preferred choice of higher education place, including highly competitive courses in medicine and engineering.”*



# Wellbeing & Personal Development

Pupils' physical & mental health and emotional wellbeing

We are committed to promoting the wellbeing of every child in our school. Our ethos encourages strong character development, a healthy lifestyle and a positive attitude to school life.

We are a happy, close-knit community with high aspirations for pupils where nurturing relationships between teachers and pupils form naturally. We ensure that every pupil receives the individual attention and tailored support they need to achieve.

Pupil wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do. Last year we were proud to win the Boarding Schools Association Excellence Award, and to be shortlisted in the TES Awards and Independent School of the Year Awards, for pupil Wellbeing and Mental Health Initiative of the year.

## ISI Key Findings

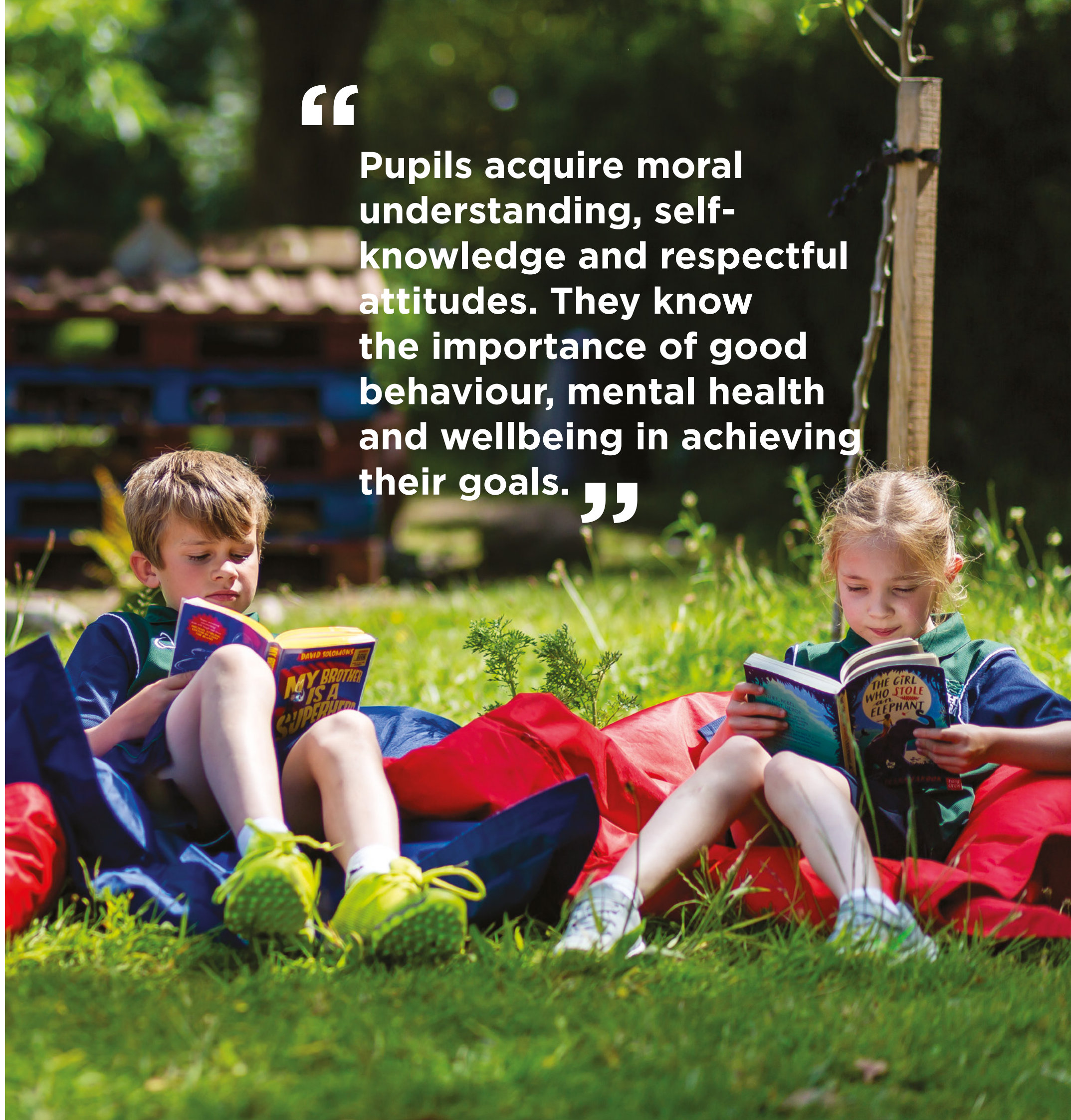
*“The school’s inclusive environment promotes equality, diversity and inclusion across all age groups...pupils are tolerant, respectful and care about their peers.”*

*“The award-winning Elms ‘eco-garden’, designed and maintained by junior pupils, provides a welcoming outdoor wellbeing space.”*

*“Pupils acquire moral understanding, self-knowledge and respectful attitudes. They know the importance of good behaviour, mental health and wellbeing in achieving their goals.”*

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They become respectful and tolerant young people, ready for their next steps after school. They are appropriately prepared to contribute to society in whatever way they can.”



## Preparing Pupils For Life

Pupils' social & economic education and contribution to society

We develop pupils who are confident, curious and compassionate members of a modern global community.

Community service is central to life here: from mentoring younger pupils, fundraising for partner schools abroad, and engaging with local charities, being an engaged member of the community is part of our way of life.

There are many leadership opportunities from Reception to Sixth Form which include school council, prefects,

anti-bullying ambassadors, the Combined Cadet Force, and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

Our award winning Careers provision, helps our pupils to plan for a successful future in a modern world where they can fulfil their true potential.

### ISI Key Findings

*“From a young age, pupils connect with society through volunteer work such as litter picking and looking after the environment. Senior pupils participate in many charitable activities, including regular telephone calls to support the elderly and vulnerable. Sixth-form pupils’ mentor younger pupils and help them with their reading. They take a lead in promoting charity work.”*

*“The school’s effective promotion of inclusion contributes to pupils’ understanding of values such as mutual respect and tolerance, democracy and the rule of law. This equips them well for life in British society. They become respectful and tolerant young people, ready for their next steps after school. They are appropriately prepared to contribute to society in whatever way they can.”*

*“Pupils receive effective careers advice that follows nationally available benchmarks. This helps pupils to identify their aptitudes, strengths and weaknesses, so they can make informed decisions about their future career or educational choices. Pupils benefit from talks by recent school leavers, external speakers and parents.”*



A photograph of three young women sitting around a light-colored wooden table in a bright, modern living room. They are all smiling and looking at their hands, which are holding playing cards. The room is decorated with colorful triangular bunting flags hanging from the ceiling and a large, warm-toned lamp in the background. The women are dressed in casual attire, including blazers and sweaters. The overall atmosphere is warm and inviting, suggesting a sense of community and belonging.

**“The boarding houses are welcoming and have a strong sense of community.”**

# A Home Away From Home

Boarding

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**“The school is highly effective in meeting boarders’ needs.”**

Our Boarding Houses provide a safe and secure home from home that is full of opportunities and inspires a family atmosphere built on values of loyalty, trust, openness and respect.

With boarders from the local area, across the UK and from around the world: our boarders enjoy complete social, cultural and academic integration into the life of the school, supported by dedicated house parents, matrons and duty tutors who specialise in creating happy and successful boarding communities.

## ISI Key Findings

*“Boarding staff are approachable and friendly... Pupils think highly of boarding staff, who create a welcoming environment so that pupils quickly feel included.”*

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*“The boarding houses are welcoming and have a strong sense of community.... Older boarders are used effectively to mentor younger boarders, so that they feel welcome and at home through individual attention and care.”*

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*“Boarders benefit from a variety of activities and weekend trips. As well as fostering self-confidence, these develop pupils’ interests, enhance their cultural awareness and build on friendships.”*

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*“Boarders learn practical skills, including cooking and laundry, to develop their independence in preparation for later life.”*





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