



Ackworth School
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ISI INSPECTION REPORT GUIDE

January 2026

“Pupils grow in self-confidence and self-esteem in an environment characterised by mutual respect and inclusivity.”

A message from the Head



Following our recent inspection, I am delighted to share the findings of our latest Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) report with you.

The current ISI framework moves away from graded judgements and instead confirms whether schools meet the required standards. While the conclusion may appear simple, it is underpinned by a rigorous inspection process, involving several days of detailed evaluation of leadership and governance, the quality of education, pastoral care, safeguarding, boarding and the wider opportunities available to pupils. I am proud to confirm that Ackworth School has been found to be meeting all standards.

Inspectors recognised the strong sense of purpose that runs through our school, noting that leaders have established a culture of continuous improvement and clear priorities for the ongoing development of Ackworth. Central to this is our unwavering commitment to the wellbeing of every pupil and the way in which our Quaker values are not simply articulated but lived daily by pupils and staff alike.

The report highlights the inclusive and respectful environment in which our pupils grow in self-confidence and self-esteem. Inspectors observed a school community characterised by mutual respect, where pupils are encouraged to express their views, support one another and contribute positively both within the school and beyond. This reflects what we believe lies at the heart of education: nurturing thoughtful, compassionate and confident young people.

Our approach to teaching and learning is recognised through the inspectors' acknowledgement of a well-planned curriculum, enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff, and pupils who make good progress over time. Equally important, the report affirms the strength of our pastoral systems, where highly effective collaboration between tutors, wellbeing staff and safeguarding teams ensures that pupils feel supported, listened to and valued.

Inspectors also noted the positive impact of our boarding community, describing a culture of collaboration, sharing and mutual support that enhances pupils' confidence and independence. Our Junior School and Early Years provision are praised as happy, secure and nurturing environments in which children flourish and develop rapidly from their starting points.

This report is a testament to our whole-school approach: an inclusive, values-led community where pupils' academic development, emotional wellbeing and personal growth are given equal importance. I am immensely proud of what is reflected in these findings and deeply grateful to our staff, pupils, parents, committee members and wider Ackworth community for their continued commitment and support.

Thank you for being part of Ackworth School.

Martyn Beer, Head

A message from the Clerk to the Committee



On behalf of the School Committee, I am delighted to share the outcomes of this Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) inspection and to celebrate the many strengths identified across Ackworth School.

We are particularly pleased that inspectors noted the clear vision for the ongoing development of the school and the way in which this vision is firmly rooted in Ackworth's Quaker values. These values are clearly embedded throughout the school community, shaping an inclusive environment characterised by mutual respect, reflection and care for others.

The School Committee and I are proud not only of the academic progress pupils make, but also of the confidence, resilience and social awareness they develop during their time at Ackworth. Pupils are encouraged to

express their views, support one another and contribute positively to the wider community, preparing them well for life beyond school.

This report affirms the strength of Ackworth School and the shared commitment of committee members, leaders and staff to providing a nurturing, values-led education. I would like to thank everyone in the school community for their continued dedication and high-quality impactful work.

Mary Hartshorne, Clerk to the Committee

Talk Education top 250 School and shortlisted for the Equity, diversity and inclusion category of Talk Education Awards for Innovation in Education

“Equality, diversity and inclusion run through everything it does; and it never stops bringing a modern dynamism to its traditional Quaker values and beliefs.”

“The quiet Quaker ethos and school motto of ‘Non sibi sed omnibus – not for oneself but for all’, is at the heart of the school and this place feels different from the moment you set foot inside. It’s calm, it feels respectful and there’s not a whiff of elitism.”

‘Muddy Stiletto’s’ review

Teaching and Learning

At Ackworth School, learning is rooted in curiosity, reflection and the confidence to think independently.

Guided by our Quaker values, pupils are encouraged to ask questions, listen carefully to others and develop their understanding in an environment characterised by respect and inclusivity. This approach supports pupils in becoming thoughtful, engaged learners who grow in self-confidence as they progress through the school.

Teaching and learning at Ackworth place equal value on academic development and personal growth. A well-planned, age-appropriate curriculum, delivered by knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff, enables pupils to deepen their understanding, transfer skills across subjects and make good progress from their starting points. Opportunities both in and beyond the classroom further enrich pupils' learning and encourage them to explore their interests with confidence.

We are pleased to present below a selection of key findings from our 2026 Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) inspection, which reflect the strength of teaching and learning across the school.



Accolades

- Music and Drama Education Awards 2026 Outstanding School Drama Department
- Current West Yorkshire U19 Football Champions for Second Year



ISI Key Findings on Teaching and Learning – Academic and Co-curricular

- The curriculum is well planned and regularly reviewed by leaders to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils. Based on the national curriculum, leaders ensure that the age-appropriate curriculum consistently enables pupils to expand their knowledge of increasingly complex ideas.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subjects they teach. The most effective teachers use their knowledge of pupils' individual needs to plan lessons that both support and extend their understanding, skills and knowledge.
- There is a suitable framework for assessment in place. Leaders use assessment data to evaluate pupils' progress from their starting points and to identify pupils who need additional support. As a result, pupils make good progress over time and typically achieve well in public examinations.
- An extensive programme of co-curricular activities complements the academic curriculum. A wide range of clubs, societies, sport, music and drama are well integrated into the school day and challenge pupils to develop their learning in different directions.



| Pastoral

At Ackworth School, pupils thrive in a caring and respectful community where wellbeing, inclusivity and kindness are central to school life.

Guided by our Quaker values, pupils are encouraged to support one another, take responsibility and contribute positively to the wider community.

Strong pastoral systems, working closely with safeguarding and wellbeing teams, ensure that pupils feel safe, listened to and well supported. Pupils develop a clear understanding of their emotional and physical wellbeing and are confident in seeking support when needed. Within this secure and nurturing environment, pupils are able to grow in self-confidence, resilience and independence, and are encouraged to explore their potential.

Accolades

- International Forums of Inclusion Practitioners (IFIP) Global Inclusion Award 2026 Winner

ISI Key Findings on Pastoral and Safeguarding

- Leaders have embedded a well-structured pastoral support system that is highly effective in promoting pupils' emotional wellbeing. Tutors have a deep knowledge of their pupils' needs and know how to support them.
- The pastoral, safeguarding and specialist staff from the wellbeing centre collaborate highly effectively. They put in place appropriate individual support for pupils and ensure that the school's curriculum provision enables pupils to learn about how to enhance their own wellbeing.
- Pupils grow in self-confidence and self-esteem in an environment characterised by mutual respect and inclusivity.
- Leaders have embedded a school culture in which the highest priority is to safeguard pupils. This robust culture is enhanced by the well-structured and highly visible safeguarding team.
- Safeguarding procedures are implemented robustly. Staff have a clear understanding that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Pupils are fully aware of the many trusted adults in whom they can confide and they are taught how to promote their own safety, including when online.

"I have nothing but praise for the school. The pastoral care at school is exceptional, the school is very well run and organised. I feel that the teaching is of a very high standard and that the teachers genuinely care about the pupils."

Current Parent



Boarding

Boarding at Ackworth School promotes independence within a caring, inclusive and supportive community.

Boarders are encouraged to collaborate, support one another and develop confidence in a culture characterised by mutual respect.

A strong emphasis is placed on wellbeing, balance and personal responsibility. Through shared activities, co-curricular opportunities and leadership roles, boarders develop social confidence, independence and a strong sense of belonging.

ISI Key Findings on Boarding

- Leaders in boarding promote a culture of collaboration, sharing and mutual support within the boarding house. This has a positive effect on boarders' self-esteem and confidence.
- The boarding house provides an inclusive and friendly environment. Well-trained staff help boarders to maintain a healthy balance of work and leisure and ensure that their welfare is supported consistently and effectively.
- Boarders work effectively, both independently and collaboratively, during boarding time. This has a positive effect on boarders' progress and on relevant skills such as managing time carefully.

Accolades

- Shortlisted for Independent School Parent Magazine Independent Boarding School of the Year 2023



“I am so pleased we chose Ackworth School, it’s truly a breath of fresh air to see the children flourish and be guided so well.”

Current Parent



Junior

From the early years onwards, Ackworth School provides a happy, calm and secure learning environment where children are valued as individuals.

A broad and engaging curriculum supports children's interests and enables them to make good progress from their starting points.

Staff take time to know each child well, nurturing positive relationships and supporting the development of confidence, social skills and self-awareness. Within this caring environment, children are encouraged to explore, collaborate and achieve their personal best.

ISI Key Findings on our Junior School

- The early years setting is a happy and secure learning environment. The curriculum supports the needs and interests of the children, enabling them to make good progress from their starting points.
- Children flourish in a nurturing environment where they are valued as an individual. Children are supported to become more self-aware and learn how to develop friendships and collaborate with other children.
- Leaders in the early years establish a calm setting in which positive relationships and kindness between children is highly visible.

“The early years setting is a happy and secure learning environment. The curriculum supports the needs and interests of the children, enabling them to make good progress from their starting points.”

Accolades

- Shortlisted for Independent School Parent Magazine Independent Prep School of the Year 2023
- Awarded Bronze Picture News Impact Award in 2023 and 2024 for Year 6 Business Enterprise
- Winners of the National Thomas Franks Great Food Waste Challenge 2025
- Woodland Trust's Green Tree School's Bronze Award





This is my
HAPPY SPACE



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Read the full
report here



Go Ackworth Go further