



LEIGHTON PARK
FOUNDED 1890

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE (ISI)
REPORT**

PUBLISHED JANUARY 2025



A GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Our latest ISI report is a resounding endorsement of the phenomenal work taking place at Leighton Park and highlights the School’s considerable strengths in Quaker values, outstanding teaching, and our clear sense of purpose. On the back of winning the Independent School of the Year Award 2023-24, we are all delighted that the School has met every regulatory standard and that the report is notably positive and rich in commendations.

Some may recall our previous ISI Report, published in January 2022, when we were awarded ‘Excellent’ in all areas. The ISI no longer provides single-word judgements, but they do have the option of designating a school with a ‘significant strength’ – a distinction that is rarely given. I am thrilled that Leighton Park has received this recognition, particularly in an area that defines us: our values.

I encourage you to read the report and hope you will find it as affirming as we do. While we take great pride in these findings, we are never complacent and we remain committed to the ongoing enhancement of the student experience.

Luke Walters

Luke Walters
Head of Leighton Park, from September 2025



“Leighton Park’s Significant Strength is our Quaker values and how we give them currency and purpose. Our students benefit from exceptional personal growth, an assured sense of who they are, and a determination to achieve their remarkable potential.”

Matthew L S Judd, Head, 2018-2025

“I am very pleased that the Inspectors have recognised and celebrated the impact that the Quaker ethos has on our learning community. With the Quaker values integral to all of our daily activities and embedded in our ongoing relationships both within and beyond the school, they give our students the confidence and capabilities to become the changemakers of the future.”

Eme Dean-Lewis, Chair of Governors

SIGNIFICANT STRENGTH: OUR VALUES

135 years ago Leighton Park was founded on Quaker principles that today are considered best educational practice for any school; respect, integrity, simplicity, equality, peace, truth, and sustainability. Quakers believe in the immense potential of each individual.

We draw inspiration from the impressive history of Quakers who set up forward-thinking companies like Cadbury and Rowntree; very successful businesses that also treated staff and suppliers fairly and created social good. Equally important, Quakers helped found leading charities and campaigning organisations, such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Oxfam and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

ISI key finding:

Leadership at the school demonstrates a strong commitment to pupils’ wellbeing, underpinned by the integration of Quaker values into all aspects of school life. This commitment is evident in the culture of mutual respect fostered across the community. Daily practices such as silent reflection during lunch and the organisation of Collects (assemblies) and Meetings for Worship create a calm and purposeful atmosphere, enhancing pupils’ sense of belonging. (9)

“It remains a Quaker-run school as the majority of governors are Quakers and, although no member of the Friends remains on the staff and only penny numbers of pupils are Quakers, the school lives by and exudes those gentle, civilised and socially responsible values.”

Good Schools Guide

“The Quaker values that this school encourages us to follow have changed how I act inside and outside of school. Overall it makes me happier and much more relaxed.”

Max, Year 9

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TEACHING AND LEARNING

ISI key findings:

Leaders provide a broad and balanced curriculum that caters effectively to the needs and aptitudes of all pupils. (20)

Leaders' strategic use of data ensures pupils are supported and challenged appropriately. (21)

Teaching is purposeful, well-paced and incorporates effective methodologies.... The curriculum focuses on broadening pupils' perspectives and fosters thoughtful discussions. (23)

Pupils take initiative in their learning, demonstrate autonomy in completing tasks and approach complex projects with confidence. (24)

Teachers balance praise with constructive criticism, fostering an environment where pupils respond to feedback and refine their skills. (25)

Pupils gain knowledge and skills that prepare them for academic and professional success. A focus on critical thinking and ethical decision making is evident in initiatives such as the Oakleaf Diploma and service-learning programmes. (30)

In its most recent analysis, the UK Government found that Leighton Park Sixth Form leavers achieved the best academic progress in Berkshire. We are one of only eight schools to have always been in the top 100 schools in England.

As an IB World School, Leighton Park offers the IB Diploma as well as A Levels in Sixth Form.

Unusual subject options available including Engineering, Global Perspectives, Mandarin, Dance, Music Technology, Creative Digital Media, TV & Film Production and Food Technology.



“The respect between teachers and students creates a great learning environment, where everyone is valued.”

Annabel, Year 10



“One of the biggest things LP did for me was push me to become a kinder person; a more selfless, dependable person. I think all aspects of the School encouraged this - competitiveness in House Music, reflection and the general ethos - all directed me to be kinder to others and the world around me.”

Alex, Head Boy 2023-24

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FUTURE READINESS

ISI key findings:

The Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) programme is integral to the curriculum, encouraging pupils to take initiative in projects that benefit society. (47)

Initiatives such as the ‘Aspiring High’ club prepare pupils for competitive university applications, while the Oakleaf Diploma combines practical life skills with ethical decision making, equipping pupils for future challenges. (49)

Pupils are given dedicated time to pause, think, and reflect on themselves, their identity and their interactions with others, promoting self-awareness and empathy. The act of reflecting as a whole school fosters a sense of shared purpose, emphasising collective responsibility. (53)

Leaders’ commitment to developing pupils’ communication skills and ability to sustain positive relationships fosters pupils’ self-esteem and confidence. (33)

Partnerships with over 25 local schools provide pupils with opportunities to lead workshops in music, art and dance, enhancing their creativity and cultural awareness. (52)

National winner of the ISA Award for Future Readiness 2024-25 and the Award for Outstanding Local Community Involvement 2021-22.

90+ co-curricular hobbies across sport, music, creative arts and academic enrichment.

Dedicated Careers department provides tailored and extensive support.

Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) personal development programme in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and Lower Sixth, linking to the IB Diploma Programme.

Our Oakleaf Diploma prepares Sixth Formers for university and beyond with dedicated curriculum time for developing the practical capabilities and softer skills necessary for success in adulthood.

Mentoring and leadership opportunities for students such as wellbeing ambassadors, the Female Lead ambassadors, sports leaders and prefects.



“I love how in your pupils, we see the future and I am filled with hope that the way you develop your pupils to look outward and see how they in the big and small actions can change the world.”

Ali Crooks, Head, New Christchurch Primary School



“When you are at the school, the integrity and respect embedded in LP’s culture seems very normal but in reality, it is something special that doesn’t exist everywhere.”

Olivia, Old Leightonian



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SCHOOL LIFE AND PASTORAL CARE

ISI Report says:

Leaders at the school embed Quaker values of integrity, respect and kindness across all aspects of school life, fostering a strong sense of community and inclusion. Pupils are supported to develop empathy and compassion through co-curricular activities, leadership and mentoring. (46)

Leaders establish clear behaviour expectations based on Quaker values, promoting respect and inclusivity, and reducing bullying. A well-defined behaviour policy and... robust sanctions system addresses incidents swiftly. (40)

Leaders balance academic and pastoral priorities. Pupils are supported well, with access to online programmes and regular mental health checks, ensuring comprehensive care. (43)

Leaders ensure that pupils have access to resources to support their emotional wellbeing. The wellbeing suite, multisensory room and therapy dog are popular with pupils who are able to access this provision to support their pastoral needs. (38)

The physical education (PE) curriculum is designed to ensure high engagement, with pupils motivated to refine techniques and develop tactical strategies. (37)

Food provision is of high quality, with a variety of nutritious meals and snacks available, contributing to pupils' positive physical and emotional health. (36)

Pupils demonstrate a well-developed understanding of equality and embrace diversity. (50)

Students are part of small tutor groups of 10 or 11 students and see their tutors twice every day, providing exceptional support.

Students belong to one of 4 Houses for competition, community and charitable activities.

Our Music for All approach welcomes all students to enjoy the benefits of listening to and playing music, with 60% of students learning an instrument at school.

Students can choose from 30 different sports with Games two afternoons every week and our extensive the co-curricular programme.

Our Sound for Soul wellbeing programme brings together our sector-leading pastoral care with our incredible music department.

We have 20 staff trained as mental health first aiders, a school counsellor and a team of nursing staff in our medical centre as well as our student wellbeing ambassadors.

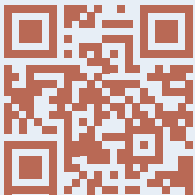


The Quaker ethos is lived through the way the School operates and through the processes in the School, promoting peace, equality and integrity. This includes many periods of reflection which help me stay present and not get overwhelmed as well as giving me time to be grateful for the opportunities I have and the people around me.

Rhys, Upper Sixth



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BOARDING

ISI key findings:

Boarders benefit from a well-maintained environment that fosters independence and supports wellbeing. Effective induction arrangements ease transitions, while regular meetings allow boarders to voice concerns and influence their boarding experience positively. (7)

Boarding provision is managed with professionalism and care supported by experienced staff who demonstrate a thorough knowledge of pupils' needs. (14)

A variety of activities are available to boarders at the weekend, and pupils' participation is high. Those who choose to stay in the house are well supervised and encouraged to use their time for socialising and recreational activity. (31)

Food provision is of a high quality, with a variety of nutritious meals and snacks available, contributing to pupils' positive physical and emotional health. (36)

Boarders are able to share their views on the quality of boarding and ideas for improvements, and leaders are receptive and responsive to this. (41)

The boarding community is perfect, All of the people are very nice and friendly. They always help me and they always know how to make me laugh.

Tautvydas, Lower Sixth Boarder from Lithuania

Comfortable boarding facilities offer accommodation to Senior Girls (age 14-18) in Reckitt House, Senior Boys (age 14-18) in School House and co-educational boarding for Juniors (age 11-14) in Fryer House.

There are five boarding tutors resident in each boarding house and an on-site health centre staffed by a team of qualified nurses ensuring exceptional care and support are available 24/7.

Exploring the UK through the trips programme takes boarders to new and exciting destinations such as London, Windsor, Oxford, Winchester and the south coast.

Our weekend and evening trips ensure boarders enjoy family-type activities such as bowling, go-karting, go ape, cinema trips and shopping.

Indoor games such as table football, pool and table tennis are popular alongside board games, karaoke sessions, movie nights and access to house kitchens for baking and snacks.



“The Quaker Values of the school have made me more patient and confident and have made the School feel very inclusive and welcoming which helped when I first joined. I feel that everyone is one big family and my experience has made me take a more positive outlook of life.”

Rohan, Year 10



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AWARDS AND ACCOLADES



2024 Won the Future Readiness Award from the Independent Schools Association (ISA)

2024 Finalist - Most Inclusive School in Muddy Awards

2024 Highly Commended - Giving Something Back in Muddy Awards

2024 Feminista Action Gold Award for combatting sexism in our society

2024 First senior school in the UK to Partner with HerGameToo, campaigning against sexism in sport



2023-24 Won Senior School of the Year in the Independent Schools Association Awards (ISA)

2023-24 Finalist – Independent Senior School of the Year in the TES Schools Awards



2023 Co-curricular football partnership with Chelsea Football Club

2022-23 National Leader for Pupil Personal Development, winning the ISA Award for Excellence

2022-2025 Recognised for exceptional pastoral care, achieving the Wellbeing Award for Schools, accredited by the National Children's Bureau



2022 Excellent in all areas, the top grade, in our Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) report

2021 Won the national ISA Award for Outstanding Local Community Involvement

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https://bit.ly/LP_ISI_2025



Leighton Park School, Shinfield Road, Reading RG2 7ED
T: +44 (0)118 987 9608 F: +44 (0)118 987 9625 W: www.leightonpark.com

@leightonparkschool