

School inspection report

16 to 18 September 2025

Ghyll Royd School and Pre-School

Greystone Manor

Ilkley Road

Burley-in-Wharfdale

Ilkley

West Yorkshire

LS29 7HW

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 do not demonstrate the necessary skills and knowledge to actively promote and safeguard pupils' wellbeing in all areas.
2. Leaders do not ensure consistently effective identification and management of potential risks. In particular, they do not ensure that the regular risk assessments regarding fire and water safety are conducted or that suitable checks of asbestos management and gas services are carried out. Not all hazardous materials are stored safely.
3. A suitable attendance policy is not published on the school's website. The school does not use correct codes in attendance registers. The school does not inform the local authority when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times of transition.
4. Leaders do not ensure consistently effective supervision of pupils, particularly when they arrive at school each morning and when children in Reception are eating their morning snacks.
5. Leaders do not ensure that all required pre-employment checks are always completed before staff commence working at the school.
6. Leaders set out the school's aims clearly and take actions designed to create an environment in which each pupil is valued. Parents receive appropriate and regular information about their children's attainment and progress.
7. Pupils of all ages, including children in the early years, benefit from a wide-ranging and stimulating curriculum taught by knowledgeable staff. Typically, well-planned teaching promotes pupils' progress and builds their confidence and self-esteem. Teachers provide pupils with the skills to work both independently and collaboratively. Teachers' written and verbal guidance supports pupils' understanding of how to improve their work further and contributes positively to their good progress. However, leaders' planning of human and social education is not effectively balanced, with the result that pupils study more historical than geographical topics. Pupils take part enthusiastically in the extra-curricular programme which enables them to build on their existing skills and interests and acquire new ones.
8. Leaders conduct regular fire drills, commission regular servicing of fire safety and electrical equipment and provide effectively for pupils' medical needs.
9. The carefully planned personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme supports pupils' understanding of how to build healthy relationships and live healthy lives. Pupils' physical development is promoted by suitable physical education (PE) and games teaching from Nursery to Year 6.
10. Leaders promote pupils' social, economic and political understanding successfully. Pupils learn about how government and the legislature work. Through the elections of school councillors and the head boy and head girl, pupils experience democracy in action.
11. Pupils' involvement in community life is promoted by fundraising for local charities and responsibility for maintaining the planting around the local cenotaph. At all ages, leaders give pupils opportunities to take on positions of responsibility to prepare them to be active citizens.

12. Leaders with safeguarding responsibilities respond effectively whenever safeguarding concerns are raised. They work closely with external agencies to provide prompt support when required for pupils affected by safeguarding issues.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are not 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 not met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are not met.

Areas for action

The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:

- demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school Standards are consistently met
- fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the independent school Standards are consistently met and
- actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils

so that:

- potential risks are identified and managed effectively
- a suitable attendance policy is published on the school's website
- all required health and safety checks are carried out in a timely manner so that the premises are maintained to a suitable standard
- an up-to-date fire risk assessment is in place
- pupils are effectively supervised throughout the school day, particularly when they arrive at school each morning and when children in Reception are eating their morning snacks
- correct codes are used in the attendance registers
- all required pre-employment checks are carried out on staff before they begin working at the school
- local authorities are consistently informed of pupils joining or leaving the school at non-standard transition points.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with an appropriate balance of historical and geographical studies.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

13. Proprietorial oversight is not effective. It does not ensure that leaders have the skills and knowledge required to follow current statutory guidance so that the school meets all the Standards and that pupils' wellbeing is always promoted effectively.
14. Leaders do not ensure that all potential risks are identified and managed effectively. For example, they do not ensure that all potentially harmful substances are securely stored.
15. Leaders review the effectiveness of their work and take appropriate action to bring about improvement in pupils' experiences. They invest in supporting pupils' wellbeing, including their social, emotional and mental health. A revised system of pastoral oversight supports staff in responding sensitively and effectively to pupils' emotional needs. Suitable training supports teaching staff to develop pupils' spoken and written communication skills successfully.
16. Leaders take effective action to create and maintain a welcoming, inclusive environment in line with the school's aims. Leaders communicate these aims and the school's core values, such as courtesy and co-operation, successfully so that they are promoted by staff and known by pupils and parents.
17. Leaders provide staff with appropriate risk assessment training, including at induction. They ensure that staff draw up appropriate risk assessments which cover educational activities, including trips. These risk assessments provide appropriate measures to minimise the potential risks that are identified. Staff also provide suitable care plans and risk assessments for any pupils whose welfare is identified as being at risk.
18. Leaders ensure that the school meets its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. They work closely with external agencies, including to provide appropriate support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They also implement a suitable accessibility plan, which is revised and updated regularly. Leaders ensure that no aspects of the school's provision discriminate against any pupils.
19. Effective leadership in the early years provides staff with suitable support and guidance so they can plan an interesting and stimulating curriculum for the children. Leaders' careful oversight of the early years ensures that well-planned use of resources and of the indoor and outdoor learning environment promotes the children's social, emotional and intellectual development. Leaders support the children's acquisition of new knowledge, skills and understanding successfully.
20. Leaders provide parents with most required information. The school website contains an appropriate complaints policy which leaders adhere to effectively, maintaining suitable records of both formal and informal complaints. Parents receive regular, helpful written reports on their children's progress and attainment, including guidance about how further progress can be achieved. There are also termly opportunities for parents to have formal meetings with staff.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

21. Standards are not met consistently with respect to risk assessment, health and safety, fire safety, the supervision of pupils, admissions and attendance, maintenance and safeguarding.

22. As a result, Standards relating to governance, leadership and management are not met.

23. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

24. Leaders provide pupils with a broad curriculum which is appropriately challenging and supportive of pupils' differing abilities and needs. Schemes of work plan pupils' learning effectively to enable their knowledge and understanding to be developed systematically. Pupils learn Spanish and French and benefit from a well-planned humanities programme which enables them to see links between history, geography and religious studies. Schemes of work for music and art, including ceramics, enable pupils to successfully develop appreciation of and skills in the creative arts. Across the curriculum, pupils are supported to take their learning beyond national curriculum expectations. However, study of the humanities focuses more on history than geography, with the result that pupils have fewer opportunities to develop their geographical knowledge to the same extent.
25. Teachers support pupils to become resilient learners with the ability to work both collaboratively and on their own. Pupils learn to conduct independent research, such as about different history topics and then explain their work in question-and-answer sessions with their peers. They also learn to work together effectively, such as when engaged in group activities in English.
26. Typically, effective teaching enables pupils to build their knowledge and skills successfully in the principal subjects. Knowledgeable teachers apply appropriate strategies and make use of pertinent resources consistently effectively to support pupils' progress and engagement in lessons. Appropriate teaching methods in history, for example, enable older pupils to discuss arguments for and against the principles of communism and capitalism. In art, younger pupils engage in activities well-designed to develop their understanding of colour and different practical skills. Teachers support pupils to take the next steps in their learning through sensitive, helpful feedback about their work and how to improve it further. Pupils respond positively to their teachers' guidance.
27. Early years leaders provide children with a carefully planned programme of activities through which they successfully build their knowledge and skills in literacy, numeracy and oral communication. Staff work alongside children to model activities, such as writing, and to use appropriate language in a highly effective way. Staff use well-chosen, engaging activities to build children's understanding of numbers up to ten, including how to order numbers and recognise number patterns. They also help them learn phonic sounds made by letters.
28. Through assessment on entry and regular observations by teachers, leaders successfully identify pupils who have SEND early in their time at the school. Well-tailored support from class teachers and teaching assistants during lessons enables these pupils to make good progress.
29. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) currently in the school do not require any additional support for their English. However, the school's approach to early identification of need enables staff to provide support for pupils who speak EAL, should this be required.
30. A detailed assessment framework enables teachers to track pupils' progress effectively. Leaders and teachers analyse results from standardised tests and regular assessment of pupils' work, effort and achievement grades in meetings about pupils' progress. Leaders and teachers use this information to plan the next steps in the pupils' learning and provide support to pupils with higher prior attainment and those who find tasks challenging or experience difficulty understanding concepts.

31. Before school, during lunch break and at the end of the school day, staff provide pupils with an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils develop enthusiasm for cross-country running and take part in local and national competitions. Staff run clubs for a variety of other hobbies, such as art, model-making and playing in different musical ensembles. These activities enable pupils to acquire new interests and develop their skills in these areas successfully.

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

32. All the relevant Standards are met.

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

33. Leaders do not ensure the suitable checking of water safety, gas services or asbestos at the school.
34. Leaders do not ensure that an up-to-date fire risk assessment is in place in line with the school's policy.
35. Leaders do not ensure that the correct codes are used consistently when completing the attendance registers, or that a suitable attendance policy is published on the school's website.
36. Leaders do not always ensure appropriate supervision of pupils. Staff do not supervise children in Reception effectively while they are eating snacks. The supervision of pupils when they arrive at school each morning is not effective.
37. Leaders successfully create a supportive environment based on the school's core values. Effective pastoral care is complemented by leaders' and staff's modelling of courteous and co-operative behaviour. Assemblies, form periods and the award of house points for acts of kindness embed these values effectively so that pupils learn to appreciate tolerance and respect for others. For example, weekly celebration assemblies commend a pupil from each class for showing kindness and tolerance to others. Leaders' and staff's respectful approach to pupils and their valuing of pupils' effort, behaviour and achievement contribute to pupils' development of self-confidence and self-esteem.
38. Staff are trained in behaviour management. They support pupils' typically good conduct through the consistent application of school rules. Staff respond promptly to any behavioural incidents, keep detailed records and communicate effectively with parents, when this is appropriate. Leaders implement an effective anti-bullying strategy, using assemblies and a termly anti-bullying day to support pupils' understanding of why different forms of bullying are harmful and unacceptable. As a result, bullying is rare.
39. Leaders provide carefully planned and comprehensive relationships and sex education (RSE), which is taught successfully through the PSHE programme. This meets the requirements of current statutory guidance and covers suitable topics such as different family structures, features of healthy relationships, privacy and puberty. RSE is taught in an age-appropriate way. Leaders consult appropriately with parents about the RSE policy and invite them to ask questions and share their ideas with their children's teachers.
40. PSHE lessons support pupils in managing their physical and mental wellbeing. Carefully planned lessons teach pupils about healthy eating and managing risks. Pupils learn how to control their feelings and to understand the positive connections between physical and mental wellbeing. Mindfulness lessons and workshops with mental health specialists provide pupils with effective strategies with which to manage their emotions and any worries they might have.
41. Pupils learn about the major world faiths in well-planned religious education lessons. Workshops with the local authority inter-faith team help pupils to reflect on different religious beliefs. As a result, they learn to respect other people's values and appreciate the spiritual aspects of life.

42. Staff supervise pupils effectively during extra-curricular activities and most other occasions. Leaders ensure that the required adult-to-child ratios are maintained in the early years.
43. Effective teaching of physical education (PE) and a well-managed games programme support pupils in developing their physical and sporting abilities. Specialists provide pupils in Reception to Year 6 with weekly swimming lessons that develop their skills in this area. Gymnastic activities and games, such as handball and 'ultimate frisbee', help pupils develop their agility, balance and co-ordination. Pupils learn about the importance of teamwork and how to use different tactics in particular sports, including when competing with other schools in local, regional and national competitions.
44. Early years staff support children in activities which develop their physical skills successfully. Creative activities using chalk and modelling dough, 'cooking' in the mud-kitchen, and riding toy vehicles develop their co-ordination, physical strength and teamwork skills. In PE lessons, children learn about how the body moves and what happens to their bodies when they exercise.
45. Leaders ensure that the admissions register is maintained as required by current statutory guidance.
46. Leaders ensure there is suitable accommodation to meet pupils' medical needs and that any medicines are safely stored. Suitably qualified staff trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid, support pupils who are injured or unwell and administer first aid and medication appropriately when required.
47. Leaders ensure that regular fire evacuation drills are conducted so that pupils know how to respond in the event of an emergency. Leaders implement regular checks of fire safety equipment and conduct the required electrical safety checks.

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

48. Standards are not met consistently with respect to health and safety, fire safety, the supervision of pupils, admissions and attendance and maintenance.
49. As a result, Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are not met.
- 50. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.**

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

51. Leaders display the school's core values in every classroom and promote these values through assemblies, form periods, PSHE education and religious studies (RS) lessons. Pupils explore the concept of human rights and learn how different groups have campaigned for democracy and fair treatment. Teachers ensure pupils learn about the diverse nature of British society and the harm caused by discrimination and intolerance.
52. In PSHE, staff teach pupils about the British political system. Pupils learn how members of parliament are elected and the different roles of the legislature and government. They also learn that democracy is based upon individual liberty, respect for other people's beliefs and their right to express them freely. As a result, they develop their understanding of the importance of democracy and the rule of law.
53. Elections to different roles in school further promote pupils' understanding of democracy. Pupils vote for those who will represent them on the school council and eco council and also elect the head pupils.
54. Staff teach pupils about the roles played by key institutions in society. Pupils learn about banks, the services provided by hospitals and doctors' surgeries and the part played by the Church of England in local community life.
55. Staff in the early years implement consistent daily routines with the children, which put them at ease so that they can learn and play constructively. Careful supervision of children walking up the stairs and climbing on outdoor play equipment supports development of their independence. Staff teach children to listen, share and take turns and explore ideas of right and wrong in the picture books they read with them. As a result, children learn to treat others fairly.
56. The school develops pupils' sense of social responsibility through opportunities to contribute positively to school life by taking on different leadership roles. Older pupils act as head boy and head girl, lead the school council and support teachers in managing the sports programme. Older pupils act as buddies for younger ones. They help organise lunch so that pupils sit in house groups and older pupils serve younger ones. Early years children benefit from age-appropriate experience of responsibility through taking it in turns to be line-leaders as the class moves around the school.
57. Leaders encourage pupils to contribute to the local community. Pupils take part in the annual Remembrance Day service in the nearby town and are responsible for maintaining the planting around the cenotaph there. They work with charitable organisations and the local food bank to support people who live nearby.
58. The school develops pupils' understanding of financial and economic matters effectively. In the early years, children use counters and stones as coins during role-play shopping. In Reception to Year 6, a structured programme addresses themes such as how to use money, managing money, and the different ways in which having or not having money might affect us. Staff support pupils in organising schemes to raise funds for local and national charities. Members of the school council take responsibility for managing the school tuckshop.

59. Leaders support pupils as they prepare for the next stage in their education. They organise several 'moving up' days at the end of each academic year so that pupils can visit their new classroom and spend time with their form teacher for the following year. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 take part in activities designed to prepare them for entrance examinations for selective schools and receive guidance about likely expectations as they make ready to move to their secondary or senior schools.

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

60. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

- 61. Governors do not provide effective oversight of all arrangements for safeguarding.
- 62. Leaders do not inform the local authority about changes to the admissions register when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times.
- 63. Leaders do not ensure that all required pre-employment checks are consistently completed before staff begin working at the school.
- 64. The safeguarding policy reflects statutory guidance and is available to current and prospective parents on the school's website. Leaders responsible for safeguarding are suitably trained for their role. They ensure that members of staff receive appropriate training, including at induction, and regular updates about safeguarding issues at the weekly staff meetings. Leaders and staff respond to any safeguarding concerns in an appropriate and timely way.
- 65. Leaders responsible for safeguarding maintain effective links with external agencies, including the local authority, children's services and the police. They ensure that any required referrals to these agencies are made promptly. Leaders responsible for safeguarding maintain detailed records of safeguarding concerns, referrals and the school's actions in response to these.
- 66. Leaders ensure that safeguarding is on the agenda for all staff and governing body meetings. They maintain an accurate single central record of appointments (SCR).
- 67. Leaders provide pupils with appropriate guidance so that they know how to stay safe online. Leaders ensure an appropriate internet filtering and monitoring system is in place to manage and oversee online activity on school devices. They test this system regularly and respond promptly to notifications of any potentially inappropriate internet use.
- 68. Governors undertake safeguarding training and conduct an annual review of the school's safeguarding arrangements. The safeguarding governor visits the school to review documentation and meet with members of staff prior to each termly governing body meeting. Governors review and approve the safeguarding policy at the start of each academic year and check that the school responds appropriately whenever any safeguarding concerns are raised.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 69. Standards are not met consistently with respect to admissions and safer recruitment.
- 70. As a result, Standards relating to safeguarding are not met.
- 71. Not all the relevant Standards are met. A schedule of unmet Standards is included in the report.**

Schedule of unmet Standards

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

The following standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR ¹ Part 3, paragraph 16	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –
16(a)	the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
16(b)	appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
ISSR Part 8, paragraph 34(1)	The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school –
34(1)(a)	demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
34(1)(b)	fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
34(1)(c)	actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.
EYFS ² 3.91	Providers must ensure that they take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children in their care are not exposed to risks and must be able to demonstrate how they are managing risks. Providers must determine where it is helpful to make some written assessments in relation to specific issues, to inform staff practice, and to demonstrate how they are managing risks if asked by parents and/or carers or inspectors. Risk assessments should identify aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis, when and by whom those aspects will be checked, and how the risk will be removed or minimised.

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

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 11	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.

¹ The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('ISSR')

² Early years foundation stage statutory framework ('EYFS')

ISSR Part 3, paragraph 12	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 14	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that pupils are properly supervised through appropriate deployment of school staff.
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 15	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006.
ISSR Part 5, paragraph 25	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
EYFS 3.42	Staffing arrangements must meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. Providers must ensure that children are adequately supervised, including whilst eating, and decide how to use staff to ensure children's needs are met. Providers must inform parents and/or carers about how staff are organised, and, when relevant and practical, aim to involve them in these decisions.
EYFS 3.63	Whilst children are eating there should always be a member of staff in the room with a valid paediatric first aid certificate for a full course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A.
EYFS 3.79	Providers must ensure that their premises, including overall floor space and outdoor spaces, are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children cared for and the activities provided on the premises. Providers must comply with requirements of health and safety legislation, including fire safety and hygiene requirements.
EYFS 3.80	Providers must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff, and others on the premises in the case of fire or any other emergency. Providers must have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An emergency evacuation procedure • Appropriate fire detection and control equipment (for example, fire alarms, smoke detectors fire blankets and /or fire extinguishers) which is in working order. Fire exits must be clearly identifiable, and fire doors free of obstruction and easily opened from inside.

Safeguarding

The following Standards in this section of the Framework are not met.

Paragraph number	Standard
ISSR Part 3, paragraph 7	The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that –

7(a)	arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
7(b)	such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
EYFS 3.13	Providers must ensure that people looking after children are suitable; they must have the relevant qualifications, training and have passed any required checks to fulfil their roles. Providers must take appropriate steps to verify qualifications, including cases where physical evidence cannot be produced. Providers must also ensure that any person who may have regular contact with children (for example, someone living or working on the same premises the early years provision is provided), is suitable.

School details

School	Ghyll Royd School and Pre-School
Department for Education number	380/6017
Registered charity number	1070235
Address	Ghyll Royd School and Pre-School Greystone Manor Ilkley Road Burley-in-Wharfedale Ilkley West Yorkshire LS29 7HW
Phone number	01943 865575
Email address	information@ghyllroydschool.co.uk
Website	www.ghyllroydschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Ghyll Royd School Ltd
Chair	Mr David Cunningham
Headteacher	Mr David Martin
Acting headteacher	Mr Hadley Nicholson
Age range	2 to 11
Number of pupils	96
Date of previous inspection	4 to 6 October 2022

Information about the school

72. Ghyll Royd School and Pre-School is a co-educational day school located near Ilkley in West Yorkshire. The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. The acting headteacher took up his post in June 2025.
73. There are 35 pupils in the early years comprising three Nursery classes and one Reception class.
74. The school has identified nine pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). No pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
75. The school has identified a very small proportion of pupils as speaking English as an additional language.
76. The school states its aim is to provide a nurturing, highly engaging educational environment in which each child is valued and encouraged to reach their potential.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

16 to 18 September 2025

77. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

78. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the acting headteacher, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

79. 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**.

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For more information, please visit isi.net