



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

ST TERESA'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL

JUNE 2017



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

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| School | St Teresa's Preparatory School | | | |
| DfE number | 936/6571 | | | |
| Registered charity number | 1095103 | | | |
| Address | Beech Avenue Effingham Hill Dorking Surrey RH5 6ST | | | |
| Telephone number | 01372 453456 | | | |
| Email address | prepinfo@st-teresas.com | | | |
| Headteacher | Mrs Sarah Conrad | | | |
| Chair of governors | Mr Michael Bray | | | |
| Age range | 2 to 11 | | | |
| Number of pupils on roll | 205 | | | |
| | Boys | 11 | Girls | 194 |
| | Day pupils | 205 | Boarders | 0 |
| | EYFS | 35 | Juniors | 170 |
| Inspection dates | 14 to 15 June 2017 | | | |

PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any unmet standards identified at their previous inspection.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors' excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registrations, assembly, hymn practice and a school council meeting. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Mrs Jane Chesterfield | Reporting inspector |
| Mr Richard Green | Team inspector (Former deputy head, IAPS school) |
| Mr Kit Thompson | Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school) |

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 St Teresa's Preparatory School is an independent day and boarding school for girls aged between 2 and 11 years. The school accepts boys in its Nursery but takes girls only from Reception onwards. The school is a charitable trust which is administered by a board of governors. It was founded in 1963 and moved in 2009 to new buildings on the site of its senior school, which was founded in 1928 as a Roman Catholic day and boarding school for girls. The governing body and the bursar are common to both schools.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection in 2011, the school has created new facilities, including a tennis academy and an equestrian centre, both of which are shared with the senior school. The current headteacher took up her post in September 2015 and has restructured the senior leadership team.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to encourage pupils to rejoice in and do well through the pursuit of academic excellence throughout the curriculum and beyond. It seeks to provide support, encouragement and challenge, so that pupils realise their potential and are well prepared for the future. It also aims to promote high standards of personal behaviour and the development of moral and spiritual values. These values are: faith, character, community, compassion and intellect.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils on entry is above average. The school has identified four pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for two pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified 45 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 58 other pupils because of their special talents in sport, music, drama and art.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

| <i>School name</i> | <i>National Curriculum name</i> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Nursery (2 to 3 years) | Nursery |
| Pre-reception(3 to 4 years) | Nursery |

2. KEY FINDINGS

2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Pupils display strong intellectual curiosity and their study skills are highly developed across the school.
- Pupils of all ages exhibit a love for learning and are keen to take the initiative and be independent in their tasks.
- Pupils reach above average standards of attainment across the curriculum, especially in English and mathematics.
- Pupils are highly successful outside the classroom, particularly in speech and drama, and in music.

2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of spirituality and appreciation of the non-material aspects of life.
- Pupils have a clear moral code and a notably strong understanding of right and wrong.
- Pupils are proud of their school and are keen to make their contribution to the school and the wider community.
- Pupils show great respect for others and for cultural diversity.

Recommendation

2.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:

- Develop the use of information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the curriculum to strengthen pupils' application of ICT skills across the range of subjects.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils' strong intellectual curiosity is evident in their enquiring minds, their willingness to be adventurous in their learning and their ability to ask unexpected questions. The school has focused recently on promoting pupils' independence and ability to show initiative, and has been highly successful in this. Pupils are not afraid to venture their ideas, because classrooms are supportive environments, where expectations for the achievement of all are consistently high and pupils of all abilities are challenged. The school has fully met the recommendation of the previous inspection in this regard. Pupils say that they are encouraged to think for themselves before they ask for help, working through the 'five Bs' of 'brain, board, buddy, book and then boss', and that when they try to work something out for themselves, they find they can do it after all.
- 3.3 Pupils' capacity to grasp ideas and build on them is apparent throughout the school. As younger pupils prepared to set off for the outdoor learning environment, for example, they were told to don high visibility jackets to keep them safe on the site. A pupil then asked who invented high visibility jackets, and why, and this led to a class discussion and a research task for homework. Further up the school, a pupil in an English lesson on writing nonsense poetry asked if a nonsense poem had to be silly, and this led to a discussion on the nature of writing for different reasons. Pupils' ability to reflect on their learning and deepen it further stems from their trust of staff and the quality of relationships in the classroom, as well as adults' high-quality questioning skills and willingness to let pupils explore and discover for themselves.
- 3.4 An eagerness to be independent starts in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), where children are settled and confident, and are fascinated and intrigued by the wide range of exciting activities available to them, both indoors and outside. Leaders have responded positively to the recommendation of the EYFS intermediate inspection in 2014 to extend outdoor activities, and from September 2017, the Reception and Nursery classes will share the same accommodation and resources. EYFS children work and play happily with or alongside their classmates, and their highly effective learning is fostered by staff who have a clear understanding of the needs of their age group and are guided by their interests.
- 3.5 As pupils progress through the school, their knowledge and skills develop strongly in all areas of the curriculum, as a result of the effectiveness of both specialist and class teaching, and the range of resources available. Pupils benefit from the enthusiasm of staff and the interesting work they are given. Older pupils enjoyed setting a court scene to try a murder in their Latin lesson, and were able to link study of Macbeth in their English lesson with the history of Britain at that time. Lower down the school, pupils showed that they could sight-read music to play the xylophone, and that they could display the necessary staging skills to portray characters in a play.
- 3.6 Pupils of all ages are clear, confident and articulate speakers. For example, the very youngest children in the Nursery are happy to initiate conversation with visitors, while school council members of all ages are able to make coherent contributions in their meetings, which are competently chaired by the oldest pupils. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and classmates and make pertinent responses. The majority of pupils read at a level above that expected for their age, and have a love of reading. Pupils who were interviewed commented that story books 'hooked them in', so that they found it hard to put them down. Pupils' books show that they write fluently and at a high level. Reception children are able to write simple sentences, joining them with simple conjunctions, while the oldest pupils know how

to use different types of writing in different situations, such as reports in science or descriptions in religious education (RE).

- 3.7 In numeracy, pupils have a thorough understanding of the basics and handle figures easily and accurately. They are able to apply their knowledge to solving problems, and younger pupils enjoy doing this in a practical way, such as during the 'wriggle and crawl' activities. Pupils are proficient users of ICT in their computing lessons and are able to apply these skills in their project work and homework. The pupils' secure grasp of core skills in literacy and numeracy has been the result of the school's recent planned focus on the basics of grammar, spelling and punctuation, and on problem-solving in mathematics, which has been highly effective. Senior staff have identified strengthening and extending pupils' application of ICT skills across the curriculum as the next step in their academic development plan.
- 3.8 The school does not enter pupils for national curriculum tests but evidence from school data, pupils' books and lesson observations shows that attainment across the school is above national age-related expectations. New systems for assessment and tracking of pupils from the early years onwards, introduced by senior staff in response to the findings of the previous inspection, have enabled staff to match tasks more accurately to the needs of individual pupils than before. This has meant that appropriate degrees of support and challenge are offered, with the result that pupils of all abilities make rapid progress through the school. Pupils with SEND or EAL achieve as well as their classmates thanks to the tailored support they receive, while the more able tackle extension tasks with determination and enthusiasm. The school does not select pupils by ability and so pupils enter with a range of different starting points. A large proportion of leavers gain scholarships at the senior school of their choice for achievement in academic work, music, drama, art or sport.
- 3.9 The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt that their child's educational needs were met effectively by the school, and that the teaching enabled their child to make good progress. All pupils who responded to their questionnaire felt that the school gave them the opportunity to learn and make good progress, and that teachers were supportive and helpful if they had any problems with their work. The findings of the inspection upheld these views.
- 3.10 Pupils' success in their achievement extends beyond the classroom, in accordance with the school's aim to pursue excellence throughout the curriculum and beyond, which is promoted by senior staff and governors. Pupils have been particularly successful in speech and drama examinations, public speaking competitions, music examinations and public choral performances, as a result of the extensive range of opportunities made available to them at school. In sport, pupils shine in many areas, including hockey, swimming, biathlon, athletics, gymnastics, tennis and equestrianism, empowered not only by the facilities available at the school, but also by the encouragement and support of staff for pupils' talents and success in activities pursued outside the school.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' approach to school life is underpinned by the school's ethos and values which promote their moral and spiritual development. Their spiritual insight is evident not only in assemblies and religious education (RE) lessons, where the youngest pupils write their own prayers, but in other lessons across the curriculum. Pupils are fascinated by the natural world and the opportunities to enjoy it afforded by the school's site. Younger pupils working in the outside classroom, for example, were mesmerised by mini-beasts and competitive about observing as many different types as possible. Older pupils studying human biology, meanwhile, sparked questions on the miracle of life and individual identity. Pupils say that they feel lucky to have opportunities to be quiet and reflect, and in this they are nurtured sensitively by staff and the school's Catholic ethos which permeates all aspects of school life under the direction of senior staff and governors.
- 4.3 Pupils have a thoughtful and highly respectful approach to different religions and cultures, and are able to empathise with the beliefs of others. Older pupils studying Islam, for example, were able to identify with the rituals and routines of another religion, and make well-reasoned and considered suggestions about the purpose of fasting in Ramadan. They felt that fasting would help followers know what it was like to be poor and hungry, for example, and thought that followers would believe that their God would support them through their fast. Pupils are open towards other cultures and ways of life as a result of the school's Catholic ethos. At the lower end of the school, for example, pupils enjoyed a presentation about Hindu celebrations after a pupil attended a wedding. Some of the oldest pupils in the school, meanwhile, used sign language during hymn practice to help teach this to others and increase understanding of the needs of those who are hearing impaired. All pupils who responded to the inspection questionnaire felt that the school encouraged them to respect others, and almost all pupils and parents felt that pupils were encouraged to be tolerant of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 4.4 Throughout the school, pupils' behaviour is excellent, both in class and around the site, because of the high expectations of staff who act as excellent role models in this regard. The youngest children in Nursery know how to sit still and take turns, and share their toys without fuss. Pupils of all ages have a notable understanding of the differences between right and wrong and treat others as they would like to be treated themselves. The school wholly meets its aim to promote high standards of personal behaviour and the development of moral and spiritual values, particularly those of character, community and compassion. Break times are calm and orderly occasions. All parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school actively promoted good behaviour.
- 4.5 Pupils show a strong understanding of their own strengths and areas for development, and develop resilience through winning and losing at games and sport and through correcting and improving their tasks, as a result of the supportive environment and the encouragement they receive from staff. For example, teachers' consistently clear and thorough marking enables all pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work and progress further.
- 4.6 Pupils have excellent social skills and are able to work sensibly with others for the benefit of their class, their school and the wider community. In lessons, pupils of all ages collaborate readily with their learning partners or in groups for a shared purpose. They take on responsibilities willingly, for example as buddies to support new pupils, as members of the school council or as representatives on the catering committee. Pupils show that they can work together constructively towards a common goal, such as the recent public performance

- by the senior choir, co-operating with a maintained school and The Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines. Pupils are able to discuss current affairs, and understand that they can have different opinions, such as about the general election, but still be good friends.
- 4.7 Pupils are happy to help others and are pro-active in organising fund-raising for local, national and international charities. The school council, for example, selected an animal welfare charity to support, picked two endangered species to sponsor, and held a cake sale to get the appeal underway. Pupils show compassion and a particularly mature understanding of the plight of others. They are particularly sensitive towards those in a less fortunate position than themselves. They are proud of their school duties and how they can make a contribution to the success of the school. The oldest pupils recognise their role in helping the staff to ensure the school runs smoothly. They are empowered to play their part as head and deputy head girl, house captains, sports captains, chaplaincy prefects and form prefects helping to organise the younger classes and escort their pupils to assembly. Older pupils also willingly support pupils who have EAL to help them with their English.
- 4.8 Pupils realise the importance of decision-making and know that they can shape their own future through the decisions they make. They cite their choices about the wide range of clubs on offer at the school as an example of this, and say that they sometimes find it hard to make up their minds on what to pursue. Older pupils enjoy taking part in citizenship and enterprise schemes, where they have to make choices for the benefit of themselves and others, and say that applying for different scholarships at the senior school is helpful in shaping their thinking about what they might be good at in the future. Pupils' confidence and ability in decision-making is advanced by the caring pastoral environment of the school, the quality of their relationships with their teachers, and the ethos of encouragement and challenge.
- 4.9 From the EYFS onwards, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and safe behaviour. The youngest children in the Nursery know that they need to wear sunhats and sun cream before they go out in the sunshine, while Reception children are able to name fruit and vegetables as examples of foods that contribute to good health. Pupils of all ages know about the importance of keeping safe online and in their daily lives. They benefit from a wide range of healthy options in the school dining hall, and are encouraged to make sensible choices, saying they get sent back to the counter if they do not select any fruit or vegetables. Pupils enjoy a healthy outdoor lifestyle and activities, thanks to the opportunities by the school's site and facilities, and they appreciate the benefits of exercise as they participate with enthusiasm in sport and games.