



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

DURLSTON COURT PREPARATORY SCHOOL

MAY 2017



CONTENTS

SCHOOL'S DETAILS	1
PREFACE	2
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	3
1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION	4
About the school	4
What the school seeks to do	4
About the pupils	4
2. KEY FINDINGS	6
Recommendation	6
3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	7
4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	9

SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School College	Durlston Court School			
DfE number	850/6056			
Registered charity number	307325			
Address	Becton Lane Barton-on-Sea New Milton Hampshire BH25 7AQ			
Telephone number	01425 610010			
Email address	secretary@durlstoncourt.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Richard May			
Chair of governors	Mr Chandra Ashfield			
Age range	2 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	277			
	Boys	151	Girls	126
	Pre-Prep, including Kindergarten	111	Middle school	89
	Senior school	77		
Inspection dates	17 to 18 May 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 un-met 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 the chair of governors and a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended chapel. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. 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 Vivien Sergeant	Reporting inspector
Mr Richard Follett	Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Dr Simon Horbury	Team inspector (Head of learning support, IAPS school)

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Founded in 1903 as a boys' boarding school, Durlston Court is now a co-educational day school for pupils aged 2 to 13. The school is a charitable trust, overseen by a board of governors. The current headmaster was appointed in 2015. The school has a pre-prep department consisting of lower and upper kindergarten, reception and Year 1 and 2. Pupils then move into the middle school for Years 3 to 5, and then to the senior school for Years 6 to 8.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to existing buildings and new facilities built including a new library, information technology and design technology facilities, a ceramics studio, an art design centre, new sports courts, a kindergarten play area and learning development suite. The outdoor education facilities have been further developed.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 In order to fulfil their commitment to educate the 'whole child' the school aims to: provide an academic education of the highest quality, underpinned by the pursuit of excellence and high expectations for all; deliver a broad well balanced curriculum and a wealth of extra-curricular, artistic and sporting opportunities; enable each pupil to fulfil his/her potential within a culture of praise and encouragement; foster an happy secure, disciplined environment, in which each individual's contribution to the community is valued; instil values and attitudes in keeping with the Christian tradition and encourage an awareness and acceptance of other faiths; develop happy well rounded, self-disciplined, well mannered, caring, confident, young people; and foster the partnership between parents and school.

About the pupils

- 1.4 The school draws pupils from a range of different backgrounds in the local area, which includes the large conurbations of Bournemouth, Lymington and Christchurch together with the New Forest area. Results of standardised tests indicate that, although a wide range of ability is represented, pupils' average ability is above the national average. The school has identified 11 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism, speech and language difficulties, hearing difficulties and Down's syndrome. Eight of these receive additional support. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language for nine pupils; of these, one has specialist class support, while the rest are supported by their class teachers. Data used by the school have identified 31 pupils as being the most able in the school's population. The curriculum is modified for them and for 39 pupils because of their special talents in sport, performing arts, art and design technology.
- 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>
Lower kindergarten and Upper Kindergarten	Nursery
Reception	Reception
Years 1 and 2	Years 1 and 2

Middle school	Year 3 to 5
Senior school	Year 6 to 8

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils have excellent communication and literacy skills which successfully underpin their learning in all areas.
- Pupils are both highly effective independent and collaborative learners.
- Pupils' achieve strongly in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils display a consistently exemplary attitude to learning and they are prepared to take initiative.

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

- Pupils demonstrate high levels of self-confidence, and have a strong and well-developed self-awareness for their age.
- Pupils are confident decision makers prepared to take responsibility for their own actions.
- Pupils show excellent standards of behaviour and consideration towards others at all times.
- Pupils have excellent social skills and make valuable contributions to their school community.

Recommendation

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

- Encouraging even further use of the excellent information and communication technology (ICT) facilities across all areas of curriculum to further enhance pupils' learning approaches.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils have excellent communication skills and are exceptionally articulate. The older pupils demonstrate high-level writing skills, for example when communicating their interpretation of a poem, and showing that they understand how a poet uses metaphor to create effect. Throughout the school, pupils develop excellent debating and public speaking skills, because of the many opportunities they are given to present ideas, read or perform in public. Pupils recognise the importance of listening, understanding that this is a fundamental skill they will need to make progress in their school lives. From the pre-prep upwards, pupils communicate extremely effectively because teachers create a learning environment in which pupils feel safe to make mistakes and actively contribute to discussion. Pupils' use of vocabulary which is sophisticated for their age is a result of teachers' judicious selection of language.
- 3.3 Pupils are highly effective independent learners who study with increasing self-motivation as they move through the school. From their early days in pre-prep, pupils develop the ability to research, learning how to use the library and computer resources to search for useful information. In this way, pupils develop their independent creativity and make choices of which resources to use, in response to the recommendation in the previous report that they should become more independent. Pupils' study skills continue to develop in the prep school through lessons on how to study and revise in personal, social and health education (PSHE), reinforced by outside speakers and opportunities to engage in many open-ended projects and investigative work. Pupils are confident decision makers and respond positively to tasks where independent thinking is required. This is because pupils receive lessons on critical thinking and parents receive material to enable them to better support their children's study habits at home. The senior leadership has responded to the previous inspection report, emphasising the importance of developing programmes of study and teaching strategies which promote these skills, to which the teachers across the school have acted on fully.
- 3.4 Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning, thoroughly enjoy collaborative study opportunities and are eager to work. They maintain extremely high levels of focus, enthusiasm and determination to succeed, participating well in self-initiated tasks. This is because teachers demonstrate consistently high expectations for their pupils and have very positive working relationships with them. They inspire pupils and ensure the aims of the school to develop happy, well-rounded, self-disciplined, well-mannered, caring and confident young people are well met. In the questionnaires, the overwhelming majority of pupils felt their teachers were supportive and helpful if they have any problems in their work.
- 3.5 Pupils demonstrate high levels of success both as individuals and groups in an extremely wide variety of activities, including in the creative and performing arts, and sport. They have won awards at local music festivals and public speaking competitions, local science, technology and mathematics competitions, and reached a national schools netball final. Almost all are successful in gaining entry to senior schools with demanding entry requirements, regularly achieving scholarship awards. They achieve these successes because of the many and varied opportunities they are given: through the curriculum and underpinned by extra school activities. In addition, the governors have prioritised the provision of facilities that focus on continuing to ensure pupils continue to achieve success.
- 3.6 Pupils' development of knowledge, understanding and skills across the school is excellent. Pupils are encouraged to show curiosity, to experiment and conduct research with open minds and creativity. Pupils in the pre-prep are able to understand complex concepts for their age. For example, they appreciate the importance of bees in the role of pollination, are able to discuss 'what is an efficient bee?' and apply this knowledge to investigate bee activity in their

own school garden. The school has responded effectively to the recommendation in the previous report to increase opportunities for outdoor learning and the accessibility of resources in the EYFS. Throughout the school, pupils show that they can remember what they have previously been taught and use that knowledge to increase their learning. Teachers set high expectations, design imaginative activities to promote learning and prepare well-planned lessons. These are structured to build acquisition and synthesis of knowledge using a variety of stimulus for learning to take into account the needs of all. Teachers use tracking data effectively in their planning to monitor individuals and ensure they are all acquiring suitable knowledge and skills for their age and ability. The overwhelming majority of parents felt their child's educational needs were met effectively by the school, for example saying that the school encouraged very open, honest and positive partnerships with parents, giving them confidence that the children were in the best place to learn and develop to the best of their individual ability.

- 3.7 Pupils of all ages acquire strong numeracy skills; they produce and analyse a variety of graphs in science and geography. They apply their mathematical skills to decipher binary codes and then use their understanding to design a binary counter. Pupils avidly seize the opportunities provided by teachers to transfer and successfully apply their techniques in well-planned practical situations, for example on motion and speed in science. These opportunities engage and challenge pupils' understanding, and utilise a wide variety of resources which are readily available.
- 3.8 Pupils are confident users of ICT and have a thorough understanding of the basic skills in this area, including simple programming. They apply these skills to the presentation of work in other subjects. In the pre-prep, the pupils gain experience of ICT using 'cause and effect' toys as well as programmable floor robots. Pupils are exposed to the use of ICT from an early age and throughout the school. A wide variety of information technology resources are available. When teachers incorporate their use into lessons, pupils use it very effectively to enhance their learning.
- 3.9 Pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND, make very good progress. Pupils with EAL make very good progress not only in their acquisition of English but also in their academic performance. This was observed in lessons and seen in the meticulous handling of data by all levels of school leadership, which enables teachers to plan and set effective targets for individuals. More able pupils extended their understanding as a result of the more challenging work given to them. The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2013 to 2015. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in the national tests at age 11 have been well above the national average, in relation to the national average for maintained primary schools. Results were exceptional in 2015. Teachers in the EYFS use observational assessment effectively to match the 'next steps' to pupils' individual needs, interests and ability, responding to the previous inspection report. Assessment data is well used to monitor both individual pupils' and the school's academic targets, and to guide teachers' planning and school development. In the questionnaires, the vast majority of parents felt that teaching enabled their children to make good progress and develop skills for the future.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils develop high levels of self-understanding, growing into confident, resilient young people who are prepared to take risks, and have a huge determination to succeed. From the youngest age, pupils are actively involved in making decisions to set targets for their own progress in school; they learn to identify their next steps, so that by the time they leave the oldest pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their academic lives. Pupils feel valued as individuals, as a result of being valued by their teachers. Pupils feel there is always someone who will listen and support them, find ways to adapt teaching and learning to suit them as individuals and work with them to overcome their difficulties. In the questionnaires, almost all parents were overwhelmingly positive about how the school supported and championed each and every child, comprehensively meeting their needs as an individual.
- 4.3 By the time the pupils leave the school, they are increasingly autonomous, fully able to make decisions relating to their preferred style of study, and how to present their work. When holding positions of authority, they relish the decision making responsibility that these present, recognising the impact this will have on others. The oldest pupils enjoy opportunities to read with younger pupils. Pupils feel they are able to demonstrate these high level decision making skills because they understand how to deal with stress and take opportunities to relax; as a result they are mentally prepared for challenging situations. At every stage of school life, pupils feel they are fully prepared for the next step, from the pre-prep learning to carry trays at lunchtime, in preparation to moving to middle school, to the older pupils deciding which charities to support in their house fundraising events.
- 4.4 Pupils demonstrate high levels of understanding about the importance of the rule of law through the way they apply the school rules and ethos to establish a respectful, friendly and tolerant school society. The values of the school thread the culture from governors through to kindergarten. Pupils are fully aware of right and wrong. At all stages of their education they can recognise behaviour that is acceptable. They understand how their actions can affect others. Teachers apply behaviour management techniques consistently, with considerable emphasis on the importance of being truthful; parents are extremely supportive and value the school's ethos. Governors have a high level of commitment to retaining and recruiting those into the community who share and promote the school's values and act as excellent role models.
- 4.5 Pupils have highly developed social skills, working collaboratively, not only with their peers but also in mixed age groups. They achieve common goals as much in lessons as through activities, such as in the performance of school plays and team sports. The school provides every opportunity for pupils to develop socially in the way that the timetable is structured. This allows for mixed age problem solving activities, and the considerable breadth of extra curricular activities and sports provision. Teachers also provide many opportunities for pupils to work together performing in school events. Pupils empathise and value one another as individuals. They speak with genuine empathy for those less fortunate than themselves and show initiative and leadership in helping others through charitable and fund-raising activities.
- 4.6 Pupils demonstrate high levels of spirituality. Pupils were astonished by a demonstration of electrostatic forces in physics, showing a sense of awe and wonder at the invisibility yet power of the natural laws. Pupils enjoy opportunities for reflection, in Chapel prayer or quiet time. The school gives pupils the chance to nominate others for kindness and consideration awards. The excellent outdoor facilities for learning, class gardens and spaces outside the art room, allow many opportunities for quiet reflection and immersion in the natural world whilst learning.

- 4.7 Pupils show tremendous levels of respect for all in their community and treat everyone, regardless of their background, with the same level of tolerance and understanding as they would expect in return. Pupils who join the school from other countries said that they were quickly made to feel part of the 'Durlston family.' Pupils are able to listen carefully to opinions of others and appreciate different viewpoints. This is because the ethos of the whole community models these values. The religious studies programme further embeds the pupils' high level of respect for a multi-faith society. In the questionnaires the overwhelming majority of pupils stated that the school encourages them to respect other people and to be tolerant of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 4.8 Pupils have a very clear understanding of the importance of a healthy and balanced lifestyle. Pupils are able to make healthy informed choices at mealtimes from a wide selection of nutritious food. They take advantage of every opportunity to exercise, provided through a wide choice of physical activities; including the table tennis academy and before school tennis training. Pupils demonstrate a particularly strong appreciation of the importance of mental wellbeing and its contribution to their happiness. The school leadership actively promotes mental health and wellbeing through its emphasis on the PSHE programme. Governors unreservedly support pupils in becoming happy, well-rounded individuals who love learning by funding specialist initiatives such as the emotional literacy support assistants, who work with individuals and classes to promote mental wellbeing. In the questionnaires the overwhelming majority of parents felt the school is governed, led and managed well.
- 4.9 Pupils demonstrate they are able to take high levels of responsibility for themselves and their peers, making the most of every opportunity provided for them to contribute through leadership roles, to improve the wider life of the school. In the pre-prep, form captains, library monitors and those in the 'Garden Gang' and 'Composting Crew', take their responsibilities very seriously. Older pupils enjoy organising House events and drawing up their own duty rotas. Pupils appreciate the contributions of their peers and are proud of the successes of other pupils. Pupils' high level of understanding of the importance of being responsible, is because of the emphasis the senior leadership has placed on developing programmes of study and teaching strategies which promote these skills.