



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**TAVERHAM HALL SCHOOL  
INTERIM INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Taverham Hall School

Full Name of School	<b>Taverham Hall School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>926/6008</b>		
EYFS Number	<b>EY392623</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>311272</b>		
Address	<b>Taverham Hall School Taverham Norwich Norfolk NR8 6HU</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01603 868 206</b>		
Fax Number	<b>01603 861 061</b>		
Email Address	<b>headmaster@taverhamhall.co.uk</b>		
Headmaster	<b>Mr Michael Crossley</b>		
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Sharon Turner</b>		
Age Range	<b>1 to 13</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>233</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (140 boys; 93 girls)</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-3 (EYFS):	<b>17</b>	5-11: <b>131</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>48</b>	11-13: <b>37</b>
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	<b>214</b>	Capacity for flexi-boarding: <b>45</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>19</b>	
	Full:	<b>0</b>	Weekly: <b>19</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Lindsey Davies</b>		
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>23 Nov 2010 to 24 Nov 2010</b>		

## PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule* for INTERIM inspections. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in October 2006.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010\*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

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

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31<sup>st</sup> August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

A specific inspection of boarding was not carried out and the report does not contain judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. Any comments on boarding arising from this inspection are in the context of the school as a whole. The existing report on boarding was produced in February 2008 by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under Boarding School.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Taverham Hall School is a co-educational day and boarding preparatory school for pupils between the ages of one and thirteen years. Built in 1850, the grand country hall is a few miles from Norwich and is set in one hundred acres of parkland, woods and fields with a river flowing through its grounds. The school opened there in 1921 and became an educational trust in 1967, with governors as trustees. The present headmaster was appointed in 2008, and the governing body was restructured and reduced in number to eight in 2009.
- 1.2 The boarding facilities and preparatory classrooms are in the main hall, while pre-preparatory classrooms are nearby in a modern building; a sports hall has been added recently. The purpose-built nursery opened in 2000 and is set in its own garden. The grounds give ample space for games, and outdoor and country activities; the school has recently been awarded Forest School status. It offers an extended day and the opportunity for weekly or flexible boarding.
- 1.3 The school's mission is to create a community of empowered learners, in a family atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. It aims to involve pupils with target setting, to enable them to recognise their responsibility in learning, and to provide them with the opportunity, time and space to grow. The school also aims to encourage pupils to make decisions for themselves, to have respect for one another, to forge lasting friendships, and to develop their academic and social skills, interests and understanding. It also seeks to enable pupils to gain an appreciation for the wider natural world through the Forest School ethos, which aims to build confidence, self-esteem and a positive attitude.
- 1.4 The school has 233 pupils. Sixty-five are in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 43 of whom are part-time, 31 are in Years 1 and 2, 100 in Years 3 to 6, and 37 in Years 7 and 8. There are two nursery and two reception classes in the EYFS. Nineteen pupils board weekly.
- 1.5 There is no formal assessment test prior to entry, and the ability range is very wide. Results of standardised tests indicate that the ability profile is above the national average, with a few pupils whose ability is below the national average and a few far above. The school has identified 34 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), 26 of whom receive specialist learning support. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs, or English as an additional language.
- 1.6 The vast majority of pupils are white British, with very few from minority ethnic groups. Their families live relatively near the school and have business or professional backgrounds. Almost all pupils remain until the end of Year 8, when the majority proceed to local independent day schools, although some move to boarding schools.
- 1.7 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## 2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

### **The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills**

- 2.1 Pupils achieve good standards and are very well educated; the school is successfully providing an excellent all-round education which fulfils its aims. Achievements include gold awards in the UK Junior Mathematics Challenge, significant success at national level in poetry, music, art, and European language competitions, a national gold medal discus winner, and two national champions in aero model plane flying.
- 2.2 The well-planned, wide-ranging and stimulating curriculum, which includes French and Latin, together with ample opportunities to develop information and communications technology (ICT) skills, enables all pupils to reach high standards in relation to their age and ability. Pupils are articulate and talk about their work with ease. They are able to reason and argue confidently with their peers and adults. They develop good literacy skills from the strong foundation established in the EYFS and the pre-preparatory department. They write fluently when writing factual accounts or when writing creatively. Their numeracy and scientific skills are strong and they are very competent when using ICT. The curriculum is significantly enhanced by sessions in the Forest School. During the present improvement in the design and technology (DT) facilities, Forest School sessions have been increased and Year 4 pupils were highly involved in using their imagination, ingenuity and creativity. As stranded passengers lost in a remote area, they had to create shelters and stretchers for the injured, and mark out a landing space for the rescue helicopter using only natural materials found in the woods.
- 2.3 The provision of extra-curricular activities is excellent. The wide variety of activities extends the strong sporting, artistic, musical and dramatic areas of the curriculum. An interesting range of hobbies includes aero modelling and chicken clubs. The eggs laid by rescued battery chickens are sold for charity. Many pupils succeed at sports and other activities at county, national or international level, as well as in school, reflecting the very high standard of achievement in these which are a major factor in the promotion of personal qualities.
- 2.4 Pupils' academic attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance against a fixed national norm but, on the evidence available, it is judged to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. There is an excellent success rate in Common Entrance examinations and Year 8 leavers consistently obtain places in their first choice of senior school, several with scholarships. Pupils of all abilities make good progress as they proceed through the school.
- 2.5 Good, and at times outstanding, teaching enables pupils to achieve high standards in academic work and activities. The well-qualified teachers recognise their pupils as individuals. Teaching is well planned and includes opportunities for independent learning, as seen in a Year 8 geography project which made extensive use of ICT. Thorough marking together with helpful comments as to how to improve helps all pupils to make good progress. A constructive programme of monitoring lessons and scrutiny of work by senior staff is in process, and its extension is planned. Regular assessment enables planning of more challenging tasks and good use is made of a wide variety of teaching methods and resources to enhance pupils' achievements. Progress is tracked through the analysis of standardised tests, and any need for

individual or group learning support is identified. A positive start has been made on the development of the learning support department. Individual educational plans (IEPs) are shared with both teachers and classroom assistants, who are then aware of the support required in lessons. Increased provision for individual specialist support is in progress.

- 2.6 Pupils' attitudes towards their work are very positive overall. They are keen to learn, apply themselves very well both individually and in groups and take great pride in producing work which is of as high a standard as possible. Pupils' achievement has been enhanced by the introduction of target setting, self-evaluation, and their awareness of different styles of learning. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they are given to work and think independently, and they contribute well in group work too.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 2.7 Pupils' personal development is excellent. The atmosphere of respect and care for others, together with the excellent relationships which the pupils have both with each other and with adults, shows that they have extremely well-developed personal qualities for their age. Their spiritual and cultural development is enhanced by inspirational experiences in art and music. Morning assemblies are quiet community times of sincere reflection and thanksgiving. Pupils' successes are celebrated; the 'Radiator of the Week' award for the pupil who gives out the most warmth and kindness towards others is highly coveted and contributes to the personal development of all pupils, as does the annual Courtesy Cup. Pupils are courteous, thoughtful and articulate young people, with a clear sense of responsibility for others; older pupils set a good example to younger ones, as promoted by a flourishing 'shadow' system. They appreciate opportunities to take responsibility within the school community and enjoy their initiatives in fund-raising.
- 2.8 Additionally, the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and the link with a local special school gives pupils opportunities to learn about and contribute to the wider community. An awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses enables them to have understanding and tolerance of others. They have respect for those from different cultural backgrounds, particularly as they learn about and appreciate literature, art and music from around the world.
- 2.9 The quality of pastoral care is excellent. It is extremely well organised so that pupils always feel safe and well cared for in the happy family atmosphere. Their safety and protection are given high priority and significant improvements have been made to procedures over recent years. A high proportion of pupils considered that the school deals well with any bullying issue. Child protection and safeguarding training is very comprehensive and regularly updated. Very efficient risk assessments are carried out both within school and on visits, at home and abroad. Medical and health needs are met with great kindness and efficiency by well-qualified staff. Healthy lifestyles are promoted through nutritious meals and a wide choice of sports and games. Safe recruitment and equality legislation is given close attention and admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained. Policies are comprehensive and very effectively implemented.
- 2.10 The quality of boarding education is excellent. Boarding provision has been greatly improved and is much appreciated and enjoyed; no effort is spared to ensure that it is a positive and enriching experience which contributes significantly to pupils' personal development. The boarders relate very well to one another and to their house staff. The girls, in particular, enjoy their attractive, comfortable rooms.

## **The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management**

- 2.11 The governance of the school is excellent; the governors' range of experience is extremely relevant and valuable to the school. The smaller restructured group is cohesive and focused; it is determined to provide the head and staff with all the support they require to uphold academic standards through the development of facilities, the provision of resources, and the recruitment of high-calibre staff. It is fully involved in development planning and meeting legal and statutory requirements, in addition to the oversight of child protection, safe recruitment, health and safety and the quality of education.
- 2.12 Excellent leadership and management ensure clear educational direction towards high academic standards and effective procedures at every level. An excellent awareness of strengths and weaknesses and a determined drive to effect improvements has led to high quality development planning. Much good practice and comprehensive documentation has been introduced, and helpful guidance is given to teachers. Assessment is much improved, leading to more precise planning, tracking and target setting. Monitoring of teaching by the director of studies, supported by a governor, has been introduced, and has led to increased professional dialogue and improvement. A good start has been made on appraisal. The recognition and development of the gifts of each individual pupil are central to the work of the entire staff, following the example of the headmaster, senior management and heads of departments. The high quality of pupils' achievement, personal development and pastoral care is a result of the selfless determination of the leadership. The school has effective procedures for checking the suitability of staff and governors. It also recruits highly able staff, who are exceptionally well motivated and extremely committed to the all-round achievement and care of its pupils.
- 2.13 Pupils enjoy an excellent environment. Every effort is made to ensure that the premises and accommodation are of the highest possible standard, despite the inevitable challenges caused by the age and historical importance of many buildings and the extensive grounds. The art room with its stunning displays, the new sports hall, the refurbished DT centre and the high standard of the boarding accommodation are testimony to this. The surrounding parkland is a paradise for pupils, and the gracious elegance of the Neo-Jacobean family residence is sympathetically conserved for the benefit of present and future generations of pupils.
- 2.14 The school has excellent links with parents, who appreciate the caring, safe and stimulating environment which their children enjoy. Detailed reports and a weekly newsletter, together with an informative website, keep parents well informed about the school and their children's progress. The Friends' Association is very active and many parents are involved in supporting the school's work. They are made welcome at drop-in clinics, breakfast club and tea and coffee sessions. Parents are aware of the complaints procedure, which complies with the requirements; they are encouraged to talk to staff about any concerns.
- 2.15 Parents were very positive about all aspects of the school in their replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Their responses showed that the vast majority are extremely pleased with almost all aspects of the school. A few expressed reservations about the response to concerns and about homework. Inspectors found the school very aware of the need to be alert to concerns and willing to make changes necessary to help both pupils and parents.

### **3. ACTION POINTS**

#### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

#### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Continue to develop the monitoring and evaluation of teaching to ensure that all teaching reaches the level of the best.
  2. Extend the provision for learning development to ensure that pupils receive appropriate levels of support for their individual needs.
  3. Update staff training in relation to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act with regard to the EYFS to maintain the current high standards of teaching.

#### **4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

##### **4.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

4.1 The overall effectiveness of this setting is outstanding. Children make significant progress in their learning and development. Children's needs are very well met through a broad range of activities. Excellent assessment ensures that no child or group is disadvantaged. Staff sustain existing good standards by accurately identifying areas to improve. Relationships with parents are extremely positive and this is reflected in their response to the recent parents' questionnaire. All recommendations of the last inspection have been met with the provision of ICT and improved assessment systems. Robust procedures strongly promote children's welfare.

##### **4.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

4.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. The children are safeguarded highly effectively due to the efficient implementation of excellent policies and thorough risk assessments. Children's well-being is significantly enhanced by exceptional organisation. The strong partnership with parents and other agencies contributes significantly to children's welfare. A clear vision is communicated well in an achievable plan: consequently, staff work together as a happy, caring and effective team. This supports the continuous improvement that staff, children and their parents have experienced, but EYFS staff have not received updated training in regard to the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Leaders and managers make exceptionally good use of resources, particularly the natural environment, for exploration and using its products for creativity.

##### **4.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

4.3 Provision is outstanding. Assessment through observation is rigorous and is used effectively to guide planning and target next steps. Staff in the nursery provide children with a wide range of natural materials for exploration both indoors and outdoors. In reception, children actively participate in learning numbers and phonics, and enjoy stimulating learning experiences outdoors. Learning is effectively balanced between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Children's work and interests are valued and reflected well in the colourful and stimulating learning environment. Outdoor provision is exceptionally good for both nursery and reception children, who participate enthusiastically in the Forest School activities in all weather conditions. Parents are well informed of their children's learning and achievements through detailed information. Children's safety is accounted for well, and the care for their overall well-being is exceptionally good. They have a thorough understanding of safety and good attitudes to health and personal hygiene due to well-established routines.

#### **4.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

- 4.4 The outcomes for children in the nursery and reception classes are outstanding. They make very good progress from their starting points in all areas of learning. Children are happy, self-motivated and enjoy learning. They co-operate well, and readily make choices and decisions. In the reception classes children show excellent concentration on their chosen tasks. They are eager to listen to each other's views and respond well to adults: in the nursery they share their news confidently and play together on the dinosaur landscape demonstrating excellent language and listening skills. Children have a well-developed understanding of the wider world, and especially of the natural world. In both nursery and reception classes they use ICT with confidence and independence for developing skills in literacy, numeracy and art. They show a well-developed understanding of how to keep themselves safe, especially with regard to crossing a road. They enjoy healthy lunches and snacks. Secure foundations for their future well-being in all aspects of their learning are provided.

#### **Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three**

- 4.5 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

#### **Complaints since the last inspection**

- 4.6 Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required any action to meet national requirements.

**Section 3 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding accommodation and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Danice Iles

Mr Richard Balding

Mrs Anne McConway

Mrs Susan Rix

Reporting Inspector

Former Head of Department, IAPS school

Early Years Lead Inspector

Early Years Team Inspector

(Former Head of Junior School, SHMIS school)