



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

LANGLEY PREPARATORY SCHOOL AT TAVERHAM HALL

23 TO 24 NOVEMBER 2016



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Langley Preparatory School at Taverham Hall			
DfE number	926/6008			
Registered charity number	311272			
Address	Taverham Park Taverham Norwich Norfolk NR8 6HU			
Telephone number	01603 868206			
Email address	enquire@taverhamhall.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Michael Crossley			
Chair of governors	Mrs Sharon Turner			
Age range	2 to 13			
Number of pupils	375			
	Boys	210	Girls	165
	Day pupils	375	Flexi Boarders	35
	Pre-prep EYFS	108	Pre-prep	69
	Prep	198		
Inspection dates	23 to 24 November 2016			

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 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 grade descriptors 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 in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they 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 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, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and 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 Sara Wiggins	Reporting inspector
Mr Neil Chippington	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Hilary Wyatt	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Jennifer Burrett	Team inspector for boarding (Former Head IAPS school)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Langley Preparatory School at Taverham Hall was formed from a merger of two Norfolk-based preparatory schools, in September 2016. The merger united Taverham Hall School, which opened in 1921, with Langley Preparatory School, part of Langley School, which was founded in the 1850s. The new school is an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls. It has recently undertaken a full programme of refurbishment including the facilities for information and communication technology (ICT), netball and tennis courts, the music, recording and composing suite, the Design and Technology (DT) block, boarders common room and boarding house. A new outdoor classroom and science and wildlife pond have been developed on the site. There has been a nursery extension, two new prep school classrooms and in the most recent months, the development of six new temporary classrooms.
- 1.2 The school admits children from the age of two. Pupils up to age 7 are located in the pre-preparatory department and those aged 7-13 are in the prep department.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school's mission is to create a community of empowered learners in a family atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. The school's aim is that each pupil, whatever their ability, will be motivated to develop skills, interests and understanding through personalised academic learning programmes and investigative hands-on experiences in the school's woodland environment.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, mostly from white British families with very few from minority ethnic groups. The school has identified 39 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, dyspraxia and autistic spectrum disorder, all of whom receive additional specialist support. Two pupils have an educational health and care (EHC) plan. Six pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and support is provided and support is provided when necessary. Data used by the school have identified 57 pupils as being the most able in the schools' population and the curriculum is modified for them and for other pupils because of their particular talents in a range of sporting and musical disciplines.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.6 This is the first inspection of this school.

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils of all abilities achieve a high measure of success in their academic, sporting and other achievements.
- The development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills is excellent in their extra-curricular studies and through most areas of learning.
- Pupils from the EYFS onwards are highly articulate for their ages and apply their strong communication and numeracy skills to a variety of other areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors.
- Pupils' attitudes towards learning and their willingness to work collaboratively are strengths.
- Pupils' achievements in computer skills and in developing higher order thinking skills are not quite as well developed as their other achievements.

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

- Pupils develop excellent spiritual understanding and strongly appreciate the non-material aspects of life.
- Pupils understand the importance of being physically healthy.
- Pupils are highly adaptable and persevere in activities and lessons.
- Pupils from the EYFS upwards display excellent collaborative skills.

Recommendations

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Raise the quality of all marking to reach the standard of the best, and so provide more opportunities for pupils to develop higher order thinking skills through reflection on their work.
- Increase the pupils' use of ICT to support their learning across the curriculum and across age groups.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils from the youngest age achieve highly in accordance with the school's aim that each pupil, whatever their ability, will be motivated to develop skills, interests and understanding through personalised academic learning programmes and investigative hands-on experiences. Pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are excellent in their extra-curricular studies and through most areas of learning. Their skills are enhanced through the rich and broad curriculum which makes extensive use of the outdoor environment. Their skills are further developed through the breadth of additional opportunities available from, for example, poetry recitals and mathematical challenges, to science and Spelling Bee quizzes. Older pupils are actively involved in the shaping of the enrichment programme, which offers opportunities to develop new skills and increase their knowledge of the world around them. Activities have included public speaking, advanced design and technology (DT), town planning with Lego, debating and balloon modelling. A large majority of parents and pupils in answer to the pre inspection questionnaire indicated that the school enables pupils to make good progress and develop skills for the future.
- 3.3 Pupils' academic attainment is excellent in relation to age-related expectations, as judged from the range of evidence available and, in particular, the high proportion of scholarships and awards that pupils win to selective senior schools. The pupils show at least good progress in relation to their starting points and benefit from the skilful monitoring of their progress which includes recognition of the ways in which they learn. Pupils who have SEND and/or EAL and those who are identified by the school as being more able and talented, progress equally well. This is demonstrated by observation of pupils' performance in lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work. Pupils benefit greatly from the support of teachers in their lessons and, where available, that of teaching assistants. Boarders with particular needs are equally well supported during boarding time. Small groups, facilitating individual attention, and the use of strong visual aids for pupils with EAL, enable rapid progress. More able pupils relish the challenges provided in their lessons through extension material and through the enrichment extra-curricular programme.
- 3.4 Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are excellent. In lessons and activities pupils are highly engaged, they enjoy working with others and are aware that team work can enhance their skills. They are supported in their development of these skills through well resourced, imaginative teaching. The reasons they cite for their high levels of achievement include: the interesting, practical based lessons; the encouragement provided by staff to 'have a go' and the extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities which are available to them.
- 3.5 Pupils from the EYFS onwards are highly articulate for their age and apply their strong communication and numeracy skills to other areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors. They have learned to write well through many areas of the curriculum and through enrichment activities. As a result of their skills pupils achieve success across a range of competitions. For example, older pupils' entries to a competition for young writers were selected for publication. Pupils have made particularly strong progress in their reading as a result of the strength of the assessment methods used and the support of senior leadership. This has enabled the introduction of a literacy programme and vertical grouping which commences in the EYFS. These skills are further enhanced by the depth of the languages programme in the school. Pupils enjoy the opportunities provided to learn other languages through their lessons, the school's designated 'Languages Day' and opportunities to take part in national competitions, in which they achieve high levels of success. More able pupils extend their reading skills

- through activities designed for them, such as the online critical reading course for which they have received awards for their high-quality responses.
- 3.6 Pupils' competence in numeracy is of a high standard, drawn from the strong use of practical problem-solving methods and its application across the curriculum. For example, younger Prep pupils used puzzles and technology in Geography to create a pretend corner shop and supermarket, and discussed the economics of using both in a study of the local area.
 - 3.7 Pupils are skilled in leading their own learning and showing initiative. For example, during break time, younger pupils worked together to move a pile of leaves in the playground to a safer place; other pupils used their imagination and skills to create their own bridges using saws and clamps competently and in a variety of different ways. The development of pupils' competence in ICT is good. They confidently use tablets and computers in specific computing lessons and occasionally in subjects such as French. However, this use of ICT by pupils, to support their learning, is not yet embedded across the curriculum and nor is its use well-developed to provide support to pupils with particular needs.
 - 3.8 The youngest years from the EYFS onwards demonstrate particularly strong study skills which are encouraged through the skilful, well-formed questioning of their teachers. They hypothesise about why the wind blows and use prior knowledge to synthesise as they consider what they would have to do to fit the whole class in a tent. Older pupils competently discuss the dynamics of a work by Mozart, and in science define the word 'artificial' and take their learning further as they relate this to artificial intelligence and robots. In the pre-inspection questionnaire a very small minority of pupils expressed a concern about how they knew if they were doing well in a subject and whether marking helped them to improve their work. In interviews, however, they were clear that they had many opportunities to know how well they were doing and that marking mostly helped them to improve. The inspection found that marking is inconsistent in its helpfulness and impact. Consequently, pupils' higher order thinking skills are less well developed as they are not always helped sufficiently to reflect on their learning and skills.
 - 3.9 Pupils' success in academic, sport, performing and other arts is a real strength of the school. Pupils benefit from the inclusive approach which enables each individual to achieve their personal best, including those who are especially talented. Pupils participate in an excellent variety of sporting, musical and dramatic events, organised through inter-school matches, class assemblies, concerts and whole school dramatic productions. They are currently preparing for a production of *Oliver*. Many pupils receive musical instrument lessons at the school, achieve highly in national music examinations and develop their skills further through the extra-curricular music activities on offer. Pupils' artistic skills are highly developed as a result of the school's guidance that enables them to discover and explore their talents. They enter photograph and art competitions, and create a variety of artistic work inspired by their visits to galleries and workshops. For example, older pupils visited the National Portrait Gallery to focus on Tudor painting and drawing techniques.
 - 3.10 The positive, encouraging culture successfully emphasises the importance of exercise and being outdoors. This leads to an exceptional level of achievement in sport. School teams have reached national finals in a number of sports including swimming, hockey, cricket and football and individual national representations have taken place across a variety of sports. These high levels of achievement are made possible by the enthusiasm and excellent attitudes of the pupils and their teachers, the introduction of master classes and specialist coaches, and the strong and effective leadership and management that is evident.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils, including boarders and children in the EYFS, develop excellent skills to prepare them for the next stage of their lives. This is strongly supported by the school's mission statement to create a community of empowered learners in a family atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Pupils display high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence as a result of a culture of reward, praise and encouragement. From the EYFS onwards pupils are resilient. Teachers value and praise pupils' efforts, and encourage them to work out answers for themselves and learn through their mistakes; for example, all boarders are successfully inducted into the community by buddies and staff, and soon learn to become independent, self-managing and confident. They are expected to contribute to the daily running of the boarding house by keeping organised and tidy and, for older boarders, taking a lead in running the house. Among many examples of resilience observed, junior-age pupils in a DT lesson cut the corners of the wood themselves for their bridge building project. If it was not done accurately enough, they willingly did it again.
- 4.3 Pupils have a strong spiritual understanding and very much appreciate the non-material aspects of life, whether religious, philosophical or other. Pupils respond fully to the school's emphasis on the need to be outdoors in all weathers and this enables pupils to develop their understanding of nature and the changing seasons. For example, during an afternoon of woodland learning, the youngest children were encouraged to look up at the sky. This led to gasps of amazement as they were taken aback by the sheer height of the trees around them.
- 4.4 Pupils develop a strong sense of respect for those within their society and the wider community, partly because the school leadership ensures that planning for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to all activities within the curriculum. Pupils develop their understanding and tolerance by raising money for those less fortunate than themselves. They learn to appreciate other cultures and demonstrate high levels of sensitivity for those from different backgrounds. This is supported by both the pupil and parent response to the pre-inspection questionnaire. The overwhelming majority of responses confirmed that the school encourages respect for other people.
- 4.5 Pupils persevere throughout many aspects of school life both on the games fields and in lessons. From the EYFS onwards they are encouraged to do things for themselves, from self-registration on arrival, to putting on their own overalls and boots. At all ages, they respond positively to teachers' encouragement and challenge to persevere with more difficult skills. Pupils much enjoy the opportunities they are given to make decisions, such as in the course of their studies and in developing personal skills. Their understanding of the importance of the decisions they make, as determinants of their own success and wellbeing is developing.
- 4.6 In the short time since the merger of the two schools in September 2016, pupils have shown excellent levels of adaptability. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils from the two schools have developed quickly through the opportunities they have had to work together and through initiatives such as sport activity week, alongside the high expectations of staff, and the strong pastoral care. In the pre inspection questionnaire, a very small minority of parents stated that they disagreed that the school is governed, led and managed well. In carefully considering the responses, and noting the strength of the pupils' personal skills which are underpinned by the school's leadership team, the inspection could not find evidence to support this view.
- 4.7 Pupils throughout the school distinguish right from wrong, understand and respect systems of rules and laws, and accept responsibility for their own behaviour, including towards others.

This is a strong priority and embedded within the ethos of the school and is carefully modelled by staff and older pupils. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe through assessing any potential risk to their safety and understanding how to be mentally and physically healthy through exercise, lifestyle and diet. This is supported through a well-planned personal, social, health and economic education programme. Pupils' understanding of how to stay physically healthy is particularly highly developed. They appreciate and enjoy the plentiful supply of fresh fruit and vegetables offered at break time, at lunch and during boarding time, and are clear about its beneficial impact on their health. The outside curriculum enables pupils to take risks and learn to keep themselves safe. Even the youngest understand how to take care near fire and they quickly develop a keen awareness of the dangers present in nature, for example, that some plants are poisonous. Pupils know how to stay safe at playtimes; they wait patiently for their turn on the swings and the youngest accept that they cannot go on the monkey bars 'because we might fall off and break our arms.' Older pupils were very clear when interviewed that they should not go near the pond, which has a fence around it. Safety notices in class books and on display in the DT and science rooms remind pupils how to stay safe and 'healthy eating' displays remind pupils to eat a balanced diet.

- 4.8 Pupils willingly take responsibility and work with others to contribute to the school and the wider community. Pupils enjoy working together both in their classes, in teams, in their houses and across age groups. They value the importance of being set challenges to solve in teams or pairs. For example, the recent visit from a 'Puzzle' company provided them with a variety of opportunities to develop problem-solving strategies, and working in groups and pairs enabled them to increase in self-confidence and self-belief. The much valued 'radiator of the week' award, given to the pupil who has shown the most generosity of spirit, helps pupils to appreciate the importance of taking the time to make a difference in their school community. Pupils show an excellent sense of responsibility, for example through the many and varied responsibilities they are given, whether as prefects, or as members of the boarders' forum or the school council, or simply when undertaking jobs in the dining hall. This enables pupils to develop the skills necessary for the next stage in their lives. Boarders work highly effectively as a team, with older pupils taking responsibility for looking after their younger peers. The strong guidance provided by staff ensures an in depth understanding of their responsibilities, including the need to refer to staff any concerns they have or incident they encounter.