



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

DEVONSHIRE HOUSE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

07 TO 08 DECEMBER 2016



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Devonshire House Preparatory School			
DfE number	202/6380			
Address	Devonshire House Preparatory School 2 Arkwright Road Hampstead London NW3 6AE			
Telephone number	0207 4351916			
Email address	hmpa@devonshirehouseprepschool.co.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Stephanie Piper			
Proprietor	Lady Loveridge and Mr Michael Loveridge			
Age range	2 to 13			
Number of pupils	677			
	Boys	369	Girls	308
	Day pupils	677	Boarders	0
	EYFS	202	Juniors	424
	Seniors	51	Sixth Form	0
Inspection dates	07 to 08 December 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 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 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 proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. 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 Diane Gardiner	Reporting inspector
Mr Michael Crossley	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Christopher Davies	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Loraine Guest	Team inspector (Principal, IAPS school)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Devonshire House Preparatory School is an independent day school for boys from two and a half to thirteen years and girls from two and a half to eleven years of age. The school is administered by a single proprietor, supported by an advisory group. Since the previous inspection, the school has undertaken a programme of investment, which has provided new facilities for art and design technology and a dedicated science room. Facilities for information and communication technology (ICT) have been extended to include new teaching spaces and the provision of tablet devices across the school.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1989 in Hampstead, London and is based in two sites in large Victorian houses adapted for educational use. The school is divided into three sections: the Nursery, which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage, caters for pupils from two and a half to five years of age, the junior school for pupils from five to eight years old and the upper school for pupils from eight to thirteen years of age.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide a caring, happy and safe environment which is conducive to learning and personal development. It aims to provide the highest standards of teaching, learning, achievement, personal care and the encouragement of initiative.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds and cultural traditions. The school has identified 66 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which includes dyslexia, dyspraxia and autistic spectrum disorder; fifty-nine of whom receive additional specialist help. Two pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for ten pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified 157 pupils as being the most able in the school's population and 71 who have specific gifts or talents, and the curriculum is modified for them.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was an interim inspection in March 2011. The recommendation from that inspection was:
- Improve the opportunities for pupils to use ICT in their learning throughout, including the EYFS.
- 1.7 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous inspection. Further detail is given in the main text of the report.

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils are highly enthusiastic and well-motivated in their learning. They demonstrate initiative and high levels of independence.
- Pupils are articulate and confidently debate, question and express their ideas and views intelligently.
- From the EYFS onwards, pupils use their very well-developed skills for ICT and other subjects to great effect, across all areas of the curriculum to enhance their learning.
- In a very small minority of cases, an inconsistent approach to marking and the use of support strategies limits progress for some pupils.

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

- Most pupils take pride in contributing exceptionally well to the lives of others within the school, recognising the need to support others in the local community and further afield.
- Pupils respect and value the unique diversity within the school.
- Pupils leave the school as confident, resilient young people who have a strong self-esteem and a well-developed understanding of how to improve their own learning.

Recommendations

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

- Sharing the existing good practice within the school to provide a consistent approach to marking and the use of strategies to extend and provide support for pupils of all abilities.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 The school is successful in meeting its aim to provide a caring, happy and safe environment which is conducive to learning, the achievement of strong academic results, the development of initiative and a level of personal development which prepares every pupil for the next stage of their education. This results in pupils making excellent progress across all age groups in the school. The school does not take part in national curriculum tests, but the available evidence shows attainment to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. Pupils have achieved increasingly good results in selective senior school entrance examinations; a significant number of pupils attain awards and scholarships to highly competitive schools for academic success, art and music.
- 3.3 From an early stage in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and also in the junior and upper school, pupils make rapid progress from their starting points due to the careful tracking of their skills and the provision of effective interventions to support their learning. A creative programme of study, which takes into account the pupils' own interests and aptitudes, allows every pupil to enjoy their learning and begin to understand that they can make decisions for themselves, as demonstrated when they choose from a wide range of materials to make a sleigh or when, in their story writing, they choose the difficulties their snowmen will face on a long journey. The pupils' learning is successfully supported and extended through the high levels of communication between staff and through the constant process of review. This results in teaching staff knowing their pupils extremely well and providing a broad range of targeted activities.
- 3.4 Pupils with SEND or EAL are almost always well supported so they achieve fully in relation to their starting points. In all sections of the school, their progress is tracked carefully and specialist staff provide effective support, both during lessons and in one to one sessions. However, on a few occasions, an inconsistent use of strategies to manage and support their specific needs limits their progress. More able pupils enjoy the opportunity to extend their own learning through research projects, on topics such as heathland environments. They also benefit from opportunities to debate a range of issues, such as when they demonstrated the ability to argue and reason logically when comparing *West Side Story* with *Romeo and Juliet*. They pursue their own interests at a high level, for example when publishing their own books or challenging the validity of Pythagoras' theorem.
- 3.5 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They are highly enthusiastic and well-motivated in their learning. They demonstrate initiative and high levels of independence, resulting in the vast majority enjoying taking control of their learning. In a few instances, this enthusiasm can spill over and dominate discussion. Pupils across the whole school, including in the EYFS, demonstrate an excellent ability to work independently and collaboratively, either in pairs or in groups, sharing ideas and brainstorming alternative ways of achieving joint aims.
- 3.6 Throughout the school, pupils are highly articulate. They confidently debate, question and express their ideas and views intelligently, as exemplified in a Year 2 lesson where they questioned whether bears hibernated because they were really sleepy or through force of nature. Similarly, in a Year 5 history lesson, pupils made excellent use of rhetorical questioning and alliteration when delivering presentations on castles. They also use wide-ranging vocabulary in their extended writing and, from an early age, they use a variety of strategies to review and improve their work.

- 3.7 Mathematical skills are well developed throughout the school. Pupils understand and manipulate numbers with confidence; pupils in Year 1 displayed an excellent knowledge of times tables when using an interactive programme on their tablet devices and Year 7 pupils showed resilience when problem solving as they developed their knowledge of algebra. A number of pupils have recently achieved the highest awards in a national mathematical challenge competition.
- 3.8 Using the confidence gained from their extremely well-developed technology skills, pupils of all ages undertake their own research and extend their awareness of the wider world. For example, they conduct research on endangered species or plan a well-balanced Christmas menu after browsing information about different foods on supermarket websites. As they move through the school, pupils use the wide range of ICT resources and other sources of information to develop their ability to analyse the results of their research and synthesise their findings to enhance their understanding. This meets a recommendation from the previous inspection.
- 3.9 Pupils of all ages develop excellent skills in art, music and drama. Creative and innovative teaching allows pupils to build their skills in the creative arts and apply their skills across other areas of the curriculum. Pupils across the age range have recently gained first place awards in local and national art competitions. The many opportunities that pupils enjoy to participate in assemblies, concerts and performances in the local area ensure that, at all stages, they are confident and capable performers, as was witnessed during the infant and junior year group productions. A high percentage of pupils from Year 1 onwards learn to play a musical instrument, demonstrating high levels of skill for their age, as was seen when the jazz band played in assembly, and when the orchestra prepared for the Christmas carol service.
- 3.10 As they mature, pupils develop their sporting abilities to an increasingly strong level. Specialist coaching, and increased opportunities to develop their skills in a range of sports, has resulted in the school football and netball teams achieving their best results ever in local and national tournaments. The broad extra-curricular programme provides pupils with the option to develop activities and their own interests to a high level. For example, the excellent opportunities to take part in individual sports has resulted in the school karate team winning silver medals in their association national championship. Speech and drama activities enable pupils to achieve highly in external examinations and appear in major film productions.
- 3.11 The vast majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were particularly satisfied with the range of subjects provided within the curriculum and the high levels of teaching throughout the school. A very small minority of parents felt that they did not receive sufficient information about their child's performance and progress. The inspection team reviewed the process for providing feedback for parents and concluded that the level of information was timely and included all the necessary content.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils develop a secure self-knowledge and mature personalities for their age. Staff provide excellent pastoral care through a well-structured personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum, a thoughtful assembly programme and a very wide range of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities within the school community. Pupils are confident, flexible and resilient, and they are not afraid to make mistakes, as they acknowledge that they will learn more that way than by playing safe. They are also aware that they will be praised for their hard work. A vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire were supportive of the way that the school actively promotes good behaviour, ensures excellent levels of supervision at school and on trips, and promotes values of democracy and respect within a healthy and safe learning environment.
- 4.3 From the EYFS onwards, pupils develop their ability to make decisions. This helps them to develop an increased self-awareness. From choosing their own activities in the EYFS to organising a charity gala night for their parents in Year 8, pupils learn to develop excellent organisational skills and make choices that affect their own and others' lives. Pupil representatives on the school council gather the ideas and thoughts of their peers to take to meetings. Here, decisions are made that will have a positive effect on their school and the local community, as they decide which charities to support and how they will raise money.
- 4.4 In the lessons observed and in activities such as assembly, pupils demonstrate adaptability and the ability to persevere. They understand that they need to take control of their learning; they review and develop their work through the use of a range of systems that allow them to respond to teachers' comments and identify why a teacher has praised a particular section of their work. In discussion with pupils and by looking through books, inspectors found that strategies for marking were not always used consistently, confirming the view of a small minority of pupils in the questionnaire.
- 4.5 Pupils enjoy the many opportunities they have to work together to solve problems or achieve a common goal, for example when Year 7 pupils worked together to adapt a piece of music and make it their own, or when Year 1 pupils worked together to make a pictorial representation of the local area. The house system also provides pupils of all ages with opportunities to work together to prepare for specific events such as the house singing contest. Pupils take on a wide range of responsibilities within the school, ranging from taking the initiative in collecting and putting away a set of headphones in Year 1 to organising the lost property or running the stationary shop in Year 8. They reflect with pride on the contribution they make for others. By Year 8, pupils are skilled in working as a team to organise events such as the book fair for the younger children; in this they take on a range of management, presentation or financial roles. Pupils are proud of their school community and feel that they all have a useful role to play within it.
- 4.6 Pupils develop a natural curiosity for the wider world, resulting in a thoughtful and considerate approach to the non-material aspects of life. This was evident in the way that younger children understood what they can do to make someone happy, and in the concern shown by older pupils for their world when they discussed ways in which they can limit their negative effect upon the environment in the Green Team. This new sustainability drive has been led by the pupils and includes ideas from the whole school community, including parents. Pupils respect and value the unique diversity within the school. A wide range of visits to buildings of faith, together with a regular sharing of festivals and customs with pupils

from different backgrounds and religions, ensures that they form their own opinions in a balanced and considered way.

- 4.7 From an early age, pupils develop a strong understanding of right and wrong and are aware that communities need to abide by a set of simple rules to ensure the well-being of all its members. They work closely, both with each other and with staff, to maintain an environment in which everyone feels valued and safe. This shared approach has reinforced the need to respect the rules, take full responsibility for their own behaviour and make the right choices whenever possible. In the questionnaire, a very small minority of pupils felt that staff were not always fair in the way that they gave out sanctions and rewards. Discussions with pupils during the inspection, and a scrutiny of the system for recording of these, showed that careful monitoring ensures that staff reflect regularly on this aspect of school life to improve the consistency of their approach.
- 4.8 Even the youngest pupils at the school are aware of the importance of keeping mentally and physically healthy, and they have a good awareness of the importance of diet and exercise in maintaining a balanced lifestyle. At lunchtime, they make healthy choices from the wide range of options available and enjoy this time to meet and socialise with their friends. Opportunities for exercise are regular and varied, ensuring that pupils develop a strong individual enjoyment for exercise and an awareness of its importance in their lives as they grow. The PSHE programme is a very strong contributory factor to the excellent outcomes for pupils across the school. In the nursery, children learn to manage their emotions and understand how to relate to others. In Years 3 to 5, pupils learn meditation techniques to help them cope with their busy world; older pupils build successfully on these strong foundations by undertaking mindfulness sessions which build their resilience as they prepare to move on to the next stage of their education.
- 4.9 Most pupils take pride in contributing exceptionally well to the lives of others within the school, recognising the need to support others in the local community and further afield. They frequently use their own imaginative ideas to take the initiative to organise special events and carry out individual and group efforts to raise money. Pupils develop an extremely strong understanding of the nature of charity work through on-going support for a small charity in Rwanda. Staff provide pupils with first-hand knowledge of the help they provide when visiting the village each year to assist with teacher training and enhancing facilities. A group of classes contribute directly each month towards the upbringing of a number of children in the village. Other events have provided funds for a new room at a hospital for sick children in London. In working together so effectively, pupils develop important organisational and economic skills which prepare them very well for each transition within the school and ultimately for their move to their senior schools.
- 4.10 Pupils are particularly well prepared for the next stage of their lives. They leave the school as strong, capable and confident young people who are ready to meet their next set of challenges.