

School inspection report

Date 23 to 25 April 2024

Taunton Preparatory School

Staplegrove Road

Taunton

TA2 6AD

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Taunton Preparatory School is a nurturing and vibrant community, where leaders prioritise the values of respect and inclusion. Governors and leaders actively promote pupils' emotional and physical wellbeing. Governors reassure themselves that leaders have the appropriate skills and knowledge to perform their roles so that pupils feel valued and safe.
2. Governors and leaders have identified a strong vision for the direction of the school with a set of aims which are well understood by the pupils.
3. Governors and leaders liaise closely to ensure that policies are reviewed regularly and that they reflect the statutory guidance. Leaders are knowledgeable and well trained, arranging regular staff training and monitoring the implementation of policies so that pupil wellbeing remains a priority.
4. The required information, for example that relating to policies and contact details, is shared on the school's website. Parents receive regular reports keeping them updated on their child's progress and attainment.
5. Governors and leaders are proactive in their approach to risk, remaining vigilant to any potential risk factors which may arise and taking prompt action to resolve them in the best interest of pupils.
6. Effective systems are in place to manage any complaints. Leaders are proactive in their approach and respond in a timely manner. They maintain detailed records in support of their decision-making.
7. Governors and leaders understand their responsibilities under the Equality Act and careful consideration is given to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils in respect of curriculum, documentation and the physical environment.
8. Boarding is well managed, and the accommodation is comfortable and well resourced so that boarders feel cared for in a welcoming and reassuring environment where their opinions are heard.
9. Leaders have introduced a comprehensive curriculum offering that enables pupils to secure knowledge and skills across linguistic, mathematical, scientific, aesthetic, physical, creative, and technical areas. The breadth of subjects provided establishes a secure foundation for pupils in preparation for senior school.
10. Teachers' subject knowledge and the purposeful deployment of additional staffing enable pupils to make good progress. Pupils are focused and motivated learners, able to apply themselves independently and collaboratively. In the early years, leaders' detailed understanding of the children's needs and interests and their strong relationships with their teachers promote the children's development. In a few lessons, where teaching activities do not fully provide for the range of pupils' learning needs or where feedback to pupils is less clear, pupils are left unsure how to develop their skills further and make less progress.
11. Leaders draw upon a broad set of assessment measures to support pupil monitoring, enabling them to consider the need for intervention strategies, where relevant.

12. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress from their starting points. Leaders identify needs early so that additional key skills sessions and specific technology can be introduced to promote pupils' ongoing skills development.
13. Leaders in the early years are well trained, providing a broad and creative curriculum for children so that they can develop as learners.
14. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress. A range of measures such as glossary banks for different subjects and translation applications are provided alongside small group intervention aimed at building pupils' fluency and confidence.
15. Leaders provide an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities which introduces pupils to new skills and develops existing ones. Boarders enjoy their free time and the wide range of weekend activities, sharing their preference of activities in a house vote.
16. Leaders ensure that a programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), including relationships and sex education, is appropriate for the age and needs of the pupils. Detailed planning including coverage of topics such as healthy lifestyles and conflict resolution equips pupils for the challenges of later life.
17. Leaders have established a comprehensive set of rewards and sanctions for when pupils' behaviour falls below expectations. When incidents of bullying arise, leaders respond swiftly and suitably so that any concerns are addressed.
18. Governors and leaders have a rigorous approach to health and safety including facilities, buildings and grounds. Accommodation for boarders is comfortable and well resourced. Checks are routinely carried out and record-keeping is detailed.
19. Supervision is suitably provided for all pupils, including boarders, so that pupils can move around the site safely and know that teachers are always close by.
20. Boarding leaders are well trained and implement a range of policies for boarders so that their wellbeing remains a priority.
21. A well-structured PSHE curriculum covers aspects of human, social and economic education, including careers, which are relevant to pupils for their future lives. Through an introduction to moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of learning, pupils feel prepared for life in modern British society.
22. Governors and leaders understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe from harm. Staff safeguarding training is regularly undertaken to refresh understanding of the current guidance. Leaders draw upon advice from various external partners and the safeguarding policy is implemented effectively. A suitable register of staff checks is maintained and appropriate checks are carried out before a person starts work at the school.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- ensure that teaching consistently provides suitable support and challenge so that all pupils' needs are met enabling them to develop their knowledge and skills and make good progress
- ensure that feedback to pupils consistently offers guidance so that pupils know how to make progress in their learning across all subjects.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

23. Governors and leaders prioritise pupils' emotional and physical wellbeing, enabling pupils to feel valued in a dynamic and caring community.
24. Governors collaborate closely with leaders, ensuring that leaders are well trained and have good skills and knowledge to carry out their roles. A boarding governor ensures that boarding leaders undertake training so that boarders' welfare is safeguarded. Governors scrutinise policies and systems through various committees from education to boarding, health and safety to safeguarding. In this way, governors reassure themselves that school practice reflects the current statutory guidance, and that policy implementation is consistent.
25. Leaders' commitment to creating a stimulating learning environment, rich with opportunity both inside and outside the classroom, underpins the school's ethos. The recently appointed leadership team has set out their ambitions for the pupils in a purposeful strategic plan. In this way, pupils are encouraged to 'find their exceptional' by embracing the opportunities available and they flourish as a result. Leaders ensure that the school's aims, including its boarding principles, are embedded across every aspect of school life and are well understood by pupils.
26. Leaders provide the required information to parents via the school's website detailing its policies, aims and contact details. An annual report and termly grades detailing a child's progress and attainment are shared with parents.
27. Leaders work in close partnership with a range of external agencies, notably in safeguarding, seeking advice when needed. They are well trained and knowledgeable in respect of the current guidance. In this way, effective measures are in place to protect pupils, including boarders, from harm.
28. Governors and leaders remain alert to identifying possible risk factors and resolution is prompt, when required. In response, leaders have introduced a new assessment programme, additional schemes of work, new management information software and a review of practice around learning support. The introduction of a new compliance committee reflects the school's ongoing commitment to an open safeguarding culture. The proactive approach taken by leaders and governors ensures that pupils' wellbeing remains a priority.
29. Leaders produce detailed risk assessments, which are regularly reviewed. Staff are well trained in assessing risk, for example when planning overseas visits and swimming lessons.
30. A suitable system is in place to manage complaints, and concerns raised are dealt with in a timely manner. Leaders step in to address any concerns at the first opportunity, keeping meticulous records to inform their decision-making.
31. Leaders have established comprehensive measures for when pupils' behaviour falls below their high expectations. The rewards and consequences system is clearly set out, consistently applied and well understood by pupils. When incidents arise, leaders respond sensitively and promptly. Records are well documented and used by leaders to identify any patterns arising from incidents so that swift action can be taken. The vigilance of pastoral leaders, reinforced by their regular interaction and careful monitoring, allows for any issues to be addressed appropriately.

32. Governors ensure that boarding is well managed and that policies and systems, such as fire drills and induction arrangements for staff and pupils, are carried out so that boarders' experience is rich and nurturing.
33. Leaders and governors fulfil their responsibilities under the Equality Act through the implementation of a detailed accessibility plan which outlines the school's consideration of equal opportunities for all pupils through its curriculum, documentation and physical environment. Adaptations have been made to the school site to ensure ease of access for all users, including for the wider extra-curricular offering of residential trips and off-site visits. The school fulfils its duty to inform the local authority for pupils who have education, health and care plans.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

- 34. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

35. Leaders have designed a comprehensive curriculum, including a breadth of creative areas so that pupils develop a broad knowledge base relevant to their future lives. Pupils, notably in pre-prep, are confident communicators with well-developed numeracy skills which they apply across science and technology. Leaders design well-planned schemes of work which reflect an inclusive society. Pupils make good progress from their starting points and are generally working at, or above, average national expectations based upon standardised scores. Teachers' subject knowledge provides effective preparation for senior school entry. By the end of Year 8, pupils have accelerated their rate of progress, achieving scholarship successes across a range of sporting and academic disciplines. At the end of Reception, the majority of children are working at the expected level in the early learning goals. Pupils are self-motivated and focused, nurtured by their teachers in a happy and purposeful learning environment. Teachers' in-depth subject knowledge inspires pupils, and efficient deployment of teaching assistants teamed with pupils' confidence in accessing information through technology enables pupils to make sustained progress.
36. Leaders draw upon a broad assessment framework to identify a range of support strategies for pupils. Through ongoing analysis of standardised scores and grades as well as scholarship results, leaders track pupil progress and introduce intervention groups as needed.
37. Where teaching strategies are most effective, well-planned lessons result in teachers drawing upon assessment data to design a varied range of activities which both challenge those of higher prior attainment and offer support to others. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, the range of activities introduced using fraction cards, pizza shapes and words enables all pupils to identify and work confidently with halves, thirds and quarters.
38. In a few lessons, however, when the teaching activities provided do not fully reflect the range of pupils' learning needs through suitable challenge and support, pupils can become disengaged, and they make less progress as a result.
39. Pupils who have SEND make good progress from their starting points. Early identification ensures that individualised learning plans and targets offer support. A series of key skills sessions reinforces pupils' core learning, and reading development is enhanced through voice to text technology.
40. Pupils who speak EAL make good progress, frequently achieving above average standardised scores, notably in mathematics. In addition to glossary cards and translation tools, pupils are supported in small group sessions, when required.
41. Leaders generally provide effective feedback to pupils so that pupils have insight into how to further develop their skills. In performing arts and sport, individual feedback to pupils allows them to understand how aspects of their performance can be improved. When verbal and written feedback, including that relating to the attitudes to learning grades, is less clear, pupils are uncertain how to enhance their skills in order to maximise their progress.
42. In the early years, children articulate their ideas confidently and they are curious learners. In a Reception literacy lesson, the teacher's use of repetition and modelling of actions enables children to actively engage in the story. Teachers are proficient in planning, targeting the children's interests and understanding their needs so that purposeful opportunities are created for them to develop as learners.

43. Parents receive termly grades as well as annual reports so that they are updated on their child's progress and attainment.
44. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the extensive extra-curricular activities open to them. Whilst activities such as aikido, strategy games and weaving introduce new skills, others such as chamber choir, woodwind ensemble and the swimming team training allow pupils to hone existing talents. The breadth of activities engages pupils' interests so that they become rounded individuals for the future.
45. Boarders speak enthusiastically about the diverse programme of weekend activities as well as the chance to relax with friends. They enjoy the chance to vote for preferred activities, such as board games or activities in the sports hall.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

- 46. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

47. Leaders prioritise pupils' emotional wellbeing by creating a nurturing, inclusive environment where pupils feel happy and confident that their voices will be heard. The weekly wellbeing survey, particularly welcomed by Years 7 and 8 pupils coupled with the presence of playground ambassadors and a wellbeing mentor, provides a vehicle for pupils to share any concerns. Reception pupils select one of two locations to place a character, enabling their teachers to understand how they are feeling and offer strategies to manage their emotions. In this way, pupils develop greater self-understanding.
48. Leaders recognise the importance of pupils' physical wellbeing and draw upon teacher specialism, in-depth planning and knowledge of a wide range of activities to ensure that pupils keep fit and active. In a Year 2 games lesson, varied resources and insightful instruction result in pupils making progress with their bowling and batting skills. Similarly, in Year 7, the use of praise and tuition in small groups ensures pupils make progress in acquiring skills in javelin, shot and long jump. Pupils speak excitedly about the breadth of sports available and enjoy successes as regional and national champions. The regularly used facilities, including astro pitches, cricket facilities and swimming pools, alongside pupils' regular participation in fixtures enhance opportunities for their skills to flourish, simultaneously increasing their self-esteem.
49. Reception children delight in the well-resourced outdoor spaces. Through climbing trees and problem-solving how to transport trike passengers over a ramp, children keep physically and mentally active.
50. A comprehensive programme of PSHE, including relationships and sex education, is suitable for the pupils' age and needs. As a result, pupils speak confidently about how to form healthy relationships and recognise unhealthy ones and show understanding of the vulnerabilities of different groups in society. Detailed planning introduces pupils to topics such as healthy lifestyles and conflict resolution providing a toolkit for their future lives.
51. Leaders set out high expectations for pupils' behaviour, including for boarders, and a well-structured system of rewards and consequences is understood by the pupils and applied consistently. As a result, pupils are courteous and respectful. Leaders respond promptly when bullying incidents occur and draw upon careful record-keeping so that any trends are identified and addressed. For example, leaders have extended pupils' access to additional outdoor space which has had a positive impact upon behaviour at breaktimes. Pupils are closely supervised and feel well supported by their teachers during activities and at break times. Designated boundaries create a safe environment for pupils to move around the wider school site.
52. Recently refurbished boarding accommodation is comfortable, attractive and well resourced, with varied outdoor spaces for boarders to meet. Boarders enjoy the chance to individualise their rooms. Leaders minimise the risk of harm allowing boarders to feel relaxed in their surroundings.
53. Leaders maintain accurate admissions and attendance records and follow up appropriately in the event of prolonged pupil absence. The school informs the local authority if a pupil leaves or joins the school at a non-standard transition time.

54. Leaders demonstrate a rigorous approach to health and safety. Facilities are well maintained, and routine checks are efficiently recorded. A range of measures is in place to reduce the risk of fire, including regular fire practices, bell testing and fire equipment checks.
55. Comprehensive arrangements, including meticulous record-keeping, a well-equipped medical centre with suitably qualified staff and secure storage of medicines, are in place so that pupils' medical needs are catered for. Boarders have access to on-call doctors when required.
56. Boarding leaders liaise routinely with guardians and follow up on any concerns ensuring that boarders' views are listened to. Boarders also have access to an independent listener as well as house parents to share any worries they may have.
57. Leaders ensure that boarders make sensible meal choices and meals are suitably adapted to meet boarders' dietary needs.
58. Boarders enjoy access to leadership opportunities where they can train as playground ambassadors and heads of house, valuing the chance to mentor the younger boarders.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 59. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

60. Leaders actively promote respect and inclusion through a well-planned PSHE curriculum. Pupils explain how resources such as posters and 'word of the week' displayed around school help to keep their understanding of core values fresh. As a result, pupils speak respectfully about those from different races and genders to themselves and they exercise their understanding of right and wrong through respectful interactions.
61. The rich curriculum enables pupils to increase their knowledge of human, social and economic issues. For example, Year 8 pupils listen intently when learning about the devastation caused by floodwater during Hurricane Katrina and the human impact when the levees broke.
62. With opportunities for discussion through PSHE and assemblies, pupils are knowledgeable about the benefits of living in a diverse community. They understand neurodiversity and embrace ways in which they are the same or different to others. As a result, they learn to recognise discriminatory behaviours and practise mutual respect. Through carefully planned activities such as form discussions around global citizenship and tutor group presentations, leaders broaden pupils' knowledge of cultures different to their own. An assembly for Years 3 and 4 pupils celebrates the richness offered by different countries through food and traditions.
63. Leaders provide pupils with an introduction to career options through the PSHE curriculum as well as through talks, such as by an Olympic rower and an artist encouraging pupils to consider professional ambitions for their future lives. A Year 6 themed day enthuses pupils about the aerospace industry where they implement their new knowledge by designing a glider, and pre-prep and older nursery children are invited to dress up for a themed day linked to different occupations.
64. Pupils learn about financial literacy as part of the PSHE curriculum, including budgeting and debt, so that they are well-equipped to navigate the challenges of modern society. Whilst Year 7 pupils learn terms such as tax, credit and debit during a topic on percentages, pre-prep pupils are encouraged to understand the value of money through real life scenarios. A talk provided for pupils in Years 7 and 8 on the mass production of T-shirts prompts discussion around machine versus labour and the subsequent impact on retail pricing.
65. Leaders create opportunities for pupils to engage actively with their local community. Pupils participate in delivering food bank donations, sing at a residential nursing home and fundraise for mental health and war veteran charities. In this way, pupils learn how to become responsible and caring citizens. The commitment and resilience demonstrated by a group of Year 7 and 8 pupils training to swim the English Channel for charity reflects the pupils' empathetic attitude towards helping those in different situations to their own.
66. Pupils accept responsibility for their actions through the range of leadership roles open to them, including school councillors and playground ambassadors, and recognise the importance of embracing the views of others. As a result, pupils feel that they are listened to and they speak enthusiastically about successful school council initiatives, such as the introduction of chess club and new playground equipment.

67. Pupils readily engage in discussion designed to develop their understanding of public institutions, democracy and law. Through well-planned opportunities to debate topical issues, pupils engage confidently when reflecting upon the role of social influencers, the potential nationalisation of water companies and consider whether war can ever be justified. In a Year 8 philosophy and religious education lesson, pupils maturely participate in an ethics discussion based around the writings of Thomas Hobbes.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

68. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

69. Arrangements to safeguard the welfare of pupils are comprehensive, ensuring that a robust safeguarding culture exists throughout the school community.
70. Safeguarding leaders are proactive in organising regular training for governors and staff, including for those new to the school. Training is enhanced by weekly updates on topical issues, most recently covering anxiety and the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, staff feel confident in identifying and responding to concerns.
71. Close collaboration between governors and leaders allows the school to remain vigilant to signs that a pupil may be at risk so that concerns can be dealt with promptly. Record-keeping is thorough and the analysis of trends arising from incidents offers leaders insight enabling procedures to be adjusted, when needed. Appropriate measures are in place to protect pupils from harm.
72. A safeguarding policy reflecting leaders' understanding of the latest guidance has been implemented effectively and is kept under regular review by governors and leaders.
73. Leaders work closely with external safeguarding partners to seek advice and keep up to date on the current legislation in order to inform their decision-making. They actively encourage a culture of open communication for staff and pupils so that pupils' worries can be heard and addressed.
74. The availability of medical practitioners, a wellbeing mentor and an independent listener for boarders provides pupils with a range of people in whom they can confide. Pupils feel reassured that their voices are heard.
75. Pupils are knowledgeable when explaining how to keep themselves safe online both at home and in school. Leaders are alert to the risks involved in online access and have implemented a comprehensive system of filtering and monitoring, which is closely monitored and discussed with pupils. In this way, leaders minimise the risk of pupils' access to inappropriate websites.
76. Those with responsibility for carrying out staff suitability checks operate an exacting system to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to safeguard the welfare of pupils. A suitable central register of staff appointments is maintained, and all the required checks are carried out prior to a person starting work at the school.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 77. All the relevant Standards are met.**

The quality of the early years foundation stage in the registered early years provision

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

78. The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.
79. Leaders and staff know the children's needs and interests well. Through focused observations and discussion with children and parents, staff plan the curriculum and each child's next steps to further enable learning. For example, they encourage less confident children to speak in front of a group of friends. This increases their confidence and gives them a feeling of accomplishment.
80. Staff motivate children by providing age-appropriate activities and resources. Children use their initiative and imagination to make connections. For example, they recognise and suggest links between a wooden star and a favourite star song. This gives them an opportunity to demonstrate their learning and to be successful.
81. Staff establish clear guidelines for behaviour in each nursery class. As a result, children understand right from wrong. For example, they learn not to take a toy from another child. This helps them understand the need to be kind and caring to each other and share resources.
82. Safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. Leaders, managers and staff have a shared understanding of their responsibilities to protect children in their care. Policies and procedures are understood and followed to keep children safe, for example including during collection time at the end of each day.
83. Leaders fully recognise the importance of early intervention and monitoring. Providing for children with specific needs is an important aspect of the nursery so that children receive effective support in order to improve long-term outcomes.
84. Leaders evaluate practice to ensure all children access the education they are entitled to. However, at times the provision for some children varies in terms of access to resources and staff interaction.

Quality of education

85. The quality of education is good.
86. Staff design the curriculum with the intention that each child, including those who have SEND, is able to gain the knowledge and understanding they need to succeed. Programmes of learning are both structured and flexible allowing for children's needs and interests to be followed. As a result, children are prepared well for future learning.
87. Specialist staff teach subjects such as dance, music, swimming and sport and so offer rich experiences for older children. French lessons also enhance the curriculum for the younger children. These rich experiences provide increased opportunities for the development of new skills.
88. Staff provide a range of opportunities so that younger children can develop their language. For instance, staff repeat words for children to copy, point to and name pictures in books and ask familiar questions. When staff engage with babies during a sensory activity with sand, blue rice and

sea creatures, they respond to simple questions and instructions and attempt to say the word 'fish'. Words such as 'scooping' are introduced to the babies to develop their vocabulary. Older children confidently talk to visitors about their family members and can explain what they are learning. These opportunities give children the confidence to be successful in their language development.

89. Appropriate resources enable children to enjoy a range of opportunities to develop their physical skills. For example, older children climb trees and find ways to balance. They practise cutting out using scissors with increasing dexterity. As they take part in these activities they demonstrate their increasing confidence.
90. Children have a confident approach when using their mathematical knowledge during their play. For example, younger children add one more toy to the table to make two, and older children demonstrate their counting ability during a game of hide and seek. Some children build a tower and explain for example 'I'm trying to make it taller'. These opportunities enable children to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.
91. Overall, staff are effective at supporting children to take risks and investigate during their play. For example, older children embrace the wide range of outdoor opportunities as they make obstacle courses and create routes with pipes for water to flow down. However, not all children benefit from these opportunities. For instance, younger children do not have free access to an inviting range of toys and resources, particularly outdoors, and so opportunities to make choices and enhance their self-chosen play are limited.

Behaviour and attitudes

92. Behaviour and attitudes are good.
93. Staff provide opportunities for children to play co-operatively so that they learn important skills. For example, children plan how they are going to build a pathway together with bricks and other resources. This enables them to learn to respect each other's ideas, communicate together and establish fair rules for play.
94. Staff have high expectations for children's conduct. For example, they demonstrate the use of kind hands, encourage children to understand when their behaviour is not acceptable and to apologise when necessary. As a result, this guidance gives children the resilience to work out how to resolve their own disagreements and learn to share, take turns and recognise that everyone's opinions and feelings are important.
95. Overall, the provision of an age-appropriate and stimulating curriculum enables children to be active learners and to have positive attitudes to their learning. For example, when they explore the outside woodland area, they write their name in the soil and name other words starting with the same sound. As a result, they celebrate their achievement and success.
96. Staff provide opportunities for investigation, curiosity and critical thinking. For instance, when investigating a large tray of soapy water children observe what happens to the bubbles when the soapy water is blown and when the bubbles get too big. This enables them to make their own conclusions and to share their ideas with other children.

97. Parents share important information from home about their child's learning. For instance, 'wow' moments celebrated at home are shared at nursery, providing a valuable link for the children. Parents are positive about the support their children receive and the careful transitions when children move up to new rooms. They state that they are well informed about their child's progress.

Personal development

98. The personal development of children is good.
99. Key persons know their children extremely well. They value their opinions and form positive relationships with them. Staff provide a nurturing environment and healthy meals for each child. They know the dietary requirements and individual preferences of each child and provide for their needs. As a result, children consistently demonstrate that they feel extremely safe and happy.
100. Staff positively encourage responsibility. For instance, they choose a child to shake the tambourine as a way of calling the other children to come to the carpet. Children respond quickly and come to the carpet in response. As a result, they build good habits, demonstrate positive attitudes and enable children to achieve a sense of pride and confidence.
101. Familiar routines create a sense of pattern for the children. For example, younger children recognise when it is snack or lunch time. Older children know when they must wash their hands and independently manage their own personal needs. These routines ensure that children feel emotionally secure in the nursery environment.
102. Staff and children welcome the diverse cultures evident in nursery. Staff provide opportunities for them to learn about similarities and differences as they celebrate festivals from different countries, for example Chinese New Year. Links with community groups also enable children to help those who have different needs, for example by supporting the local food bank.
103. Staff provide opportunities for children of all ages to prepare to transition between nursery rooms. For instance, children spend time in the garden of the new class with their next staff member so that they are well prepared emotionally for this important step. As a result, children's confidence grows, and they are ready for future learning.

Leadership and management

104. Leadership and management are good.
105. Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the development of the nursery. The Head of Pre-Prep and Nursery is relatively new to her role and has implemented many improvements to the provision in her time in post. These are well documented in her development plan. Leaders recognise that there is still more to do. They now need to focus on supporting staff practice in order to help staff share a consistent understanding of how to interact with children more effectively and so promote the development of new knowledge and skills.
106. Leaders act with integrity to ensure children, especially those who have SEND, are well provided for and receive the help they need. Early intervention is welcomed by leaders and staff who liaise with parents and outside providers to ensure each child is supported appropriately.

107. The leadership is fully committed to the wellbeing of staff and recognises the main pressures they face. Regular supervisions and daily contact ensure staff have every opportunity to share concerns. Staff feel supported as they manage their workload. Leaders actively encourage staff to benefit from focused professional development opportunities in order to build knowledge and improve outcomes for children.
108. Governors understand their roles. The governor with responsibility for the EYFS regularly visits the nursery to support the leaders and discuss the provision. She is able to challenge leaders and ask them questions. She visits the children and takes an interest in what they are doing.
109. Leaders fulfil their statutory duties, for example under the Equality Act 2010, and other duties in relation to the 'Prevent' duty and safeguarding.

Safeguarding

110. Safeguarding is effective.
111. Leaders give the utmost priority to safeguarding ensuring children are kept safe. There is a strong culture of shared responsibility by practitioners who fully understand how to protect children and ensure each child is well cared for. Staffing levels are good and appropriate records are kept. All staff are extremely vigilant and have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training.

Recommended next steps

- evaluate and improve the outdoor and indoor learning environments and resources, to ensure that across the nursery provision they are equally inviting and enable children to make independent choices in their play.
- strengthen support for staff to help them develop an equally secure understanding across the nursery provision of how to interact more meaningfully to support and extend children's learning and progress.

The extent to which the school meets the requirements of the early years foundation stage

112. The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006.

School details

School	Taunton Preparatory School
Department for Education number	933/6214
Registered early years number	EY310094
Registered charity number	1081420
Address	Taunton Preparatory School Staplegrove Road Taunton Somerset TA2 6AE
Phone number	01823 703307
Email address	tps enquiries@tauntonschool.co.uk
Website	www.tauntonschool.co.uk
Proprietor	Taunton School Educational Charity
Chair	Mr Mark Anderson
Headteacher	Mr Ed Burnett
Age range	0–13
Number of pupils	527
Number of boarding pupils	56
Number of children in the early years registered setting	130
Date of previous inspection	12 to 13 February 2020

Information about the school

113. Taunton Preparatory School is a co-educational day and boarding school, located in Taunton, Somerset. The school is a charitable trust overseen by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection a new headteacher was appointed in September 2023 and a new chair of governors took up role in November 2023.
114. Male and female boarders aged 7 to 13 are accommodated in a single boarding house on the school site.
115. There are 28 children in the early years across two Reception classes. There are four Nursery classes which are registered with Ofsted and which cater for children aged six months to one year, one to two years old, two to three years old and three to four years old.
116. The school has identified 94 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Three pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
117. English is an additional language for 67 pupils.
118. The school aims to enable each child to embrace their individuality, explore their passions, and develop into confident and well-rounded individuals ready to make a positive impact on the world. It seeks to develop in pupils a culture of ambition, a sense of belonging, a mindset for life, and to create a global community centred around the core values of humility, engagement and kindness.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

23 to 25 April 2024

119. A team of seven inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.
120. Inspection activities included:
- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
 - observation of registration periods and an assembly
 - observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
 - discussions with the chair and other governors
 - discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
 - discussions with pupils
 - visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
 - visits to the boarding house accompanied by pupils and staff
 - scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
 - scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.
121. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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For more information, please visit isi.net