



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Davenies School

October 2019



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School's Details

School	Davenies School			
DfE number	825/6004			
Registered charity number	313120			
Address	Davenies School Station Road Beaconsfield Buckinghamshire HP9 1AA			
Telephone number	01494 685400			
Email address	office@davenies.co.uk			
Head	Mr Carl Rycroft			
Chair of governors	Mr Nicholas Edwards			
Age range	4 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	341			
	Pre-preparatory	118	Preparatory School	223
Inspection dates	1 to 3 October 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Davenies School is an independent day school registered for male pupils aged between 4 and 13 years. It was founded in 1940 in the town of Beaconsfield in Buckinghamshire, and it is owned and governed by the Beaconsfield Educational Trust. The pre-preparatory department for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 to 2 and the preparatory department for pupils in Years 3 to 8 occupy the same site and share all facilities. Since the previous inspection, the school has restructured the pastoral system, the games programme, and the setting arrangements in English and mathematics. It has also refurbished a science laboratory and invested in developing science, technology and mathematics.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school's vision is to engage, inspire and challenge the pupils by offering academic excellence, modern teaching techniques alongside traditional values, and a vibrant, caring, inclusive environment. The objective is to develop young men who are curious, motivated and ambitious in their learning, and courteous, confident, thoughtful and independent in their character.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Almost all pupils are from a range of professional and business backgrounds and live within fifteen miles of the school. The composition of the school's population reflects the multi-cultural nature of the local community. Nationally standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the pupils is above average. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified 42 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and processing difficulties, of whom 31 receive additional specialist support. English is an additional language for one pupil, who is readily able to access the curriculum. Data used by the school have identified 59 pupils as being among the more able in at least one curriculum area.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

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. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards 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.

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 a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.11 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.13 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.14 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.16 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.18 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Attainment and progress in academic subjects are excellent.
 - Pupils' achievement in activities is excellent.
 - Pupils are articulate and assured when speaking.
 - Skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) are highly developed across the age range.
 - Pupils are engaged in lessons and eager to learn.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils develop very high levels of confidence, independence and skills for the future.
 - Their behaviour is excellent.
 - Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, taking responsibility for their own actions.
 - Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and the wider community.
 - They know how to be safe and healthy.

Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:
- Developing pupils' ability to improve their work from written feedback in Years 5 to 8.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Academic results are excellent. In the last three years, all pupils leaving at the end of Year 8 have gained admission to their first-choice senior school, including those with the most demanding entry requirements. Most Year 6 pupils who sat the 11+ tests for local maintained grammar schools passed. Attainment is excellent overall, especially in English and mathematics. Data provided by the school indicate that most pupils make at least good progress over time from their starting points. Progress is most rapid in the pre-preparatory department. Pupils with SEND make very good progress as a result of the careful analysis of their needs and the excellent specialist support they receive.
- 3.6 Pupils of all ages and abilities show excellent knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum. Their use of language shows a powerful range of expression and an outstanding active vocabulary in many cases. Their mathematical skill is highly developed. Many pupils show excellent aesthetic understanding and achievement to produce outstanding painting and other artwork. Both ensemble music which involves large numbers of pupils and individual instrumental and choral music are of a high quality. Pupils' skills and understanding develop rapidly in response to the school code. This is a set of values which permeates everything the school does and which the pupils embrace with consistent enthusiasm. In the academic sphere, it encourages resilience and says that making mistakes is a natural part of learning. In addition, the school builds pupils over time into effective learners. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), children make a rapid start in acquiring strong learning qualities and skills. The school introduces an imaginatively planned programme of activities, instilling independence and a love of learning. All pupils, and almost all parents, agreed in the pre-inspection questionnaires that the curriculum and activities provision is good. The school offers appropriate challenges beyond the classroom for the more able pupils, who are identified in relation to specific subjects rather than as a general category. Their needs are also supported by their classroom teachers.

Pupils and parents alike are overwhelmingly positive about the teaching at the school. The school holds regular public celebrations of achievement. It takes advantage of the competitive nature of the pupils in, for example, reaching targets as part of the Accelerated Readers programme. The school has made excellent progress in implementing the recommendation of the previous inspection report to provide more opportunities across the curriculum for independent learning and critical thinking. For example, pupils make presentations in class in humanities based on independent research, and their classmates offer constructive criticism by way of response. Almost all pupils agreed in the pre-inspection questionnaire that the school encourages them to think and learn for themselves.

- 3.7 Pupils are articulate and speak with assurance. When debating, they are willing to accommodate others' views, but they are also able to stand their ground. The clarity of their expression is seen across the curriculum. In physical education (PE) lessons, for example, pupils describe the function of parts of the body with accuracy. Pupils develop these skills through drama in the curriculum and extra-curricular drama awards, where they gain notable success. Younger pupils are accustomed to speaking in assemblies. Pupils' writing is often excellent. Younger pupils show excellent fine-motor control in the formation of letters and move confidently to cursive script. Older pupils savour the opportunity to write at length in continuous prose when tackling open-ended tasks, and they especially enjoy creative writing and storytelling. A popular creative writing club, external competitions, and a book festival with a visiting poet, all make a contribution to the culture and expectations. Reading is popular, and pupils confirm it is a source of growth and pleasure for them. They are able to retell a story accurately and with enjoyment from an early age. Listening skills are also highly developed, and pupils are polite and attentive.
- 3.8 Almost all pupils have excellent numeracy skills. They apply their skills effectively to solving problems and have an excellent understanding of mathematical terminology, so that in Year 1 a pupil could explain 'commutative'. They enjoy after-school mathematics club meetings and benefit from careful mathematics teaching with a particular emphasis on mastery and understanding. They say it is fun and accessible, and that nobody is excluded, in an exceptionally positive atmosphere. The individual needs of the pupils are met by careful selection of activities and support in class where necessary. Pupils of all ages have strong skills in ICT and use them effectively in other subjects, for example for research in science in Year 3. From Year 4, pupils use tablets quite naturally to support their learning. Most pupils grow into effective learners with an inquisitive approach and a dogged determination to make progress, and they take full advantage of the school's study skills programme. They are supported by the school's pastoral care team, which takes a holistic view of development and ensures greater self-esteem so that pupils become increasingly independent. Furthermore, much of the teaching at all stages of the school is effectively planned, well resourced, and indicative of a strong knowledge of the pupils as people and as learners.
- 3.9 Pupils achieve significant success in activities. They excel in traditional team games and in swimming, judo, athletics and racket sports. Increasingly, too, they are winning recognition at a national level in academic and creative pursuits, spanning photography, chess, public speaking and mathematics competitions. This success is mirrored by the enthusiasm pupils show for the activities programme, which the school monitors and evaluates systematically in terms of popularity and educational value, consulting the pupils and taking their views into account. A large minority of leavers in 2019 won awards to their senior schools for their academic achievements and for music, sport and art.

- 3.10 Pupils show an excellent ability to work both independently and collaboratively. Almost all parents and pupils agreed that the school promotes strong teamwork and social skills in the pupils. They readily take leadership in their learning, and this is promoted by the tasks and teaching methods used, so that they are engaged and eager to learn and apply their skills and knowledge. The approach is one which says not 'I can't do it', but 'I can't do it...yet'. One excited lunch-time conversation sprang from learning that morning that boys in Sparta began their military training at the age of seven. Pupils' outstanding attitudes derive from the habits they acquire in all that they do in the school. Teamwork and initiative, which grow in games, outdoor activities, house competitions, music and theatre, all have a positive impact on the way pupils approach the classroom.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.11 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.12 Pupils are reflective learners with high levels of self-confidence and a strong understanding of the need for resilience. They are, therefore, willing to make mistakes in class and view them as an opportunity to learn. Pupils are clear: better an 'oops' than a 'what if...?' In the pre-preparatory department, they learn quickly from the written feedback they get from teachers. In the preparatory department pupils do not always benefit in the same way, because marking is less consistent in quality and it does not always demand that pupils respond to development points. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education by the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. They are well informed about their future schools through tutorial sessions which include interview practice and a programme of visiting speakers. In the questionnaires, almost all pupils and parents said that the school enables pupils to become confident and independent. In addition, parents were almost unanimous that their children are acquiring good skills for their future.
- 3.13 Pupils develop strong decision-making abilities. They recognise that the decisions they make are influential in their own success and well-being. In their academic work, they are regularly invited to choose which tasks to try. Extra challenges are commonly available for those who finish their work early. In the EYFS, some activities are led by children. In the rest of the school, pupils make autonomous decisions, for example in choosing to behave well and making sensible decisions about their extra-curricular clubs. Pupils are guided by the school's code of conduct and are aware of the consequences of breaches. Excellent behaviour is promoted strongly by excellent relationships at all levels throughout the school. Respect for teachers is matched by teachers' concern for the well-being of their pupils: they know them extremely well and have their interest at heart in all areas of their school lives. The form tutors and teachers are at the heart of this as are the members of the pastoral team in the preparatory department, where heads of section, the learning support department and the school nurse all play a central part in the pupils' welfare and development.
- 3.14 Pupils gain a strong understanding of the non-material aspects of life through their involvement with the creative arts. Participation at all levels is encouraged, and positive attitudes are fostered by the wealth of plays, concerts and exhibitions on offer. In a music lesson in Year 4, making music together using the djembe drums gave pupils great pleasure. A walk through the autumnal landscape prompted by a visiting poet stirred the senses of most of the participants. An art assignment in Year 5 prompted striking expressions of emotion depicting the suffering of soldiers in war. Pupils have a good awareness of a range of religions, from celebrating Diwali to assemblies run by a rabbi and an imam. In tutor periods, they are encouraged to think of family time and happiness. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have had half a term of mindfulness sessions, which they say has made their approach to school less frenetic. They also appreciate the calm and welcoming environment provided by the school, and its impact on their well-being.

- 3.15 Pupils display an outstanding sense of right and wrong, and they accept responsibility for their own behaviour. They regulate themselves effectively so as to avoid the school's sanctions system: punishment is rare enough for it to be a source of embarrassment for most pupils. They see that systems of rules and laws play an important part in society, and that they serve their own best interests by being a positive influence on others. The school always seeks a positive outcome to disciplinary action, and it is unusual for a warning to be followed by a sanction for the same offence. As a result, their social interaction and skill in discussion reflect the kindness and respect with which they customarily treat one another. The peer mentor scheme is valued by younger pupils, who say it has enabled them to find a listening ear and solve problems. Pupils are socially aware and work effectively with others to solve problems and achieve common goals. They attach a particular value to the house system, which creates a sense of belonging and community.
- 3.16 Pupils make an excellent contribution to the wider community as part of the excellent activities programme. In addition to fund-raising, they give of their time and energy in local food banks, residential care homes and recycling schemes. The school council and food council are both chaired by members of the school. They have successfully suggested initiatives, for example, for water fountains, and themed menus as part of Book Week. In Year 3, pupils developed posters showing ways of reducing food miles and are planning to translate the ideas into a food committee proposal. The school has a strong sense of service which has its roots in its early days when it contributed to the war effort through cultivation and beekeeping.
- 3.17 Pupils state clearly that they respect and appreciate their own and other cultures, because it is natural to do so. They feel that the school population reflects the multi-cultural nature of the community in which it stands and so tolerance is second nature for them. Furthermore, the Davenies Code urges respect and tolerance towards all. Pupils are open to other cultures through the curriculum, for example in art, where they produce paintings in the style of a Dutch artist depicting an African market scene, and music, where playing African drums is part of a cross-curricular theme dealing with African cities. Pupils also have an excellent knowledge of British culture and values through a PSHE programme which has them as a central theme, and through seeing how democracy, individual freedom and the rule of law, for instance, feature in their daily school lives.
- 3.18 Pupils have a strong awareness of both physical and online safety. If they feel they are being treated unkindly, they know that they can seek help from any adult. They have a particular memory of a visit from a police officer who discussed the dangers of social media. All pupils are aware of the importance of diet and exercise for their well-being. In the questionnaire, almost all pupils said that the school encourages them to be healthy and safe. A science module in Year 3 analyses different food groups. The catering team works with the school nurse and a group of pupils to develop menus. The opportunities for physical exercise are plentiful and varied, and the pupils embrace them with huge enthusiasm.

4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Bill Burn	Reporting inspector
Mr David Williams	Compliance team inspector (Assistant head, IAPS school)
Mr Guy Barrett	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Ms Joanna Gay	Team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)