



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

FRANCIS HOLLAND SCHOOL, SLOANE SQUARE

APRIL 2017



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Francis Holland School, Sloane Square			
DfE number	213/6046			
Registered charity number	312745			
Address	Francis Holland School, Sloane Square 39 Graham Terrace London SW1W 8JF			
Telephone number	020 77302971			
Email address	office@fhs-sw1.org.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Lucy Elphinstone			
Chair of governors	Mrs Marie Winckler			
Age range	4 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	520			
	Boys	0	Girls	520
	Day pupils	520	Boarders	0
	EYFS	24	Juniors	140
	Seniors	284	Sixth Form	72
Inspection dates	26 to 27 April 2017			

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. Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates on behalf of the DfE, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest report on the work of ISI on the Ofsted website.

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 following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

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

This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- a) The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- b) 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.

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

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. 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'.

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 a member of the governing council, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and an assembly. 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 Susan Marks	Reporting inspector
Mrs Penny Austin	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Perdita Davidson	Team inspector (Acting head, GSA school)
Mr Adrian Meadows	Team inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mr Jonathan Reddin	Team inspector (Head, HMC school)

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

1. Francis Holland School, Sloane Square is one of two girls' independent day schools in London that are jointly administered and governed by a charitable trust. The school was founded in 1881 by the Reverend Canon Francis Holland and moved to its present site in 1884. Pupils aged from 4 to 11 years attend the junior school and those aged between 11 and 18 years attend the senior school; both of which are located on the same site.
- 1.1 Since the previous inspection in May 2011 a new chair of governors, a new headmistress and a new head of the junior school have all been appointed, and the senior leadership team has been restructured and expanded. A learning support department has been established.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to prepare girls for higher education and the adult world by providing a challenging and stimulating curriculum in a friendly, supportive and caring environment which values every individual and supports pupils' personal development within a Christian context. The objective is that pupils develop an enthusiasm for learning, self-confidence and resilience, respect for others, leadership skills and a responsible attitude towards the wider community.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Girls come primarily from families with professional and business backgrounds, and are from a variety of religious denominations and nationalities. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils on entry is above average in reception and the senior school, and broadly average on entry in the sixth form. The school has identified 88 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and some physical difficulties, of whom 52 receive additional specialist help. Two pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 139 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Lower Sixth	Year 12
Upper Sixth	Year 13

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Girls entering GCSE, IGCSE and A-level examinations achieve high grades that are above average for pupils of similar ability. Girls make strong progress at all ages.
- The school is notably successful in fulfilling its aims to provide an education which promotes independent thought, enthusiasm for learning and leadership skills.
- Girls show very high levels of skill, knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning and in their extra-curricular activities.
- Girls demonstrate outstanding attitudes to learning throughout the school.
- Many girls achieve very high standards in extra-curricular activities, particularly in ballet, sport, music, drama, and debating.

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

- Girls develop outstanding self-confidence and strong social skills.
- Girls have excellent spiritual understanding and a well-developed sense of moral integrity. They treat each other and staff with kindness and consideration.
- Girls have a very strong sense of community and are proud of their school. They are respectful of the beliefs and heritage of others, and their behaviour is exemplary.
- Girls fully understand the need to establish balance in activities to stay physically and mentally healthy.

Recommendation

2.2 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school is advised to consider:

- In the junior school, ensure that the marking of girls' work in subjects taught by specialists from the senior school enables pupils to understand how to improve their work.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2013 to 2015. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools. Results were well above the national average in 2014. Girls' attainment in 2016 showed an increase in the proportion of GCSE grades awarded at A* or A. Results in IGCSE have been above worldwide norms, and results in A-level examinations have been above the national average for maintained schools. The most able girls achieve excellent standards in the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and the great majority of girls obtain the A-level grades required for their first choice of university and course, many of which are highly selective. The achievement of girls with SEND and EAL is excellent in relation to their abilities. They make strong progress at all ages in relation to their starting points, helped by highly effective learning support introduced by senior leadership since the previous inspection including specialist teaching assistance in English and mathematics. Expectations of all pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, are very high and appropriate levels of support are provided to all pupils to enable them to achieve their full potential.
- 3.3 The school is notably successful in fulfilling its aims to provide an education which promotes self-confidence, independent thought and an enthusiasm for learning. In their responses to pre-inspection questionnaires, almost all girls and most parents agreed that the school enables pupils to learn and make good progress.
- 3.4 In the EYFS, the youngest girls show mature communication skills, speaking clearly and confidently and listening well to each other. They write in simple sentences and show confidence in their early reading skills. Reception pupils know numbers up to 20 and use them appropriately in activities and role play. They show aptitude for creativity and an interest in the world around them. Their fine motor skills are well-developed and, in line with a recommendation from the previous inspection report, good use is made of the outdoor play space to enable them to develop their gross motor skills, such as running and jumping.
- 3.5 As they progress through the junior school, girls show very good levels of knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum. They ask questions to enhance their learning and express their thoughts clearly when debating challenging topics such as 'does yesterday still exist?' in a Philosophy lesson observed. Well-planned lessons employing a variety of tasks, open-ended questions and intellectual challenges enhance the pupils' enthusiasm and contribute to a fast pace of learning. Girls are keen to keep trying until they succeed; as a Year 5 pupil said, "If I can't do something, I know it's just that I can't do it yet."
- 3.6 Girls use their highly developed communication skills in all aspects of school life. They are able to listen effectively and sensitively to their peers, and express their ideas and thoughts effectively both in writing and orally. Senior school pupils benefit from high quality teaching, which is a significant factor in their academic success, epitomised by thoughtful lessons, which make excellent use of resources to develop a culture of effective learning. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and set high but achievable expectations for them. Most lessons observed were carefully planned, fast-paced and purposeful, contributing strongly towards the girls' rapid progress. Girls enthusiastically take an active part in lessons and develop their communication skills in a safe but challenging environment in which all can learn and everyone's views are respected; this builds the girls' confidence as well as communication skills. All girls have lessons in debating and learn how to write a convincing speech, how to deliver a persuasive argument and how to speak to a group with confidence; this facilitates their learning across the curriculum as well as their successes in local debating competitions.

- 3.7 Girls have highly developed skills in mathematics and a recent emphasis on developing mental arithmetic skills has further developed girls' understanding of mathematical approaches. They apply these skills effectively in other subjects and enjoy the challenge of numerical problem-solving. Older girls showed perseverance and pleasure at their success when completing the square. The girls' high level of achievement in numeracy and confidence in mathematics is facilitated by enthusiastic and supportive teaching; care is taken to support those who find work more challenging while pupils with high levels of ability are stretched and challenged, for example, in a bespoke programme of further mathematics for older girls.
- 3.8 Girls employ specialist language and technical vocabulary with accuracy and confidence, for example in the sciences and technical subjects. Their linguistic skills are well-developed in a range of subjects, and their considerable creativity is evident not just in the high standard of artwork on display, and in the quality of girls' own musical compositions, but also in other subjects such as the creation of cell models in science.
- 3.9 From the earliest years of junior school onwards, girls use their ICT skills with confidence and skill to organise and present information, research for project work and set up business plans and budgets. The introduction of the virtual learning environment (VLE) has had a very positive impact on girls' learning, facilitating their communication with the staff and making it easier for girls to obtain support and review their own progress. Pupils make particularly effective use of ICT as a research tool, as seen in sixth form Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) work. The use of ICT as a tool to enhance teaching and learning is now embedded across the whole school, reflecting the successful implementation of a recommendation from the previous inspection as a result of clear direction from the senior leadership team and oversight of the governors who have ensured a suitable provision of staffing and resources.
- 3.10 Girls' study skills are excellent. They are enthusiastic learners and display particular confidence in discussion and debate. Intellectual curiosity leads them to draw upon wide and various sources of information, supported by their teachers' careful choice of resource material. Girls appreciate the example of scholarship and joy in learning that is communicated by their teachers and often take the initiative individually to follow up a lesson with further one-to-one discussion, seeking reinforcement or extension work from their teachers, for whom they have obvious respect. There is a clear culture of mutual respect and cooperation and in lessons girls work effectively in pairs and small groups, offering ideas and working constructively together. They are attentive listeners as well as confident speakers and show maturity in offering and receiving advice from peers as they help set each other targets for improving a piece of work.
- 3.11 The culture of teamwork is embedded in their approach to work and girls move easily between collaborative and independent work within each lesson. This was seen in an English lesson where older girls used constructive peer evaluation to formulate an effective persuasive speech as well as developing class guidelines for constructing an argument. Older girls gain valuable organisation and public speaking skills by participating in the many opportunities for leadership offered by the extra-curricular activities programme where, for example, in music, speech and drama many activities are devised and directed by the girls themselves.
- 3.12 Girls' excellent progress is supported in most subjects by effective marking, especially in the sixth form, where written feedback is regular, frequent and informative. A small minority of pupils in both junior and senior schools disagreed that marking helps them improve their work. Inspection evidence shows that, in the junior school, whilst marking by class teachers is very effective, the marking of a few of the subjects taught by specialists from the senior school is

infrequent and cursory, with the result that junior pupils do not always understand how they could improve their work. In senior school, inspection evidence showed that, although some marking of written work does not include detailed guidance for improvement, the small class sizes and effective oral feedback in lessons ensure that girls know what they need to do to improve.

- 3.13 Girls of all ages engage and achieve highly in an excellent range of extension activities to support the curriculum, including extra-curricular activities, day trips and overseas visits. Girls display great enthusiasm for sport, and the range of opportunities provided, combined with the skill and enthusiasm of the teaching staff, enable the girls to achieve high standards at local, county and national levels in sporting competitions such as in netball, hockey and gymnastics. Many girls, from the junior school upwards, have achieved very highly in external ballet grades, with some younger girls being awarded places as Junior Associates of the Royal Ballet School. Girls achieve highly in external drama, music and musical theatre examinations and benefit from performing on international stages such as through the choir trip to Athens for which they were practising during the inspection.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 All girls develop self-confidence and strong social skills as a result of the school's outstanding pastoral care and senior leaders' and governors' emphasis on valuing each girl as an individual. In their questionnaire responses, almost all parents agreed that the school promotes an environment which successfully supports their child's personal development and that it meets their child's pastoral and welfare needs effectively; inspection evidence firmly supports this. From Reception to the sixth form, the girls' development is nurtured through the pervading ethos of growth mind-sets, with the result that girls understand that their abilities are not fixed, and that they can increase their achievement by taking on challenges and learning from them without fear of failure or making mistakes. Senior school pupils are notably unafraid of making mistakes and rightly recognise them as opportunities for learning. Girls who spoke with the inspectors were extremely positive about this approach, and felt strongly encouraged by their teachers, whose approach rewards effort and helps to instil resilience.
- Pupils demonstrate a realistic understanding of their abilities and understand that the choices they make have an important effect on their well-being and success. From the youngest upwards, girls are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions; junior girls see purpose in the reflection room as a support for learning from their mistakes and developing their own decision-making. Girls appreciate being able to choose the level of challenge in certain activities and say this boosts their confidence and adds to their sense of achievement.
- 4.3 Girls have excellent spiritual understanding and appreciation of the non-material aspects of life, which are encouraged by the Christian character of the school. Girls are able to reflect on the non-material aspects of life as a result of the thoughtful assemblies that they attend. For example, during an assembly to mark St George's Day, girls were able to identify and confront their own personal "dragons" or inner anxieties, and to reflect on the Christian belief that evil has been overcome through Jesus's death and resurrection. Those girls of different faiths, or of none, show great respect for the traditions of the school and the beliefs of their peers, and they appreciate the freedom to decide for themselves their level of participation. Mindfulness lessons help the girls to devise strategies for focusing calmly on the present and respond effectively to any negative thoughts or anxieties. Girls appreciate the opportunities at the start of lessons to practise their mindfulness techniques and develop their concentration skills very well as a result.
- 4.4 Throughout the school girls show a clear understanding of right and wrong and have a strong sense of fairness. They demonstrate excellent respect for rules, laws and fundamental British values. In questionnaires, the overwhelming majority of parents agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour and almost all girls agreed that the school encourages them to behave well and that they understand the sanctions for poor behaviour. In practice girls' conduct is exemplary, whether in lessons, break periods, as they move around the school or at the start and end of the school day. Girls understand what conduct is expected of them, are respectful towards the teaching and support staff and treat each other with kindness and consideration.
- 4.5 Girls are socially aware and naturally collaborate with one another in lessons, for example, when analysing poetry effectively during an English lesson. In extra-curricular pursuits such as sport, music, the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme, drama and debating, girls regularly work effectively together to overcome obstacles and achieve collective, as well as individual success. Pupils speak positively about the encouragement and support they received from staff and their peers when they were new to the school. Girls integrate very well across the senior school, as well as within individual year groups; girls reported this as a strength of the school.

They recognise the broad range of opportunities for personal development they are offered and embrace them with enthusiasm. All pupils in the sixth form are expected to undertake additional responsibilities through the lower sixth volunteering programme or upper sixth 'Ambassadors Programme'. Girls develop their problem-solving skills while promoting positive relationships with younger children and staff, or volunteering within the wider community to achieve common goals. Much of this work is initiated by the girls themselves and subsequently supported by the school. Sixth formers particularly appreciate the opportunities they have to serve their community and develop leadership skills through their work with girls in the junior school, and with pupils from other schools in the locality; girls in Years 10 and 11 would like to have similar opportunities as they are inspired by their sixth form peers, whom they see as excellent role models.

- 4.6 In keeping with the school's Christian ethos, girls are encouraged to become involved in a wide range of charitable initiatives throughout the year including raising funds for the Italian Red Cross following an earthquake. Girls are enthusiastic fundraisers for charity and are pleased and proud to help those less fortunate than themselves. One of the girls' chosen charities is the mental health charity Mind which links strongly with the school's positive emphasis on mental and emotional health. Girls show an awareness of their responsibility to do what they can to help those in need or less fortunate than themselves. They take responsibility seriously and like to contribute ideas for the school community through the school council. This is because school leaders keenly encourage service to others in the community across the school. For example, girls support the charity 'In-Deep' which helps elderly people in Westminster and Lambeth, and The Katherine Low Settlement which provides educational and recreational activities for local residents. Girls work cohesively within and across year groups to organise fundraising activities such as fancy dress activities, cake and bake sales, odd socks day, busking and comedy nights. Such activities are usually pupil-led, aptly demonstrating the development of their leadership and collaborative skills.
- 4.7 Girls show outstanding respect towards those of different cultures, faiths and backgrounds. They value the rich cultural diversity that exists in their school, which they feel is reflective of the metropolitan society in which it is located. The girls enjoy celebrating cultural diversity by marking festivals from many faiths and cultures, and they appreciate the opportunities provided by the school to hear parents speak about their different religious and national festivals. An overwhelming majority of parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 4.8 Girls understand how to stay safe and are highly aware of the need to establish balance in all they do to stay physically and mentally healthy. In the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of girls agreed that the school provides them with a safe and healthy environment and that they know how to keep safe on-line. Girls are encouraged to be fit and to take responsibility for their own health and safety by making good choices. The school actively supports this by providing fresh and nutritious lunches for all dietary requirements. Sport and exercise plays an important role in the physical and emotional well-being of girls as they move through the school. Older girls take advantage of the wealth of opportunities to keep fit and active through the extensive extra-curricular programme, including rowing on the Thames, Pilates and yoga as well as more traditional team sports. Girls benefit from a comprehensive emotional well-being programme delivered through PSHE discussions, and also the range of assemblies. The Year 11 and 12 Link programmes have been well-received by girls who recognise the value in sharing their concerns with others, staying safe on-line, and making use of the extremely positive and supportive relationships with their teachers. Girls feel well-supported by having access to the school counsellor in the 'Place2Be' drop-in centre. Other girls find the Animal Club boosts their emotional well-being by giving them the opportunity to

pet and care for a variety of small animals. Pupils feel supported by their teachers and are confident that any concerns will be heard through their class 'worry box' or through talking to a teacher.