



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

ST HILARY'S SCHOOL

DECEMBER 2016



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	St Hilary's School
DfE number	936/6042
Registered charity number	312056
Address	St Hilary's School Holloway Hill Godalming Surrey GU7 1RZ
Telephone number	01483 416551
Email address	secretary@sthilarysschool.com
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Whittingham
Chair of governors	Mrs Vivien Gillman
Age range	2 to 11
Number of pupils	250
	Boys 64 Girls 186
	EYFS 85 Prep 165
Inspection dates	07 to 08 December 2016

PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form time and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils. 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 Jane Chesterfield	Reporting inspector
Mr Tim Cannell	Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr Paul Leeming	Team inspector (Head of senior boys & director of sport, GSA and IAPS school)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 St Hilary's School is an independent day school for boys aged between 2 and 7, and girls aged between 2 and 11. It was founded in 1927 and became a charitable trust in 1966. The school is overseen by a board of 12 governors.
- 1.2 The school is based in a Victorian house situated in grounds on the outskirts of Godalming. The original house has been extended to provide purpose-built accommodation, and a new building known as the Hiorns Centre provides additional indoor facilities. The headteacher, deputy, Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) leader, head of pastoral care and Key Stage 1 leader have all taken up post since the previous full inspection in 2010.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide an outstanding all-round education, equip pupils with the qualities and skills required in school and beyond, recognise and utilise all their talents and ensure that all achieve their full potential. It works to develop a thirst for learning in its pupils, transmit strong traditional values based on the school's Christian ethos and provide a warm, safe and caring environment that enables all children to thrive.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, mostly from White British families living locally. The school has identified 51 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) of whom 39 receive additional support, mainly for literacy and numeracy. It has 3 pupils with education, health and care plans, funded by the local authority. English is an additional language for 17 pupils, 2 of whom receive support from tutors. The school has identified 39 pupils as the more able in the its population, and they are offered extension activities and teaching to match their needs.
- 1.5 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>
Nursery	Under-threes
Kindergarten	Nursery

Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was an interim inspection in November 2010. The recommendations from that inspection were:
- Define clearly and implement fully the respective management roles and responsibilities of the head of the lower school and the head of the EYFS.
 - Ensure that all children in the EYFS have regular access to all areas of the outdoor provision throughout the year.
- 1.7 These recommendations were fully met by the time of the EYFS intermediate inspection in December 2013, when all aspects of the EYFS were judged to be outstanding. The recommendation from that inspection was:
- Develop consistency in systems of tracking individual progress against the early learning goals (ELGs) to suitably inform all transitions to the next stage of learning.
- 1.8 The school has successfully met the recommendation of the previous inspection. Further detail is given in the main text of the report.

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils of all ages achieve high standards of attainment, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Pupils are very articulate and use their communication skills to great effect.
- From the EYFS onwards, pupils display a love of learning and an eagerness to tackle their tasks.
- Pupils across the school are highly successful in extra-curricular activities, especially art, sport, music and drama.

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

- Pupils of all ages are confident, settled and happy at school.
- Pupils are self-disciplined and persevere with their endeavours.
- Throughout the school, pupils co-operate willingly with others.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility and making their contribution to the life of the school.

Recommendations

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

- Taking steps to ensure consistency of challenge for the most able pupils in lessons.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils receive an excellent education in line with the school's aim of providing an outstanding all-round education that equips pupils with the qualities and skills required in school and beyond, that recognises and uses their talents, and that ensures they achieve their full potential. The school does not take part in National Curriculum tests, but the evidence available from school data and inspection activities demonstrates that attainment is high throughout the school in relation to national age-related expectations. Staff have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and focus on developing their key skills of literacy and numeracy, building on knowledge systematically. Teachers use assessment and tracking data effectively to inform planning and target setting for pupils. The recommendation of the previous inspection to develop consistency in the tracking of individuals to support their transition to the next year group has been fully met.
- 3.3 Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress across the school, based on the evidence from school data and inspection activities. Those pupils with SEND make at least good progress from their different starting points, as their needs are identified very early on in their school career. As a result, they follow programmes of support tailored to their individual requirements. Similar methods are used to support the small number of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. More able pupils make good progress and benefit from the school's focused action plan to channel their talents and gifts, and this is regularly observed in challenging and thought-provoking questioning and activities in class. Occasionally, opportunities to do this are missed in lessons. The inspection found no significant variations in the performance of boys and girls in the EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2, though differences in year group size and the proportions of boys to girls from year to year make it difficult to discern trends. Pupils are highly successful in gaining scholarships to their next school, both at the age of seven for the boys and eleven for the girls.
- 3.4 Throughout the school, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are developing competently across the subjects of the curriculum as a result of a carefully planned, interesting and relevant curriculum which builds on previous learning. Every parent who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire was satisfied that the school offers a suitable range of subjects for their children. In the EYFS, children explore and discover across all the areas of learning due to the extensive range of opportunities offered to them both indoors and outside. Higher up the school, pupils develop skills specific to their subjects, such as using maps and co-ordinates in geography and looking at original source material in history. In computing they demonstrate that they know how to programme devices and debug programs, while in French they practise their accents and their vocabulary. In art they display the capacity both to experiment with and to control implements and materials.
- 3.5 Throughout the school, pupils' communication skills are at a high level. They are articulate, confident and reasoned speakers who listen to others and respond appropriately, for example when they work in class with 'talk partners'. This is as a result of staff from the EYFS onwards demonstrating good language skills for their classes, building vocabulary and asking questions which develop what pupils already know. Pupils across the school can read at levels well above those expected for their age and can write fluently and expressively, both in English and in other subjects such as history. Pupils demonstrate that they can write in different ways to suit different purposes. This was observed in Year 4, where pupils displayed that they could write not only clear instructions for a task but also a persuasive presentation to sell a toy.

- 3.6 Pupils of all ages have strong numeracy skills, as observed in the pace of their work in mental mathematics and in their application of their previous knowledge and understanding to solve mathematical problems. They demonstrate that they can do this in other subjects such as science and geography, for example pupils used bar charts in their project work on Godalming. Pupils are helped in developing their numeracy skills through skilful questioning and support from adults, ample opportunities for discussion of methods, and grouping by ability in lessons.
- 3.7 Pupils are confident users of information and communication technology (ICT), and apply these skills successfully to project work and technology. In their computing lessons they follow instructions and try to troubleshoot problems.
- 3.8 From the very youngest children in the school, pupils of all ages have well-focused study skills; they settle to their tasks quickly and without fuss, and apply themselves to their learning. They display well-developed analytical skills in thinking through answers to questions posed by staff and working out ideas for themselves without prompting by adults. They enjoy working independently on tasks to reach solutions and debating ideas with others, for example in philosophy lessons.
- 3.9 Pupils across the school have excellent attitudes and are keen and eager learners, in line with the school's aim of developing a thirst for learning amongst them. Children in the EYFS are inquisitive and interested in exploring the activities available to them, and they enjoy working and playing with others. Older pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work and try hard to perform to the best of their ability. Pupils apply themselves to their early morning tasks as soon as they arrive each day, and automatically support one another in activities. This was particularly evident in the outdoor classroom where Year 5 worked together on making Christmas decorations. Pupils of all abilities are happy to collaborate with one another for a common cause. Their positive approach to learning is brought about by the quality of relationships in the classroom, and the high expectations of staff in fostering an ethic of hard work. Teachers have a clear understanding of the needs of different age groups and abilities which ensures that they can guide pupils towards success in their undertakings.
- 3.10 Beyond the classroom, pupils demonstrate an excellent range of talents in their extra-curricular activities. They are highly successful in gaining scholarships and in art, sport, music and drama competitions. Pupils have won tournaments in netball, football and athletics, and have achieved awards for musical and dramatic performances such as at the local arts festival. The high quality of pupils' artwork is evident from displays by all year groups around the school. The school's ethos is one that nurtures and celebrates pupils' talents, providing them with many extra-curricular activities and supporting them in endeavours that they undertake out of school.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 From the Nursery onwards, pupils demonstrate in their behaviour that they feel confident and secure in their surroundings. This is a result of the school's thoughtfully structured pastoral system and the fulfilment of its aim to create a warm, safe and caring environment that enables all children to thrive. Guided by the school's leadership, staff share a common desire to promote excellent relationships and an atmosphere where pupils feel able to share their thoughts and ideas. In interview, pupils expressed that they enjoyed having targets for improvement and appreciated the comments made by teachers in their books. A small minority of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire did not feel that marking helps them to improve their work or that they know how well they are doing in their subjects, though almost all felt that teachers are supportive and helpful should they have any problems with their work. The inspection found that marking in pupils' books is appropriate to the age of the year group concerned and included were some useful comments for improvement, particularly in English and mathematics.
- 4.3 Pupils display self-discipline and perseverance in their approach to school life. Year 6 pupils said that they do not give up when they find things hard, and this is borne out by the quality and quantity of work in the books of pupils across the school. Pupils' self-discipline and self-control is also evident in their behaviour around the school, for example in assembly. In a whole-school assembly during the inspection, EYFS children sat still and concentrated for the duration while older pupils displayed patience and tolerance with the youngest children and understood that they wanted to answer all the questions. Older pupils realise that the decisions they make have an impact on others, which is the result of initiatives such as the school's coveted Prince George award. Pupils have the chance to tackle this award from Year 3 onwards, demonstrating traits such as citizenship, sportsmanship and employability. Pupils feel that the introduction of philosophy to the curriculum has helped them to listen to other viewpoints and make decisions. Year 6 have enjoyed the work they have done on setting goals for achievement which range from practising a musical instrument every day to gaining a place at a particular senior school.
- 4.4 Pupils have an interest in non-material aspects of life and in thinking about ideas beyond the daily routine. One example of this was the school's 'Lest we forget' project where pupils researched the lives of their ancestors who served in the world wars. This resulted in a published book which was sold to families to raise money for charity. In keeping with the school's aim of transmitting strong traditional values based on the school's Christian ethos, pupils display respect and acceptance for those who are different from themselves, and an awareness and understanding of other religions and cultures. For example, pupils in Year 6 this term have enjoyed studying Hinduism, the American election and the impact of migration, and have been interested in finding out what motivates others. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils were fascinated to watch a film about how two disabled children overcame their difficulties to play sport or do their homework. They were able to list the many things they had in common with the children portrayed, rather than focus on the differences. Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school encourages them to respect other people and be tolerant of different beliefs.

- 4.5 Pupils have a clear grasp of how to stay safe and keep healthy. They eat sensible portions of healthy meals in the dining hall, supported by staff who oversee their choices. Year 4 pupils spoke about the value of a 'colourful plate'. Both boys and girls are active at lunchtime such as through playing football or skipping, which is due to the range of playtime equipment provided by the school. Pupils know what to do if they are worried about bullying or if they need first aid, and all those who responded to the questionnaire said that they know what to do in the event of fire. Every parent responding to the questionnaire felt that the school does all it can to ensure that their children learn in a safe and healthy environment. A few pupils and parents did not feel that the school deals effectively with bullying. Inspection evidence gained from a scrutiny of the school's records demonstrated that it is handled thoroughly in accordance with the school's policy.
- 4.6 Pupils of all ages enjoy working together, following school rules and making their contribution to the life of the school community, in line with the school motto 'Not for oneself but for all' which underpins school life. For example in the EYFS all children participate willingly in 'tidy-up time', guided by staff expectations and the example that they set. Pupils throughout the school consistently follow school rules and conventions, gladly sharing resources and putting others before themselves. They behave sensibly around the building, in the dining hall and in the playground, knowing that this is for the benefit of all. Pupils say that they appreciate having input into the school's golden rules and code of conduct, and that this makes them feel that the rules belong to them. They also believe that having the opportunity to take on roles of responsibility such as prefects, school councillors or house captains makes them feel that they have 'ownership' as stakeholders in the school. Others said that they were still playing their part even if they were simply putting a note in the school council suggestion box. Pupils participate enthusiastically in the 'buddy' scheme across the school. For example, during the inspection pupils in Year 4 took their job of hearing their Year 2 'buddies' read very seriously, while Year 2 pupils said afterwards how much they enjoy trying to impress Year 4 pupils with their reading skills. Pupils throughout the school are active charity fund raisers for local, national and international causes. Their success in all of these areas is a result of the wide range of opportunities for personal development offered by the school and the support provided by the staff to facilitate this.
- 4.7 Pupils leave the school extremely well equipped for the next stage of their education. They are enthusiastic and articulate with a fondness for learning, and have the social skills that they need to help them cope with the rigours of senior school. In practical terms, they are experienced in having specialist teachers and in moving around the site for their lessons. The ethos of the school and the successful fulfilment of its aims ensure that pupils are ready to tackle new challenges in the future.