



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

MAY 2017



CONTENTS

SCHOOL'S DETAILS	1
PREFACE	2
INSPECTION EVIDENCE	3
1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION	4
About the school	4
What the school seeks to do	4
About the pupils	4
2. KEY FINDINGS	5
Recommendation	5
3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	6
4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	9

SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School College	St Paul's Cathedral School			
DfE number	201/6006			
Registered charity number	312718			
Address	2 New Change London EC4M 9AD			
Telephone number	020 72485156			
Email address	admissions@spcs.london.sch.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Simon Larter-Evans			
Proprietor Chair of governors	The Very Reverend Dr David Ison			
Age range	4 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	252			
	Boys	149	Girls	103
	Day pupils	221	Boarders	31
	EYFS	20	Pre-prep	43
	Middle School	146	Upper School	43
Inspection dates	24 to 25 May 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.

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:

- 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.

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 group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies and a tutor group. Inspectors visited the boarding house and 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

Dr Wendy Bowring	Reporting inspector
Mr Robert Gullifer	Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Morgan	Team inspector (Head of mathematics, IAPS school)

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 St Paul's Cathedral School is a co-educational day school for pupils from four to thirteen years of age with boarding provision for the cathedral's boy choristers from the age of seven years. The school traces its origins back to the 12th century when it existed for several centuries solely for the education of the cathedral choristers. It moved to its current location, close to the Cathedral, in the 1960s and began to admit boys who were not choristers as pupils in the 1980s. The pre-preparatory department was opened in 1998 and the school has been fully coeducational since 2002. The school is owned by the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral. Its governing body comprises seven lay members and five Chapter members, chaired by the Dean.
- 1.2 The school is divided into three departments: the Pre-prep for pupils aged 4 to 7, the Middle School for pupils aged 7 to 11 and the Upper School for those aged 11 to 13. The Pre-prep and Years 3 and 4 are largely taught by class teachers. From Year 5, teaching is more specialist based. The choristers are housed in a separate building within the school with two resident fully qualified nurses, and with other residential staff adjacent to it. Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) which is now incorporated into the curriculum from Reception to Year 4. The current headmaster has been in post since September 2016.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to instil a love of learning through a broad curriculum, giving each pupil the opportunity to develop intellectually, socially, personally, physically, culturally and spiritually. It seeks to encourage its pupils to work to the best of their ability and achieve excellence in all of their endeavours. Within a Christian community, where the welfare of each child is of the utmost importance, the school strives to develop their independence and mutual responsibility. It encourages close partnerships with parents and aims to promote positive relationships, where the values of love, justice, tolerance, respect, honesty, service and trust are nurtured and practised.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, from a diverse range of ethnic origins living within a 10-mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised tests indicate the ability profile of the school is above average. The school has identified 18 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include dyslexia, dyspraxia and autism spectrum disorder, all of whom receive specialist learning support. One pupil currently has an education and healthcare plan (EHC). In addition to the choristers, the school has identified 25 pupils as being the most able who are provided with additional challenging activities. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL).
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils of all abilities achieve their individual potential through highly perceptive, sensitive personalised teaching.
- Pupils display excellent communication skills across the wide-ranging curricular and extra-curricular opportunities they are given.
- Pupils achieve excellent results in highly competitive entry examinations to senior schools, and many win scholarships for music and other subjects.
- Pupils achieve exceptional standards in music in the range of opportunities available to them.

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

- Pupils develop strong leadership skills through the many opportunities they are given.
- Pupils build strong supportive relationships with their peers, reflecting the excellent relationships modelled by the staff, including the leadership and management of the school.
- A highly developed, tangible sense of community pervades all aspects of school life.
- Pupils have a high level of awareness as to how to keep safe at school, and as far as practicable, in the wider community.

Recommendation

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

- ways to share effective strategies in teaching to enable pupils to apply their ICT skills consistently across the curriculum.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND and the most able, achieve high standards that demonstrate the fulfilment of the school's aim to instil a love of learning through a broad curriculum, giving each pupil the opportunity to develop intellectually, socially, personally, physically, culturally and spiritually. The strong ethos within the school of each child doing their best and of persevering when things appear challenging, enables pupils to take informed risks in their learning and make rapid progress in all areas. The dedicated leadership team, ably supported by strong governance, successfully creates a dynamic, enthusiastic learning environment where pupils of all ages and abilities are expertly supported to enable rapid progress.
- 3.3 Pupils of all ages and abilities, including boarders, make great strides in their learning through a broadly-based, challenging curriculum. Measures have been taken in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to ensure planning includes provision for the needs of individual children, as recommended in the previous inspection. Children leave Reception having met, or in many cases exceeded, national expectations. The inclusion of the IPC for science and humanities for younger pupils enables them to develop strong reflective and analytical study skills at a high level which can be applied to many aspects of the curriculum to enhance learning. Pupils know what to do to improve their work through efficient regular teacher assessment, helpful marking and close tracking of their performance through standardised tests which enable individual support to be given when necessary. Specific target-setting for SEND pupils ensures they make rapid progress through close attention to their individual needs. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, pupils overwhelmingly agreed that teachers were supportive and helpful when they encountered problems in their work. Pupils are able to identify their own strengths and weakness and be fully engaged in their own learning through the school's culture of self-reflection, skilfully monitored by staff who know their pupils well. For example, pupils in Year 2 routinely follow the 'children's rubric' to identify how well they feel they are performing in a particular topic. Pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND, develop high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. Linguistic skills are particularly well-developed through the many opportunities given to present and perform. Challenge and support provided by teachers in physical, creative and aesthetic subjects ensures pupils make excellent progress in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils achieve excellent results in highly competitive entry examinations for senior schools, winning many scholarships for music and other subjects. The choristers sing the weekly programme of services in the cathedral at an exceptionally high quality.
- 3.4 Pupils of all ages have outstanding communication skills. Knowing they will have a sympathetic ear from their teachers and peers, pupils are lucid and expressive when sharing their ideas. Reception children listen attentively, are highly articulate and keen to volunteer answers to open-ended questions. Boarders speak passionately and maturely about the spiritual dimension being a chorister brings to their lives. Pupils successfully write in a number of genres. For example, Year 4 pupils demonstrated the power of writing persuasive texts when presenting strong fatuous arguments for *not* wearing sun cream or the benefits of eating badly and growing fat. More able pupils write fluently using sophisticated vocabulary and complex grammatical structures which meet the high expectations of their teachers.
- 3.5 Pupils achieve high levels of attainment in numeracy, and thrive on opportunities they are given for mathematical enquiry. Inspirational teaching which focuses on meeting the individual needs of pupils and the use of a range of teaching strategies, ensure all are engaged and move forward rapidly in their learning. Reception children used tally charts to record data,

and solved simple addition and subtraction calculations within 20. Pre-prep pupils could confidently describe the features of 2D and 3D shapes, and could solve written problems that involved two operations. Appropriate opening tasks and sympathetic in-class support enables the lower attainers to have high esteem and achieve high standards during lessons. Older pupils displayed excellent mental skill when changing decimals into fractions, and the application of high levels of computational skills were seen in the oldest pupils' books.

- 3.6 Pupils develop a good range of skills in ICT from the earliest age, and in many cases, excellent application of skills to other areas of the curriculum enhances their learning. Younger pupils used tablets to extend their mathematical learning, and Year 3 pupils incorporated images to create an anti-cyberbullying poster. Staff recognise the use of ICT as a cross-curricular skill, and ensure opportunities for its application are planned for in most subjects.
- 3.7 Pupils from the earliest age develop excellent study skills and are able to clearly analyse and hypothesise. In preparation for creative writing, Year 4 pupils displayed keen deductive thinking when interpreting visual images of character and mood. Year 5 pupils intelligently thought through the positive and negative implications in food advertising. Older pupils displayed meticulous investigative skills and high-order thinking skills during a science discussion on bones. Analytical skills were evident in history when older pupils looked at first-hand historical sources, and made it clear what substantive evidence could be extracted. More able pupils achieve at a high level as teaching provides additional challenging tasks and further opportunities to follow their own lines of enquiry. The school has successfully fulfilled the requirement from the previous inspection to share best practice in teaching across the school to ensure consistent standards in the pace and variety of activities in lessons.
- 3.8 The vast majority of pupils participate in a number of diverse musical activities including choirs, orchestra and a range of ensembles. Energetic and enthusiastic staff provide opportunities for pupils to achieve high standards in a wide range of activities. The school ensures activities are open to all pupils including the choristers, who were extremely happy with the extra-curricular opportunities available to them. In the questionnaires, pupils overwhelmingly agreed that they were able to be involved in a good range of activities, and parents similarly felt the school provides a good choice of extra-curricular activities. School teams achieve creditable levels of success in inter-school matches and individual pupils have enjoyed success in sports competitions outside of school, such as representing the county in cricket and in local swimming and fencing competitions. The most able pupils achieve significantly high levels of success as staff encourage participation in a wide range of national competitions, such as for general knowledge, maths and art. Pupils' achievements are celebrated by staff and pupils in assemblies and are shared with parents and governors through weekly circulars, strongly reflecting the school's ethos of praising the efforts of every child regardless of ability. They are also recorded in the 'SPCS Certificate' that they receive on leaving the school, which documents in detail their participation and success in all curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- 3.9 The pupils' outstandingly positive attitudes to learning enable them to make excellent progress across the curriculum. They stated overwhelmingly in the questionnaire that the school gave them opportunities to learn and make good progress. They persevere when acquiring new skills, as seen in Year 4 throwing and catching practice and when manipulating balls of clay to create pots in Year 5. Pupils are warmly encouraged and supported by sympathetic teachers who are full of praise for their efforts while continually asking them to reflect on their learning and challenge themselves even further. Pupils work conscientiously at all times, whether independently or collaboratively in pairs or small groups. A positive classroom ethos whereby pupils routinely collaborate to discuss work and help each other solve problems impacts positively on their learning. Excellent collaboration across year groups

was seen when a tutor group consisting of pupils from Year 3 to Year 8 took equal responsibility in delivering an assembly on recycling to the whole school.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with SEND, are extremely confident and have high levels of self-knowledge, self-discipline and resilience. This is strongly developed through the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) curriculum and supported by the ethos and excellent pastoral care of the school. Pupils have high expectations of themselves, reflected in the demands made of them by the staff, and they are extremely well prepared for the next stages of their education. Pupils are aware of their innate abilities, as seen when pupils described themselves as heavy-handed in a pottery lesson, and they showed great concentration and application in order to improve. Year 8 were extremely focused on the preparation for the forthcoming examinations, but not to the detriment of their enjoyment and desire to extend their learning. Opportunities for pupils to grow in self-confidence abound, with reading aloud and presenting to peers a common occurrence in the classroom. Pupils are empowered to make mistakes in order to learn: they are encouraged to debate, question and challenge. Their confidence grows as a result, through positive and constructive feedback from teachers and their peers. Pupils are resilient and persevere, supported through sympathetic teaching and through the positive approach to dealing with difficulties. Boarders display excellent self-discipline and time-management in successfully balancing their cathedral duties with the demands of a full school day.
- 4.3 Pupils are fully aware that the decisions they make will impact directly on their own successes, and as such, make sensible choices. Boarders appreciate the need to adhere to a strict time schedule, including proper time for sleep, in order to be able to fulfil effectively their public commitments at the cathedral. Younger pupils can explain the elements of healthy eating and why exercise is important for a healthy balanced lifestyle.
- 4.4 Pupils develop a strong spiritual understanding through the unique association with the cathedral, and through assemblies, tutor groups and studies of other faiths, and appreciate the regular visits made by governors from the clergy to the school. Year 7 pupils were aware of the power of music to change moods, and Year 6 pupils were able to discuss the moods and emotions being raised in literature and to utilise this in their own writing. Pupils unite in enthusiastically singing hymns in assembly and listen attentively to music recitals, giving hearty applause to their peers for their efforts.
- 4.5 Pupils have an excellent grasp of systems of rules and laws, and can articulate why society needs these in order to work harmoniously together. Regular assemblies provide pupils of all ages with the opportunity for reflection on moral issues and to develop empathy with people affected by tragic events in the world around them. They are able explain in a well-balanced, mature way the challenges that will face them as the next generation to be in charge of the world and they appreciate their responsibilities in this respect. Pupils understand and follow closely school behaviour protocols, and have the opportunity to collaborate and contribute sensible ideas when negotiating class rules. Reception children know there are consequences arising from the way they behave, and the need for making good choices is embedded at an early age. In the questionnaires, parents overwhelmingly agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour, and almost all pupils felt the school encouraged them to behave well and that they understood the sanctions for poor behaviour.
- 4.6 Pupils are socially aware, and a high level of collaboration across all age group is highly developed. Tutor groups enable pupils across age groups to work effectively together, and the house system provides plenty of opportunities for pupils to work successfully towards common goals. Pupils talk warmly about the positive relationships they make which fosters a noteworthy sense of wellbeing, strongly supported by the excellent role models provided by

the staff. The school's culture whereby older pupils actively look out for the welfare of younger ones is tangible, and is particularly evident in the boarding house. Boarders watch the news on a daily basis to keep them informed on national and world events, and they show maturity and empathy when giving their opinions.

- 4.7 Pupils of all ages and abilities have excellent leadership skills. They relish the opportunities provided to take on responsibility and contribute to the school community. Reception children fulfil the role of the class 'special helper' with pride, and older pupils carry out their responsibilities conscientiously. Every Year 8 pupil is given a leadership role within the school community which senior leaders recognise is important for their personal development. Pupils are confident to put forward their views for the community via the School Council where the views of all pupils are heard and considered. Choristers achieve exceptionally high standards of performance and gain great personal satisfaction through their duties at the cathedral. Other pupils also contribute to the local community through a number of activities and enjoy their interactions through music, such as school choirs singing at the annual Lord Mayor's switching on of the Christmas lights ceremony, sport, and the wider environment through charitable work.
- 4.8 Pupils see no difference between those of other beliefs and cultures, fully respecting the rights of people to hold differing views to themselves. They participate fully in activities across the curriculum that celebrate other cultures, and are acutely aware of problems that arise from lack of tolerance. Pupils learn about other faiths in RE and are able to retell stories from the bible they find particularly inspirational or thought-provoking. Parents in the questionnaire overwhelmingly agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and pupils also strongly felt the school encouraged them to be tolerant of those with different faiths and beliefs and encouraged them to respect other people.
- 4.9 Pupils have a well-developed understanding of how they can keep themselves safe physically and mentally. They can explain how to stay safe at home, at school and on-line, and have a positive attitude to keeping fit and healthy. Excellent leadership and management, supported by strong governance, ensures pupils recognise the uniqueness of the school's circumstances and do their utmost to raise awareness of personal safety and security without raising anxiety. Pupils look out for each other at all times, as noted when older pupils took great care when passing the cricket bat to each other as younger pupils were playing close by. Boarders extended a genuine warm welcome to new boarders who might feel homesick by including them in every activity. Older pupils feel fully supported by sympathetic staff who ensure that all pupils feel safe and secure and feel well prepared for life beyond school. In the questionnaire the overwhelming majority of pupils felt they knew how to stay safe on-line.