



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

UPTON HOUSE 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(s)	5
3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	6
4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	8

SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Upton House School			
DfE number	868/6005			
Registered charity number	309095			
Address	Upton House School 115 St Leonard's Road Windsor Berkshire SL4 3DF			
Telephone number	01753 862610			
Email address	info@uptonhouse.org.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Rhian Thornton			
Chair of governors	Mr Jonathan Story			
Age range	2 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	262			
	Boys	64	Girls	198
	Day pupils	262	EYFS	123
	Pre-prep	54	Prep	85
Inspection dates	4 to 5 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. 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 Sara Wiggins	Reporting inspector
Mrs Diana Green	Team inspector (Head of pre-prep, IAPS school)
Mrs Heather Beeby	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

1.1 Upton House School is an independent day school for girls and boys up to Year 2 and for girls from Year 3 to Year 6, and incorporates a nursery from the age of two.

1.2 The school was founded in 1936, by two local mothers seeking quality education for their own four children. Opened with 10 children in May 1936, it initially operated from a house at 52 King's Road, Windsor until December 1942 when it relocated to the current site. The school is operated by Upton House School Limited and is a registered charity. It is overseen by a board of governors, known as the Council of Management, with 13 members, who are trustees of the charity and directors of the company. Since the previous inspection, a new chairman of governors was appointed in June 2014 and a new headmistress was appointed in September 2016.

What the school seeks to do

1.3 The school's statement of ethos is to nurture confidence and talent both in life and in academic skills, within an aspirational, family friendly environment, and via using a lively, challenging and broad based curriculum. To do this the school aims to foster a happy and stimulating environment in which each child can prosper academically, socially, emotionally, morally, culturally and spiritually. It also aspires to provide the very best educational opportunities and to instil empathy, open mindedness and strong moral values in each child.

About the pupils

1.4 Pupils come from families with a range of professional and business backgrounds and live within a twenty-mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicates that the ability of the pupils on entry is above average. The school has identified 47 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 28 receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 22 pupils, of whom 4 receive additional support. Data used by the school has identified 26 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them.

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 display outstanding communication skills, nurtured by the breath of the curriculum and informative and lively lessons.
- The excellent level of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills is as a result of supportive, enabling teaching.
- Pupils develop notably strong creative skills in a wide range of areas, strongly supported by opportunities provided through an innovative curriculum.
- Pupils opportunities to use their well-developed higher order thinking skills are occasionally limited through overly-prescriptive teaching methods.

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

- Pupils have a deep understanding of the importance of reflection and the non-material aspects of life.
- Pupils' contribution to others, the school and the community is excellent throughout the school.
- Pupils develop extremely high levels of self-awareness and self-esteem, strongly aided by the ethos of praise and encouragement that permeates the school.
- Pupils' have excellent understanding that the decisions they make will impact on their own future success and the well-being of others.

Recommendation

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

- To provide opportunities more consistently across the school for pupils to take initiative and develop their higher order thinking skills.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

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

3.2 The school meets its aims and ethos as it nurtures confidence and talents in both life and academic skills, within an aspirational, family friendly environment and using a lively, challenging and broad based curriculum. In the EYFS, and throughout the school, pupils display outstanding communication skills, aided by the breath of the curriculum, thorough lesson planning and informative and lively lessons. Children in the EYFS communicate, both with each other and their teachers, highly effectively. They learn to make marks, form letters and by the end of the EYFS the most able pupils write simple stories independently. Excellent relationships between all in the school community enable pupils to have high levels of self-confidence and, as a result, they are willing to explain and discuss their learning in class with their teachers and peers. They listen with interest to each other and ask pertinent questions freely in discussion and, as a result, the pupils are highly articulate by the time they leave the school. Pupils enter discussions willingly and with great motivation and show excellent debating skills, both in lessons and more informal situations. They express themselves to a high standard in their writing and in older year groups the support provided by the use of information and communication technology (ICT) enables the least able to access the literacy curriculum with increasing confidence and competence. Language analysis and technical vocabulary such as clauses, punctuation marks and ellipsis, are used effectively by the teacher and understood by the pupils to a high level. Their fluent writing skills allow them to develop their knowledge and further their skills across a range of subjects.

3.3 The school does not take part in National Curriculum tests, but the available evidence shows pupils' attainment to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. This is demonstrated by the high proportion of scholarships which pupils win to selective schools; their performance in lessons; subject interviews and their written work. The pupils, including those in the EYFS, show rapid progress in relation to their starting points. Pupils who are less able, those with EAL and SEND and the most able make the same rapid progress. This is strongly supported by the use of assessment data which is carefully tracked across all ages and areas, with appropriate interventions being put in place to meet the needs of individuals. This addresses the recommendation of the previous inspection. In interviews, pupils with SEND and EAL stated that they benefited strongly from the specialist teaching provided and the support of teachers and teaching assistants in class.

3.4 Pupils of all ages develop excellent knowledge, skills and understanding across a range of subjects as a result of the thorough lesson planning which ensures that the needs of individual pupils are met. This effectively meets the school's aim to give the best educational opportunities to every child. Pupils enjoy the varied opportunities provided by the school which develop their skills, both as a result of a curriculum that includes specialist lessons such as media, food technology, computing, drama, mandarin and dance, and also through the extensive activities programme provided, the many and varied trips out and diverse range of visitors to school. Pupils make excellent use of the school's outdoor areas, on-screen resources and photographic resources and as a result are fully engaged in the activities being undertaken. Younger pupils carried out a treasure hunt activity in the grounds with pairs 'hiding' treasure, mapping out a route to find it and then creating tally charts from their findings. Older pupils considered photographic evidence which provided insights into life in the Stone Age and compared this with life today.

3.5 Pupils, particularly those in the oldest year group, have an extensive knowledge and understanding of high level scientific concepts. They further develop their skills as they consider philosophical issues related to science. Throughout the school, pupils' skills are enhanced through skilful teaching that engages pupils' attention and maintains focus. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire were in support of the range of subjects being suitable and that teaching enables good progress and develops skills for the future. A very large majority of pupils agreed that most lessons were interesting and almost all agreed that the school enables them to make good progress.

3.6 Children in the EYFS are articulate and develop high levels of phonic knowledge, benefiting strongly from the rich phonic input which includes letters of the week, list-making activities, and word walls. Their high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem ensure they are willing to use their skills to scribe difficult words, for example adding 'magnifying' to list a magnifying glass for a rucksack. They recognise 2D shapes and show secure understanding of counting. They use resources independently and explore the world around them. Whether making their own jungle corner area, or helping patients in the 'doctor's area', they consider what equipment is needed and use the available resources highly effectively.

3.7 Throughout the school, pupils apply their excellent creative skills with confidence in a wide range of areas. The quality of the art, design and technology work produced and displayed to good effect throughout the school is exceptional. The youngest children use scissors highly competently to create castles complete with turrets, out of egg boxes; whilst the oldest show highly developed skills as they design a swimming gala programme cover. They consider famous paintings and experiment with etching tools, understanding that logos and words must be etched backward for the printing to work. Pupils' achievement in sport is strong and includes scholarships to other schools, places in national swimming finals and winning local football tournaments. Achievements in music are also of a high standard, including scholarship and examination success with a variety of instruments. Pupils enjoy their music and drama, both in their individual lessons and class lessons, and relish the opportunities provided to perform and at which they succeed to a high standard. In their responses to the questionnaires, almost all pupils agreed that the school provides a good range and choice of activities.

3.8 Pupils enjoy their learning and work highly collaboratively. Pupils talk confidently about finding out about strategies for improvement and use a variety of different methods before seeking help from their teachers. In their responses to the questionnaires, the overwhelming majority of pupils agreed that staff are supportive and helpful if they have any problems with their work. Pupils can use a range of resources to research and concentrate very well as a result of engaging teaching. On occasion, pupils' ability to take initiative and develop higher order thinking skills is limited by teaching that is over directed and which does not always fully meet the needs of the most able and those with EAL or SEND. The leadership team has recognised this and has recently introduced a thorough system of lesson monitoring and data tracking. This information is used to inform lesson planning to enable the needs of all pupils to be met. Pupils respond very successfully where, as on the majority of occasions, teaching encourages imaginative and challenging tasks. Pupils settle to tasks quickly and are keen to achieve. Open-ended questioning enables pupils to use their strong study skills to draw upon a wide range of sources and hypothesise. When considering the effect of dialogue on a story, older pupils were able to respond with ideas on perspective and how the dialogue helped the reader to know what the characters were thinking. Pupils happily ask questions and seek clarification in lessons as required.

3.9 Pupils are highly competent at applying their ICT and mathematical skills across the curriculum at an age-appropriate level. In interviews, younger pupils spoke with pride about converting millimetres to centimetres when measuring rainfall in geography. Art lessons throughout the school provide many opportunities for them to use pattern and shape, further developing their creativity. More able pupils extend their skills to high levels as they undertake both numeracy and logic challenges presented to them both in enrichment lessons and after school activities. The youngest children use computers, 'smart tables' and programmable toys with confidence to extend their understanding in a variety of curricular areas. Older pupils have sophisticated skills as, for example, they use 'micro-bits' to create word sequences or moving shapes. Pupils extend their learning further as they use media in a variety of ways, for example to explore a range of adverts and what makes them effective and then film and edit their own advert promoting life at the school.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

4.2 The school fully meets its aims to foster a happy and stimulating environment in which each child can prosper academically, socially, emotionally, morally, culturally and spiritually. Pupils' spiritual understanding is outstanding. Images of younger children viewing ducklings as they hatch, older pupils relishing outdoor activities or taking part in a 'living advent calendar' show the strength of pupils' appreciation of non-material aspects of life, whether religious or philosophical. They understand the importance of reflection, whether in assembly, or in the 'just a minute' activities after break which provide them with the opportunity to stop and consider for a moment before continuing with the business of the learning day. Pupils of all ages strongly support the significance of the 'birthday song' sung by pupils, staff and parents, which hopes they will be safe and happy and receive love and kindness throughout the year. Pupils respond positively to opportunities to listen quietly to music during lessons and assembly. This is further enhanced by regular visits by local clergy who support the pupils' further spiritual development. The school's ethos, vision and values are shared by all members of the community.

4.3 Pupils' contribution to others, the school and the community is excellent throughout the school. Pupils organise their own music and sporting events and through their house system they raise money for local, national and international charities. The prep school council and the newly established pre-prep school council meet regularly with their peers and the senior leadership team to voice their opinions and ideas about school development. This has led to events such as the Christmas baking competition. Younger pupils greatly appreciate the stories that are written by older pupils and then read to them, and also the support provided through the buddy system which includes older pupils, under careful supervision, helping them to exit the premises during a fire drill. Pupils take part regularly in other events in the community, including concerts, Christmas carols and the annual Remembrance Day parade.

4.4 Pupils develop extremely high levels of self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-confidence, and resilience and are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives. This is greatly enhanced by the excellent relationships pupils have with their peers and their teachers. An ethos of praise and encouragement enables them to seek out further opportunities for their development. Pupils celebrate both their own achievements and those of others with enthusiasm and a smile. Children in the EYFS are proud of their work and confidently engage in the interesting activities provided. They are kind and happily allow others to play and learn as they share the materials in their very well resourced areas. Older pupils use peer assessment effectively to celebrate the achievements of others whilst also providing supportive guidance to aid progress. The vast majority of pupils and parents, in feedback in the questionnaire, feel that the school encourages pupils to have respect for others. Pupils are aware of their targets for improvement and seek out opportunities for showing their skills and talents and as a result develop excellent self-confidence. They readily describe how teachers' strategies help them to persevere and encourage them to think about problems in a new way. They develop excellent knowledge, understanding and skills needed to manage their lives now and in the future through 'Learning for Life' which is a key focus of the school's personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) curriculum.

4.5 Pupils have an excellent understanding that the decisions which they make are important determinants of their own success and well-being. In discussion, pupils were able to articulate that each decision they make takes them on another step to whatever they aim to achieve. In interviews pupils discussed opportunities that may be open for them in the future and cite activities such as activity weeks, debating and parliament club as contributing to these decisions. Parliament club focuses the children on opportunities which may be open to them in the future. They understand that good mental and physical health are necessary for long-term success and value the impact of both the PSHEE and the recent addition of 'mindfulness' into the curriculum for older pupils which

has extended their ability to reflect and understand themselves. Pupils throughout the school understand the importance of being healthy. Younger children show an excellent developing understanding of the importance of personal hygiene and eating a healthy diet. Pupils of all ages enjoy and engage in the varied physical education activities provided; whether games at playtime or the weekly run to the sports playing area. They know the importance of staying safe, have understood the need for online safety and know that rules such as not running in the corridors are to keep themselves and others in their community safe.

4.6 Pupils' moral understanding and responsibility for their own behaviour is excellent, strongly meeting the school's aim to instil open mindedness and strong moral values in each child. They readily distinguish between right and wrong and are supportive of the school's rules and values. They enjoy the many opportunities provided, from the earliest ages, to take on positions of responsibility taking on monitoring roles when serving at snack time or clearing away. They discuss and reflect on behaviour, understand the high expectation of their teachers and senior leaders, understand that, whilst they know they are responsible for their own behaviour, the staff will remind them through an understanding of values such as friendship when they go wrong. Their understanding and respect for the laws of the country is strengthened through the curriculum, activities and visits which include a trip to parliament and the many whole school opportunities to learn about monarchy provided by their local environment in Windsor, which develop their understanding of society as a whole. Respecting diversity and cultural understanding is an intrinsic part of life in the school. The pupils are naturally respectful of each other and of those within their community. Pupils enjoy their assemblies, which help them to learn about other people and to respect those who they perceive to be different. They recognise that they are all unique and describe the school as 'one big happy family' and this is strongly supported in lessons and activities where, for example, at break time older pupils play readily with those younger than themselves, and during lessons where pupils work highly collaboratively in groups and pairs.