



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

NOTRE DAME PREPARATORY 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
Recommendations	5
3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	6
4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	8

School's details

School	Notre Dame Preparatory School			
DfE Number	926/6114			
Address	147 Dereham Road Norwich Norfolk NR2 3TA			
Telephone number	01603 625593			
Email address	info@notredameprepschool.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Kieran O'Herlihy			
Chairman of governors	Mr Richard Bailey			
Age range	2 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	224			
	Boys	100	Girls	124
	EYFS	83	Juniors	141
Inspection dates	17 to 18 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 the chairman 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 Linda Donowho	Reporting inspector
Ms Mary Bradbury	Team inspector (Former headteacher, ISA school)
Ms Jane Stevens	Team inspector (Former deputy head, ISA school)

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Notre Dame Preparatory School is a Catholic independent day school for children aged 2 to 11 years. The school has a strong Christian ethos, welcoming children of all faiths and cultures. It was founded by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur in 1865 and was originally based at Surrey Street. The school moved to Dereham Road in the early 1970s and has been run as a charitable trust since that time. It is overseen by a governing body and is a registered charity limited by guarantee.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school seeks to develop compassion, tolerance, empathy and co-operation in its pupils, and to encourage them to look beyond themselves in order to develop spiritually and creatively. It aims for its pupils to believe in themselves and to acknowledge their own strengths and weaknesses. The school strives to encourage pupils to set goals, take risks, make decisions and develop their confidence, and to change their thinking when necessary in order to achieve goals.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a range of business, professional and other backgrounds. Although a majority of pupils come from White European backgrounds, many others come from a diverse number of minority ethnic groups. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils on entry is above average, although a wide range of abilities is represented across the pupil body. The school has identified twenty-nine pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. Seventy-eight pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), with three of whom requiring additional support with their English. More able or talented pupils are catered for in lessons as well as through the extra-curricular activities available.
- 1.4 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 develop strong core skills and enjoy their learning.
- From the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) onwards, pupils of all ages have positive and supportive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are extremely articulate and express themselves with confidence and a sense of delight.
- Pupils write clearly and accurately for a wide range of purposes, producing writing of an extremely high standard.
- Pupils use their mathematical knowledge extremely well when solving challenging problems in mathematics and other subjects.

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

- Pupils are able, particularly with decision-making, organising their learning and interacting effectively with their peers.
- Pupils' spiritual understanding is exceptional; pupils of all ages fully appreciate each other and the world around them.
- Pupils are aware of their strengths and determined to succeed.
- Pupils are adept in understanding where they are in their learning and how to improve further when marking provides them with clear direction.

Recommendations

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Ensure that all marking provides clear guidance so that all pupils can use it to further improve the quality of their academic achievements.
- Ensure that the progress of all pupils in French is accelerated by considering a wider range of approaches to teaching.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 In line with school's aims, pupils develop a positive attitude and an enthusiasm for learning that ensures their success. Their progress in mathematics and English is particularly notable due to highly effective teaching and the strong focus on these subjects, which prepares pupils well for their progression to the senior schools of their choice. In their questionnaire responses, almost all parents agreed that the range of subjects is suitable for their children.
- 3.3 Pupils throughout the school display a positive attitude and an enthusiasm for learning, and are determined to give of their best to ensure their success. They are curious, willing to challenge themselves and not afraid to make mistakes. This strongly supports the school's aims for its pupils to believe in themselves and to acknowledge their own strengths and weaknesses as they set goals, take risks, make decisions and develop their confidence to change their thinking when necessary. Pupils throughout the school achieve high standards across the curriculum, building knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning. Children in the EYFS quickly develop strong core skills which they happily apply to their work and play. A key component to their success is their willingness to collaborate and help each other. This attitude of collaboration and support of each other permeates the whole school.
- 3.4 All pupils including the younger children are enthusiastic and eager to participate in activities that are made available, and do so with great enjoyment. Pupils achieve extremely well across a wide range of activities outside the classroom. The school excels at cross country. Pupils gain confidence from an approach to sport that encourages every pupil to represent the school. Pupils talk animatedly about the many fun, creative and musical activities in which they are encouraged to participate in, and in which they achieve high standards. Their results in music grades are consistently high for their age, and pupils gain enjoyment and experience by participating in ensembles, musical events and festivals. The choir are regularly successful at the Norfolk festivals and pupils gain music scholarships to local senior schools. Pupils are successful in art competitions and in a range of other events.
- 3.5 Pupils' attainment by the time they leave Year 6 is judged to be above the national average for maintained schools, based on the school entry for National Curriculum tests at age eleven. Results from 2013 to 2015 have been well above the national average for maintained junior schools. As well as this, results in standardised tests in maths, reading and spelling have been above average for maintained schools. Inspection evidence drawn from the observation of lessons, a scrutiny of work, discussions with pupils and examination of school data confirms this judgement. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make excellent progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Less able pupils and those with SEND or EAL make excellent progress as they are extremely well supported and their progress is carefully monitored by the leadership and management. In their questionnaire responses, all pupils reported that the school provides them the opportunity to learn and make good progress. In French, less able pupils often find it difficult to keep pace with the demanding curriculum. More able pupils respond to the challenges provided in lessons so that they may accelerate their progress. Pupils' achievement benefits from the tracking system which carefully assesses the progress of all pupils in mathematics and English, and staff use this information to ensure that pupils are provided appropriate work and support.

- 3.6 From the EYFS onwards, pupils are inquisitive learners. They express their ideas openly and frequently ask insightful questions to further their knowledge and vocabulary. Pupils listen eagerly to instructions with a bubbling enthusiasm to get started on a task. They use imaginative language such as 'slimy', 'slippery' and 'drippy' when describing the texture and feel of the 'gloop' as it runs through their fingers, and are excited in their investigations. In lessons throughout the school, every opportunity is taken to encourage pupils to offer opinions and discuss thoughts and ideas, which they do with enthusiasm. Older pupils are extremely articulate and confident; they share ideas and listen to each other, demonstrating a common respect amongst pupils for the opinions of their peers. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to use their imagination and lessons offer a wealth of opportunity for pupils to integrate their skills, as observed in a lesson where pupils were creating a 'magic potion' which incorporated science, maths and English.
- 3.7 Pupils have a thorough understanding of grammar and can write effectively for many different purposes, such as producing radio adverts using all their knowledge about what styles of adverts are used effectively and what makes them memorable. Pupils read with fluency and enthusiasm; this is encouraged from an early age and adds much to their literacy achievements. Teachers consistently encourage pupils to read and enjoy books, and every opportunity is utilised to encourage a love of literature.
- 3.8 Achievement in mathematics is excellent throughout the school. The foundations for understanding of number are strongly formed in the EYFS through play and more formal activities. This is then developed throughout the school through a creative and well-considered curriculum. Consequently, pupils are extremely competent at handling number and calculations. They are adept in applying their knowledge; in an exciting lesson on creating 'magic potions', they were able to carefully measure ingredients and calculate the capacity of ingredients using column addition. A good proportion are able to use more complex measures, such as sharing 2.8 litres of 'potion' between 7 teachers. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate tenacity and persistence when solving problems. They transfer with ease their knowledge across subjects, particularly in science and geography. Children in the EYFS persevered in finding solutions to a problem of trying to get a boat down a chute; they worked together excitedly as they eventually found that adding water was the key. Older pupils investigated whether jogging or star jumps are the more effective exercise by measuring pulse rates. Pupils are confident and highly competent in their knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology, and use it regularly and appropriately to support other subjects.
- 3.9 Pupils are able to draw on knowledge from a range of sources and use it in new situations to solve problems and hypothesise. They use their study skills very well and are confident in their own ideas. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and explore their ideas. Teachers provide regular opportunities for investigation and research, encouraging pupils to explain where they are in their learning and decide what they want to learn next. Pupils then research and investigate to follow their lines of enquiry independently.
- 3.10 Pupils generally know what they need to do to improve and display a determination to do so, but do not always receive detailed advice on how to do this. They appreciate comments in the marking of their work, but the direction of this is not consistent across subjects. Pupils are wholeheartedly excited about school and learning. Their enthusiasm is joyous and unrestrained in appreciation of the activities on offer and the activities in which they take part.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils display excellent emotional resilience and self-understanding, and are capable of mature self-reflection. They are aware of their own and others' strengths and weakness as stressed in the school's aims; they are sympathetic and encouraging towards each other and generally know what they need to do to improve. A culture of self-evaluation pervades the school, and pupils regularly celebrate their own achievements and those of their peers. Self- and peer-assessment are routinely used throughout the school so that children become adept at understanding where they are in their learning and how to improve further. Pupils believe that it is important to 'keep trying' even when they are finding things difficult. They understand that teachers will always help, and they value the philosophy that says that 'there's no shame in being wrong as long as you have tried'. Staff ensure that that each child is rewarded frequently and particular strengths are highlighted.
- 4.3 Pupils are proficient at making decisions. They are consistently encouraged to take responsibility for their decisions through personal, social and health education and assemblies where they are reminded that their decisions can affect others. In the EYFS, children eagerly choose their activities and move from activity to activity when they feel that they need a new experience; they display a determination in solving problems and work together to this end. Pupils enjoy the challenge of working together to make decisions; they work in harmony and respect the right of everyone to have their say. They have a strong understanding of the democratic process, for example in groups they vote on a favourite poem and then complete the process as a class. Pupils make decisions about all aspects of school life; they ably explain where they went wrong and how to make the right decisions in order to have a happy playtime, and can discuss and decide whether characters in fiction or real life are making or have made the right decisions. Pupils demonstrate an awareness of the need to succeed and be prepared for the next stage in their education. They have a mature approach and are determined to improve and give of their best at all times. Pupils think about what they might want to be when they leave school and what skills and qualities they will need to achieve this.
- 4.4 The quality of the pupil's spiritual development is evident throughout the school. Pupils are confident and self-aware. In line with the school's aims, Christian worship is central to school life. Pupils are encouraged through assembly and Mass to pray and care for each other. They demonstrate a strong sense of reflection on non-material aspects of life following assemblies. Pupils expressed that they appreciate assemblies as they feel that a strong bond between teachers and pupils encourages openness and trust. Pupils are extremely reflective on life; they consider others and enjoy opportunities for meditation when studying Buddhism. They enjoy mindfulness lessons and pray for sad things that happen in the world as they discuss worldwide events. The pupils have an excellent appreciation and respect for their own and each other's faith and cultures. Staff and pupils celebrate the diversity of the school's members, enabling all pupils to develop an insight into the values and beliefs of others, and to develop harmonious relations with them. Pupils delight in this diversity and eagerly explain the benefits of having friends from different cultures and faiths. They expressed that friends are firm and true, and an important influence for good.

- 4.5 Pupils have excellent moral understanding and a desire to stand up for what they know is right. Great emphasis is placed on good behaviour and making the right choice for its own sake instead of for materialistic gain. Rules are universally acknowledged and accepted within the school; pupils accept sanctions and punishments as just and deserved. These are reinforced by all staff who routinely explain the reasons for them, ensuring that pupils come to understand and accept responsibility for their own actions. Pupils regularly reflect upon their own achievements and can offer mature, self-critical observations of their behaviour and work. They have a strong sense of self-esteem due to the recognition they receive for their successes, both in class and in assemblies. Many pupils perform music to a high standard, and pupils display confidence in performing and enjoy sharing their music with others, which thus forms a significant element in their spiritual development.
- 4.6 The school community are proud that everyone gets on well together and happily share their differences. In their questionnaire responses, all parents who responded felt that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 4.7 Pupils of all ages relish responsibility. Year 6 pupils are proud to have achieved status in the school through 'beacon' roles as leaders, house captains, prefects and librarians. These are highly prized and seen as recognition of their ability to behave well and guide others by their exemplary behaviour. Teachers set high expectations and pupils expressed that this makes them want to live up to these standards, which are reinforced every day. In discussions, not letting yourself or your parents down was a common theme. Pupils have many opportunities to collaborate and work with others, and they do so productively and co-operatively. A strong sense of 'esprit de corps' was observed during football club; pupils across the age range treat each other with respect and give their all, regardless of innate ability. The schools' football star was observed encouraging younger pupils and helping them acquire ball skills. Pupils with SEND spoke movingly about the support and understanding they receive from their friends, who encourage them alongside staff to persevere with their learning and congratulate them on their successes.
- 4.8 Pupils are highly motivated to support others within the school and in the wider community. They are very aware of the needs of others beyond their school, and the whole school actively contributes to those in society who are less fortunate than themselves. A wealth of charities and good causes have benefited from the school's fundraising activities, many of which pupils have chosen themselves. They are proactive in this, for example a pupil wanted to make a contribution to a charity providing educational opportunities for vulnerable children in Asia and Africa, and wrote to the headmaster with ideas on how to do so. Consequently, the pupil raised funds by asking people to donate their change to the charity and was strongly supported by the school community.
- 4.9 Pupils from the EYFS onwards have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy, developed by a wide range of sporting activities, regular internet safety sessions and healthy eating within school.