



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION**  
**DONHEAD PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

**JUNE 2017**



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### SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Donhead Preparatory School			
<b>DfE number</b>	315/6004			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	230165			
<b>Address</b>	33 Edge Hill Wimbledon London SW19 4NP			
<b>Telephone number</b>	02089 467000			
<b>Email address</b>	officemanager@donhead.org.uk			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Chris McGrath			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Michael Blundell			
<b>Age range</b>	4 to 11			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	320			
	<b>Boys</b>	320	<b>Girls</b>	0
	<b>Day pupils</b>	320		
	<b>EYFS</b>	44	<b>Pre-prep</b>	102
	<b>Prep</b>	174		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28 to 29 June 2017			

## PREFACE

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

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any unmet 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 chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings, chapel and assembly. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Geoffrey Marston	Reporting inspector
Mrs Angela Dominy	Team inspector (SENCO, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Yeates	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)

## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### About the school

- 1.1 Donhead Preparatory School is an independent day preparatory school for boys aged between four to eleven years. It was founded in 1933 as a preparatory day school for Wimbledon College, and began admitting boys from the age of four in 2006. The school operates as a charitable trust under the trusteeship of the British Province of the Society of Jesus, with a governing board who act as agents for the trustees.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has invested in a new early years centre, air-conditioned classrooms, a chapel, refectory and an auditorium for music and drama.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school's mission is grounded in the Jesuit vision of education and seeks to develop, through education, men of conscience, competence and compassion for the greater glory of God. It aims to lead pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and gain the skills to become independent, successful and confident learners, able to cope with and manage future life experiences.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds. The school allocates a quarter of its places available to non-Roman Catholic families. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils on entry is above average. Seventy-five pupils require support for special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND), fifty-one of whom receive additional support for difficulties such as dyslexia or dyspraxia. Very few pupils have a statement of educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. One hundred pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), seven of whom receive additional support for their English. Data used by the school have identified fifty-five pupils as being more able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for forty-two other pupils, because of their special talents in sport, music and performing arts.
- 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>
Pre-Prep 1	Year 1
Pre-Prep 2	Year 2
Lower Prep 1	Year 3
Lower Prep 2	Year 4
Prep 1	Year 5
Elements	Year 6

## **2. KEY FINDINGS**

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

- Pupils make excellent progress across both curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils achieve extremely well for their age.
- Pupils possess very high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive; they relish challenges, and show resilience and determination as they study.
- Pupils are notably successful in gaining places to their first choice of senior school, with many gaining scholarships and other awards.

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

- Pupils demonstrate excellent self-confidence and self-knowledge, and take responsibility for their own learning.
- Pupils have excellent spiritual awareness because of the school's Roman Catholic foundation and strong values.
- Pupils demonstrate exceptional collaborative skills and teamwork.
- Pupils have an excellent moral understanding, as shown by their exemplary behaviour and willingness to care for and support others.
- Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school, readily seeking responsibility and contributing to the wider community.

### **Recommendations**

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

- Embedding more opportunities for the pupils' use of interactive technology across the curriculum to further enhance their learning.

### 3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), make rapid progress across all subjects, with no significant difference between different groups of pupils. The school does not take part in national curriculum tests, but the available evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own assessment data shows attainment to be above and in some cases, well above national age-related expectations. Excellent attainment is achieved as teachers know their pupils extremely well, and undertake rigorous tracking and monitoring as well as accurate target setting to inform future planning, thereby meeting the recommendation from the previous inspection. Teachers' highly effective planning, ability grouping and excellent use of in-class assistants to tailor high-quality learning support to individual or group needs enables all pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, to make rapid progress. More able pupils make swift progress due to the early identification of and support for potential scholars and those with additional talents in music, sport or the performing arts. The EYFS profile results show that children make fast progress, and that all achieve, and a small minority exceed, the expected levels of development for children of their age. Almost all parents and pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire thought that the school enabled pupils to make good progress.
- 3.3 Pupils' achievement in extra-curricular activities such as music, drama, chess and sport is excellent throughout the school. The good range of clubs before and after school and at lunchtimes have contributed significantly to pupils' achievements in non-academic studies due to the high-quality coaching and support provided. Pupils achieve an excellent standard of performance in the school choirs and school productions, with successful performances from younger pupils in *Ali Baba and the Bongo Bandits*, *The Pied Piper* and from older pupils in the *Rocky Monster Horror Show* and *Yee Ha* both on stage and as support crew. Success in musical examinations is a significant strength of the school. Many pupils regularly achieve merits or distinctions in musical examinations across a range of instruments, due to the excellent specialist support provided by visiting musicians. Pupils achieve considerable success at an individual or team basis in sports within and outside the school. For example, they have achieved significant success at local tournaments in cricket, football, judo, squash, fencing and rugby. Pupils have achieved team and individual county level success in chess from under 8s to under 11s, with some pupils being successful in those competitions against a year group one above their actual age. Other team success has included reaching the England and Wales finals of the Race for the Line 'Microbit' Model Rocket Car Competition in March 2017.
- 3.4 Pupils possess very high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide range of subjects due to a varied and vibrant curriculum and the specialist subject knowledge of teachers which they impart with natural enthusiasm and passion for their area of expertise. In their responses to the questionnaire, almost all parents felt that the range of subjects was suitable and almost all pupils felt that they could be involved in a good range of activities. Pupils' knowledge in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is extremely well developed. For example, EYFS children demonstrated excellent enthusiasm for developing number skills, correctly telling the time, and recognising quarter to, quarter past and o' clock. Older pupils successfully used higher order thinking skills for their age by completing complex mathematical equations represented by Roman numerals. Pupils' scientific skills are outstanding, with many being able to draw on prior learning, make accurate predictions and draw conclusions, by the logging and synthesis of data. Year 6 pupils showed an excellent awareness of the use of scale and estimating measurements, efficiently tabulating their test results on temperature changes. Pupils have strong linguistic skills and enjoy learning new languages. They demonstrate a very good command of the Spanish and French languages as



they are introduced early in the school with Spanish being taught from Reception and French from Year 3 onwards. A visiting French theatre company and themed Spanish and French days enhance their confidence further by providing acting workshops for prep pupils and storytelling opportunities for pre-prep pupils in French and Spanish. Pupils exhibit very good computer programming skills, with younger pupils successfully programming robots through complex maze designs. Older pupils make rapid progress with sequential programming, correctly identifying parameters to design their own games as a result of their enjoyment and enthusiasm for the subject. However, in some lessons and some of the work reviewed, opportunities to enhance pupils' learning further through their use of interactive technology such as whiteboards, tablets, digital cameras and software applications were missed.

- 3.5 Pupils achieve extremely well for their age, due to the high expectations and support from teachers. Teachers have high aspirations as to the outcomes of its pupils. Excellent progress is underpinned by work which is regularly marked and includes helpful suggestions for improvement. In the EYFS, pupil profiles are regularly sent home to parents to comment on and return, in order for the school to ensure that their children's educational needs are being met. Pupils' written work across all year groups is of a very high standard, neatly presented and organised as a result of teachers' regular marking and developmental feedback provided in workbooks on presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar. EYFS children spoke highly about the importance of using a cursive handwriting style and correct finger spacing to make work neater. In Pre-Prep, pupils achieve high standards in sentence structure, composition, spelling and grammar by the use of a writing checklist. In interviews, pupils said that they understand their progress in individual subjects and know how to improve their work. Pupils speak with highly developed fluency for their age. This is because they are given many opportunities for developing their oral skills by presenting their own stories, poetry or prayers in assembly or in Mass.
- 3.6 Pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive; they relish challenges, showing resilience and determination with their studies. Pupils concentrate well and follow instructions promptly, maximising their learning opportunities. They are not afraid to take risks with their learning, as a result of every teacher's encouragement for them to 'have a try first' before they ask for help. Pupils recognise that it is permissible to make mistakes so long as they learn from them. In lessons, pupils tackle harder challenges with enthusiasm and rigour but also seek to help others if they finish early. They show high levels of commitment in class, and are very eager to complete the tasks set by the teacher by the end of the lesson. Pupils are quick to apply their knowledge in other areas of learning. For instance, older pupils applied their literacy skills highly effectively when challenged to produce a report on the key facts of St Lucia during a geography lesson. Prep pupils possess highly developed independence of mind and enquiry and successfully undertake research projects to a standard that prepares them well for the next stage of their education. For example, older pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, made excellent progress when successfully completing a research challenge in rapid time on the Aztecs during a history lesson while pupils at the top of the school investigated Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky* poem and the *Fibonacci* poetry style, successfully presenting their own styles of written poetry based upon their research. The school entirely meets its aim to enable pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and gain the skills to become independent, successful and confident learners.
- 3.7 All pupils are notably successful in gaining places to their first choice of senior school against strong competition, with many gaining scholarships and other awards in music, sport, drama and art. Their success is due to the extensive support they receive from caring and specialist staff who have a thorough understanding of the entrance exam requirements.

- 3.8 High quality leadership and management have ensured through their continued investment in facilities that they have fully met the recommendation from the last inspection to expand resources in the EYFS. Pupils make excellent progress due to having access to high quality resources. The strategic decision to keep class sizes small results in all teachers knowing their pupils very well which consequently enables them to excel in their studies.

#### **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Donhead pupils demonstrate excellent self-confidence, self-knowledge and possess very high levels of maturity for their age. Pupils have a very good understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses and naturally take an increasing responsibility for their own learning. This is a consequence of the success with which the school fulfils its aim to foster these characteristics and to develop young men of competence, conscience and compassion. Pre-Prep and Prep pupils have an accurate understanding of how well they are doing as a result of the regular opportunities to reflect on teachers' feedback in their workbooks and review their own targets for improvement. Pupils value highly the daily 'Examen', which enables pupils to reflect at the end of the day on what they could have improved with their learning during the day as well as reflecting on the sort of person they want to be tomorrow. Pupils' self-confidence is enhanced by the way in which pupils naturally praise and encourage each other. Younger pupils showed excellent maturity when successfully coaching their peers on how to improve their long jumping techniques.
- 4.3 Pupils' spiritual awareness is excellent, and they display a substantial understanding of and appreciation for the non-material aspects of life. Pupils spoke highly of the opportunities to attend Mass and private prayer in the chapel, both of which enable them to gain an excellent understanding of the spiritual richness and the sacramental life of the Catholic Church. Pupils appreciate the opportunities to read out their own written prayers and to reflect quietly on their own faith and identity. Pupils ask themselves what Jesus would do; for example, younger pupils reflected confidently on what Jesus might say about life, friendships and love. Pupils of all ages have well developed aesthetic and cultural awareness, evident through the high standard and proliferation of art and other displays around the school. Pupils enjoy performing music recitals, playing in the school orchestra, singing in the choir and acting on stage in the new auditorium. Children in the EYFS expressed their enjoyment and wonder as they drew real live butterflies. Pupils' understanding of other faiths is underpinned by a comprehensive and informative religious studies programme and the opportunities to visit other places of religious worship such as a local synagogue, temple and a mosque. Pupils are very accepting of others from different backgrounds; they eagerly participate in multi-cultural diversity days at the school, where they get to learn from their peers and sometimes their parents about the customs and foods from their culture and country of origin; Year 6 pupils relished the opportunity to write their own names in Japanese and demonstrated high order questioning with wanting to find out more about school life in Japan. In their responses to the questionnaire responses, all parents and almost all pupils agreed that the school encourages pupils to be tolerant of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 4.4 Pupils demonstrate excellent collaborative and team working skills. This is because the school encourages play as soon as children enter the EYFS, so that by the time they move up the school, these skills are well advanced. In the Pre-Preparatory department, new play areas and resources encourage children to create imaginative role play activities together, such as being security staff at an airport departure gate. Pupils in the middle of the school demonstrated an excellent prior understanding of the benefits of effective team working after watching a luxury car factory production line video extract which inspired them to successfully work together to complete construction of their model car designs. Older pupils spoke highly of the opportunities to learn and demonstrate excellent team working skills on their outward-bound course on the Isle of Wight.
- 4.5 Pupils fully understand that decisions they make are important and can greatly influence their future success. Children in the EYFS are able to confidently choose which activities they would like to undertake during 'Golden Time' or items they would like to bring in for 'show and tell',

- due to the support and encouragement provided by their teachers. Young pupils were able to successfully choose the topic of study for their Egyptian projects and the most appropriate way for presenting using three-dimensional models or picture displays.
- 4.6 Pupils have a highly developed sense of moral responsibility and respect for the rule of law. They understand the school rules, show a high degree of empathy towards their peers, and constantly support each other's well-being. Children in the EYFS naturally took turns with sharing pieces to build cubes, helping each other when pieces would not fit together easily. At the top of the school, more able pupils helped other pupils who had not finished the task with the correct use of personal and possessive pronouns in their writing without being prompted by the teacher. The standards of behaviour throughout the school are exemplary; pupils are extremely well mannered, very polite and courteous to visitors. High standards of behaviour are maintained as teachers enable pupils to reflect on the impact that their behaviour can have on others. In the questionnaire responses, all pupils felt that the school encourages them to behave well and that they understand the sanctions for poor behaviour.
- 4.7 Pupils make an excellent positive contribution to the life of the school as well as the wider community; they seek positions of responsibility or leadership in both academic and extra-curricular activities. Pre-Preparatory pupils gain an excellent understanding of the importance of taking responsibility through positions such as librarian and class messenger roles. The oldest pupils eagerly volunteer to be 'buddies' to younger ones, enabling new pupils to quickly settle into the school. The school councillors, house captains and prefects provide excellent role models for younger pupils. Pupils naturally pray for people who are suffering crises overseas and eagerly participate in the school's many charity themed days and fundraising initiatives for African children living in poverty and provide presents at Christmas time for people less fortunate than themselves.
- 4.8 Pupils have a high degree of awareness of the democratic process and of public institutions and services through successfully holding school council elections and debating news and current affairs during lessons. Pupils know how to stay safe and maintain a healthy lifestyle, which is underpinned by the school's extensive personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme. Pre-Preparatory pupils said that they valued the reporting icon on their computers which covers their screen if they see anything accidentally online that they do not like, enabling them to report immediately to their teacher. The oldest pupils develop an excellent awareness of road safety by successfully completing a cycling 'arrive alive' course. All pupils demonstrate a high sense of road safety when crossing a road with teachers to attend church. Pupils regularly participate in sport and after school clubs, which they see as an integral part of undertaking a healthy lifestyle. They demonstrate an excellent awareness of maintaining a healthy diet by actively selecting healthy choices provided on the refectory menu at lunchtimes, healthy snack choices at break times as well as taking opportunities to learn from visiting sports coaches about the importance of having a good diet. In their questionnaire responses, almost all parents felt that the school does all it can to ensure that their child learns in a safe and healthy environment.
- 4.9 The leadership and management have ensured through a continued commitment to the Jesuit principles of education that pupils develop as intellectually competent, good and virtuous young men who are well prepared for the next stages of their lives. Pupils leave Donhead with a curiosity to learn all about the world and human endeavours, and the skills to be able to apply their learning for the common good.