



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Lorenden Preparatory School

November 2018



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School's Details

School College	Lorenden Preparatory School			
DfE number	886/6064			
Registered charity number	3093684			
Address	Painter's Forstal Faversham Kent ME13 0EN			
Telephone number	01795 590030			
Email address	office@lorenden.org			
Headteacher	Mrs Kathy Uttley			
Chair of governors	Mrs Lorna Cocking			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	104			
	Boys	51	Girls	53
	Early Years	19	Pre-Prep	21
	Prep	64		
Inspection dates	13 to 15 November 2018			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Lorenden School is an independent coeducational day school for pupils aged 3 to 11. Founded in 1993, the school became part of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust in 2015. Oversight of governance is held by Kent College, Canterbury, with most aspects delegated to the Lorenden Governing Committee.
- 1.2 The school comprises of three departments: Early Years Foundations Stage (EYFS) for children aged 3 to 5 years, Pre-Prep, for pupils aged 5 to 7 years, and Prep, for pupils aged 7 to 11 years.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection the school has appointed a new Head who has been in post since September 2016.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school's aim is to provide a caring family environment which promotes good manners, kindness and perseverance, in which pupils can be nurtured to be self-disciplined, thoughtful children with a cheerful 'can do' attitude to life and a strong sense of fair play. It intends pupils to become well prepared socially, physically and intellectually for the next phase of their education.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, mostly from white British families living within a 15-mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified eight pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, four of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language for three pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified 30 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and their needs are supported by classroom teachers or other specialist staff as appropriate.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

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. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

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 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.

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 a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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.

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 published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#) [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.11 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.13 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.14 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.16 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.18 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection reports 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.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. 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'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils display extremely positive attitudes towards learning from an early age.
 - Pupils communication skills are excellent, allowing them to be confident participants in all aspects of school life.
 - Pupils develop strong study skills and use these to tackle challenges with enthusiasm.
 - Pupils display well-developed skills, knowledge and understanding in most areas of learning with notable strengths in literacy and numeracy and in their physical development.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils accept responsibility for their own behaviour with a clear sense of right and wrong and show kindness and consideration towards others.
 - Pupils display excellent social awareness and collaborate most effectively to benefit one another.
 - Pupils show an appreciation of their own and other cultures with respect and tolerance nurtured by the school's Christian ethos.
 - Pupils strong sense of social responsibility is demonstrated in their enthusiasm to engage in activities that benefit their peers and the wider community.

Recommendation(s)

- 3.3 In the context of these excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following recommendation:
- Increase pupils' ability to consolidate their skills, knowledge and understanding consistently across all areas of learning.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Evidence from lesson observations, pupils' work, scrutiny of leavers' destinations and the school's own assessment data shows attainment to be above average in relation to national age-related expectations. All pupils, including those requiring additional support, make good progress and often, such as with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), progress is excellent. Pupils with SEND achieve and progress well in line with their peers as they are well supported by staff who understand their individual needs well. The overwhelming majority of parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires agreed that the school effectively meets their children's educational needs, and all parents who responded said that teaching enables their child to make progress. Leaders and governors have ensured that the assiduous monitoring of pupils' progress through assessment and evaluation combined with detailed planning by teachers enables all pupils to be supported effectively. Teachers collaborate to provide well-tailored targets which are easily understood by pupils and enable excellent progress and achievement. Teachers use verbal and written feedback sensitively and provide encouragement to self-evaluate. School leavers are successful in gaining places at senior schools with competitive entry requirements for which they are prepared well. The more able achieve a range of academic, drama, music and sport awards.

- 3.6 Pupils have extremely positive attitudes towards their learning and show high levels of enthusiasm from an early age. Pupils work diligently and quickly settle down to their tasks. They work exceptionally well together and are committed to producing their best, reflecting the cheerful 'can do' attitude that is part of the school's mission statement. When rehearsing a piece for their nativity play, younger pupils collaborated well, making effective movements to match the accompanying music. Teachers manage behaviour well and communicate clear objectives to promote effective outcomes. For example, young children collaborated successfully in constructing a habitat from sticks and leaves at forest school because staff raised awareness of the need to work together and offered gentle encouragement. In supporting young children in their outdoor learning, older pupils work independently and take initiative, demonstrating excellent leadership in learning.
- 3.7 The skills knowledge and understanding of the pupils are well developed across most areas of the curriculum. This is because teachers have high expectations of the pupils and their teaching embraces creativity, encourages independence and promotes challenge. Older pupils compose prose and poetry most competently including use of inference, complex sentences and relative clauses. The ability to write advanced, descriptive and evocative prose, comprehension and poetry is also evident in the work of younger pupils. Pupils' understanding and progress is enhanced through helpful and constructive comments in marking with clear guidance appropriate to the ability level of each pupil. In discussions with inspectors, older pupils explained articulately their understanding of Brownian motion gained through a science experiment on the sense of smell; predicting and testing perfume from a pressurised container. In mathematics, older pupils can problem solve using knowledge of common multiples and common denominators. The youngest children can use scissors and glue spreaders with impressive dexterity in order to create patterns and shape-puppets. Young pupils also display fine motor skills and dexterity when developing their stick-handling, ball stopping and passing skills on the hockey pitch. In some areas of the curriculum the opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and understanding to the same high level are not seized. In response to a recommendation from a previous inspection, the outdoor environments in the EYFS now provide imaginative and challenging opportunities for children to pursue their interest outside of the classroom, supporting and developing their creativity and practical skills.
- 3.8 Pupils communication skills are excellent. From an early age they express their own views clearly and listen well to others. Pupils communicate with each other and their teachers with enthusiasm, confidence and eloquent expression. They relish opportunities to discuss and debate ideas and express themselves articulately in their speaking and writing. This is because teachers attach high levels of importance to reading and writing and hear all children and younger pupils read regularly. Teachers show empathy in their approach to pupils' writing tasks, encouraging pupils to develop their creative writing skills voluntarily, either individually, in pairs or in a small group. As a result, older pupils utilise a range of writing styles, including pieces such as informal letter writing and journal entries that are lengthy, detailed and accurately punctuated. Young pupils give mathematical explanations to their peers confidently and articulately. In a lesson exploring Hindu artefacts, pupils spontaneously developed their own lively debate with some interesting ideas as they were allowed the freedom to express themselves with minimal intervention. In a French class, more able pupils could confidently articulate whole sentences and were comfortable in relaying these in front of their peers.
- 3.9 Pupils of all ages of all ages develop excellent study skills. They show initiative and enthusiasm in tackling a wide range of academic challenges using a variety of resources. This is because teachers encourage pupils to think for themselves and develop independent learning habits by providing stimulating challenge. Older pupils demonstrate their independent learning skills effectively when carrying out detailed research to complete individual projects on such topics as, 'Is naval warfare dead?', 'Communism - good or bad?', 'How to help people with autism' and 'What is the best sweet?' The youngest children can work with impressive concentration and perseverance for a protracted period, with patience and care, due to the calm supportive learning environment and clear objectives set. Older pupils can form hypotheses, predict and interpret outcomes and evaluate the reliability of

data in scientific experiments. Older pupils are adept at taking notes from a variety of sources and show high-order skills in discussion. In a philosophy lesson, when considering 'What is music?', pupils raised the intelligent question of whether John Cage's silent piece of music was music. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that they were encouraged to think and learn for themselves.

- 3.10 Most pupils show a high level of competence in their numerical skills and in applying these effectively to other areas of learning. Young children develop their ability to add and subtract and express mathematical statements successfully. In design and technology (DT), young pupils show an excellent understanding of different weights and measures when making a Christmas cake. Older pupils use their data-handling skills well to interrogate results in practical science experiments and use their good geometrical knowledge to develop project designs in DT. Pupils are competent users of information communication technology (ICT) and make good use of research, presentation and data-handling skills to enhance their performance in other areas of learning. They use computers effectively to research information and produce high calibre presentations on topics such as Anne Frank and Charles Darwin. As they move through the school pupils develop touch typing skills with confidence and accuracy. Older pupils with SEND told inspectors that using ICT to produce work on the 'Creation Story' had helped to build their self-confidence.
- 3.11 Pupils achieve well in academic and other activities. In their response to the questionnaires, most parents agree that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. Within the context of the size of the school, the success achieved in team sports is outstanding. Winning an under-11 netball tournament and an under-9 boys' football tournament are distinctive successes for pupils. Pupils also achieve excellent results in other sports, including girls' hockey and girls' cricket. Notable individual achievements include a pupil representing the South East England gymnastics team, a pupil participating in triathlons at county level, two Kent county tennis players and one who is involved at national level as part of a Canterbury tennis mini-academy. Many pupils have achieved distinctions and merits in speech and drama examinations. Further successes in county music festivals, speech and drama and poetry competitions reflect the tenets, 'we strive', 'we succeed' embodied in the school motto.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.12 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.13 Pupils demonstrate substantial self-confidence and resilience from the EYFS upwards. They learn to recognise their strengths and weaknesses and strive to be the best version of themselves. Pupils are nurtured and enabled to develop this self-knowledge through teachers who know them extremely well. The young children develop excellent self-confidence and resilience through making decisions, taking risks and persevering in their outdoor forest school activities; climbing trees, gathering branches and leaves to create habitats and through the sheer sense of discovery. Older pupils spoke confidently to inspectors about how they had grown in confidence over their time in the school, developed greater self-discipline in completing their homework and challenged themselves to achieve at a higher level. This is because teachers make good use of praise and take opportunities such as assemblies to celebrate pupils' achievements both in and out of school. As they progress through the school, pupils learn and understand how to manage their improvement. Pupils feel positive about themselves and well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils are willing to persevere in the knowledge that perseverance will be rewarded in accordance with the 'we strive' tenet of the school motto.
- 3.14 Pupils show a strong awareness of the importance of accepting responsibility for their own behaviour and consideration for others. They help establish rules and show a clear sense of the value of positive behaviour, kindness and compassion that is actively promoted by the school. The culture of good behaviour is underpinned by leaders' and governors' successful inculcation of the school's code of courtesy and their securing of a consistent use of the school's reward system which includes house points and 'Gems', the latter for acts exemplifying the school motto. Pupils moral understanding is strong because teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and make judicious use of appropriate sanctions in the event of required standards not being met. Pupils often mediate with their peers where behaviour occasionally deteriorates thus defusing situations through their strong commitment to the school's ethos and culture of kindness. Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong as seen in the class charters and golden rules that they draw up themselves. Older pupils demonstrate exceedingly high levels of responsibility, care and understanding in the timetabled buddy sessions. Pupils develop positive relationships and are highly supportive of one another within the close-knit school community.
- 3.15 Pupils display excellent social development and collaborate highly effectively. Their ability to work together to the mutual benefit of others in their groups is exceptional. In lessons, pupils were observed to collaborate effectively to solve problems and to work together to improve both individual and team skills on the sports field. In discussion with inspectors, pupils enthused about the positive experience of working with their peers in pairs, groups and teams, and engaging socially with those from different year groups. Pupils of different gender show a warm and respectful relationship towards one another. There is a strong 'buddy system' in place. This was exemplified by older pupils supporting nursery children on climbing equipment, playing with balls, pedal cars and in the sand pit with great maturity. The buddies build strong relationships, enabling the younger children to make choices and develop their self-confidence. Pupils demonstrate highly purposeful and cooperative attitudes when working together in class. In a games lesson involving under-9 hockey training, very able pupils were seen to give confident, empathetic and encouraging coaching support to fellow pupils. The excellent social awareness and effective cooperation of the pupils is promoted by teachers purposefully providing many opportunities for collaborative work and ensuring that the 'we care' 'we share' aspects of the school aims are fully embedded.

- 3.16 Pupils delight in taking on responsibilities which they fulfil with enthusiasm and diligence. Pupils democratically elect house captains and class representatives for the school council. They contribute most effectively to the welfare of their peers and others in the school also are keen to engage in activities that benefit the wider community. Older pupils act as excellent role models for younger pupils and help advance the welfare and enjoyment of school for younger pupils. Older pupils show this in their role as buddies and in supporting younger pupils in performing in school assemblies. Pupils are adept at taking on a range of age-appropriate responsibilities enthusiastically and effectively, such as the oldest pupils entrusted with dismissing others following school assembly. Pupils experience and appreciate the benefits of supporting the local community. Charity monitors help guide the school to choose the most appropriate charities and then organise the fund-raising events themselves. From making loom bands, a fun run in the Trust lands and undertaking jobs at home to fill a moneybox, the pupils are keen to support charitable causes through their own efforts.
- 3.17 Pupils show a positive appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. Young children exhibit a keen interest in the natural woodland areas they can explore and be themselves in. Older pupils philosophise on such statements as, 'Is a river the same river two minutes later?' Pupils learn about different belief systems through assemblies, sometimes chaplain-led, religious education (RE), personal social and health education (PSHE), visiting speakers such as a Buddhist nun and visits to such places as the local Sikh temple. Pupils show that they have a mature and respectful understanding and appreciation of the distinctive characteristics of both their own and other people's cultures. Nurtured by the school's Christian ethos, pupils treat those of different faiths or no faith with the same respect and tolerance they show for each other. In an English lesson, older pupils showed an awareness of the issues of racism and its potentially disastrous effects and understood issues such as anti-Semitism through their studies of *The Boy with the Striped Pyjamas* and Anne Frank. A clear understanding of the importance and significance of Remembrance Day is evident in pupils' work. Older pupils show a thorough, mature and considered understanding of the importance of British values including law, democracy and the need to avoid prejudice and hate through wide-ranging discussion as part of their PSHE programme. Almost all parents and most pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people.
- 3.18 Pupils know how to stay safe and understand how to be physically and mentally healthy, particularly in terms of diet, exercise and a balanced lifestyle. Pupils know how to keep safe online as a result of the e-safety training they receive within ICT and PSHE lessons, and all pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that they knew how to stay safe online. Younger children show excellent awareness of the need to be safe with sticks at forest school. In DT, pupils understand the importance of hygiene in dealing with and handling foodstuffs. Young children take responsibility for washing their hands before snack time. The school council has made a request for increased attention to mental health issues in the PSHE programme. Pupils enjoy taking advantage of the many opportunities for physical exercise and fresh air available to them. This is well supported by the school's strong programme of physical education, sports matches and after school activities such as the gardening club and 'Bikeability'. The development of pupils good physical and mental health is promoted by the positive efforts of the school's leaders and governors to ensure that a wide range of outdoor learning opportunities within the school's setting and the adjoining parkland is used effectively.

4. INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 4.1 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

Mr Vaughan Jelley

Reporting inspector

Ms Sarah Hollis

Compliance team inspector (Head, IAPS school)

Mr Brian Melia

Team inspector (Former head, IAPS school)