



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

SPRATTON HALL SCHOOL

16 TO 17 NOVEMBER 2016



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|-----|------------|-----|
| School | Spratton Hall School | | | |
| DfE number | 928/6032 | | | |
| Registered charity number | 309925 | | | |
| Address | Spratton Hall School Smith Street Spratton Northampton Northamptonshire NN6 8HP | | | |
| Telephone number | 01604 847292 | | | |
| Email address | office@sprattonhall.com | | | |
| Headmaster | Mr Simon Clarke | | | |
| Chair of governors | Mr James Coley | | | |
| Age range | 4 to 13 | | | |
| Number of pupils | 383 | | | |
| | Boys | 210 | Girls | 173 |
| | Day pupils | 383 | Boarders | 0 |
| | EYFS | 40 | Pre-Prep | 71 |
| | Juniors | 272 | Sixth Form | 0 |
| Inspection dates | 16 to 17 November 2016 | | | |

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 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 grade descriptors 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 in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they 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 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 tutor meetings and 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 Diane Gardiner | Reporting inspector |
| Mr Mark Albini | Team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school) |
| Mrs Pam Simmonds | Team inspector (Former head, ISA school) |

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Spratton Hall School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged between 4 and 13 years. The school is a charitable trust administered by a governing body. The current headmaster has been in post since January 2014 and the chair of governors from 2014. Since the previous inspection, the school has undertaken a full programme of refurbishment and created a performing arts centre. Facilities for Information and communication technology (ICT) have been extended to include a new digital learning platform and tablet devices provided are now provided for pupils in Years 6 to 8.
- 1.2 Spratton Hall School was founded in 1951 as an independent day and boarding school for boys aged from 4 to 13 years. In 1975 it became co-educational and ceased boarding in 1988. The school educates pupils from the ages of 4 to 7 in the pre-preparatory department and pupils aged from 8 to 13 years in the junior and senior departments.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide a challenging, yet caring and supportive environment for learning in which each pupil is able to develop the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to achieve the highest standards of which he or she is capable. It also aims to meet the personal and social needs of each individual in a healthy, safe and secure school environment which is dedicated to their care and welfare.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, mostly from white British families living within a 20-mile radius of the school. The school has identified 72 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, dyspraxia and autistic spectrum disorder, all of whom receive additional specialist support. One pupil has an educational health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for two pupils, whose needs are met by their classroom teacher and specialist language teachers. Data used by the school have identified a number of pupils as being the most able in the school's population across different subject areas, and the curriculum is modified for them and for other pupils because of their particular talents in sporting and musical disciplines.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was an Interim inspection in November 2010. The recommendations from that inspection were:
 - Give pupils opportunities to develop their dramatic skills more deeply.
 - Make use of samples of work to exemplify judgements within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils demonstrate extremely strong communication and numeracy skills across all age groups due to the well-planned curriculum and lively teaching.
- From the EYFS onwards, pupils with specific learning needs develop strong study skills to enable them to make rapid progress due to early and well targeted intervention.
- Pupils develop highly positive attitudes to their learning and enjoy working collaboratively across year groups and gender.
- Pupils do not consistently use their secure ICT skills to further their learning across all areas of the curriculum.

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

- Pupils are confident, capable and resilient and develop strong levels of self-esteem through understanding how they learn most effectively.
- Pupils develop strong spiritual awareness and a well-rounded moral code which ensures high standards of behaviour, respect for and responsibility to others.
- Pupils are very well prepared for each transition, understand how to stay safe and healthy and leave the school fully prepared for the next stage of their education.

Recommendations

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

- Ensure pupils are given suitable opportunities to use extended writing skills to present their work in a variety of imaginative ways.
- Ensure that pupils are given suitable opportunities to apply their good ICT skills across all areas of the curriculum.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 The school successfully meets its aim to provide a challenging, yet caring and supportive environment for learning in which each pupil is able to develop the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to achieve the highest standards of which he or she is capable. As a result, pupils of all abilities make excellent progress across all sections of the school. The school does not take part in national curriculum tests, but the available evidence shows attainment to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. Pupils have consistently achieved high results in competitive senior school entrance examinations. Each year a significant number of pupils are successful in gaining scholarships to highly competitive schools for academic success and for art, music, drama and sport.
- 3.3 Pupils in the EYFS and Key Stage 1 make excellent progress from their starting points due to the highly personalised approach the school takes to their learning. Pupils demonstrate a genuine excitement for their learning as their particular interests, aptitudes and skills are developed in a variety of ways; for example, when a group of children expressed a desire to find out more about dinosaurs, a range of resources and activities were provided to develop their learning. Excellent communication between staff and careful tracking of each pupil ensures that staff know the pupils extremely well. This ensures that staff can provide a range of targeted activities to interest and support the pupils in achieving well across all areas of the curriculum. Staff share good practice to exemplify judgements, meeting a recommendation from the previous inspection report.
- 3.4 Pupils of all ages demonstrate high levels of skill in reading, writing, speaking and listening, as demonstrated in Year 2, where pupils showcase their story writing proficiently and explain clearly how they have achieved such good results. Their use of vocabulary is broad and they have a well-developed sense of how to improve their work from an early stage. Pupils use their skills across all areas of the curriculum, from completing detailed projects in history to writing poetry to explain their emotions when looking at stained glass windows in Coventry Cathedral. Opportunities to record their work in different ways are less well developed in some subject areas.
- 3.5 An excellent understanding of mathematical concepts is evident across the age range. Pupils understand and manipulate numbers with confidence. Pupils in Year 1 worked well together to explore number sentences for addition and subtraction, and pupils in Year 7 solved increasingly complex single and multi-step algebraic equations with confidence and resilience. More able and gifted pupils demonstrated their ability to extend their own learning and were well supported by the challenging levels of work set, which matched their abilities. They have extremely good concentration and spontaneously ask inquisitive questions. They are also quick to recall relevant information and make perceptive links with other areas of study, and are able to argue and reason logically. They are creative and persistent in finding solutions to problems, as they demonstrated when using technology proficiently to support their learning while designing and building a bridge in ICT. Pupils pursue their own academic interests at a notably high level. Talented pupils are highly accomplished in their own areas of expertise, and achieve considerably in advance of expected levels.
- 3.6 The achievement of pupils with SEND or EAL is excellent, as shown by the progress they make in relation to their difficulties and starting points. They receive support appropriate to their needs at an early stage, ensuring that they retain their enjoyment for learning and develop at a rapid pace. Pupils have a strong understanding of the impact they have upon our world from a geographical and historical perspective. Their debating skills are well-honed through a wide range of opportunities; for example, to discuss the effect of extremes of weather on populations throughout the world and in looking back to see if lessons have been learnt from studying the mistakes previous generations have

made. They use a wide range of resources and sources to research different areas and, as they move through the school, develop the skills to analyse and synthesise the information successfully. Pupils develop good skills for the use of technology to further their learning, but opportunities to use these skills independently varies across all areas of the curriculum.

- 3.7 Pupils develop excellent skills in art, music and drama. In recent years, pupils have achieved first places at regional and national levels in an art competition run by the Royal Academy of Arts. Recently, pupils have also been winners and runners up for two consecutive years in a national art and poetry competition, where they presented to the judges on behalf of the school. A majority of pupils play musical instruments to a high level and this year a significant number of them have been selected to play with county music groups such as the Junior Youth Orchestra and Guitar Ensemble and performed in the Music for Youth Prom. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to represent their house or school in regular musical concerts and performances. Pupils are confident, capable and skilled in speaking in class, assemblies or on stage. Drama is now an important part of the school curriculum which successfully meets a recommendation from the previous inspection. Pupils also take part in external drama productions at local professional theatres. Most pupils take part in three performances over the course of each year, which ensures that all pupils are presented with the opportunities to try new things in a safe environment where they know they will be well supported.
- 3.8 All pupils develop their sporting skills to a high level as they move through the school. Good coaching and a wide range of opportunities to use their skills ensure that school teams for rugby, hockey, netball, cross-country, cricket, athletics and riding achieve success in many local and national events. A number of older pupils are selected to train and play with local, county, regional and development teams. Occasionally pupils are selected to train on a specialist player programme with the Lawn Tennis Association.
- 3.9 Pupils' skills across a wide variety of activities are very well developed through the exceptional programme of extra-curricular activities provided before, during and after school. These include photography, ballet, drama and many sporting options. The school meets its stated aim to identify pupils' particular strengths and aptitudes by offering this wide range and then giving them the time, space and high level of teaching to enable and develop their skills.
- 3.10 Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were particularly happy with the way that the school was governed, led and managed, the information that they receive about school routines and policies and the way in which the school promotes good behaviour. A very small minority of parents felt that the information they receive about their children's progress was inconsistent at times. The inspection team reviewed the process for reporting to parents and concluded that feedback was timely and included all relevant information.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils have extremely well developed self-knowledge and personalities for their age. They are confident, resilient and have a strong sense of self-esteem. As part of the school's personal, social, health, economic and educational (PSHEE) programme, pupils learn to identify their particular learning style and, as a result, are adept at improving their own learning to improve their performance. Staff encourage pupils to try their best in all situations. This ensures that they are willing to have a go, secure in the knowledge that they will be praised for their efforts. Pupils in Year 6 have learnt to read body language, resulting in them being able to develop further their empathy for others.
- 4.3 From the EYFS onwards, pupils understand that the decisions they make are important to their own well-being and that of others in their school and the wider world. Pupils in Reception follow guidance when using the ride-on toys, keeping themselves and their friends safe. Pupil representatives on the junior and senior school councils take decisions, having sought the ideas and thoughts of their classes. In lessons observed and in assemblies, pupils demonstrated adaptability and the ability to persevere. They understand that they need to take control of their own learning by using a system which encourages them to think, use a range of resources and ask a friend, before asking for help from a teacher. In this way, they develop important skills for the future. They develop strong collaboration and organisation skills whilst preparing for the many house events which happen each year or deciding how many kilometres they can run in break times when preparing for a charitable event, and still manage their time without missing lessons.
- 4.4 Pupils have a well-developed spiritual understanding and appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. This was evident in work covered in history as pupils explored the meaning behind religious symbols. Assemblies and a range of visits to buildings of faith help pupils to think beyond the obvious and form their own opinions in a considered way.
- 4.5 Pupils actively enjoy working together. In class, they relish opportunities to work with others to solve problems, such as when pupils in Year 4 were baking courgette and cheese muffins. Pupils take on a wide range of responsibilities from an early stage and reflect with pleasure on their roles and the contribution they make to the school community. As well as the responsibilities of the head boy and girl, house captains and sports captains, the lunch orderlies from Years 4 and 5 help to organise the dining room by clearing the tables and the eco-representatives undertake an audit of the use of electricity and the effectiveness of radiators in the school. School council representatives discuss ways in which the school can improve and learn how to manage money by using their termly allowance wisely. A genuine sense of community pervades the school and every pupil has a role to play, building self-confidence in the process.
- 4.6 Pupils have a strong moral code and good behaviour is the norm in and outside the classroom. They understand that communities need a simple set of rules and through the school council have recently worked with staff to produce the new community code. This shared approach has reinforced in pupils the need to respect the rules and take responsibility for their behaviour. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that staff were not always fair in the way that they gave out sanctions and rewards but discussions with pupils during the inspection and a scrutiny of the system for the recording of these showed that the careful monitoring of how rewards and sanctions are given ensures that staff reflect regularly on this aspect of school life. A small minority of pupils and parents also expressed concern about the way that any bullying behaviour was dealt with. Inspectors scrutinised the anti-bullying policy, the record of serious sanctions and the records kept of all incidents. Inspectors found that the school takes bullying extremely seriously and monitors even the smallest incident to identify patterns and provide support and advice to all parties concerned.

- 4.7 Even the youngest children at the school develop a secure understanding of what constitutes a healthy and balanced lifestyle. They are keen to show that they make good choices at lunchtime, such as when a pupil collected lettuce and cucumber to ensure that his plate contained sufficient vegetables or salad. The opportunities for exercise are numerous ensuring that pupils develop a love of exercise in whichever way is most enjoyable for them. The personal, social, health and citizenship education programmes are strong contributory factors to the excellent outcomes for pupils. In the Pre-Prep, pupils take time to reflect on how they are feeling at the start of the day and build an awareness of their emotions and how to manage them. This is then built upon as pupils move through the school. All staff are responsible for the pastoral needs of the pupils and the strong communication that takes place across the school ensures that all pupils' needs are understood and met. A very small minority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that their child's pastoral needs were not well met. Close scrutiny of the records showed that staff take every care to support pupils and help them manage their relationships with friends and learn how to deal with incidents that concern them.
- 4.8 An ethos of inclusivity in the school is respected by pupils. Pupils are assimilated into the fabric of the school regardless of background, race or religion. Pupils support each other and respect and appreciate the customs of other cultures, showing empathy for others from different religious traditions. They understand and support the particular needs of those with SEND. They enjoy finding out about the different ways that cultures organise themselves and share their festivals and celebrations.
- 4.9 Pupils of all ages enjoy making a positive contribution to their local community and the wider global community. The older pupils research different charities and present a case for supporting them. They decide which charities to support and organise events for pupils and parents to raise funds. Over the last twelve months the pupils have been responsible for raising a large sum of money to support charities for the homeless, for the NSPCC and to support a child to attend school in Uganda. This work helps pupils to develop important organisational and economic skills. Their joint contributions through the strong house system prepare them well for the next stage of their education and lives. They leave the school as strong, capable and confident young people who are ready to take on their next set of challenges.