



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION**

**FARLINGTON SCHOOL**

**JANUARY 2017**



## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Farlington School			
<b>DfE number</b>	938/6144			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	307048			
<b>Address</b>	Strood Park Horsham West Sussex RH12 3PN			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01403 254967			
<b>Email address</b>	office@farlingtonschool.net			
<b>Headmistress</b>	Ms Louise Higson			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Sue Mitchell			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	297			
	<b>Boys</b>	2	<b>Girls</b>	295
	<b>Day pupils</b>	260	<b>Boarders</b>	37
	<b>EYFS</b>	21	<b>Prep</b>	101
	<b>Seniors</b>	135	<b>Sixth Form</b>	40
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17 to 19 January 2017			

## PREFACE

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

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards identified at their previous inspection.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

**This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting on the quality of the school's work.** It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

**The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.**

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and 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 Gwen Caddock	Reporting inspector
Mrs Mary Bradfield	Team inspector (Former Head teacher, ISA school)
Ms Adrienne Richmond	Team inspector (Principal, GSA school)
Mrs Elizabeth Worthington	Team inspector for boarding (Senior deputy head, HMC school)

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## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Farlington School is a day and boarding school for girls aged from 3 to 18 years and for boys in the Nursery. The school was founded in Haywards Heath in 1896, moving in 1956 to the current site, Strood Park, with a Mansion House and 33 acres of parkland. The Mansion House provides administrative, educational and boarding accommodation. Since the previous inspection, a programme of development has included a wide range of educational and sporting facilities including a junior boarding house, Fishponds, which opened in September 2015.
- 1.2 The school is a charitable trust and company limited by guarantee; the governors are also the directors of the company. The work of the governing body is supported by four specialist committees, and four governors have specific responsibilities, working closely with the senior team and staff of the school. The current head took up her post in November 2012.

### **What the school seeks to do**

- 1.3 The school aims to develop pupils' confidence, enabling every girl to achieve her full potential and to establish life skills for future success and happiness. The school aims to give each girl a strong sense of moral and social responsibility and to instil a long-lasting love of learning, challenging the most able and supporting the least confident so that each fulfils their individual academic potential.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.4 Of the 297 pupils on roll, 37 are full boarders and the school also makes provision for some weekly, flexi and occasional boarding. Pupils come from a wide range of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Pupils' ability, measured by nationally standardised tests, is above the national average, within a wide range. The school has identified 94 pupils as having special educational needs and /or disabilities, mainly dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and, of these, 56 receive additional support. Three of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an Educational Health Care Plan. Twenty-nine pupils have English as an additional language, and 27 of these receive additional support for their English. The school has a programme of enrichment aimed at more able pupils though all pupils are encouraged to participate.

### **Recommendations from previous inspections**

- 1.5 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was a standard inspection in December 2010. The recommendations from that inspection were:
- Improve the preparatory school library.
  - Bring more teaching into line with the best by presenting more opportunities for independent thinking in lessons.
  - Improve assessment by embedding pupil self-assessment and the use of data.
  - Ensure priorities for improvement in the EYFS are clearly identified within an Early Years development plan.
  - Incorporate observations and assessment of a wider range of child-initiated activities into the children's developmental records in the EYFS.

- Ensure evidence used to reach Early Years and Foundation Stage profile judgements is clearly documented.
- 1.6 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous inspection.
- 1.7 The recommendations of the intermediate boarding inspection in February 2014 were:
- Strengthen procedures for ensuring that house staff have a clear picture of boarders' academic progress and how to support this.
  - Extend the extra-curricular programme to provide a greater variety of options for boarders.
- 1.8 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous inspection.

## 2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- External exam results are above the national average and in line with pupils' ability, pupils with SEND achieve in line with their peers and their ability, and pupils with EAL make excellent progress and achieve in line with their ability.
- Pupils of all ages develop strong core skills.
- Pupils across the age groups are competent users of ICT but there was limited evidence of use of these skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils achieve excellent standards and successes in varied individual and group activities in music, drama and sport.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning.

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

- The school successfully meets its aim for pupils to develop self-confidence, to learn to make good decisions and to be fully prepared for the next stage of their lives.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school; they value both the academic achievements and the personal development of their children, both of which are nurtured by the school.
- Pupils develop strong spiritual awareness and value the non-material aspects of life.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of moral values and behaviour, and the relationships within the school reflect this; pupils are kind and thoughtful and enjoy taking responsibility.
- Pupils are socially and culturally aware and make a significant contribution to the life of the school community, the local community and communities further afield.

### Recommendations

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Develop opportunities within lessons for pupils to use their ICT skills across the curriculum.

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupil's academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.2 Pupils of all ages achieve well. The pupil profiles for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) show that all pupils except those with special needs or English as an Additional Language (EAL) have achieved the early learning goals, and that each year a number exceed the targets set. Standardised data available in the school shows that the achievement of the pupils in the prep school is good as are results for national curriculum tests taken in the Years 2013, 2014, and 2015. During the inspection, achievement and progress were judged to be good using evidence from lessons observed, from books and from teachers' records. Using the national comparisons for the most recent three years for which they are available, results at GCSE are above the average for pupils in maintained schools: similarly results at A level are above the national average. At A level there has been a steady trend of improvement over the most recent three years. Progress at both GCSE and A level is judged to be good, as supported by the good quality of pupils' work in lessons and by pupils' participation and successes in a wide range of activities and in the challenges which are built into their educational experiences. More able pupils and pupils with SEND achieve equally well, and those with EAL make excellent progress supported by both staff and pupils to make rapid strides in learning English and settling into the new curriculum.
- 3.3 The pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are good at all ages. In the EYFS, children develop good skills in all areas, and excellent speaking and listening, creative and imaginative development. These skills are nurtured, in particular, through outdoor learning, which enables children to take risks and have adventures whilst learning to keep themselves safe in a secure environment. Pupils played imaginatively; for example, on seeing a tall, narrow tree, a group of children described it as a bean stalk with a giant at the top and planned how they might climb it. Older EYFS children read simple texts and all build a strong foundation in mathematics through engaging in practical activities before moving on to use this knowledge in abstract situations.
- 3.4 Throughout the pre-prep and prep, all groups achieve well in relation to their abilities due to individualised planning, which is tailored to their interests. Prep school pupils read and write well, listen carefully, learn appropriate mathematics skills and perform well in a range of physical activities. They excel at modern languages and science and apply their skills in many contexts as they move through the school. Pupils build on these skills in the senior school and, by Year 9, they show excellent speaking and listening skills along with strong mathematics skills which they use confidently in a range of contexts. For example, they discussed statistics in mathematics and science lessons in different contexts and made accurate calculations and interpretations of statistical information in Year 10 Physics and at A level in both biology and business studies. Older pupils make excellent use of technical language, both orally and in their writing, and by Year 11 they are reading and confidently interpreting advanced texts. The communication skills of SEND pupils were also seen to be excellent.
- 3.5 From the EYFS onward, pupils use ICT competently. Some younger pupils showed very good skills in coding in an ICT lesson. Pupils have some experience of using ICT in other lessons but this is not yet embedded in subject planning across the curriculum. Superb examples of art and textiles work showing high levels of imaginative thought and technical skills were on display in many areas of the school. Pupils thrive in small classes where their teachers know them well. Teachers use assessment and recording effectively to inform their planning, resulting in direct support for all pupils in their learning,

- 3.6 Pupils develop good study skills as they move through the school. In the EYFS and pre-prep, pupils learn to choose independently from the many resources available to support their learning. They develop excellent concentration and attention spans. As pupils move on through the school, they have fewer opportunities for self-directed learning until the sixth form, but they develop strong study skills and, by the sixth form, they have become capable learners who feel that they are well prepared for their examinations and for future studies.
- 3.7 Prep school pupils regularly win scholarships to the senior school, in a range of categories. Pupils achieve highly in a wide range of both individual and team sports, both within school activities and in outside events. Pupils are participating and achieving success at local and national level, including county gymnastics and tennis, south of England triathlon, county field athletics squad, national fencing and diving, and local open water swimming competitions. The equestrian team won first place in an inter-schools show jumping competition, with a second team achieving second place in another class, and the teams went on to compete at national level. Pupils speak highly of the support given them by their teachers when they are taking part in these demanding activities. Pupils take part in highly successful prep and senior school drama productions and concerts throughout the year including a major concert with two local primary schools under a regional outreach scheme. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme flourishes; last year 18 pupils achieved the Bronze Award, 10 achieved Silver Awards and 4 achieved Gold. Pupils speak thoughtfully about their experience of volunteering within the scheme and some day pupils continue their voluntary work during the holidays. Participation in the Young Enterprise scheme enables pupils to develop fundraising, marketing and sales skills, for which pupils were highly commended in 2016. Pupils raise a considerable amount of money through fundraising activities to support these and other causes.
- 3.8 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent from the EYFS onwards. Pupils demonstrate initiative and, by the sixth form, pupils take responsibility for their progress and delight in working independently. Questionnaire responses from pupils in Year 5 and above showed that an overwhelming majority of pupils felt that the school gave them the opportunity to learn and make progress. In lessons observed pupils thoroughly enjoyed their learning, they concentrated and worked well together. In discussions with inspectors they showed pride in and ownership of their work. Pupils' learning is supported very strongly by warm relationships with dedicated staff.

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 The school successfully meets its aim to educate pupils to be confident, happy and successful. From the earliest ages, pupils develop strong self-confidence; even the youngest pupils are confident in speaking to adults. In the EYFS and through the prep school, pupils concentrate very well for their age, they use resources and facilities confidently and they persevere with tasks independently with very little intervention from adults. Pupils of all ages have a clear understanding of their own abilities and understand what their teachers are doing to help them improve their learning. They appreciate the strong pastoral care and supportive work of their teachers. Older pupils are self-confident, self-disciplined and have a great awareness of their own and others' needs. Pupils spoke very admiringly of the way overseas pupils worked to learn English and to understand what was expected of them, and they described many ways in which they help new girls learn the language and settle into school, especially through family suppers and fun card games. They saw this as a highly positive aspect of life at Farlington.
- 4.3 From the EYFS onwards, pupils learn to make careful decisions and take responsibility for choices. They are very aware that the decisions they make affect both themselves and others, and so pupils are thoughtful and careful in the choices they make. Pupils are resilient: the work ethos of the school, subscribed to by both staff and pupils, is not to give up but to persevere until the task is done, which contributes to pupils' high self-esteem. Residential trips, volunteering and charity work reinforce the value of team work and the importance of putting other people first. Pupils are very well prepared for the move into the senior school, and older pupils are suitably supported in making option choices for GCSE and A level courses by comprehensive careers and life skills courses. They feel well-prepared for university applications and the next stage of their lives.
- 4.4 Responses to the parent questionnaire showed that parents are highly supportive of all aspects of the life and work of the school and appreciative of both the academic and the social aspects of the education of their children. Poor behaviour and friendship issues are painstakingly dealt with and recorded and pupils understand that they must avoid such behaviour. A very small number of parents raised a concern about the leadership of the school; no evidence was found to support this concern, and there is frequent communication and an open door policy. The complaints policy records that no concerns at level two or three have been received in the past two years.
- 4.5 Pupils develop a strong spiritual understanding, benefitting from opportunities for quiet meditation and consideration of spiritual matters. Pupils show respect for each other's religious beliefs and practices. Older pupils appreciate the non-materialistic aspects of their lives and value quiet time and space within the school day.
- 4.6 Throughout the school, the pupils show that they have a very clear understanding of right and wrong. They respect the school rules and understand their purpose. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are kind and thoughtful to each other. They show respect to visitors and are extremely well-mannered. Pupils know that bullying behaviour of any sort is unacceptable, and appreciate the fact that any incidents of unpleasantness or unkindness are dealt with properly. Even the youngest pupils are conscious of the need to follow rules and accept responsibility for their actions. Older pupils understand their moral and social responsibilities. They respect and understand the need for laws. Pupils are sensitive to others' needs and will change their behaviours to adapt to the needs of others. In interviews pupils explained that the annual Year 8 camping trip is instrumental in helping them to get on with each other. They learn to work as a team and to support each other as they face the challenges set. Pupils understand the

need to respect and value every member of the community. The programme of speakers and visits for older pupils helps them understand our laws and institutions and encourages them to have a genuine interest in the workings of British society.

- 4.7 Excellent social integration throughout the school has strong foundations in the boarding life of the school and in the development of vertical houses where pupils of all ages mix and work together on projects including sporting competitions and house activities. Older pupils help the younger pupils with support in both formal schemes and in many informal ways; for example, older girls set up a very successful drama activity for younger girls as part of their Duke of Edinburgh's award. Through the house activities, and especially the House Challenge, pupils learn to work very well in teams sometimes alongside those they would not choose to work with.
- 4.8 Pupils make excellent contributions within the school and in diverse situations outside it. Pupils in all the phases of the school have positions of responsibility. Older pupils make written applications and are often interviewed for the posts they wish to undertake. They contribute as prep school prefects, as school council representatives and as members of the senior prefect team, where they make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school and learn valuable skills at the same time. Pupils run a paper recycling scheme and take charge of lost property. Older pupils run activities for younger ones and are encouraged if they wish to set up new activities such as a Feminist Society. The school informs pupils very effectively about opportunities for service in the community; during the inspection an assembly took place about a summer holiday project older pupils will undertake and a pupil spoke about her experience last year in leading a local fundraising project for the homeless. The school has links with a local old people's home: pupils visit and also sing on special occasions. Pupils regularly travel to Africa during the summer to work on charitable projects and raise considerable amounts of money to support their work. In interviews pupils spoke very positively about the projects they had taken part in and about the contributions they had been able to make.
- 4.9 The school is a multi-cultural community, and pupils are accepting of each other's backgrounds. Across the school pupils show respect and understanding of different cultures, religions and backgrounds, fulfilling the ethos of the school, to "promote the highest standards of behaviour in a school that emphasises tolerance and loyalty". The younger children play and work together happily, and enjoy sharing information about their homes and backgrounds. Pupils celebrate festivals for all the major religions in assemblies and religious education lessons. Boarders from a number of backgrounds live harmoniously in the two boarding houses.
- 4.10 Pupils of all ages show an excellent understanding of how to stay safe including e-safety. They understand what constitutes a healthy diet and have a sensible approach to eating well. Pupils participate in a wide range of sports and take plenty of outdoor exercise. The outdoor education programme for the youngest pupils develops their understanding of hazards and children manage these extremely well for their age. Younger pupils take plenty of outdoor exercise daily, and older ones participate in a wide range of sports and exercise activities. The school has recently updated the mental health policy and pays careful attention to the mental health and well-being of both pupils and staff.