



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

REPTON PREPARATORY SCHOOL

(FOREMARKE HALL)

FEBRUARY 2017



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Repton Preparatory School (Foremarke Hall)			
DfE number	830/6019			
Registered charity number	5271717			
Address	Milton Derby Derbyshire County DE65 6EJ			
Telephone number	01283 707100			
Email address	office@foremarke.org.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Richard Merriman			
Chair of governors	Sir Henry Every Bt DL			
Age range	3 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	459			
	Boys	236	Girls	223
	Day pupils	398	Boarders	61
	EYFS	71	Juniors	246
	Seniors	142		
Inspection dates	22 to 23 February 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 group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the Learning Enhancement 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 Sara Wiggins	Reporting inspector
Mr Alexander Mitchell	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Green	Team inspector for boarding (Former deputy head, IAPS school)
Mrs Amanda Childs	Team Inspector (Head, IAPS school)

CONTENTS

	Page
1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION	1
About the school	1
What the school seeks to do	1
About the pupils	1
Recommendations from previous inspections	2
2 KEY FINDINGS	3
Recommendations	3
3 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	7

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Foremarke Hall is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged from three to thirteen, and is the preparatory school for Repton School. It is a charitable company limited by guarantee, overseen by a board of governors who also govern Repton School. Since the previous inspection, the school has opened new specialist facilities for learning enhancement, languages, art, and design and technology (DT). Also, a new management structure has been introduced.
- 1.2 The school operates as three discrete sections: pre-prep for pupils aged between three and seven years, Lower School which educates pupils aged seven to nine years, and Upper School which comprises pupils aged nine to thirteen years. Boarding is split into four houses; two catering for boys, one for girls and one mixed house accommodating day pupils who wish to board on a flexible basis.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide the highest standard of teaching and learning, pastoral care and a broad co-curricular and extra-curricular experience. It intends for pupils to use their minds well, understand their responsibilities and make wise judgements. The school also seeks for pupils to be able to discriminate between right and wrong, appreciate beauty and value others, enabling them to be well prepared for the senior phase of their education and for life beyond.

About the pupils

- 1.4 The school has identified 46 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), none of whom have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. Approximately 27 pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), 22 of whom receive additional support for their English. Data used by the school have identified the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for other pupils in response to their special talents in art, music and sport.
- 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 a standard inspection in November and December 2010. The recommendations from that inspection were:
- Build on existing good practice to ensure that, in addition to praise, marking consistently includes advice for improvement.
 - Further develop the embryonic system for tracking academic development, so that all staff can ensure that every pupil makes optimum progress.
 - Create further opportunities for teachers to observe and review each other's professional practice.
 - In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), provide further opportunities for child-initiated activities.
- 1.7 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous inspection. Further detail is in given in the main text of the report.
- 1.8 The recommendation of the intermediate boarding inspection in May 2014 was:
- Ensure that boarders can contact family more readily.
- 1.9 The school has successfully met the recommendation of the previous inspection.

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- The most able pupils and those who have SEND or EAL progress particularly well.
- Pupils demonstrate outstanding levels of participation and success beyond the classroom.
- Pupils' communication skills are excellent.
- The school does not always enable pupils to apply their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to advance their ability to research, synthesise, analyse and hypothesise.

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

- Pupils' contribution to the lives of others within the school and the wider community is excellent.
- Pupils demonstrate substantial sensitivity towards others and value diversity strongly.
- Pupils including boarders demonstrate an advanced understanding of their own safety and well-being.
- Pupils' have an outstanding sense of right and wrong.

Recommendations

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

- Extending opportunities for pupils to apply their ICT skills to advance their ability to research, synthesise, analyse and hypothesise.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils develop at least good and often outstanding knowledge, skills and understanding, strongly meeting the school's aims to provide the highest standard of teaching and learning, pastoral care, and a broad co-curricular and extra-curricular experience. Both boys and girls make consistently good progress in lessons and in their written work over time due to the strong support and typically excellent subject knowledge of their teachers. The school does not take part in National Curriculum tests, but the evidence available shows attainment to be above average in relation to national age-related expectations. Such evidence was obtained through the school's own data, lesson observations, work scrutiny, and the relatively high proportion of scholarships and awards that pupils achieve. In their responses to pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of pupils agreed that the school enables them to learn and make good progress. They are supported in this through the breadth of the curriculum and the extra-curricular programme which includes study days, residential field trips and overseas excursions to appropriate sites and venues which extend their learning.
- 3.3 In the EYFS and throughout the pre-prep, pupils display high levels of knowledge and understanding, and excellent communication skills, aided by the recent development of a creative curriculum introduced to support the transition from the EYFS to Year 1. Pupils relish the many opportunities provided for them to initiate their own learning activities. In the EYFS, children imaginatively used the porridge oats provided in their outside play area to create a pretend volcano. They carefully explained that the hole at the top was so that they could see the fire inside, and their enjoyment was further enhanced when a countdown from five ended in the 'volcano' exploding and the 'lava' flowing out. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate happiness and enthusiasm, and are engaged in their studies. For example, pupils in art responded with a sense of wonder as the teacher demonstrated how different colours and tones could be achieved when mixing paints. Such delight and enjoyment combined with the teachers' clear communication enables pupils to develop subject-appropriate vocabulary and to persevere in their learning. Pupils' progress is occasionally restricted as a result of overly supportive teaching which lacks pace and restricts the development of independent thought. The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their children's educational needs are met effectively by the school, and that teaching enables good progress and develops skills for the future.
- 3.4 Pupils who have SEND or EAL and those who are identified by the school as more able and talented progress particularly well. This is as a result of leaders and staff identifying their individual needs very carefully and using this information to provide appropriate support and challenge. In interview, pupils commended the help that they receive from the learning enhancement centre. Boarders benefit from the excellent levels of support provided in boarding time which enables all boarders the opportunity to utilise the school's facilities, including the learning enhancement department. This well-resourced department provides support to all pupils, which they commended in interviews held during the inspection. More able pupils develop high levels of skill for their age, notably in scholarship classes where they are challenged to take leadership of their learning. In science, older pupils make predictions and display excellent skills as they build circuits and work out the differences between series and parallel circuits.

- 3.5 The excellent facilities and extensive non-academic activities provided enable pupils to demonstrate substantial success beyond the classroom. In their questionnaire responses, almost all parents and pupils agreed that the school provides a good range and choice of activities. From a very early age, children are encouraged to learn a musical instrument and to perform. Achievement in music is excellent, as demonstrated through participation in school, local and national ensembles, including by several pupils who are members of the National Children's Orchestra or the National Children's Choir. Music scholarships to a number of senior schools are regular achievements and form part of the longer list of academic and non-academic scholarships to a range of senior schools. Creativity is further enhanced through success in art and DT, celebrated both through the work on display around the school and scholarship achievements. Pupils engage fully in school activities which enable them to face challenges, take controlled risks and push themselves to achieve further. Pupils use the opportunities provided to develop their skills for life and take ownership of their learning, such as leading sports practise sessions for their peers and making their own decisions regarding in which activity to take part. Pupils are enthusiastic about the many opportunities to work as a team and they display considerable ability, enabling sports teams to perform at particularly high levels in regional and national IAPS competitions. The school's U13 girls hockey team are the current national champions. Some excellent individual successes are represented in sports such as swimming and fencing. Pupils achieve success in mathematics and scientific competitions, with more able pupils achieving at advanced levels.
- 3.6 Pupils' excellent communication skills are enhanced through a curriculum which actively supports the performing arts and provides many opportunities for pupils to perform, from celebration assemblies in the pre-prep through to whole-school productions. The introduction of French at a young age increases pupils' linguistic skills. Pupils speak with confidence in French, and they listen and respond with strong accuracy and success. In the pre-prep, pupils enjoy many opportunities to talk together and reflect on the open questions asked through the skilful use of 'talk partners'. During a science lesson, pupils confidently discussed why bread had developed mould from their unwashed hands. Written work across the whole school is of a high standard. Fluency in handwriting, sentence construction, spelling, grammar and punctuation enables pupils to write with creativity, accuracy and confidence. They use technical vocabulary effectively and write for a number of purposes. Pupils' reading skills are developed through a number of initiatives, including older pupils reading and listening to younger pupils. Their reading abilities are advanced through the highly effective use of well-resourced libraries, visits from authors, book fairs and dramatic performances. Pupils apply their outstanding communication skills to all their activities.
- 3.7 Pupils use their strong numeracy skills successfully across the curriculum. For example the youngest children confidently counted to ten and back in French, while older pupils completed graphs and tables in geography field study work and in their scientific experiments. Pupils are competent users of ICT. They use music software with confidence to create individual pieces of music using computers. The use of ICT across the curriculum does not consistently enable pupils to enhance their ability to research, synthesise, analyse and hypothesise.

- 3.8 Pupils' work is well organised and presented to a high standard. A very small minority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire disagreed that marking helps them to improve their work, which was an area of recommendation from the previous inspection. Inspection evidence demonstrates that marking in many cases includes detailed guidance for improvement. Helpful oral feedback is provided to pupils, which was also confirmed during pupil interviews. Younger pupils synthesise and hypothesise successfully, strongly encouraged by the well-developed use of the school's system of 'learning powers' which encourages pupils to develop skills such as resilience and motivation. Pupils are strongly encouraged to be 'curious', to ask each other questions as they talk with partners and so develop their knowledge and understanding. They respond very successfully where teaching encourages challenging tasks. For example in an English lesson, older pupils analysed poetry and knowledgeably discussed the technical aspects of the poem using suitable complex and sophisticated vocabulary. Pupils enjoy creative and collaborative work, and value the excellent relationships that they have with their peers and teachers. Pupils in interview, particularly those with SEND or EAL, were clear that these relationships contribute strongly to their substantial levels of achievement.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils' contribution to others, the school and the community is excellent throughout the school. The school fully meets its aims to produce young people who are confident, who achieve well in and out of the classroom, and who are appreciative of the needs of others around them. Pupils are proud of their school and their houses, and enjoy the many opportunities provided for them to be involved in both the school and the local community. They sing at a local hospice for terminally ill children, perform in a local hospital and organise tea parties for local elderly residents. Pupils recognise their contribution through the reward system which celebrates their commitment, for example through 'citizen of the week', 'boarder of the week' and 'good egg' awards. Boarders in particular are aware of the importance of their community and take their responsibilities extremely seriously. These responsibilities include helping younger boarders settle in the boarding environment, listening to them read and providing them with hot chocolate in the evening. Pupils' excellent social awareness enables them to work together for the benefit of the whole school community.
- 4.3 Pupils develop excellent leadership skills. They may apply for any number of leadership roles in their final year and become part of the 'R-Team', a team of pupils with particular responsibilities towards others. Pupils take on roles such as head librarian, head of choir, assembly technician, woodland ranger, peer group and pupil mentor, and pre-prep play assistant. The formal application process ensures roles are taken seriously and are respected by those within the school community. Pupils in younger years contribute to their community in a number of ways including involvement in the school council and the boarding council, recycling, acting as mentors for prospective pupils, charity representatives, and participating in musical and dramatic performances.
- 4.4 Pupils strongly respect and value diversity in society. Pupils from a varied range of backgrounds and culture relate exceptionally well with each other and are wholly intolerant of prejudice. In interview, boarders spoke of full integration within their houses irrespective of age, nationality or religion. Leaders have successfully embedded these inclusive values throughout the school, enabling pupils to feel valued and cared for in a safe, happy and homely environment. Pupils celebrate diversity in the classroom and in special assemblies. For example, a recent innovation to encourage overseas pupils to present an assembly on 'My Country' has enlightened pupils to the world of which they are a part. A small minority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire disagreed that the discussion of current affairs and politics is presented with a balanced view. However, discussions with pupils and staff demonstrated that pupils develop a strong understanding and empathy with world and national issues through their personal, social and health education lessons, and their daily discussions regarding current affairs.
- 4.5 Pupils have a substantial sense of right and wrong. They understand the school's rewards and sanctions system and can translate this into the wider world. In their many sports matches for example, pupils are clear about the importance of displaying respect to the opposition and abiding by the rules. In interview, pupils understood that their actions have inevitable consequences and that the occasional misdemeanor would result in a sanction in line with the school's policy. The system encourages pupils to reflect on their behaviour and seek ways to minimise poor behavior in the future. Pupils understand that what they say and do impacts on others, and their behaviour is usually excellent as a result.

- 4.6 Pupils including boarders demonstrate an advanced understanding of their own safety and well-being, and awareness of aspects regarding their mental and physical health and fitness are extremely well developed. This excellent awareness is supported through leadership and governance ensuring that staff are well trained about supporting pupils' emotional health and resilience. Pupils recently scored highly when taking part in a national initiative which measured 'mental toughness' as the 'mind-set that every person adopts in everything they do'. They understand the importance of warming up and cooling down before and after sports activities. Pupils appreciate that the curriculum, the extensive activities programme, the excellent school food and the extensive school grounds enable them both to understand the importance of keeping themselves safe and keeping fit and healthy. They understand the rules associated with climbing trees and enjoy the opportunities provided for them to take appropriately measured risks, which strongly supports the schools aim for young people to be well prepared for the senior phase of their education and for life beyond. Pupils provide support for each other in making healthy choices about food. For example they remind each other about the importance of 'colour' on a plate to ensure a balanced diet. Alongside their excellent understanding of the importance of a healthy diet, they are supported by the menu available which reflects both the cultural and nutritional needs of those in the school community. Further to this, pupils are strongly aware of the need to keep themselves safe and how to do so, as a result of assemblies and outside speakers covering a variety of topics such fire safety and anti-bullying.
- 4.7 Pupils have high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem which enable them to make informed decisions. For example, in numeracy they understand the importance of using methods best suited to their own learning style when problem solving. They choose which activities to undertake and the school's flexible boarding system enables all pupils to feel secure, valued and liked by the boarding staff in a community environment. Pupils enjoy a team-building programme at the start of the academic year which enables them to work together, take controlled risks, and to develop their independence and leadership. Pupils demonstrate excellent manners, courtesy and attitudes. They have a strong sense of teamwork in many aspects of their lives, which is developed strongly through the extra-curricular programme and the house system. Pupils successfully uphold the 'Foremarke Code' of 'CARE' which incorporates 'common sense, aim high, respect and enjoy'. This begins in the pre-prep with the 'Golden Rules' and develops in an age-appropriate fashion as pupils move upwards through the school.
- 4.8 Pupils are perceptive and well prepared for the next stage of their education. They demonstrate a spiritual sensitivity and a highly developed sense of awareness of the non-material aspects of life. Pupils appreciate and enjoy their physical surroundings and the many opportunities provided by the school for reflection and spiritual contemplation. They concentrate, observe and express their feelings as, for example, they mix soft clay into differing shapes and colours. Pupils observe the changing seasons and reflect thoughtfully on the impact on the world around them. In their questionnaire responses, the overwhelming majority of parents agreed that the school promotes an environment which successfully supports their children's personal development, and inspection evidence supports this view.