



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**TORMEAD SCHOOL**

**INTERIM INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Tormead School

Full Name of School	<b>Tormead School</b>		
DfE Number	<b>936/6050</b>		
Registered Charity Number	<b>312057</b>		
Address	<b>Tormead School Cranley Road Guildford Surrey GU1 2JD</b>		
Telephone Number	<b>01483 575101</b>		
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Email Address	<b>office@tormeadschool.org.uk</b>		
Headmistress	<b>Mrs Christina Foord</b>		
Chairman of Governors	<b>Mr Colston Herbert</b>		
Age Range	<b>4 to 18</b>		
Total Number of Pupils	<b>744</b>		
Gender of Pupils	<b>Girls</b>		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: <b>183</b>
	3-5 (EYFS):	<b>15</b>	11-18: <b>546</b>
Number of Boarders	Total:	<b>0</b>	
EYFS Gender	<b>Girls</b>		
Inspection dates	<b>10 May 2011 to 11 May 2011</b>		

## PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule for INTERIM inspections*. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in March 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010\*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

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

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31<sup>st</sup> August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (ι) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ιι) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (ιιι) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (ιιιι) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Tormead School is a selective day school for girls aged from 4 to 18, situated in a suburb of Guildford. The school is inter-denominational. It is a charitable company limited by guarantee and administered by governors who are trustees. Founded in 1905, it has been on its present site since 1915, extending its property and facilities as opportunities arose. The junior school, within which the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) classroom is sited, is situated in buildings across the road from the senior school, although its pupils share some senior facilities such as the dining room. The children in the EYFS have direct access to an outside play area. The current headmistress was appointed in September 2010.
- 1.2 The school aims to create a happy, supportive atmosphere within which to encourage every girl to develop her abilities and talents to the full, recognising her own individuality, while developing tolerance, a sense of personal responsibility and the ability to work in a team. It seeks to instil in pupils a love of learning, the ability to think independently and the self-confidence to face the challenges of adult life.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, developments have included a performing arts centre and considerable investment in information and communication technology (ICT), including means to improve communication with parents.
- 1.4 Currently, there are 744 pupils enrolled. Of these, 15 are in the EYFS and 112 in the sixth form. Junior school pupils are given priority for entry to the senior school, following successful performance in the entrance examination. The majority of pupils are from families with professional backgrounds living within a twenty-mile radius of the school. Standardised test data indicates that the ability of most pupils is above the national average. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Three girls in the junior school who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive extra support within the school for general learning difficulties. None of the 51 pupils who come from homes where another language is spoken requires specific help with English. There are in total 76 pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), of whom 50 receive help from the school.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report and by the school in Years 1 to 11 to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school in the EYFS and the sixth form, and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence, are shown in the following tables.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Pre Prep	Reception

### ***Sixth Form***

School	NC name
Lower Six	Year 12
Upper Six	Year 13

## 2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

### **The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills**

- 2.1 The overall quality of the pupils' achievements is excellent. The pupils are very well educated, in accordance with the school's aim of encouraging girls to develop their abilities and talents. The girls demonstrate good speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. Their creative and artistic skills are evident from the many displays around the school. Pupils are eager learners, listening carefully and often making perceptive comments; their expectations of themselves are high. Virtually all sixth-form leavers go on to university, the majority at their first choice institution.
- 2.2 Many girls achieve well in graded examinations for music and drama. Girls are successful in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award at all levels. Many pupils play sports at county level and the school's gymnastics teams have achieved national levels of success.
- 2.3 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in standardised tests in English and mathematics taken by junior school pupils indicate that they achieve results higher than national norms. At GCSE and A level, results have been far above the average for pupils in all maintained schools, and above average for those in maintained selective schools. In 2010, almost 70 per cent of A-level results and 90 per cent of GCSE results were graded A or A\*. Throughout the school, the girls make rapid and often excellent progress in relation to their abilities, although the most able are not always fully challenged. Results of tests show that pupils with EAL or LDD make equally good progress.
- 2.4 The curriculum supports the development of a spirit of enquiry. In the junior school, recent initiatives successfully challenge girls to think more widely and independently. A good range of subjects is taught at senior level and the school is introducing extension activities to develop independent learning skills in all girls, irrespective of ability.
- 2.5 There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, including very active 'eco' groups and opportunities for pupils to participate in programmes such as Young Enterprise. There are also numerous trips to local and overseas destinations. Not all pupils take full advantage of the opportunities available, however, and the school is keen to encourage greater levels of participation.
- 2.6 Teaching is excellent overall, invariably ensuring that the girls have the knowledge needed for examination success. However, teaching does not always extend their thinking beyond the confines of examinations or provide the stimulation for the most able to fulfil their considerable potential. In the best lessons, teachers employ a wide range of creative strategies to encourage the girls to think and to pose their own questions. The small number of less successful lessons lack pace and challenge, providing limited opportunities for collaborative or independent learning.
- 2.7 In the pupil pre-inspection questionnaire, many girls in the GCSE years said that they feel their workload is not sufficiently monitored. Inspectors found that the school is aware of the need for teachers to be alert to such pressure on pupils. Work is marked regularly, although the quality of the marking is not always

consistent. There are many examples of good practice where effective guidance is given and pupils are confident that they can ask their teachers for help as needed.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 2.8 The quality of the girls' personal development is excellent. By the time they reach the sixth form the girls are self-assured, confident individuals with a strong sense of responsibility to themselves and to the school community. The school achieves outstanding success in its aim of preparing the girls for life as adults well able to play their part in society.
- 2.9 The girls show a very good sense of a spiritual dimension of life. For example, they keenly supported the recent recreation of the Quiet Garden for reflection. The girls' moral development is excellent; they have high expectations of themselves and of others. They contribute to wider society, as shown in their enthusiasm for ecological initiatives and the sizeable amounts of money they raise for charity. Many told inspectors how much they value the school's strong sense of community. The girls enjoy the friendly rivalry involved in working together for house events. Throughout the school, girls enthusiastically seize opportunities to take responsibility. The senior school council is run by the head girls and large numbers of junior pupils have stood for election to the junior council. Year 6 girls carry out their many duties conscientiously, as do the senior school prefects, house officials and members of the head girls' team. Pupils show a very good awareness of their own and other cultures, those in the junior school, for example, enjoying the weekly challenge to find out about a country.
- 2.10 The school successfully fulfils its aims to promote tolerance and to foster good relations within the school community. Pastoral care is a great strength of the school. There are good relationships amongst pupils and they have a warm regard for their teachers, who are excellent role models. The girls feel extremely safe, happy and well supported by the school.
- 2.11 There are appropriate and effective policies in place to promote the pupils' well-being, including those for safeguarding, promoting good behaviour and dealing with bullying. The girls feel confident that incidents, which they say are rare, will be dealt with promptly and resolved at an early stage with considerable sensitivity. Staff are trained appropriately and effectively for their work in these areas. Good communication between the junior and the senior school enables pupils to make a smooth transition to secondary education. The school provides a safe environment, with appropriate levels of supervision throughout the day. Risk assessments are exemplary. All necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards are taken. Admission and attendance registers and procedures are efficiently maintained and organised. There is a well-equipped medical room with a qualified nurse and numerous members of staff trained in first aid. The dining room provides a good selection of healthy and appetising meals.

## **The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management**

- 2.12 The governance of the school is excellent. The governors have a good relationship with the headmistress, offering helpful support. Proposals in the regular reports from the headmistress, head of junior school and bursar are carefully discussed. Some governors have undertaken formal training and all are well aware of their legal responsibilities, which they discharge effectively. Policies are reviewed regularly. There are named governors with specific responsibility for, and good knowledge of, the EYFS, and also for safeguarding; they ensure that the governing body is kept aware of its responsibilities in these key areas. Health and safety are given a high priority. Some governors are familiar figures in the school, attending functions regularly and using the opportunity to talk to parents informally.
- 2.13 Governors exercise strong strategic leadership, ensuring that the needs of all sections of the school are taken into account. Wise governance and astute financial management are ensuring that the school thrives, and provides an attractive and well-equipped environment.
- 2.14 The leadership and management of the school are excellent overall. The highly effective senior management team works well to ensure an excellent and comprehensive oversight of the school and that every girl is known and valued. School leadership is achieving good success in promoting an atmosphere that nurtures intellectual curiosity. The creation of a notably happy, supportive environment within which the girls thrive is a credit to the commitment and hard work of senior leaders.
- 2.15 Child protection is taken extremely seriously, with good policies in place and regular training for staff. Records are meticulously maintained. All staff have been subject to appropriate regulatory checks, previous inconsistencies in recording having been remedied. There is a comprehensive school development plan to which individual departmental plans are linked. Since the previous inspection, a co-ordinator for Years 1 and 2 has been appointed. Good systems for monitoring the work of departments are in place although some inconsistencies persist in the middle management of the senior school, for example in marking and the imposition of sanctions. The grounds and buildings are attractive and well maintained.
- 2.16 The school has strong links with parents. All required information is provided. The website provides a great deal of material and there are regular newsletters. School reports are informative, supplementing the annual parents' evenings. There are information evenings held annually for each year group, parents' talks focused on parenting skills and open forums for free discussion. The Parents' Association, jointly chaired by representatives from the junior and the senior school, organises regular social and fund-raising events.
- 2.17 In the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small number of parents indicated that they do not feel there are sufficient opportunities to be involved with the school; inspection findings did not support these views. Overall, parents expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the school and their children's progress. The single complaint registered last year was handled sensitively, in line with the school's policy.



### **3. ACTION POINTS**

#### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

#### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Encourage the development of teaching strategies to ensure that work always challenges all pupils in the class.
  2. Ensure greater consistency in the implementation of policies and develop further measures to share the good practice evident in many areas.
  3. For the EYFS, explore means to make full use of the outdoor area in all weathers.

#### **4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

##### **4.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

4.1 The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding. A strong commitment to children's welfare and equal opportunities is evident. Outstanding practice ensures that children make excellent progress regardless of their individual starting points. Partnerships with local agencies and other providers are used very effectively to promote high quality education and care. There is an excellent sense of teamwork and an ambitious vision for future development. Since the previous inspection, new systems for assessment and planning, and greater use of the outside area, have had a positive impact on the children's learning. The capacity for further development is outstanding.

##### **4.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

4.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Inconsistencies in the recording of recruitment checks have been rectified and as a result, effective systems are now in place to ensure the suitability of staff. Comprehensive policies are reviewed regularly and reflect the particular requirements of the EYFS, although some minor inconsistencies were found in the implementation of some. Secure risk assessments of premises, resources and outings ensure that children are safe at all times. Strong relationships exist with parents through continuous dialogue at the school gate, formal meetings, newsletters and informative reports. Parents express a high level of satisfaction with the provision. Inclusive practice and equality of opportunity are strongly promoted, ensuring that all children achieve well and that their welfare needs are met. Self-evaluation is good and staff feel very well supported by senior management and the well-informed governing body. There is an excellent sense of teamwork and an ambitious shared vision for future development which is clearly set out in the EYFS development plan. Staff deployment and resources, including training, are well managed, providing children with a stimulating and supportive environment inside and, in dry weather, outdoors.

##### **4.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

4.3 The quality of provision in the EYFS is outstanding overall. The richly resourced classroom and the excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities encourage children to follow their own lines of enquiry, supported by experienced staff. The well-resourced outdoor environment offers opportunities across all areas of learning, but is not used fully in wet weather. Good use is made of specialist physical education (PE) staff to extend opportunities for physical development. Teachers make excellent use of detailed observations to assess progress and inform planning that recognises children's individual needs and interests, ensuring they are both challenged and supported. Adults and children form genuine, affectionate bonds in a caring, supportive environment where children's welfare is paramount.

#### **4.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

- 4.4 Outcomes for children in the EYFS are outstanding. Girls make excellent progress in all areas of the curriculum, particularly social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy, and by the end of their time in the EYFS, are working consistently at the level of or above the Early Learning Goals. They are enthusiastic, inquisitive, creative learners, who use a wide range of literacy, numeracy and problem solving skills in self-initiated activities, and demonstrate confidence with ICT. Children are well behaved, play together happily and develop strong friendships. They respond positively to the expectations of the adults who care for them, developing a strong sense of independence and responsibility through a range of classroom duties. Girls understand how to stay safe, the need for personal hygiene and the importance of choosing healthy foods at meal times. They participate enthusiastically in PE lessons, and understand the importance of exercise.

**Section 3 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.**

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Colette Culligan

Dr Christopher Enos

Miss Joanna Gay

Mr Christopher Manville

Reporting Inspector

Assistant Head, GSA school

Deputy Head, IAPS school

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector