



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

TORMEAD SCHOOL

MAY 2017



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Tormead School			
DfE number	936/6050			
Registered charity number	312057			
Address	Tormead School Cranley Road Guildford Surrey GU1 2JD			
Telephone number	01483 575101			
Email address	office@tormeadschool.org.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Christina Foord			
Chair of governors	Mrs Rosie Harris			
Age range	4 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	730			
	Boys	0	Girls	730
	EYFS	11	Juniors	199
	Seniors	437	Sixth form	83
Inspection dates	04 to 05 May 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. Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates on behalf of the DfE, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest report on the work of ISI on the Ofsted website.

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 the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the 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 Kate McCarey	Reporting inspector
Mr Duncan Byrne	Team inspector (Head, HMC school)
Miss Margaret Connell	Team inspector (Former principal, GSA school)
Mr Magnus Cowie	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Joseph Smith	Team inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mrs Francesca Southern	Team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1. Situated in a suburb of Guildford, Tormead is a day school which educates girls from the ages of 4 to 18. Founded in 1905, it has been on its present site since 1915 and has extended its property and facilities as opportunities arose. Its junior school includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting and is situated in buildings across the road from the senior school. The school is a charitable company limited by guarantee and administered by governors who are trustees.
- 1.2. Since the previous inspection, developments have included new premises, opened in November 2015, providing modern informal teaching and learning spaces based around a central atrium, along with a new library, a specialist design and technology (DT) room and new classrooms. An enhanced digital infrastructure has been introduced to enable the use of tablet computers across the school site.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3. The school seeks to create a happy, caring and supportive atmosphere, encouraging every girl to develop her abilities and talents to the full, recognising her own individuality, while developing tolerance, respect and dignity, a sense of personal responsibility and the ability to work in a team. It values individuality and celebrates diversity. The school seeks to instil in pupils a love of learning, the ability to think independently and the self-confidence to prepare for the challenges of adult life.

About the pupils

- 1.4. Pupils come from Guildford and its surroundings within a radius of approximately 15 miles and are from a range of backgrounds. The school is academically selective and standardised data indicate that all the pupils are of above average ability. A total of 88 pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 59 of whom receive support within the classroom and/or in individual learning support sessions. No pupil has a statement of educational needs or an education and health care plan. A few girls speak a language other than English at home, but none receive support for English as an additional language.
- 1.5. National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils demonstrate excellent knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide curriculum and are ably supported by expert and dedicated teaching.
- Pupils achieve considerable success both academically and in a wide range of additional activities.
- Pupils make creative use of digital technology to enhance their learning.
- Pupils display exemplary attitudes to learning and greatly enjoy the many opportunities for collaborative learning, decision making and independent research.

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

- Pupils exhibit excellent awareness of themselves as learners and as developing people. They leave the school well prepared for the challenges of higher education and their adult lives.
- Pupils behave in an exemplary way and have a well-developed sense of right and wrong.
- Pupils have a strong sense of respect for all members of the school and for its ethos.
- Pupils develop their social skills by contributing enthusiastically to the school community and are well-engaged with charitable giving for a variety of causes.

Recommendation

2.3 In the context of excellent outcomes for pupils the school might consider the following improvement:

- Seek further opportunities for the pupils to contribute to the local community.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1. The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2. Pupils demonstrate excellent knowledge, skills and understanding across a broad curriculum. Children in the EYFS gain an understanding of the natural world by growing sunflowers, and enjoy writing sentences and can speak confidently about their work and play. Pupils of all ages have well-developed skills of numeracy which they apply successfully across the curriculum. In the junior school, pupils used their mathematical knowledge to help them paint a picture in the style of Kandinsky and they apply previous knowledge to tackle investigations with confidence in science and mathematics. Junior school pupils enjoy working things out for themselves and solving problems set by their teachers. They express themselves confidently and are willing to contribute ideas in class. Pupils of all ages use specialist language effectively across the curriculum and their linguistic skills are well-developed. Senior school pupils can express difficult concepts in other modern foreign languages and use complex vocabulary effectively. Pupils have competent practical skills in design and technology, and food and nutrition. Throughout the school, pupils make the most of the opportunities provided to be creative in art, drama, music and dance. Pupils of all ages exhibit strong physical skills in physical education and games lessons. In almost all lessons observed, pupils were seen to be enthusiastic learners. They particularly enjoy the range of learning experiences that are made possible using their tablet devices. Pupils' skills in the use of such technology are developed from an early age and applications for the use of each pupil's individual tablet device are being developed continually. Year 1 pupils were learning how to video record each other while seeking evidence for the arrival of spring, Year 8 pupils were observed preparing multimedia presentations and Year 9 pupils used slow-motion video technology to record each other's sports performance and thus monitor their progress. Throughout the school, pupils exhibit a strong desire to acquire knowledge and skills and to improve their understanding. By the time they reach the sixth form, pupils are extremely competent learners. The strategic vision of the school's senior management team is a strong contributory factor to the pupils' success in these areas.
- 3.3. Children in the EYFS are meeting or exceeding expectations in all the seven areas of learning. In the junior school, pupils make good long-term progress from their starting points as evidenced by work scrutiny, the careful recording of their assessment data and the tracking of their progress. Contributory factors to the pupils' successful achievement in the junior school are the use of subject specialists across the school, effective planning for the needs of all pupils including those with SEND, and provision of individual and targeted support where necessary. The following analysis uses data from the years 2013 to 2015, which are the years for which the most recent national data is available: results at GCSE have been above the national average and in 2014 were well above it, IGCSE results have been higher than worldwide norms, and A level results have been above the national average for maintained schools. In most lessons observed, pupils were making excellent short-term progress due to detailed planning and well-paced and varied activities. Longer-term progress is monitored by careful tracking of pupils from their starting points and by individual support sessions where necessary. Pupils who have SEND are well supported and achieve well. They access all courses and receive support both within the classroom from their teachers and in tailored individual sessions where necessary. These pupils are clearly identified in teachers' planning, and evidence gained from written work scrutiny and their examination successes demonstrate that they make excellent progress from their starting points.

- 3.4. Pupils have excellent study skills. Senior school pupils spoke about how independent study sessions in the middle of morning lessons have improved their work habits. In the junior school, pupils enjoy weekend project work which sometimes replaces regular homework and helps them to develop independent study skills at an early age. By the time pupils reach the senior school they can manage their study time extremely well and are encouraged to make their own decisions on balancing their workload. They use traditional and electronic research resources effectively and can clearly communicate their findings verbally, in written form and in multimedia presentations. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, a small minority of pupils disagreed that their lessons are interesting. Inspection evidence does not support this view; evidence gained from lesson observations and pupil interviews demonstrate that almost all lessons are well-paced and varied in approach. Pupils are well-engaged and contribute to their learning with enthusiasm. They hand in work for marking on their tablets as well as in hard copy, and marking in most cases is thorough and provides them with positive comments about how to improve. Pupils in interview were clear that teachers are always available to provide them with individual feedback and support and that this greatly assists their progress.
- 3.5. Pupils have exceptional attitudes to their learning. They expect to work hard, take responsibility for their own learning and are ambitious for academic success. In lessons, children in the EYFS and junior school pupils settle to work quickly and listen attentively to their teachers. Pupils of all ages enjoy working both independently and collaboratively. In the junior school, they worked together to compose simple tunes on xylophones and Year 8 pupils enjoyed working as a team to plan research on a drugs project. Pupils develop excellent skills of communication as they move through the school so that by the sixth form they are highly articulate in discussion, and argue cogently and with determination. They have developed a noticeable love of enquiry and in interviews they spoke of their ambitions for university and beyond, and of their appreciation of being in an environment where they can always take risks when offering their answers and opinions. Pupils aim for universities with competitive entry requirements and most achieve their first choices.
- 3.6. All pupils benefit from the extensive cross-curricular programme known as Beacon, which is aimed at providing both breadth and depth across a wide range of topics and activities. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the variety of activities they can choose for pleasure and to further develop their talents. They discover new interests and talents, often developing advanced skills in those areas which they pursue with commitment. For instance, pupils were observed rehearsing chamber music early in the morning, training for gymnastics and various sporting teams at lunchtime and taking part in cheerleading in the evening. Year 9 pupils spoke of the enjoyment and learning they experienced when tasked with inventing a city of the future on a planet distant during an independent learning day.
- 3.7. Many pupils achieve well beyond the school environment. In sport, individuals and teams are highly successful. The school has been awarded Best School in the ISGA National Gymnastics Championships for the previous three years and pupils have also had considerable success in athletics and swimming. Pupils achieve extremely well in a range of musical activities, strongly supported by the strength of the many and varied musical groups within the school. Pupils have gained places in a national orchestra and a university organ scholarship. The richness of the co-curricular provision is a strong contributory factor to pupils' success in many areas, and they are well-prepared for life beyond school through the many opportunities provided such as links with university departments, visiting speakers and the clubs such as astronomy and dissection club.

- 3.8. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, almost all the parents agreed that the school enables their children to make good progress and develop skills for the future, and meets their children's educational needs effectively. Similarly, almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school provides them the opportunity to learn and make good progress, and that they can be involved in a good range of activities. The school fully meets its stated aim to develop the skills and talents of each individual pupil to the full.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils exhibit excellent awareness of themselves as learners and as developing people, thus meeting a stated aim of the school to develop pupils' self-confidence and ability in order to prepare them for the challenges of adult life. In interview, pupils expressed the view that attending the school has enabled them to improve their self-understanding. They cited examples from the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme and the provision of mindfulness sessions, and said that they appreciated the time that staff invest in helping them become 'the best versions of themselves they can be'. The boundaries between academic teaching and personal development overlap, and pupils develop self-knowledge whilst also learning to make decisions about academic choices and study. In this, they are assisted by dedicated teaching staff, pastoral leaders and form tutors all of whom have the best interests of the pupils at heart. Children in the EYFS enjoy opportunities to talk about their own and others' feelings, and junior school pupils develop self-knowledge in PSHE and critical thinking sessions as well as in the regular contact with their form tutors. They are encouraged to make their own decisions and take on responsibilities. In interview, they were articulate and aware of their own areas of strength and weakness. Regular individual sessions with form tutors in the senior school help pupils to identify areas for short- and medium-term focus, and to make responsible and appropriate decisions about their work and well-being. As a result, senior school pupils have high self-esteem but without a trace of arrogance or presumption. Sixth formers are strong role models of successful personal development. They also explained in interview that they are encouraged by teaching and pastoral staff always to be 'honest and open', and have the confidence to express their views. A strong culture of developing resilience among the pupils and the wide selection of extension activities provided by the leadership and management encourages a 'have a go' mentality which strongly aids pupils' personal development.
- 4.3 Pupils behave in an exemplary way and have a strong sense of morality. They are responsible for their own behaviour, do not tolerate poor behaviour in others and understand how to seek help from staff if they encounter it. Pupils understand the school rewards and sanctions, and they feel that sanctions are rarely necessary due to strong pupil-staff relationships. They commented on how staff compliment them when they have done well and how this makes them feel valued, and pastoral staff are quick to respond to incidents of poor behaviour and to provide support. Pupils in interview felt that teachers were fair, and observations in classes and across the school provided evidence of extremely supportive pupil-staff relationships. In interviews, pupils expressed the view that little bullying occurs and that it is dealt with effectively. Inspection evidence found that there were few cases, and records demonstrate that these were carefully considered and appropriate action taken.
- 4.4 Pupils have many opportunities to reflect on non-material aspects of life both within and beyond the curriculum. In religious education, Year 9 pupils have produced some perceptive work on themes such as 'Does God exist?' and the relationship between a 'lotus flower and feelings' during a Buddhism topic. Pupils particularly enjoyed the visit to a Buddhist temple, and in interview expressed that they could work out their own spiritual identity in the open culture of the school. Pupils make the most of opportunities to appreciate art, music and literature, and they relish the beauty of their surroundings. In the EYFS, children had a sense of wonder observing their growing sunflowers and the new life emerging all around them during Spring. Year 10 pupils displayed their appreciation of the numinous by analysing mood and atmosphere in a Beethoven piano sonata. Pupils enjoy and gain valuable inner strength from taking part in mindfulness sessions.

- 4.5 Pupils have a strong social awareness and a sense of respect for all members of the community. In the junior school, older pupils help look after the youngest EYFS children during lunchtimes and enjoy engaging in activities with them. Senior school pupils visit the junior school to help pupils' transition, and pupils benefit from a peer mentoring scheme where older pupils help younger ones academically and socially. Within year groups relationships are good and pupils are naturally supportive of each other, aware of the problems created by close friendship groups and appreciative of the school's efforts to mix age groups where appropriate both in lessons and activities. Pupils also have strong views which they feel confident to express in forums such as the junior and senior school councils where their views are listened to and often acted upon. A drawing and painting club for non-specialist artists has recently been established as a result of a request from pupils.
- 4.6 Pupils understand that some members of their community may have particular needs and characteristics, and they are open in their attitudes to each other and to society in general. They collaborate with each other willingly both within the classroom and beyond, for instance when rehearsing devised drama pieces or coming up with ideas for a project within the Beacon programme. Senior school pupils are aware of the importance of structures which exist within society to make it work, and understand democracy and the rule of law as well as the principle of free speech. Pupils studying GCSE in the school produced moving art work on the theme of 'We are not Afraid' after a recent terrorist attack in London and this has been displayed in Westminster Hall. The school is an eco-school and all pupils including the children in the EYFS take their responsibilities of caring for the environment seriously.
- 4.7 Pupils appreciate the circumstances of those less fortunate than themselves and are actively engaged in raising funds for selected charities which they pick themselves. Each year these include a local, national and international charity. Pupils who take part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme are involved in service in the local community where they contribute in local care homes, a local library and an animal rescue centre. Not all pupils have the opportunity to contribute positive direct links with the local community as the school does not currently run a programme of local community service beyond this framework. Pupils are tolerant and appreciate diversity, and almost all of those who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school encourages them to respect other people and be tolerant of other faiths and beliefs. Pupils take part in overseas trips which often include an element of fundraising and support for local communities. These pupils acquire first-hand knowledge of other cultures and a more global outlook. They described their experiences as 'life changing'.
- 4.8 Pupils know how to stay safe in the real world and online, and understand the importance of physical and mental health in terms of diet, exercise and a balanced lifestyle. Younger pupils discussed the importance of a balanced diet, and throughout the school a strong emphasis is placed on the importance of exercise. Pupils value the inclusion of mental health issues within the PSHE programme and speak highly of pastoral support from staff around these and any other issues which they face.
- 4.9 Pupils at the school are well rounded, self-confident and articulate young people, who by the time they are ready to leave have developed the skills necessary to lead fulfilling lives in the future.