

School inspection report

15 to 17 October 2024

Tormead School

Cranley Road

Guildford

GU1 2JD

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to pupils' wellbeing and maintain high academic standards. The school's supportive and nurturing environment enables pupils' academic and emotional growth.
2. Safeguarding pupils is important in this school. Staff are well trained and work closely with leaders and governors to identify and help pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders emphasise teaching pupils about online safety so they understand how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
3. The governing body ensures that key policies and systems are in place and the school's core values thread through every aspect of school life.
4. Leaders have developed a well-rounded curriculum that supports pupils' different learning needs. The curriculum is regularly reviewed so that the content remains relevant and supports pupils to achieve well.
5. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly to make sure that they learn successfully. Teachers take swift action if any pupils start to fall behind. In the senior school, on occasion some pupils are not stretched by questioning in lessons.
6. Leaders promote a culture of respect, kindness, and inclusion through the curriculum and various initiatives and experiences. These approaches are generally successful, but at times, some pupils forget to show these important values which causes upset to others.
7. The school's curriculum balances academic knowledge with practical life skills, such as budgeting and money management. Leaders use a programme of external speakers to broaden pupils' knowledge and perspectives.
8. Pupils are encouraged to engage with the wider community through volunteer work and fundraising events. Pupils are given opportunities to explore a range of career paths. These experiences contribute to developing pupils as responsible and socially aware citizens.
9. Governors, leaders and staff are committed to pupils' safety and welfare. The school sites are well-maintained and secure. Governors make sure that health and safety arrangements are appropriate. Regular risk assessments take place for the premises and various activities. Action is taken to reduce any identified risks.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- Provide opportunities across all phases to stretch and challenge pupils, specifically through questioning
- Embed the ethos of the school's pastoral care programme so it reaches and promotes the wellbeing of every pupil.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

10. Leaders make decisions to support pupils' wellbeing. Weekly staff meetings focus on sharing any pastoral and academic concerns. Appropriate support is put in place. The Wellbeing Centre provides pupils with help from a highly experienced team. Leaders and staff model how to be considerate and kind to others. Most pupils follow this guidance and are happy and confident.
11. Through the head girl team, pupils share their ideas and make suggestions on how to improve the school. Pupils appreciate the support they receive through 'walk to talk' sessions, 'worry monsters' and the THRIVE (together, health, resilience, inquisitive, vision, and enjoyment) programme, which help pupils to work through any issues they have.
12. Leaders are vigilant about pupils' safety and wellbeing. They respond quickly to any issues on and off the school site and adjust the curriculum to teach pupils how to keep themselves safe in different situations. Staff receive regular training so they are equipped with the skills needed to identify and address any safeguarding concerns. Newly appointed staff undergo a thorough induction process, including using safeguarding training materials from the local authority.
13. Leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that need to improve. They take the right actions to move the school forward. Leaders support teaching staff to develop their teaching skills. Staff learn to improve their practice over time.
14. The school's core principles are woven through the curriculum. Themes such as 'triangles' and 'Tormead Together' teach pupils about important values such as adaptability, confidence, determination and perseverance.
15. Governors use their skills and expertise to support leaders to carry out their roles and responsibilities. Governors know the school well through regular visits. They work with leaders to review policies and systems. They address any weaknesses promptly while providing constructive feedback which supports continuous improvement.
16. Leaders regularly conduct risk assessments and review safety protocols and records. Leaders put measures in place to mitigate any identified risks. This helps to ensure a safe environment for pupils and staff.
17. Leaders build positive relationships with parents and address any concerns that arise in a timely manner. An effective complaints policy is in place. Any issues are handled consistently and appropriately. A log of concerns is maintained and scrutinised to identify any trends or patterns. All necessary information is available to parents through the school's website.
18. Leaders report to the appropriate local authority when pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times. Leaders ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010. They promote inclusivity and set out how pupils can benefit from all the school offers through the school's accessibility plan. Annual financial reports for pupils funded by local authorities are provided to both the relevant local authority and, if requested, the Secretary of State.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

19. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

20. The curriculum encompasses a broad spectrum of subjects, including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, aesthetic, and creative areas. This comprehensive coverage not only meets the diverse needs of pupils but also prepares them for future challenges by equipping them with essential knowledge and skills.
21. Leaders prioritise pupils' communication, language, and literacy skills right from the start in early years. Older pupils undertake detailed projects which develop their speaking and research skills equipping them well for the next stage of their education.
22. Teaching results in children in the early years and prep school making good progress across the curriculum. Pupils in the senior school make above expected progress academically as evidenced by GCSE and A-level results. Leaders and teachers provide regular updates and reports on pupils' progress. This enables parents to understand their child's achievements as well as their next steps.
23. Leaders review all aspects of the school's work to improve outcomes. Teachers adapt their teaching to meet pupils' different needs. In the prep school, teachers recently revised the content of the science curriculum to teach subject-specific knowledge in a more logical order that support pupils' understanding. Teachers link project work with real world applications to help pupils to develop critical thinking and resilience.
24. Teachers seek support from external specialists when required. For example, to help develop pupils' specific communication and language needs. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive personalised help through individual support plans and access to learning resources such as writing frames, worked examples, and glossaries.
25. Children in early years are taught early number skills through music, movement and other practical approaches. Older pupils take part in mathematics challenges, coding competitions, and problem-solving clubs to enhance their mathematical knowledge and understanding.
26. Lessons are typically well planned and teachers use effective teaching strategies to help pupils learn. For example, in the prep school, Latin grammar is broken down into a 'mathematical formula' to aid pupils' understanding. However, in the senior school, in a small number of classes pupils are not always asked suitably demanding questions.
27. Leaders and teachers check pupils' progress, including pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) ensuring that their individual needs are met. In many lessons, teachers recap on previous learning to check that pupils have remembered important knowledge before moving on to teaching new content.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

28. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

29. Leaders and teachers encourage pupils to demonstrate respect, kindness, and tolerance at all times. Pupils are taught to reflect on their own behaviour. Pupils can explain how they remedy issues they may have caused. However, some pupils use unkind comments within their friendship groups. This leads to a small minority of pupils feeling that they are not always included by their peers.
30. Across the school pupils speak with a sense of pride regarding their academic progress and achievement. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their interests and enthusiasms as well as recognise the situations that they find more challenging.
31. Leaders teach pupils to develop healthy attitudes when facing challenges and see failures as an important part of life. Pupils develop personally and socially through activities such as Mental Health Week and leadership opportunities through the prefect system. Pupils enjoy undertaking additional responsibilities such as peer mentoring and various leadership roles. This helps pupils to understand responsibility and give back to others.
32. Leaders have clear behaviour expectations that pupils understand. Pupils are encouraged to think about their own behaviour and its effect on others. Prefects and older pupils help younger pupils to reflect on their behaviour through 'walk and talk' sessions.
33. Pupils recognise that there will be times when they fall out with their friends. They are taught how to sort issues out for themselves or through discussions with trusted teachers. Most issues are resolved effectively but, on occasion, some friendship issues remain unresolved.
34. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on and discuss sensitive issues in order to understand and appreciate different viewpoints. Pupils are taught about different cultures and faiths. Subject leaders make sure their subject is taught using a range of resources and strategies that reflect modern society, such as naming pupil groups after diverse female mathematicians.
35. Physical education (PE) is a strong part of the curriculum. Pupils experience a variety of activities through PE lessons and sports programmes. These are taught in suitable facilities by skilled staff. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their physical health. Teachers use pupils' feedback to provide additional activities. The high pupil turnout for optional sports sessions shows their strong enthusiasm for physical activity.
36. The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is generally well received by pupils. Topics include both emotional and physical aspects of wellbeing, providing a comprehensive and balanced education. The PSHE curriculum supports pupils to be equipped with the skills they need to navigate personal and social challenges both now and in the future.
37. Relationships and sex education (RSE) lessons address important issues such as consent, protection, and online safety through interactive activities, discussions and quizzes. Teachers provide anonymous question boxes to encourage pupils to engage in important themes.
38. Leaders have implemented a structured anti-bullying framework which is led by the safeguarding team. Any issues are addressed promptly. The 'Girls on Board' initiative is one of several strategies

that support pupils' wellbeing, with trained staff who manage incidents discreetly. Assemblies address bullying and friendship dynamics and help reinforce the school's zero-tolerance on bullying.

39. Leaders ensure facilities are well maintained, enhancing the school's positive learning environment. Health and safety arrangements, including the administration of first aid, are prioritised. Staff supervision is effective, with appropriate teacher-to-pupil ratios to ensure pupils' safety, particularly in early years, so children can learn and play safely.
40. Attendance and admissions registers are well organised and comply with regulations. Staff know pupils' individual circumstances well. They work closely with parents and the local authority when needed should a pupil's attendance cause concern.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 41. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

42. Leaders ensure the curriculum supports pupils' academic knowledge and economic education. For example, the science curriculum helps pupils apply theoretical knowledge to real-life situations. In English, pupils study Shakespeare's sonnets, and teachers use these as a medium to explore themes like wealth.
43. The curriculum is enhanced by a range of external speakers from diverse backgrounds such as those involved in developing the COVID vaccine and individuals with different life experiences, including an ex-offender. Practical activities like the 'Fiver' and 'Tenner' challenges give pupils hands-on experiences in budgeting and managing money.
44. The curriculum reflects diversity through a range of resources and materials, and other cultural activities highlight the school's commitment to inclusivity. Discussions about mutual respect are integrated across subjects to ensure important values are a key part of pupils' education. The school has many pupil-led societies which celebrate different communities.
45. British values, such as respect and individual liberty, are emphasised across the school, starting in early years. The school promotes and celebrates individuality, while topics in geography are handled with appropriate sensitivity, promoting balanced discussions of global issues, and preparing pupils for life in modern British society.
46. Pupils come from diverse cultural backgrounds and enjoy sharing their experiences of different faiths and traditions. The art curriculum includes artists from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. Such approaches help pupils to appreciate the richness of cultural diversity, and respect for difference.
47. Pupils receive a comprehensive careers programme that includes subject-taster sessions, career talks and one-on-one meetings with different professionals. External experts, networking events, and collaborations with alumnae provide pupils with insights into a variety of career paths. While pupils appreciate the careers guidance they receive, a few pupils would like earlier discussions and information about alternative paths like BTECs and apprenticeships.
48. Leaders prepare pupils for life beyond school through a range of experiences. Links with local schools and activities like mock elections and debates during national election periods help pupils engage with British society and its democratic processes.
49. Leaders promote a strong sense of right and wrong, encouraging pupils to be honest and take responsibility for their actions. Children in early years help create classroom rules, while older pupils take part in restorative justice programmes. Pupil-led councils, the Year 6 leadership positions and initiatives led by the head girl team provide further opportunities to instil these values.
50. Pupils engage with the local community through various activities. Prep pupils perform in local care homes and raise money for charities through house events. Older pupils volunteer and help in the prep school as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE). The school develops strong ties with the local community.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

51. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

52. The comprehensive safeguarding policies and systems support pupils' safety. Staff receive regular and thorough training, including refresher courses and updates on the latest statutory guidance, so they are confident about their roles and responsibilities to keep pupils safe.
53. Pupils have access to various support services such as counselling, mentoring, and well-trained staff in the dedicated Wellbeing Centre. These services provide pupils with the means to express any concerns. Safeguarding procedures are communicated to staff, pupils and parents through regular briefings, newsletters and online platforms.
54. Leaders work with external agencies, including family support centres, mental health services, and the local police to ensure pupils receive additional support when needed. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) attends local safeguarding meetings to stay informed about current and potential issues. Leaders and staff are well equipped to address any concerns about pupils' safety and welfare.
55. Leaders actively manage risk with a compliance officer who oversees the risk register. This register is also reviewed by the governing body. Recent improvements, including more frequent health and safety audits and the implementation of a digitised safeguarding process, highlight governors' and leaders' ongoing commitment to pupils' safety and welfare.
56. Pupils are taught about online safety through regular assemblies and discussions. Pupils have dedicated lessons on responsible mobile phone use and digital citizenship. Leaders employ strong filtering and monitoring systems to detect any inappropriate online activity, with actions taken based on the severity of the incident.
57. Pupils in the prep school, including the youngest children in Reception, receive lessons on online safety to promote digital awareness and responsible technology use from a young age.
58. Leaders prioritise safer recruitment practices. They conduct thorough checks on all staff members before they start to work at the school. Every interview panel includes a staff member trained in safer recruitment practices, ensuring that recruitment processes adhere to safeguarding regulations from start to finish.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 59. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	Tormead School
Department for Education number	936/6050
Registered charity number	312057
Address	Tormead School Cranley Road Guildford Surrey GU1 2JD
Phone number	01483 575101
Email address	office@tormeadschool.org.uk
Website	www.tormeadschool.org.uk
Proprietor	Tormead Limited
Chair	Mr Matthew Howse
Headteacher	Mr David Boyd
Age range	4 to 18
Number of pupils	794
Date of previous inspection	20 September 2023

Information about the school

60. Tormead School is an academically selective day school for girls located in Guildford. Established in 1905, it has been at its current site since 1915. Its preparatory school includes an early years foundation stage (EYFS) provision which is situated in buildings across the road from the senior school. The school is governed by a board of trustees. The most recent inspection was a material change inspection in September 2023.
61. The prep school caters for pupils aged 4 to 11 years. There are 21 children in Reception. The senior school includes a sixth form and caters for pupils aged 11 to 18 years.
62. There are 135 pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A very small proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan).
63. English is an additional language for 105 pupils.
64. The school states its aims are to treat everyone with respect and dignity, deliver academic excellence, enrich through a broad and varied curriculum, celebrate effort and achievement, bring out the best in pupils and prepare them for life beyond school.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

15 to 17 October 2024

65. A team of seven inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

66. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with governors
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the wellbeing centre, the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

67. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

CAP House, 9-12 Long Lane, London, EC1A 9HA

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