

IBSTOCK PLACE SCHOOL



Independent Schools Inspectorate: Inspection Report Summary

5 May 2010

INSPECTION A RESOUNDING ENDORSEMENT

The findings of the Independent Schools Inspectorate following their recent appraisal of the School may be read in full in the accompanying file. Below is a summary of the main findings from the Report.

The Inspectors had this to say about our pupils:

- Pupils' personal qualities are outstanding. Pupils are engaging, curious and committed to striving for the best, happily stating that the school helps pupils to appreciate that success is mainly the result of hard work and commitment. The friendly and welcoming atmosphere of the school is marked. Pupils have very good relationships with each other and their teachers and pupils value the relationships across the years.
- The overall success that the pupils achieve throughout the school owes much to the positive attitudes that they have towards work, to their exemplary behaviour and to the very good relationships that exist between pupils and their teachers. Pupils' high achievement is the result of personal commitment, a real desire to learn and the lively dynamic between pupil and teacher.
- Pupils are very articulate, and listen and respond thoughtfully to the views of others. They clearly enjoy their lessons and are attentive. The school is very successful in its aim for pupils to become resilient, determined learners who can respond positively to constructive feedback.
- Cultural development is strong. Pupils show excellent understanding of the diversity of their community and the world in which they live. Pupils of different cultural backgrounds are well integrated into the life of the school and make significant cultural contributions. Distinguished visiting speakers, foreign authors and cultural events encourage pupils to be aware of world issues.
- Children (in the EYFS setting) are happy and make good progress in their learning and all-round development. Exemplary behaviour and outstanding personal development are strengths. Children learn to share, take turns and form happy friendships.
- They converse confidently, and talk about their learning activities with enthusiasm and clarity of expression. They respond well to praise and encouragement and are happy in the setting, deriving pleasure from their learning.
- Pupils are extremely well developed socially and they play an active part in the school community.
- In lessons pupils display a very positive attitude to learning.

The Inspectors acknowledged that the links between school and parents is strong and productive:

- The school has excellent links with parents, carers and guardians. It takes considerable care to communicate effectively and involve parents in the life of the school.
- The parent-teacher association (PTA) is very active and supportive of the school.
- Developing links with parents and carers help to involve them in children's care and education and they are kept well informed of their children's progress.
- Parents of pupils in both the preparatory and senior schools receive invitations to a wide range of events, such as sung evensong in Southwark Cathedral, and are encouraged to join school

expeditions. Parents of pupils in the Preparatory School enjoy the opportunity to attend regular open mornings in which they can visit the classrooms and observe the work of the school.

The Governing Body gives generously of its time and expertise, and the Senior Leadership Team deploy their skills effectively, as noted by the Inspection Team:

- At the heart of the success of the school is a vision of its purpose which is shared by pupils, staff and governors.
- The leadership of the senior management team and the governors contributes significantly to the positive and ambitious spirit which typifies the school. Whilst the last report made no recommendations, it is typical of the leadership of the school that they set themselves a series of targets to enhance the pupils' educational experience. Whilst it is easy to identify the major building programme as a successful achievement, the school has achieved an equally, if not more, important target in the enhancement of the pupils' academic, cultural and sporting life. It has also been committed to improving communication with parents through both personal and technological contact.
- Whilst the school is rightly proud of the development of New School and the physical provision for pupils, it is clear that the school management regards investment in high quality staff to be an equal if not higher priority.
- The recruitment and retention of high calibre staff is a priority for the senior leaders.

The Inspectors praised the teaching staff for their expertise, talents, dedication and commitment to ensuring an outstanding education is enjoyed by all pupils across the whole school:

- Strong and enthusiastic teaching underpins this success. Teaching is, in many cases, exciting and stimulates the pupils to research, debate and question.
- Teachers display excellent subject knowledge and teach in a firm, confident manner. Teaching is lively and conducted at a brisk pace. Teachers make high demands of their pupils, which they enable them to meet.
- The quality of teaching throughout the Preparatory School is good and often excellent; Teachers provide, and pupils make excellent use of, a variety of resources.
- The quality of the teaching in the Senior School is at least good and often outstanding.
- (In EYFS), Children's outstanding personal development is positively influenced by adults who are admirable role models.
- A particular strength of the teaching is the use of a range of stimuli outside the classroom, including lectures, performances, galleries and overseas expeditions.
- Pupils receive plenty of support in helping them to make progress and to work independently.
- The relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are of a high order, contributing to the positive but natural atmosphere of the school community. Pupils in the upper part of the school value the one-to-one discussions with teachers about their work.

About Academic, Pastoral and Co-curricular programmes, the Inspection Team said:

- The school's approach to supporting and safeguarding its pupils is encapsulated in its *Promoting the Wellbeing of Pupils* handbooks for both schools, handbooks which are models of good practice. The school's care and support of pupils is excellent. Excellent pastoral and academic care supports the high level of pupils' personal development. Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a characteristic of both the Preparatory and Senior schools. (In EYFS), outcomes for children are good overall and personal development is outstanding.
- Pastoral care is well structured with staff very aware of the needs, skills and successes of those in their pastoral groups. Pupils learn to lead and contribute to the community through a variety of

extra-curricular and charitable roles. Sixth formers are well supported in university applications and opportunities for gap years. Co-operative working is a very strong feature of pupils' achievement. Pupils read and write fluently and take pride in the careful presentation of their work. The school is very successful in its aim for pupils to develop inquisitive and imaginative minds and the confidence to think for themselves. Independent research is enjoyed by pupils and their responses confirm how much this discipline enhances their learning

- Pupils are very well educated in line with the aims of the school. They have high levels of knowledge, understanding and skill as observed in curricular and in extracurricular activities. The well-planned, broad and balanced curriculum and extra-curricular activities are strengths, and enable pupils to reach high standards in a wide range of subjects. Pupils' success also stems from the wide-ranging and challenging curriculum, which is enhanced by extensive opportunities beyond the classroom. In the Preparatory School the curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent, offering a very broad and well-balanced curriculum which succeeds in providing challenge to pupils across the ability spectrum, enabling all pupils to achieve good standards relative to their abilities. The academic curriculum, which covers all the required areas of learning, is enhanced by an extensive languages programme, including French, Mandarin, Latin and Greek.
- Both parents and pupils confirm that there is so much on offer that, sometimes, it is difficult for the pupils to make their choices. Pupils are able to select their GCSE subjects from a good choice of options, and the availability of twenty-four subjects at A level is a strength for a school of this size. The Dimensions of Learning initiative, started two years ago, is led by a specialist coordinator. This skill development programme is well integrated into the curriculum and has already made an impact on the quality of pupils' learning.

This success is predicated on high aspirations for each pupil's future, and for the success of the School as a whole. The School continues to set ambitious goals for improvements – for example, in curriculum, the *Dimensions of Learning* and *Habits of Mind* programmes; in facilities, the construction of the Sports Hall and New School; and, in pastoral care, the growth of the vertical House structure.