



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

DODDERHILL SCHOOL

MARCH 2017



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Dodderhill School			
DfE number	885/6016			
Registered charity number	527599			
Address	Crutch Lane Droitwich Spa Worcestershire WR9 0BE			
Telephone number	01905 778290			
Email address	info@dodderhill.co.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Catherine Mawston			
Chairman of governors	Mr Alvin Robinson			
Age range	0 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	247			
	Boys	22	Girls	225
	EYFS	62	Juniors	60
	Seniors	125		
Inspection dates	22 to 23 March 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 the chairman 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 learning support 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 Gwen Caddock	Reporting inspector
Ms Amanda Clark	Team inspector (Director of studies, IAPS school)
Mr Jack Williams	Team inspector (Head ,ISA school)
Mrs Ros Ford	Team inspector for EYFS (Former deputy head, IAPS school)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Dodderhill School is an independent day school for girls aged 0 to 16 years and for boys aged 0 to 4 years. It is a charitable company limited by guarantee, and the board of governors of the school form the trustees. The school has an early years registered setting for children under the age of 2, with further early years provision for 3 to 5 year olds. The junior school educates pupils of 6 to 11 years and the senior school includes pupils up to the age of 16.
- 1.2 The school opened in 1973 as the girls' senior school to Whitford Hall Preparatory School in Bromsgrove. In 1999 the schools amalgamated on the current 100-acre estate; the original 18th century house and more recent buildings provide modern educational facilities. The most recent development has been the installation of a new wireless internet system and information and computer technology (ICT) curriculum, with each pupil from the age of ten having their own device to use in all lessons.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide an excellent education, which enables all pupils to achieve their full potential and reach academic excellence whilst developing the personal qualities which will enable them to meet the challenges of the modern world.

About the pupils

- 1.4 The pupils come from business, professional and farming backgrounds, and from mainly White British families. A small number of pupils are from other cultural and religious groups. Pupils travel from a wide area. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that pupils' ability is above average. Sixty-three pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); thirty-four of whom receive specialised support. No pupils have English as an additional language. The school has identified twenty-two pupils as more able, and a range of specific provision is made.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Nursery 1	Nursery (0-1 years)
Nursery 2	Nursery (1-2 years)
Nursery 3	Nursery (2-3 years)
Kindergarten	Nursery (3-4 years)

Recommendations from previous inspection

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was an interim inspection in January 2011. The recommendations from that inspection were:
- Build further on present initiatives to share the good teaching and marking practice evident in some areas.
 - Develop the role of middle management to ensure effective monitoring and leadership of all subject areas.
 - Develop further the outdoor learning environment in the EYFS.
- 1.7 The school has fully met the recommendations to share good teaching, to develop middle management and to develop the outdoor areas for the EYFS and partially addressed the recommendation to share good practice in marking. Further detail is given in the main text of the report.

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- The achievement and progress of pupils is good and excellent in a number of areas.
- Pupils develop excellent knowledge, understanding and skills across all areas of learning.
- Pupils develop excellent mathematical and ICT skills which they use confidently in many different contexts, supporting their excellent study skills.
- Pupils achieve excellence in academic and other achievements as individuals, and in groups and teams.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent; they respond positively when marking provides them a clear indication of how to improve, but such marking is not yet done consistently.

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

- Pupils have excellent self-confidence, and know how to improve their learning and performance.
- Pupils respect the school rules and the law, they know how to keep safe and their behaviour is excellent. They take on responsibilities very willingly and work hard for local and national charities.
- Pupils learn to make careful decisions; however, the programme of advice on careers and future schools does not yet fully support younger pupils.
- Pupils are respectful and tolerant towards other faiths and cultures.
- Pupils have strong understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Recommendations

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

- Ensuring that all marking consistently provides an indication of what pupils need to do to improve their work.
- Extending the programme of advice on careers advice and future schools decisions to provide better support for younger pupils.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievement is excellent.
- 3.2 As pupils progress through the school they develop excellent knowledge, understanding and skills across all areas of learning including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic, and creative education. Pupils develop skills and expertise which they use in a wide range of contexts. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils demonstrated excellent physical skills in a cheerleading activity where they were able to execute cartwheels and forward rolls as part of the routine. Year 2 pupils have done excellent creative writing on the theme of Florence Nightingale. Pupils in Year 3 used peer assessment expertly to develop their writing skills. Year 6 pupils made constructive criticisms of their own work. Pupils in Year 11 displayed expertise and understanding in using scientific language when working on a task to prepare revision materials for the class. Pupils use high-level skills and language in many other areas including music, physical education, languages, art and textiles. Work in art and textiles areas displays creativity, understanding of the work of other artists, and aesthetic appreciation of and response to the natural world. Pupils of all ages are currently rehearsing to perform as the pit orchestra for the junior school production, demonstrating confidence and competence in putting their abilities to practical use.
- 3.3 Parental responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were very positive; parents expressed considerable confidence in the quality of teaching and in the attention provided to the needs of the children.
- 3.4 Pupils of all ages are articulate. They express themselves clearly in many situations including in public, such as in the Mother's Day assembly. In the Kindergarten, children listen quietly and are confident to answer questions; they chat confidently using appropriate language. Older pupils listen very well both to teachers and to other pupils; enabling them to work well together and to follow instructions. Children in Reception write simple sentences using their phonic knowledge and form letters correctly. Year 2 pupils provided a clear explanation using mathematical language to explain how they had achieved an answer. Older pupils speak effectively in Spanish; those in Year 10 used a wide vocabulary and displayed their ability to discuss issues in a Spanish lesson about cyberbullying and identity theft, demonstrating both their understanding of the moral issues and their linguistic competence.
- 3.5 Pupils display high levels of mathematical competence and older pupils use these skills in a wide range of contexts. Children in the Kindergarten count up to ten and back down again. Year 2 pupils count in fractions, identify patterns and are able to define what a half is. In discussions they said 'we do lots of maths and we get help whenever we need it'. Year 6 pupils used cubes to work out ratios of ingredients for a recipe. They demonstrated their understanding in their answers to open-ended questions which encouraged the pupils to explore their ideas and responses. Detailed curriculum and lesson planning has embedded the use of mathematical skills across other subjects, ensuring that pupils develop and use their skills and methodologies with great confidence in many different contexts. For example, Year 11 pupils worked very competently on tax and interest questions in a personal, social and health education and religious studies (PSHE/RE) module.

- 3.6 From the earliest years, pupils develop excellent ICT skills which they use very effectively across the curriculum. Detailed curriculum planning and thoughtful identification of useful online resources ensure that pupils use these new skills and access resources in many subjects. Pupils are learning coding from Year 2 onwards and becoming effective users of ICT, programming web pages, solving problems and developing their creativity. Year 1 used the interactive whiteboard independently to play a mathematics game, busily identifying numbers up to 100 with great confidence. Photographs taken during a Year 6 drama lesson on class tablet computers were analysed using the freeze frame method, while pupils discussed why they had chosen particular poses and what they meant in relation to the texts studied. Pupils explained how much they value their tablets for making presentations and doing research, and how interesting these make lessons. Older pupils use the technology highly effectively to take notes and create excellent work on graphs. In a catering lesson, Year 8 pupils learned to produce a star graph to display key information about nutrition and diet. Staff are using the resource to unobtrusively provide specific support for individual pupils with learning difficulties.
- 3.7 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Pupil Profiles display excellent results; in 2016, children all met the expected level and all exceeded the expected level in listening, speaking, making relationships and mathematics areas. Results of nationally standardised tests used in the junior school demonstrate that pupils make excellent progress. The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2013 to 2015. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Performance at GCSE has been above the national average for maintained schools. Inspection evidence from lesson observation, work scrutiny and discussion with pupils along with evidence from activities and examination results, show that pupils make excellent progress. The school's careful analysis of the results of standardised tests and GCSE results demonstrates that pupils with SEND and the more able also achieve well for their abilities. Pupils become independent learners, benefiting from the information provided by the tracking scheme which is used highly effectively in both junior and senior schools. Staff monitor progress and ensure that pupils receive both support and appropriate challenge. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils said that they do not know how well they are doing in their subjects, but pupils in interview during the inspection spoke positively about the regular half-termly grade cards they receive which provide them detailed information about their attainment and what they need to do to improve.
- 3.8 Pupils of all ages learn and demonstrate excellent study skills as they progress through the school. Those in Year 2 used a variety of sources for historical research, Year 4 pupils hypothesised about the sound transfer they would achieve when they built their tin can telephone, and Year 8 pupils confidently compared and contrasted different media in their study of texts in English. Staff plan for independent research and learning, and for self-criticism and analysis in many areas of the curriculum for pupils across the age range. Teachers in the junior school integrate the making of predictions into their questioning, particularly in science, and set problem-solving activities in mathematics to enable pupils to think for themselves. By the time pupils leave the senior school, these skills are well developed.

- 3.9 Pupils achieve excellence in academic and other achievements as individuals, in groups and in teams. Their achievements include successes in winning scholarships to other schools, and in national competitions in sport and music. Pupils are successful at gaining places in highly competitive sixth forms both locally and across the country. Pupils have attained a wide range of significant individual and team successes in local, regional and national sporting competitions. A high proportion of pupils learn to play an instrument or have singing lessons, pupils of all ages play or sing in music groups which abound. Pupils perform in successful school productions and provide the orchestras to accompany the musicals. Groups from the school successfully compete in the local arts festival and have been invited to sing in prestigious locations including the Birmingham Town Hall and Worcester Cathedral. Other successes in recent times include awards in the ISA art competition, in the Worcestershire Young Musician of the Year and in the Worcester Young Photographer competition. Most Year 11 pupils succeed in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme at the Bronze level.
- 3.10 The attitude of pupils to their learning is outstanding; they work highly effectively both individually and in collaboration with others, and they are able to take initiative and responsibility. Pupils respond enthusiastically to their teachers' enthusiasm and planning, and from the Kindergarten onwards apply themselves successfully to the task in hand. This culture of trying hard is promoted and supported through whole-school rewards assemblies. A love of learning is instilled as pupils progress through the school, they support each other and rise willingly to new challenges. The school meets its aims to provide an excellent education leading to high academic achievement, and to give every pupil the opportunity to reach her full potential.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils have excellent self-confidence and self-esteem, and display a clear understanding of how to improve both their learning and performance. They take part in public events such as assemblies with self-assurance. For example, Year 6 pupils presented certificates to younger pupils in front of the whole school, and both the senior school and junior school choirs performed confidently to the school and their parents. Year 2 pupils expressed their views confidently during the inspection, they knew that they should persevere in a task, and understand that it is not a problem to get something wrong and that the teachers would help them if they really get stuck. Junior school pupils understand the marking, assessment and feedback system used by staff, using it to improve their work. Pupils in the senior school said that they receive guidance on how to improve from marking in some subjects but not all, and such a view was backed by observations made during the inspection work scrutiny. The best marking provided detailed feedback and information on how a pupil could improve her work, there were however some inconsistencies in practice.
- 4.3 Children in the EYFS learn to make good decisions about what they will use in their lessons, preparing them for the decisions that they will make about their learning when they are in the junior school. Year 6 pupils felt well supported by the preparations for them to move into the senior school; they understand that they will have a 'big sister' to look after them and act as a buddy. As they move through the senior school, pupils make choices about which subjects they will study. These choices are supported by work in the PSHE and RE programme. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a majority of pupils expressed some concern about the support they are receiving for these choices. In discussion, some senior pupils explained that the careers and future schools programme started in the final term of Year 10 and that they would appreciate earlier advice about their choices.
- 4.4 Pupils of all ages value the time for reflection provided in assemblies as time when they are challenged to think about non-material aspects of life and to appreciate music, supporting their spiritual development. The development of pupils' skills for life such as understanding the strengths and weaknesses of others is at the centre of the recently introduced RE and PSHE integrated scheme.
- 4.5 Younger children demonstrate clearly that they understand and respect the class rules, and they behave well towards each other and their teacher. Junior pupils fully accept responsibility for their behaviour and the importance of telling the truth. They respond well to the high expectations of good behaviour from staff. Older pupils said that they are confident that they know how to keep safe and what to do if they found themselves in a bad situation either inside or outside school. In discussion, pupils said that they understand school rules and the rule of the law, and that they work together in PSHE/RE to learn to resolve conflict. Pupils of all ages say that pupils are friendly and behave well toward each other. Pupils are able to nominate others for an award in assembly for acts of kindness.

- 4.6 Younger children play extremely well together, forming good relationships as a foundation for learning to work together. Year 1 pupils willingly help each other to tidy up. Older pupils enjoy having responsibilities and Year 6 are proud that they serve younger children their lunch. Pupils work well together in many contexts; Year 3 pupils were making group decisions about how to produce a quieter sound in their musical composition, and Year 6 pupils worked in pairs to solve mathematics problems. Both the outdoor education programme and the enrichment week develop pupils' abilities to work with those of different ages. Younger pupils make good friends with older girls by playing in music ensembles. Older pupils work very effectively in groups and challenge each other's learning; in French, Year 10 pupils challenged each other's grammar which led to rapid learning.
- 4.7 Pupils of all ages take on responsibilities very willingly, contributing in many different ways to the life of the school community. Year 2 pupils take great pleasure in fulfilling their responsibilities to collect notes, snacks and milk, and to do the recycling. Pupils in Year 6 are proud to take on positions of responsibility such as house captains, prefects, librarians and pet monitors. In the senior school, house captains and their deputies, with the music captains, are proud of their excellent levels of collaboration and leadership in producing drama and music entries for the house Eisteddfod. Pupils of all ages from the Kindergarten onwards take part in the Race for Life every two years, running in the school grounds to raise substantial sums for cancer charities. Houses and house captains decide which charities will receive the money raised. Older pupils support local charities as volunteers, some as the service element of the DofE scheme. Pupils value the wide range of leadership opportunities in the school. They feel well prepared for the next stage of their lives.
- 4.8 A culture of respect is engendered from the EYFS; every opportunity is used to explore and understand different cultures and traditions. The youngest pupils discussed with great interest the difference in homes in different parts of the world. In work associated with the Mother's Day assembly, Year 6 pupils researched traditions in other parts of the world associated with the celebration. In a whole-school assembly, pupils displayed respect for each other's faiths. Pupils understand the beliefs of many religions and discuss their thoughts and beliefs with respect. In questionnaire responses, most pupils said that the school encourages them to be tolerant of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 4.9 In their questionnaire responses, most pupils indicated that they know how to stay safe including online. The youngest pupils enjoy healthy snacks and water to drink. As they progress through the school, pupils learn about the importance of healthy eating and have healthy options at lunch. Pupils learn about healthy ways of life including through outdoor learning, and in PSHE/RE and catering lessons. They take part in games and sports activities with enthusiasm and understand the importance of exercise.