



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

MORETON HALL PREP SCHOOL

JANUARY 2017



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Moreton Hall Preparatory School			
DfE number	935/6026			
Registered charity number	280927			
Address	Moreton Hall Preparatory School Mount Road Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP32 7BJ			
Telephone number	01284 753532			
Email address	office@moretonhallprep.org			
Headteacher	Mr Chris Moxon			
Chair of governors	Mr Neil Smith			
Age range	4 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	95			
	Boys	43	Girls	52
	Day pupils	88	Boarders	7
	EYFS	8	5-11	60
	11-13	27		
Inspection dates	25 to 26 January 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 unmet 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 governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form time and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house and 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 Jan Preece	Reporting inspector
Mr Benjamin Moir	Team inspector (Assistant head, IAPS school)
Mr David Tidmarsh	Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr Stephen Yeo	Team inspector for boarding (Headmaster, Society of Heads school)

CONTENTS

	Page
1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION	
About the school	1
What the school seeks to do	1
About the pupils	1
Recommendations from previous inspections	2
2 KEY FINDINGS	3
Recommendations	3
3 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS	4
4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	7

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Moreton Hall Prep School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils between the ages of 4 and 13 years. It is a Roman Catholic school that is open to pupils from other denominations. The school was founded in 1962 and its educational facilities are arranged around a listed Georgian building set in a 30-acre estate that is located near Bury St. Edmunds. The school is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors. Boarding provision is open to pupils from the age of eight years and may be full, weekly or flexi. Boarders are accommodated on the upper floors of the main house. Since the previous inspection, and at the start of the current academic year, the entire senior leadership has changed. A new headmaster arrived in September 2016, when a new head of pre-prep and bursar were also appointed. A new deputy head took up post in January 2017. The headmaster and his wife are the boarding houseparents.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school's aims are based on three core principles: that children should feel happy, encouraged and self-assured. It seeks to achieve these through the provision of an appropriate balance of challenge and enjoyment. Central to its ethos is for teachers to know each child well and for every child to know each teacher equally well. The development of children's personalities is considered to be a priority and the school strives to ensure that every child feels understood, valued and included.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from professional and business families who live within a wide radius of the school. Most are of British ethnicity but a few boarders come from overseas. Nationally standardised data provided by the school indicates that the ability of the pupils is broadly average. The school has identified eight pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include cognitive and physical difficulties, seven of whom receive additional specialist support. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. One of the two pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) receives additional support. The school has identified a number of pupils as being more able academically and others who have a talent in sport, music and drama. Extension activities and modified lessons are provided to support their learning.
- 1.4 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>
Pre-Prep 1	Year 1
Pre-Prep 2	Year 2
Transition	Year 3
Form 4	Year 4

Form 5	Year 5
Form 6	Year 6
Form 7	Year 7
Form 8	Year 8

Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.5 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was a Standard inspection in March 2011. The recommendations from that inspection were:
- Improve the allocation of time for personal, social and health education (PSHE), and for English and mathematics in Years 3 to 5.
 - Raise the quality of all teaching so that it is closer to that of the best by planning and teaching lessons that provide appropriate challenges for pupils of different abilities, including the more able.
 - Utilise the form time and registration sessions to educate pupils more effectively.
 - Improve the rigour and frequency of the appraisal of EYFS staff.
 - Offer more opportunities for children in the EYFS to explore and investigate independently, both indoors and outdoors.
- 1.6 The recommendation of the intermediate boarding inspection in March 2013 was:
- Ensure that snacks are readily available to boarders before bedtime.
- 1.7 The school has successfully met the recommendations of the previous inspections.

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils of all ages demonstrate good knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum because they receive consistently well-planned and efficient teaching.
- Pupils express themselves confidently, and reading and writing standards are high across the school.
- Pupils make rapid progress in relation to their abilities due to the individual encouragement and support they receive from highly committed staff, though there is no means of consistently tracking their progress over time to ensure that their attainment is commensurate with their ability.
- Many pupils achieve high levels of success in extra-curricular activities due to the 'sport for all' approach and plentiful opportunities in music and drama.
- The pupils' achievement is extremely well supported by their exceptional desire to do their best, which results in successful and focused learning, both independently and collaboratively.

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

- Pupils are extremely well-behaved, friendly and courteous due to highly positive relationships with staff which engender a sense of mutual respect and common purpose.
- Pupils are confident and have strong self-knowledge and self-acceptance due to the inclusive approach and helpful individual support they receive from staff.
- Pupils take advantage of the many opportunities they are given to take on responsibility throughout the school.
- Pupils are exceptionally tolerant of one another and accept that they are all unique, which is a result of the inclusive and caring nature of the school community, where each pupil's contribution is celebrated and valued.
- Pupils' excellent personal development is enhanced by strong school leadership and committed governance which ensures that the school's values-based ethos is consistently promoted.

Recommendations

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement:

- Develop a system to enable pupils' academic progress and attainment to be monitored in relation to standardised measures.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.2 Pupils of all ages achieve well in accordance with the school's aims due to the commitment of the governors and leadership team to ensure that each child is known meaningfully by every teacher and therefore provided with an appropriate balance of challenge and enjoyment.
- 3.3 Across the school pupils make rapid progress because staff have an excellent understanding of their individual learning needs, which enables them to set tasks appropriate to the varying abilities and give each pupil individualised attention. In the responses to pre-inspection questionnaires, all pupils agreed that the school gives them the opportunity to learn and make good progress. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils whose ability, as confirmed by standardised data, is broadly similar to the national average, attain above national age-related expectations. The professional judgement of their progress as seen in lessons and work confirms that they make good and often rapid progress in relation to their abilities, so that many are successful in gaining places to senior schools where a high academic standard is required, and each year a good proportion gain scholarships. Records kept by the learning support department confirm that pupils who receive specialist support, including any with EAL, make equally good progress to their peers. Pupils who are more able attain well due to the additional challenge built into lessons and the extension classes they receive in Latin, French, science and English. The new leadership has identified that whilst staff know their pupils exceedingly well and are informed of their ability profile through standardised data, there is no system to track their progress consistently over time to ensure that their attainment is commensurate with their ability. All parents of pupils who board agreed in the questionnaires that the experience of boarding has helped their child's progress and development. Inspection evidence indicates that boarders, including those from overseas, make good and often rapid progress due to the academic support they receive in their personal studies from the house parents and gap students. House staff liaise with academic colleagues frequently and strategies for any boarders requiring additional support are decided at staff meetings.
- 3.4 Pupils of all ages demonstrate good knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum because they receive consistently well-planned and well-executed teaching. For example, due to the provision of activities which accurately reflect their interests, children in Reception increase their observational and creative skills as they thoughtfully explore and describe the attributes of flour and rice in the outside learning environment. They then use their imagination to make a birthday cake carefully decorated with sand icing for one of their classmates. Pupils enjoy their learning and express joy when making discoveries, as exemplified by the Eureka moment observed in a lesson about explorers when younger pupils suddenly understood the significance of the world being round. Throughout the school pupils display a good understanding of previous learning which they apply to new situations and problems, particularly in mathematics. In many subjects, such as religious education (RE), English, science and physical education, pupils exhibit a strong understanding of correct terminology. For example, Year 6 pupils showed their clear understanding of acoustics, linking music with the anatomy of the ear when working on a project on sound. Pupils demonstrate their good subject knowledge in a creative manner when giving presentations and speeches and making posters because teachers give them freedom to make decisions about their learning. They make hypotheses and explain their reasoning in science, and older pupils use their scientific knowledge well to devise investigations, encouraged by the teacher's use of open-ended questions and the provision of good resources. More able pupils

develop their skills rapidly in extension tasks and groups because teaching content and pace reflect their abilities. For example, pupils in Year 7 extended their grammatical understanding whilst translating a fable from Latin to English.

- 3.5 The pupils' standards of communication and literacy skills are high throughout the school. Pupils are articulate, able to explain reasons for their ideas, and understand the need to take turns in discussions. They listen intently in class both to their teachers and one another, enabling them to ask probing questions which deepen their understanding. This was demonstrated in a Year 3 topic on water, where the disruption caused by tsunamis excited particular interest, and in a Year 6 English lesson, where pupils gave well-prepared speeches and took answers from their peers. Children in Reception use their knowledge of phonics to write simple sentences because they are given regular opportunities to learn sounds and practise their writing, which is reinforced by practical and creative activities both in the classroom and outdoors. As a result of systematic phonics teaching and daily individual reading sessions with a member of staff, pupils' reading fluency develops quickly. By Year 2, they are reading books with chapters enthusiastically and are able to fully comprehend their content. The many examples of pupils' writing on display and published in the school magazine confirm their well-developed creativity, which is underpinned by competent technical skills. These high standards are promoted by regular opportunities for extended creative writing. This was demonstrated during the inspection by pupils in Year 3, who performed a play they had written on Helen of Troy, in an assembly.
- 3.6 Pupils develop secure mathematical skills. Children in Reception count and recognise numbers to twenty forwards and backwards and can apply their knowledge in a variety of situations, including boiling an egg for five minutes. As they grow older, pupils are able to apply mathematical concepts to practical tasks such as using timetables to extend their knowledge of time, plotting graphs, calculating the mean in science and using grid references in geography. They are quick to absorb new methods to solve problems and explain their reasoning confidently because teachers often use interesting strategies; for example, in a Year 7 mathematics lesson, pupils enthusiastically attempted to solve a murder mystery so that the teacher could check their understanding of previous learning.
- 3.7 Throughout the school pupils make confident use of information and communication technology (ICT). Children in Reception use a laptop and the interactive whiteboard confidently, such as when playing a game to distinguish between real and imagined words which reinforced a new sound. Pupils use laptops and associated software for independent research as well as to access work prepared by their teachers and make presentations. Older pupils are beginning to study coding as a means of creating games and animations, though this element is not included in the programme of study for younger prep school pupils. Pupils in Year 8 demonstrate considerable creative and technical understanding when writing blog entries for the new school website.
- 3.8 As they grow older, pupils develop the ability to organise and critically appraise their work. For example, pupils in Year 2 self-edit their writing using helpful resources such as word walls and cursive script charts prepared by their teachers. In science, they analyse information and make predictions and they use the library and internet to research topics and present information, such as in RE where pupils in Year 6 presented a topic on Mother Theresa. However, the leadership has identified that their study skills are not yet developed systematically to fully equip them for independent study and examinations and is taking steps to improve this area of learning.
- 3.9 Pupils embrace the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities they are given and a good number achieve success in national music, speech and drama examinations due to the

provision of enrichment experiences, such as instrumental away days for talented and keen musicians and school productions, including the forthcoming musical *Olivia*. Over a third of pupils learn one instrument and many learn two. Several boarders told inspectors that they were proud of their instrumental achievements and feel supported during boarding time since practice facilities have been made available within the house. Pupils are also successful in local and national poetry and literacy competitions. The pupils achieve strongly in a wide range of sports as all of them are given the opportunity to participate in matches. Consequently, all the pupils and a very large majority of their parents agree that the school provides a good choice of activities which effectively meet children's needs.

- 3.10 The overall achievement of pupils is strongly supported by their enthusiastic and highly motivated attitudes to learning. Children in Reception are exceptionally curious and keen to explore the many interesting activities provided for them. Their enjoyment and confidence is underpinned by the individual support and encouragement they receive from staff. Throughout the school pupils work with a determination to succeed, as characterised by the short amount of time it takes for them to settle and the concentration with which they complete independent written tasks. Pupils of all ages take care with their work and show pride in good presentation. They demonstrate an excellent ability to work collaboratively; for example, in Year 2 when ordering pictures in a history topic, in Year 4 when working on a play script, and in Year 8 when they sensibly manipulate laboratory equipment. Pupils eagerly offer their ideas in the many opportunities they are given for discussion, each one having the chance to express their views in the small classes. Their enthusiasm and diligence means that they complete work effectively and speedily, which accelerates their learning.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 The school fulfils its core principles exceedingly well to ensure that each pupil is happy, feels encouraged and self-assured. This is because each pupil is known so well by every member of staff and feels valued and included in the extended school family. The standard of pupils' personal development is enhanced by strong school leadership, management and committed governance which ensures the school's values-based ethos is consistently promoted.
- 4.3 Pupils are confident and display strong self-knowledge and self-acceptance due to the inclusive approach and helpful individual support they receive from staff. These qualities are developed through the many opportunities they are given to play in sports matches, perform in class assemblies and speak in public, such as when delivering match reports. Boarders say their experience of boarding helps to prepare them for the senior school in terms of developing their self-reliance and confidence, as the caring and efficient way the boarding house is run makes the pupils feel that it is a home from home. The pupils' perceptive understanding of their progress is the result of encouragement from staff to critically appraise their own work and the creation of clear learning objectives for each pupil. Helpful marking, which refers to success criteria, enables them to be confident that they have achieved their learning goal, thus raising their self-esteem. Pupils are motivated and proud when their achievements are celebrated at the whole school weekly assembly. They told inspectors that due to the opportunities they have for self-development, they know how to persevere with areas they find difficult. Older pupils said that their confidence and resilience has grown as a result of this.
- 4.4 Pupils are extremely well-behaved, friendly and courteous due to highly positive relationships with staff which engender a sense of mutual respect and common purpose. In the questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour, and all the pupils agreed that they are encouraged to behave well and that they understand the sanctions for poor behaviour. Pupils demonstrate a clear moral code, acknowledging the value of honesty, integrity and trust. They understand the purpose of rules since they devise their own class charters and agree to abide by them, particularly the values espoused by the school of 'caring, sharing and daring'. Their moral understanding is further supported by the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme in which they learn about the need for rules and also strategies for managing their feelings such as anger management and conflict resolution. Whilst younger pupils accurately describe the role of the police, they have a hazier understanding of the wider legal system. The care shown between all members of the school community is palpable and is well-modelled by both staff and older pupils, giving a clear sense that being kind and helpful underpins the school's ethos.
- 4.5 A key factor in the exemplary conduct of the pupils is their ability to make sensible decisions. Children in Reception are assertive in choosing their activities, and younger pupils are highly motivated to gain house points, as if they amass the required number of points, they will be individually affirmed in a whole school assembly. Pupils are comfortable in making mistakes and are happy to discuss them, regarding them as part of their learning journey because staff consistently model this attitude. Younger pupils demonstrate a clear understanding that the choices they make have good or bad consequences. The oldest pupils make their own decisions about when to take on extension work and how much to undertake and are supported by staff who monitor their progress.

- 4.6 Pupils have a well-developed spirituality in relation to their ages, which recognises the importance of non-material values. This is promoted by the school's Catholic teaching which places spiritual development at the heart of the school's ethos. Pupils demonstrate this when they express sincere thankfulness when saying grace before and after meals. The atmosphere in assembly is notable for the pupils' hearty singing of hymns which are, in turn, joyful or thought-provoking. Some pupils told inspectors they value the opportunities for reflection too, such as in fortnightly mass when they are reminded of the intangible support afforded by faith. They appreciate further opportunities for prayer and reflection on the impact of the Christian message in retreat days held in conjunction with St Edmundsbury Cathedral, where some pupils are choristers. Older pupils discuss sensitive ethical topics such as the death penalty as part of the curriculum.
- 4.7 Pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves safe and healthy, realising that online safety may be a significant threat. Their understanding is effectively promoted through talks by a national children's charity and safer internet days, as well as within the curriculum. Children in Reception know that they must wash their hands before having their snack and they put on their coats when working outdoors without being reminded. Visits from the fire brigade and a nurse further develop their understanding of keeping safe and healthy. Older pupils know about the potential dangers of smoking, alcohol, drugs and how to resist stress since these topics are discussed in PSHE. In interviews pupils said that they were confident that they could talk to staff should they have any concerns, due to the warm relationships they have with them. Pupils throughout the school are aware of what constitutes a healthy diet and appreciate the frequent opportunities they are given to take exercise. Boarders stated that they feel safe and healthy in the boarding house and enjoy the time they are able to spend on sport.
- 4.8 As a result of the inclusive nature of the school, pupils recognise and affirm the contribution of all. For example, since many teams are of mixed ability, the efforts of every member are highlighted in match reports which attribute generous, and sometimes humorous, praise to each member. Pupils enjoy working together and are purposeful both in lessons and extra-curricular activities. Younger pupils are effective negotiators, as demonstrated when sharing construction pieces in an after-school club. Older pupils are adept at listening to one another's problem solving ideas. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they are given to work with other age groups both in clubs and in rehearsals for their forthcoming production.
- 4.9 Throughout the school pupils appreciate the many opportunities they are given to take on responsibility and they exercise these diligently. The younger pupils carry out their roles as class helpers with pride, and older pupils speak positively of working with the younger children during wet breaks or when giving presentations to them. Pupils of different ages cooperate to solve challenges and exercise leadership in *Living Together Day*, which is an initiative from the leadership to promote these skills. Older boarders feel involved in helping younger ones, stating that they always look out for younger members of the boarding community as they would in a family. Pupils contribute to the school community through membership of the school council. They choose several local or international charities and make presentations about them at hustings so that all the pupils democratically vote which to support. All pupils are involved in events to raise funds for their chosen charity. The oldest pupils willingly contribute to the new school website, regarding this as an opportunity to share their pride in the school.
- 4.10 Due to the nature of the small school community where each pupil's contribution is celebrated and valued, pupils are exceptionally tolerant of one another, accepting that they are all unique. Pupils of all ages demonstrate a well-developed appreciation and knowledge

of other major world religions, which are taught as part of the RE curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 5 compare Islam and Christianity and those in Year 7 explain the importance of Passover, identifying that other cultures and faiths also have meals to celebrate festivals. Boarders say that living with pupils from overseas has helped them learn about and respect other cultures and countries. As they grow older pupils develop an understanding that living as a community takes compassion and work. As pupils in Year 3 said “We are learning to solve our differences by ourselves”. As a result of the leadership’s priority of maintaining a harmonious and fair school community, all the parents and almost all the pupils agree that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

- 4.11 As the leadership has a close knowledge of every child and their family and offers excellent pastoral care, pupils have developed mature personal skills which they take into the next stage of their education. This accords with the views of the overwhelming majority of parents that the school promotes an environment which successfully supports their child’s personal development.