



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION**

**NORTHBOURNE PARK SCHOOL**

**MAY 2017**



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## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Northbourne Park School			
<b>DfE Number</b>	886/6004			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	280048			
<b>Address</b>	Betteshanger Near Deal Kent CT14 0NW			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01304 611215			
<b>Email address</b>	office@northbournepark.com			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Sebastian Rees			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Brian Semple			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 13 years			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	177			
	<b>Boys</b>	105	<b>Girls</b>	72
	<b>Day pupils</b>	120	<b>Boarders</b>	57
	<b>EYFS</b>	44	<b>Preparatory</b>	133
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10 to 11 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.

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 chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses 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 Flora Bean

Reporting inspector

Mr Tim Cannell

Team inspector (Headmaster IAPS school)

## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### About the school

- 1.1 Northbourne Park School is an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls aged from 3 to 13 years. The school is a charitable company limited by guarantee, of which the governing body are the trustees. The school was founded in 1936. The school is divided into two sections, the pre-preparatory and the preparatory school. The Old Rectory building contains four classes, Nursery and Reception in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Years 1 and 2. Years 3 to 8 and two bi-lingual French classes, sixième and cinquième are taught in the preparatory school building. The French classes are taught by French staff in mathematics, French, history and geography, following the French national curriculum and all other academic work is taught in English. The school has two boarding houses, one for 39 boys and the other for 30 girls.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new headmaster who took up post in September 2015. The head of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was appointed in September 2016. The school has undertaken a programme of refurbishment in both the prep and pre-prep buildings as well as improving the facilities and resources for teaching and learning. The school has increased staffing in the learning support department.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 Northbourne Park aims to provide all pupils with a wide range of academic, extra-curricular and pastoral opportunities to develop their talents and interests. The school aims to ensure that all pupils are happy, flourishing and caring individuals as well as respecting the individual qualities of each child. The school promotes initiative, leadership and personal confidence whilst making all pupils aware of the importance of teamwork and community values.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, mostly from British families. The day pupils live within a short traveling distance of the school; boarders come from London and from different countries overseas, predominantly France. The school has identified 12 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional help. Two pupils in the school have an education health and care plan. Currently 43 pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and 37 receive additional specialist help with English. The most able pupils' needs are met within lessons and through academic extension programmes. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicates that the ability range of pupils in the school is above average.
- 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>
Squirrels	Nursery
Rabbits	Reception
Hedgehogs	Year 1
Badgers	Year 2

Year 3	Year 3
Year 4	Year 4
Year 5	Year 5
Year 6	Year 6
Year 7	Year 7
Year 8	Year 8
6ième	Year 7
5ième	Year 8

## 2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils, including children in the EYFS, demonstrate consistently strong progress from their starting points and reach high levels of attainment in their learning.
- Pupils achieve excellent levels of success in a wide range of extra-curricular activities including music, art, drama and sport.
- EAL pupils succeed exceptionally well in their acquisition of English and in their work overall. SEND pupils make consistently strong progress and achieve well.
- Pupils demonstrate mature attitudes to learning and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

- Pupils are self-confident and highly positive with regard to all aspects of school life.
- Pupils work collaboratively and are extremely supportive of one another in school and in boarding.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent behaviour and are highly respectful of each other and the staff who care for them.
- Pupils contribute willingly to the life of their boarding house and all pupils give, through their charity fund raising, to the wider community both at home and abroad.

### Recommendations

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

- providing training opportunities for staff in the areas of their work they identify, to extend their expertise further and benefit pupils' learning.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) participate in a wide range of academic and extra-curricular opportunities and as a result they thrive. They are enthusiastic learners, prepared to take risks because they are encouraged by teaching staff to challenge themselves in their learning and in their extra-curricular time. Leaders have ensured that pupils' talents and interests are exceptionally well developed through active participation in a broad and balanced curriculum combined with an innovative extra-curricular programme of music, art and drama, outdoor education and exchange trips to develop their speaking in French. They demonstrate increasing secure knowledge and understanding in all areas of their learning. They are highly competent communicators and apply their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills very effectively across all areas of the curriculum.
- 3.3 Evidence gathered from nationally standardised tests shows that pupils' levels of attainment are above average in relation to national age-related expectations. As they move through the school, pupils' levels of attainment improve significantly because of the high expectations set by school leaders. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and the majority are successful in achieving their first choice school. Many achieve excellent results in local grammar school entrance examinations. A significant number receive scholarships for success in music, art and drama, including bi-lingual pupils from France who have come to the school for the equivalent of their Year 7 and Year 8.
- 3.4 Pupils in the EYFS make excellent progress in the key areas of their learning. They make rapid progress in numeracy and literacy. They listen attentively and engage fully in discussion in story time in their literacy sessions and develop their language and communication skills exceptionally well. Their particular interests and talents are identified at an early stage and discussed so that they participate in a range of innovative activities, such as the nursery children building a wigwam in the garden woodland area for the character in the story they have just read. The children are curious and eager to learn. They are confident and articulate for their age and express their opinions clearly. They demonstrate a mature clarity in their thinking and have an excellent grasp of basic phonics and numbers. Regular reviewing of each child's learning ensures that areas for development are highlighted and are a focus for staff. As a result, they make consistently strong progress. For example, in the Reception class, children wrote their own sentences using new sounds and went on to develop their literacy and art work later in the day reinforcing their new learning. Children are ably supported by staff who continually promote and extend their communication, language and numeracy skills which prepares them exceptionally well for the next steps in their education.
- 3.5 Pupils with EAL make significant progress in their learning because they are exceptionally well supported through the bi-lingual programme. They enjoy shared lessons with English pupils so that linguistic opportunities abound for all. For example, a lesson was observed where French pupils helped their English counterparts to prepare and practice for the common entrance examination speaking tests. As a result, English pupils have developed an outstanding level of pronunciation in French because of increased opportunities to hear real French speakers. In return, French pupils have developed an extraordinary fluency for their age in speaking English with an extensive range of vocabulary and idiom. Pupils said to inspectors, 'when we arrived we could not say anything. Now we are talking to you fluently in English.' Leaders and teachers promote highly effective language learning through a range of innovative activities both in and out of the classroom. As a result, EAL pupils develop increased confidence and make great strides in speaking a second or even third language. In addition, English pupils have excellent opportunities to develop their linguistic skills further when, regularly, all conversation is held in French or Spanish over lunch. The multi-lingual language focus is a real strength of the school

- and enjoyed by all. Pupils' demonstrate an intrinsic pleasure in their learning and in communicating with others. They have great enthusiasm for traveling to France for an exchange to develop their language skills further. Pupils of all ages, from age three onwards display high levels of confidence and skill in communication.
- 3.6 Pupils with SEND are well supported in lessons as their needs are carefully identified and they are given appropriately adapted work. Specialist support staff provide pupils with additional one-to-one support when required. Teaching staff guide pupils and monitor their progress so that pupils work confidently in lessons to sustain their consistently strong progress. Teachers adapt their teaching for different pupils and provide appropriate tasks so that pupils remain on task. Pupils are always actively engaged in their learning and successfully manage their work in lessons. More able pupils excel in their academic progress because they are effectively challenged in class to extend their learning through additional engaging activities.
- 3.7 Pupils develop their study skills well because staff promote pupils' confidence in their ability to work independently. This begins in Year 3 when discussions in lessons lead to simple note taking and develops towards more extended independent work as pupils move up through the school; for example, older pupils write on a topic for a history project on the Spanish Armada or on a topic in English based on reading a novel. Pupils learn gradually to think more for themselves and to take responsibility for their learning. They articulate their ideas in lessons particularly well, carefully guided by teaching staff who are unobtrusive in their support. Pupils are prepared to discuss their work and to take risks in answering without fear of failure and record their own work. This was observed in a range of lessons in English, mathematics and science where pupils worked individually or collaboratively to develop their skills and extend their knowledge.
- 3.8 Pupils develop excellent communication skills. They are articulate and discuss their ideas thoughtfully and intelligently. They ask questions with confidence and are not afraid to take risks as they explore new ideas or concepts. They express their opinions clearly and listen with interest to each other. In the best written work, pupils write with confidence and clarity. In history essays older pupils demonstrated the ability to analyse and draw conclusions. In English, younger pupils developed their use of imperatives in improving a set of instructions, whilst others created an ordered list of instructions. Older pupils developed their note taking skills as they looked at features of Anne Frank's diary and short video clips, as well as furthering their awareness of human nature and the folly of man. Opportunities to discuss and debate abound because staff are prepared to give time to pupils for them to pursue their ideas and thoughts. In a French lesson older pupils analysed and discussed La Fontaine's observations on human behaviour which led to interesting discussions; children in the Nursery listened to a story and talked of their daily routine. Pupils pursue their own particular interests and are given time and space to do so. Pupils are free to be themselves, unpressured and as a result they thrive and are able to learn well at their own pace.
- 3.9 Pupils' develop increasing confidence in mathematical reasoning and in their conceptual understanding. Younger children ably added and subtracted ten from a two-digit number using a hundred square, whilst simultaneously observing the pattern of movement. Older pupils skilfully applied their mathematical knowledge and reasoning skills in science, geography and information and communication technology (ICT). In a physics lesson, older pupils measured the increase in the length of a spring as various masses were added to help them consider the nature of forces. More able older pupils were challenged in an additional mathematics lesson, and showed real perseverance as they applied their high order mathematical knowledge. They grappled with the problems set and thought about how best to apply their knowledge to solve them with enthusiasm.

- 3.10 Pupils of all ages apply their increasing ICT knowledge and skills to extend their learning. In the EYFS pupils demonstrated their basic coding skills as they tackled a series of interesting challenges in the ICT club. Older pupils ably demonstrated that they are adept at coding on desktop computers or tablets. Younger pupils used their tablets effectively to work on a geography project viewing the school site on a google map, identifying and comparing areas on a physical ordnance survey map. As they move through the school, pupils increasingly use ICT to research and record their ideas and to extend their independent learning. In a small number of lessons pupils made slower progress because pupils did not fully understand what they had to do to complete the tasks set.
- 3.11 Committed and innovative teaching helps pupils of all ages to develop their creative and artistic skills. All pupils take part in house music, drama and arts competitions organised by committed staff. Many pupils sing in the school main choir and participate in the successful musicals and plays performed annually when the whole school are involved. Several pupils have achieved success in gaining scholarships in sport, music, art and drama to competitive senior schools. In sport, pupils have gained success in winning local tournaments in cricket and football as well as tournaments further afield. Recent success in football provided pupils with an opportunity to attend the football fiesta in San Sebastian in Spain, an event immensely enjoyed by all pupils who attended.
- 3.12 Pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes to learning. They are collaborative in their approach and work with enthusiasm. They encourage one another and hold in esteem any who have shown particular strengths or achieved success. They listen attentively and show increasingly mature levels of independence. In discussion with other pupils, they demonstrated how willingly they celebrate other's success and acknowledge and affirm each other. Parents confirmed in questionnaires that they are highly satisfied with the academic and extra-curricular provision, the progress their children make and the information they receive about their children's progress from the school.

#### **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils develop high levels of self-esteem and are self-assured because they are well supported in all aspects of their personal development. The commitment of highly experienced boarding and day staff ensures that life at school and in boarding is a positive experience. Pupils develop into increasingly mature and responsible young people ready for the next stage of their education. Pupils spoke of the warm community spirit and sense of fun that the boarding community provides for their well-being and increasing confidence. In lessons they demonstrate high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence as they share and learn positively together. Pupils take on roles of responsibility as prefects, in the school council and in boarding. They also help with younger children in the EYFS, for example being buddies to younger pupils and in listening to children read. This contributes exceptionally well to their confidence. The pupils develop confidence in their ability to take responsibility for their own learning as they organise their study time in boarding and learn to be responsible for their time management of homework. The many opportunities pupils have to speak in class, to take part in assemblies and in discussions in boarding, build secure foundations for pupils deepening self-awareness and self-understanding.
- 4.3 Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. Their moral awareness is developed from when they enter the school. They understand and accept the rules needed for living and working together so they enjoy a harmonious and convivial community spirit in boarding and in school. They discuss rules and why they are necessary and so develop a sense of the moral framework for their lives. They listen attentively to each other's opinions and work extremely well together as a supportive community. In the boarding houses they recognise that they need to abide by the rules so that there is a positive atmosphere where all can thrive. From the EYFS onwards, they learn that decision making is part of everyday life and that actions have consequences. For example, reception children articulated clearly their reasons for eating healthily and taking physical exercise and considered this as part of their responsibility for themselves. Pupils understand that they can learn from each other and demonstrate an appreciation of those around them. They are secure in the knowledge that staff will always support them and treat them fairly, even when they get something wrong and know that wrongs are opportunities to improve.
- 4.4 Pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour in lessons and around the school. They present highly positive attitudes and an excellent ability to persevere, as noted when they were working in science on a physics project on the effect of forces and in mathematics on dividing fractions. Positive attitudes about the school abound. Pupils participate eagerly in music, sport and drama, endorsed by the historic setting of their school which has captured their imaginations and enthusiasm. They are eager to extol the virtues of their school and its convivial spirit. As a result, relationships are strong and inclusive reinforced by the houseparents who look after them extremely well as one large family. In personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, pupils think and reflect on their choices for the present and for the future. They discuss organising their time in school and in boarding, balancing work and play effectively, and making time for others and for themselves. They have fun and friendship, and realise from an early age that contributing positively ensures that all members of the community benefit.
- 4.5 The Christian ethos of the school underpins all that leaders seek to achieve. Pupils develop into responsible and mature young people, ready to contribute to those around them and to the wider world. Pupils develop an increasing spiritual awareness through the church services and events of the school year. Highlights of the year are the Christingle and carol services which deepens their awareness of the mysteries and spiritual aspects of life. At the end of a

year, pupils complete a self-evaluation to reflect on all they have been involved in and what this has meant for them. From this they develop a critical view of their life in relation to others in the school, their successes and areas they wish to improve. They reflect on the activities they have particularly enjoyed or excelled in and make considered choices for the year ahead including being a new leader or organising and promoting a charity. In their enthusiasm for singing, pupils in the school choir contribute to the lives of others and raise money for charity. For older pupils, the most significant event in the year is the fourteen mile pilgrimage walk to Canterbury with their teachers which culminates in a service of blessing in Canterbury cathedral. This marks the point in their lives where they truly begin to think about moving on to the next stage, and appreciate and reflect on all that day and boarding staff and friends have contributed to their lives. They are thoughtful and reflective, mature and thankful for what they have enjoyed. As a result they are eager to contribute to the lives of others and work willingly to raise money for charities both at home and abroad.

- 4.6 Pupils have a strong sense of helping others as a result of their reflections. For example, having learnt about the importance of water for developing countries in science, pupils decided to set up a campaign to raise money for water aid. They support the work of a school in Uganda and raise money for both resources and buildings. They actively engage in fundraising activities in their boarding house, both building team spirit and raising funds, whilst encouraging each other. They learn to be self-disciplined in sharing their time and ideas together to contribute willingly to the lives of others.
- 4.7 Pupils work collaboratively together. They thrive on the opportunities to work together for house competitions, team events and whole school plays and performances. They take responsibility for maintaining the friendly and inclusive ethos in their boarding house and in school. When new pupils arrive, they ensure a warm welcome and opportunities to make new friends. They lead as school or house prefects, as team leaders or in organising the dens they build for their overnight outdoor experience with their teachers. They promote their ideas through the school council and help bring about new initiatives in school such as buddy lunches for new pupils.
- 4.8 Pupils mix readily with others of different nationalities. They are as they say, 'one community,' irrespective of background, race or belief. They benefit from sharing their various experiences and languages. They appreciate their own and other cultures, and have a strong sense of respect and tolerance for all; they encourage each other to be accepting. The bilingual nature of the school ensures that pupils have high levels of awareness of others and, as a result, develop into responsible young people who are not afraid of difference. Within the boarding community, they celebrate special days and events with fiestas and different foods. In assemblies, they develop their awareness further through presentations on topical news and events from different countries, extending their horizons and opening up informed discussion.
- 4.9 Pupils lead active and healthy lives. They are aware of the need to eat healthily and to take physical exercise. They are provided with healthy options at mealtimes and plenty of choice to ensure they have a balanced and healthy diet. They take advantage of the numerous opportunities to participate in sports and games in physical education lessons and in team sports. They balance their school day with the help and organisation of the boarding and day staff and value the advice they receive. They know how to stay safe on line and have regular PSHE lessons which provide age appropriate safety lessons. The school ensures that pupils know how to be safe. Pupils' highly positive responses in questionnaires endorse the teaching they receive on keeping safe. Team sports and games, den building and woodland walks contribute fully to their active lives providing excellent physical exercise and promotion of their well-being. They develop into mature and responsible pupils by the time they are ready to leave as responsible citizens prepared to contribute to British society and to the wider

world. In questionnaire responses parents reported overwhelmingly that the school and boarding community promote an environment which successfully supports their child's personal development, good behaviour and does all it can to ensure a healthy and safe environment. In addition, all pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that the school provides opportunities to be involved in a good range of activities, teachers are helpful and supportive with their work, and that the school encourages them to have respect and tolerance for others. As such, the school aims are fully met and pupils flourish.