



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION**

**LANGLEY SCHOOL**

**JANUARY 2017**



## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Langley School			
<b>DfE number</b>	926/6005			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	311270			
<b>Address</b>	Langley Park Loddon Norfolk NR14 6BJ			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01508 520210			
<b>Email address</b>	office @langleyschool.co.uk			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Dominic Findlay			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Margaret Alston			
<b>Age range</b>	11 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	561			
	<b>Boys</b>	377	<b>Girls</b>	184
	<b>Day pupils</b>	474	<b>Boarders</b>	87
	<b>Seniors</b>	398	<b>Sixth Form</b>	163
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18 to 19 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 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 a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. 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 Colette Culligan	Reporting inspector
Mr Paul Bevis	Team inspector (Head, Society of Heads school)
Mrs Roxanna Harrop	Team inspector (Senior housemistress, HMC school)
Mr Francie Healy	Team inspector (Headmaster, Society of Heads school)
Mr William Norton	Team inspector (Director of sport, HMC school)
Mrs Lynn Doughton	Team inspector for boarding (Head of department, GSA school)

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## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Originally founded in 1910 as the Norwich High School for Boys, Langley School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils between 11 and 18, located on a rural campus a short distance from Norwich. It is a registered charity owned by the Trustees of Langley School, who undertake the role of governance. The school campus has two boarding houses. Boys are accommodated in Main House and girls in Salisbury House. The school provides for full and weekly boarding; a few pupils also take advantage of the facility to board on a flexible basis.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the preparatory school has relocated to Taverham Hall. The preparatory school and Langley School are now separate in management and governance, but continue to work in collaboration. There have been changes in the senior management structure. The curriculum has been extended with the introduction of Chinese as a language option and a BTEC stream for sixth form pupils. A sixth form centre and performance hall were opened in 2014. The school supports its commitment to sports with six sporting partnerships including one with a local professional football club, reflecting its mission statement that it is passionate about sport as well as serious about education.

### **What the school seeks to do**

- 1.3 The school aims to provide an education in which pupils are challenged and encouraged to grow their potential within a diverse and flexible curriculum, so that they become independent, life-long learners. Its core values are commitment, opportunity, respect and excellence.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.4 The data provided by the school indicates that the ability of the pupils is above the national average, with only small numbers having below average ability. The majority of day pupils come from White British families across East Anglia with business and farming backgrounds. The 29 overseas boarders are drawn from a small range of countries, predominantly Thailand and China. The school identifies 45 pupils as having special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), including dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia. Of these, 38 receive additional support from the school's learning support department. The school has 3 pupils with education, health and care plans and 1 with a statement of special educational needs. English is spoken as an additional language (EAL) by 22 pupils. All of these pupils have a functional level of competence in English, although 15 receive additional support from the school. The school does not formally identify those pupils who are more able. It expects all departments to provide a range of strategies to challenge and extend the learning of such individuals.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

### **Recommendations from previous inspections**

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was a standard inspection in January 2011. The recommendation from that inspection was:
- Ensure that teaching consistently supplies sufficient challenge for the more able pupils.
- 1.7 The school has partially addressed the recommendation. Further detail is in given in the main text of the report.
- 1.8 The recommendations of the ISI intermediate boarding inspection in November 2014 were:
- Ensure that boarders have access to drinks and snacks in their own houses in the evening.
  - Ensure there is a behaviour policy and clear procedures provided specifically for boarding.
  - Ensure the boarding houses are well maintained at all times.
- 1.9 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous inspection.

## 2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils successfully develop their own strengths and interests in line with the school's aims.
- The pupils' excellent levels of achievement in sport reflect the school's ethos and its investment in sporting provision.
- Pupils make progress in line with their ability due to the supportive and encouraging approach of staff.
- Pupils with SEND or EAL make consistently good progress due to the support for them provided within the school.
- More able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to fulfil their academic potential.

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

- Pupils' strong relationships with both their peers and staff are based on trust, and are evident throughout the school and in the boarding houses. These significantly support pupils' personal development.
- Older pupils take responsibility seriously and contribute actively to the school and wider community, including through charitable endeavours.
- Pupils' understanding of what is right and wrong is generally good. The culture amongst them does not always recognise the importance of challenging unkind and unacceptable behaviour toward others.
- Pupils are unsure of whether their views and ideas expressed through pupil forums are valued, due to a lack of feedback.

### Recommendations

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Ensure that all lessons provide sufficient planned challenge for more able pupils, so that they are provided more opportunity to explore concepts and exploit their potential.
- Put in place measures to strengthen pupils' understanding that unkindness to others is unacceptable and it is their responsibility to challenge such behaviour.
- Ensure that pupils know that their opinions are valued by the school and that action is taken as appropriate.

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.2 The good levels of pupils' academic and other achievements successfully reflect the school's mission statement that it is 'passionate about sport, serious about education'. Pupils develop their own strengths and discover their potential especially in the sphere of sport, as they are actively encouraged to give of their best and are supported by knowledgeable and supportive teaching.
- 3.3 The emphasis placed on sport both in the curriculum and in activities results in pupils' achieving outstanding success in this area. The senior leaderships' and governors' active promotion of and investment in sports provision complements this aspect of the pupils' lives. Care is taken to organise the timetable and travel arrangements of the pupils invited to be part of the football academy, so that they can balance this with their studies. Pupils clearly understand the link between commitment, effort and excellence. As a result, there are numerous examples of sporting successes especially in rugby, football and kayaking. Most pupils represent the school regularly in teams; some also play for local clubs or compete at national level. Pupils are very proud of the progress that they have made; a number of pupils expressed how much their sporting abilities have developed since joining the school.
- 3.4 Pupils' academic attainment is good. The following analysis uses the national data for 2012 to 2015, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available. Across this period, results at GCSE have been above the average compared to the national average for maintained schools. Those at A level have been in line with the national average for maintained schools. A marked improvement was observed in 2016; most pupils entering GCSE attained grades of C or above, 40% of these at A\*-A. In the same period, the overall pass rate at A level was over 90% with a quarter of grades at A\*-A. The majority of sixth form leavers go on to higher education, pursuing a wide variety of courses at universities, and at sports and arts colleges.
- 3.5 Pupils make progress over time that is in line with their ability. The school's own data indicates variations across departments in pupils' progress from their starting points. Pupils identified as having SEND or EAL make good progress, benefiting from the imaginative support and helpful guidance provided by the specialist department. This guidance is widely used by teachers in classes and houseparents in the evenings in order to support pupils. Careful monitoring, clear target setting and constructive marking generally help ensure that pupils know how to improve their work further. In their pre-inspection questionnaire responses a small minority of pupils felt that they do not know how well they are doing, and a few felt that marking is not helpful. Inspection evidence from lesson observations and work scrutiny does not support this view. Almost all questionnaire responses from parents and pupils displayed high levels of satisfaction with the overall education provided by the school and its impact on the pupils' progress.

- 3.6 More able pupils generally make progress in line with their ability. The school has taken some action in response to the recommendation of the previous report, for example it has allowed early entry to GCSE examination in some cases. More able pupils are still not consistently provided with enough stimulus or encouragement in lessons to extend their learning further to ensure that they fulfil their potential. At times, effective challenge is provided through excellent questioning and swiftly paced lessons, as observed in a French lesson when questioning enabled pupils to critique their own work and in a religious education lesson where pupils were actively encouraged to delve into core Christian beliefs. At other points, more able pupils find work too easy and their interest is not stimulated by the lesson content or the tasks set.
- 3.7 The pupils enjoy the opportunities to enter academic competitions. For example, many in different year groups achieve high levels of success in national mathematics challenges. In the course of the inspection, the school team won its round in a national general knowledge challenge. Individual successes include the awarding of national technology scholarships and pupils reaching finalist stages in business and youth enterprise competitions. Pupils frequently produce successful entries for creative writing and academic essay competitions. Some reach high levels in drama examinations and achieve success in debating competitions, where pupils have been finalists in national events. The school has seen many successes in music, with some pupils reaching the highest examination grades and diploma level, and others receiving invitations to join the National Youth Choir. Many pupils continue their involvement in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) after Year 9, and each year pupils attain successes in The Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE) at bronze level and above. In interview, many pupils expressed pride in what they have achieved, saying that they have not only learnt a lot about the required skills but also grown in maturity and confidence.
- 3.8 The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. School leaders have invested in a programme to provide extra support for those who are less inherently motivated, and the pupils who volunteer for this say that it is having a considerable impact. It is clear that pupils value the opportunities provided to them and are ambitious to succeed; they arrive at lessons ready to learn and settle down quickly. Pupils are attentive and careful learners who can work equally well independently, in pairs or in groups. Especially at sixth form level, they enjoy the responsibility afforded to them to take control of their learning and to help direct the lesson to their specific needs. Pupils describe their teachers as always positive and encouraging, and never negative. Excellent relationships between pupils and teachers create an atmosphere in which pupils are willing to put forward answers even when they are unsure. Their willingness to persevere when finding things difficult and their refusal to engage in distracting behaviour are significant determining factors in their success.
- 3.9 Pupils' learning skills are good and developing over time in a curriculum that covers all the required areas of learning: linguistic; mathematical; scientific; technological; human and social; aesthetic and creative. They apply their skills well to their learning in the classroom. They use information and communication technology confidently and at times with imagination. Pupils generally have good analytical skills. They are not equally confident in interpreting and synthesising new material in all subjects. Pupils persevere when dealing with unfamiliar material, such as Middle English or complex three-dimensional mathematical problems.

- 3.10 Pupils' confidence in their ability to deal with the unfamiliar grows rapidly, when guided by swift and focused questioning that requires them to work out answers for themselves. This was observed in a geography lesson when pupils were encouraged to use appropriate terminology, and in a photography lesson combining photographic and technological techniques. When faced with insufficient guidance and closed questions, pupils sometimes retreat into passivity and make limited progress in a lesson. Pupils apply their numerical skills confidently in a range of subjects, are articulate and confident communicators, and can present their thinking in logical and ordered arguments. Their creativity is evident in their art work, and engagement in drama and music. Pupils can produce highly imaginative work, drawing together different media and manipulating images with technology.

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 4.2 Pupils understand the school's core values, and their commitment to these underpins their maturing personalities. Strong staff and pupil relationships which are based on trust are evident throughout the school and in the boarding houses. Pupils are socially adept, conversing easily and courteously with visitors. Their ability to work successfully with others is enhanced by their involvement with the CCF and their training for the DofE. Pupils apply the skills learnt here across their school lives, working together very effectively to bring projects to a successful conclusion. Relationships between boarders and between boarders and house staff are harmonious, relaxed and friendly.
- 4.3 In their questionnaire responses and in interview, pupils consistently reiterated their appreciation of their teachers' reassuring and positive approach. Pupils are clear that this has helped them to grow in self-confidence and to develop high levels of self-esteem, whatever their academic ability. It also helps them to develop considerable resilience, for example failure in a music grade examination is greeted by a philosophical acceptance of the need to try again. Boarders exhibit a respect and tolerance for each other that help create a harmonious and welcoming atmosphere in the houses; they have very high levels of trust in their houseparents.
- 4.4 Pupils are proud of their school and happy to take the initiative in contributing to the school community. They speak with modest pride of their roles as sports captains or in the CCF. Senior pupils with defined responsibilities as school or boarding prefects help staff in the smooth running of the school, and also act as informal mentors for their juniors. Pupils take responsibility for organising some clubs such as the debating society, or helping other activities to run smoothly as was observed in rehearsals for the inter-house music competition. Younger pupils also come together to organise events and complete projects successfully. Year 11 pupils worked together independently to manage all the preparation for their prom. Pupils also take some initiative in raising money for charities such as by organising cake sales, and they involve themselves in fundraising efforts proposed by staff. They are conscious of national and global inequalities, and respond positively to staff suggestions of support for charities which reach beyond the local area such as for a school in Africa.
- 4.5 Pupils' personal values are good and are not rooted in the purely material. Their responses to music and to art demonstrate a nascent ability to recognise beauty in a variety of forms. They are also aware of the beauty of the school's surroundings; during the inspection pupils were observed literally stopping in their tracks to exclaim at a particularly beautiful sunset.
- 4.6 Overall, pupils have a sound sense of morality and an understanding of the difference between right and wrong. There is a strong sense of community and pupils are loyal to the school and to their immediate peer group in particular. They understand and accept their responsibility for their own behaviour and that of their peers. For instance, members of a team were heard reminding others of the example that they need to set even when under pressure. Pupils in the sixth form have a well-developed sense of their moral obligation to consider and support others beyond their immediate peers and friendship groups.

- 4.7 Pupils accept the need for rules in school and in the boarding houses, even those rules they dislike such as the collecting of younger boarders' mobile phones at night. A small minority of pupils feel that these rules are not applied fairly in all situations. No inspection evidence supports this view. The school now has clear and respected behavioural expectations for boarding which are distinct from the overarching school policy. Behaviour in lessons is good. Responses to questionnaires and inspection evidence indicate that some pupils have a more limited understanding of the school's expectations; whilst keen to stand by their friends, pupils do not always fully appreciate their wider responsibilities. The line between playfulness and unkind, unacceptable behaviour to others is blurred in some pupils' minds and such behaviour is not always reported to staff. While records demonstrate clearly that staff intervene robustly when alerted, the culture amongst pupils does not universally reflect the zero-tolerance approach to such behaviour articulated in the school's policies.
- 4.8 Pupils have excellent levels of self-knowledge; they are able to describe what motivates them and know how best to improve their learning. These attributes help them to become well prepared for their future lives. As they move through the school, pupils take increasing control of their academic and sporting lives. They make decisions about subject choices based on their understanding of what they need for their future careers and are unafraid to change direction if it becomes clear that it will be wise to do so. The careers advice offered in personal, social and health education lessons supports this, with good help provided for applications to universities, apprenticeships or routes into employment. In team games, pupils are increasingly encouraged to offer suggestions about training and tactics. As a result, reliance on their coaches to make the decisions steadily diminishes as pupils move through the school. The sports department deliberately arranges some fixtures which the teams which will find challenging, rather than simply ones which will guarantee victory. This helps pupils appreciate that excellence does not come easily but is something that results from committed and sustained hard work.
- 4.9 In boarding houses as in classrooms, opposing views are discussed respectfully and pupils listen well to each other. Boarders are able to express their opinions and make requests through boarding council meetings, occasional house meetings as well as in informal conversations with house staff. Sixth form members of the Headmaster's Committee meet regularly with senior leaders to put forward ideas and requests from the pupil body. The school takes pupils' requests seriously but the mechanisms for reporting back to pupils on decisions are not formalised. As a result, pupils are sometimes left feeling that they are not listened to and that involvement in discussion is not worthwhile.
- 4.10 Pupils say that the mix of nationalities and cultures in the school enriches its communal life. They value getting to know of other cultures and beliefs. Pupils are not merely tolerant of diversity but actively welcoming, so that overseas boarders are made to feel included from the start. Pupils say that mixing with those from other cultures has helped them to recognise that individuals have more similarities than differences between them, regardless of backgrounds or beliefs. In interview, pupils supported the views expressed by almost all parents in their questionnaire responses that pupils understand the concepts of respect and tolerance of diversity.

- 4.11 Pupils display a keen understanding of the importance of a balanced and active lifestyle, and this is nurtured in all aspects of the school's provision. They know how to keep themselves safe online and are well educated in this. Pupils are also aware of what constitutes a healthy diet and of its importance for all, including those with sporting ambitions. Drinks and snacks are available in both houses in the evenings, as previously recommended. Pupils are happy to seek help when they feel that the pressures of work are building, and they know who to turn to for support. Their warm trust in staff is a significant factor in creating a supportive atmosphere that enables them to develop into sensible and well-grounded individuals. Pupils' maturity, common sense and commitment to living active, healthy lives are assets that help prepare them well for their futures.