



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

FOR SCHOOLS WITH RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

**TAUNTON PREPARATORY SCHOOL AND TAUNTON SCHOOL
INTERNATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL**

FEBRUARY TO MARCH 2017



School's details

School	Taunton Preparatory School and Taunton School International Middle School			
DfE Number	933/6214			
EYFS Number	EY310094			
Registered charity number	1081420			
Address	Taunton Preparatory School Staplegrave Road Taunton Somerset TA2 6AE			
Telephone number	01823 703307			
Email address	tps enquiries@tauntonschool.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Duncan Sinclair			
Chair of governors	Mr Henry Keeling			
Age range	0 to 14			
Number of pupils on roll	495			
	Boys	281	Girls	214
	Day pupils	422	Boarders	73
	EYFS	142	Juniors	328
	Seniors (Years 9 and 10)	25	TSIMS pupils	49
Pupils' ability	The school does not use standardised tests. However, its own assessments indicate that the ability of pupils is above average.			
Pupils' needs	The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is 56, none of whom have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. They require support for range of conditions, including dyslexia. A total of 59 pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), 54 of whom receive additional support.			

History of the school	Taunton Preparatory School was founded in 1994 following the merger of the former girls' and boys' junior schools, whilst Taunton School International Middle School (TSIMS) was established in 2012.
Ownership and governing structure	Both schools are part of Taunton School, and the trustees of Taunton School educational charity are the governors of the schools.
School structure	Taunton Preparatory School includes Taunton Pre-Prep and Taunton Nursery and caters for boys and girls aged 0 to 13 years, while TSIMS caters for pupils aged 8 to 14 years.
Other useful information	Boarders are accommodated in three boarding houses; one for both boys and girls on the Taunton Preparatory School site, and two single-sex boarding houses on the TSIMS site which is situated about three miles away.
Inspection dates	28 February to 1 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. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school’s accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school’s most recent statutory inspection.

This inspection also contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (‘boarding NMS’). It also comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and it judges the extent to which the school currently meets the boarding NMS. It identifies any standards which the school does not meet and requires action to meet them. Findings are distributed across sections relating to the eight Parts of the standards.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or 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, including the boarding NMS, 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 and any qualitative concerns identified at their previous inspection.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school’s compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils’ health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents’ complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management, together with the NMS covering the same areas. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

The inspection does not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as:

- (i) the school's aims;
- (ii) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (iii) compliance with data protection requirements;
- (iv) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (v) contractual arrangements with parents;
- (vi) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups. Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Independent School Standards Regulations](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

SUMMARY EVALUATION

The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1

Quality of education provided

In the junior school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.

The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.

The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

PART 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.

The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.

PART 3

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.

An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.

The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 2–4, 6–12, 15 and 16 are met.

PART 4

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.

The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 are met.

PART 5

Premises of and accommodation at schools

Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.

The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.

PART 6

Provision of information

A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for those with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, and its results in public examinations, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.

The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and statement of boarding principles [NMS 1] are met.

PART 7

Manner in which complaints are handled

Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.

The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.

PART 8

Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.

The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.

Children make excellent progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points. Effectively planned teaching meets the needs of children including those with SEND or EAL extremely well and enables them to advance rapidly. Children's personal and social and emotional development is outstanding as a result of the substantial support they receive from the highly trained and caring staff. Children feel very safe, secure and happy in the setting. Parents expressed that they and their children find the setting to be extremely caring and welcoming.

Safeguarding and welfare requirements are fully met and rigorously enforced, and staff fulfil their responsibility for protecting children in their care extremely effectively. Leaders robustly evaluate the early years provision and constantly plan how to improve it further, in order to best meet the needs of children and ensure that they make excellent progress and are ready for transition to the main school. They have ensured that all recommendations from previous inspections have been met.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.

Leaders evaluate the quality of the early years provision very carefully to ensure that it meets children's needs. They demonstrate an ambitious vision to create a safe and caring environment where all children can thrive. Leaders ensure that staff have very high expectations of what babies and children aged under two can achieve. Dedicated governors check the Early Years Foundation Stage carefully, visit the setting often and work closely with leaders to support improvements to the provision.

Leaders monitor the well-qualified staff highly effectively and evaluate their performance very carefully to determine which additional training or support would strengthen staff's effectiveness and professional development. Leaders meet with individual staff regularly in order to discuss how they could best advance the progress and meet the needs of children in their care. There is scope to develop these discussions so that they have even more impact on staff practice.

Parents in interview were extremely positive about the setting and the progress that their children make. They said that leaders strongly encourage them to offer suggestions about ways to further improve the provision. Parents also conveyed that leaders and staff keep them very well informed about the setting and that the staff know their children extremely well. They expressed that they value the daily contact they have with very approachable staff, and that they appreciate the opportunities to be involved in their children's learning and assessment.

Leaders ensure that the educational programmes fully meet statutory requirements, reflect children's interests and provide children with an excellent beginning to their education. For example, staff engaged children in discussing and exploring families as a result of children's interests in the family photographs displayed in the Nursery area. Leaders carry out systematic and robust checks to make certain that all children achieve extremely well and are excellently prepared for the next stages of their education. Leaders ensure that children with SEND or EAL receive outstanding support from specialists within the school and external professionals. They make sure that all children are provided with extra support and resources when needed in order to narrow any gaps in outcomes between different groups.

Leaders ensure that British values are promoted very effectively through the excellent role modelling by staff and constant encouragement to all children to show respect, tolerance and kindness towards each other. Cultural diversity is celebrated throughout the setting, and children respect each other's differences and respond well to leaders' and staff's consistently high expectations of behaviour and courtesy.

Safeguarding is highly effective. All members of staff have undertaken comprehensive training in safeguarding, including in how to minimise risks from radicalisation and extremism. Leaders keep children safe through practices such as daily safety checks on resources and the environment, detailed risk assessments and consistent implementation of safer recruitment procedures.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.

Staff have an extremely good understanding of the age group they work with. They demonstrate consistently high expectations of what children are able to achieve, including the most able and those who need additional support. Staff make outstanding use of their detailed assessment of children's strengths and needs to plan children's learning. They meet regularly to evaluate the progress of each child and monitor their welfare, and to plan the curriculum carefully. Assessment takes full account of parental and previous providers' insights into children's skills, knowledge, understanding and interests where appropriate. Staff use their excellent knowledge of individual children to plan challenging and engaging activities that meet their needs extremely well. Leaders ensure that staff use assessment to identify children who are falling behind or need more support, and plan appropriate activities and interactions that enable such children to make excellent progress. Leaders and staff work in partnership with parents and keep them extremely well informed about their children's progress. Parents are provided detailed information about how to support their children's learning at home and are invited to attend workshops about various aspects of the curriculum such as 'Babbling Babies' and 'Talking Toddlers'.

Staff are highly skilled at judging when to enable children to explore and investigate resources and lead their activities for themselves, and when to intervene to ensure that children's learning is of the highest standard. They interact with children very effectively and provide them with an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, all of which enthuse, motivate and engage children and lead to outstanding learning. Staff use their considerable subject knowledge to provide children clear and accurate explanations. They make excellent use of praise and encouragement to motivate children, and ask skilful questions that develop children's knowledge, understanding, and communication and language skills extremely well. As a result children acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding that they need to be ready for the next stages of their education and learning at school.

Leaders ensure that all staff apply the inclusive school ethos very well, and as a result children develop excellent physical, personal, social and emotional skills. Staff promote equality of opportunity and encourage children to understand their individual differences and respect one another through discussions about families, languages, and different cultures and traditions.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding.

Children demonstrate great pride in their achievements and are extremely motivated to learn as a result of the very stimulating environment, and staff who display how much they value the children's progress, interests and learning. Children exhibit outstanding levels of self-confidence, imagination and independence. For example, toddlers demonstrated great confidence when expressing preferences about what they would like to do with the toy farm animals. They are able to select their own activities and stories, and demonstrate substantial independence by choosing their own drinks and feeding themselves. Babies explore the sensory box, and play with foam shapes and other resources confidently and happily. All children display age-appropriate understanding of how to learn successfully through their concentration, curiosity and willingness to explore.

Children enjoy the setting, as is evident in the high levels of attendance. They form extremely strong emotional attachments with staff and willingly go to them for reassurance and comfort when necessary. Children enthusiastically seek out their key members of staff as they arrive at the school and settle quickly. Staff prepare children socially and emotionally for moving up to their next classrooms and year groups extremely effectively. Toddlers visit their next room for lunch and the babies play with the toddlers regularly so that they become familiar with the new surroundings.

Children demonstrate excellent behaviour and respect for one another. Their strongly developing sense of community demonstrates that they have begun to contribute to wider society and life in Britain. Children enjoy each other's company and learn to share, take turns and help each other very well. Staff have extremely high expectations of behaviour and act as excellent role models in this regard. Children also develop a strong awareness of the importance of maintaining good personal hygiene, such as by washing their hands before eating. Their healthy lifestyle is promoted by the provision of freshly prepared lunches and snacks, and by access to the outside areas for exercise and play. Children learn how to manage risks, such as when exploring the outdoor area and resources. Staff ensure that children do not access social media, and strict guidelines about use of photography in the setting are in place.

Outcomes for children

Outcomes for children are outstanding.

Children are curious and keen to explore their surroundings. Babies are eager to move around their area, and explore sensory activities such as the foam play. They display great enjoyment when taken outside to look at the fish tank and are happy to imitate actions for songs and clap their hands in to time to the music. Toddlers demonstrate emerging mark-making skills and are starting to use appropriate language in their play. They enjoy listening to stories, moving to music and singing. The older children enjoy exploring their activities and demonstrate developing observational skills, such as when they looked for particular animals to put in the farmyard. Children develop their mathematical skills well, as demonstrated during the inspection when they counted objects such as dinosaurs and recognised different shapes when playing with bricks and other construction materials. Children display extremely high levels of engagement in tasks and strong independence, often making suggestions about what they would like to do.

All different groups of children including those with SEND or EAL make rapid progress from their starting points, and about a third exceed the level of development that is typical for their age. Children are extremely well prepared for their next stage in their education.

Compliance with statutory requirements

The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Recommendations for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years.

- Strengthen the effectiveness of regular discussions between leaders and individual staff about how they can best advance the progress and meet the needs of children in their care.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The inspectors conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teachers, senior members of staff and with the chair of governors. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Steven Popper	Reporting inspector
Mr Ian Carter	Accompanying inspector
Miss Mary Sansom	Compliance team inspector (Former head of English, GSA school)
Mrs Ros Ford	Co-ordinating inspector for early years
Miss Jane Sheppard	Early years team inspector (Head of Lower School and Nursery, IAPS school)
Mr Paul Barlow	Boarding team inspector (Head of boarding, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Balding	Boarding team inspector (Former housemaster, IAPS school)