



TAUNTON

— SCHOOL —

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE (ISI) REPORT ON TAUNTON SCHOOL, JUNE 2024

Summary of findings relating to the Pre-Prep and Preparatory School.

A CULTURE OF
AMBITION

A MINDSET
FOR LIFE

A SENSE OF
BELONGING

A GLOBAL
COMMUNITY

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NEXT >

Dear parents,

As you may remember, in the second week of this term we were visited by a team of inspectors from the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). Many thanks to those of you who promptly completed the parent survey for the ISI, which was very much appreciated. I am delighted to share the results with you.

You may or may not be aware that the language of school inspection reports now avoids single word judgements such as 'excellent' or 'good' and instead makes a series of evidence-based statements to describe the school's provision. This new framework for inspection can produce some rather bland reports, as has been noted by many Heads in various schools already inspected under the new regime.

This said, you will see from the highlights in this document that Taunton School's Prep and Pre-Prep report, which encompasses all the year groups from Year 1 through to Year 8, is very complimentary. The headline judgements are that pupils benefit from our 'dynamic and caring community ... rich with opportunity both inside and outside the classroom'. In this community pupils are able 'to find their exceptional by embracing the opportunities available and they flourish as a result.'

It is affirming to see such positive commentary on each of our four key strategic pillars highlighted in bold. The inspectors focused on the 'stimulating' learning environment where the classroom experience 'inspires pupils' because of 'teachers' in-depth subject knowledge.' Pupils are 'focused and motivated' by teachers who have **ambition** for them. Outside the classroom pupils speak 'enthusiastically' about the 'extensive' co-curricular opportunities which enable them to 'flourish.' They become 'rounded individuals for the future' developing the right **mindset for life**.

Staff 'prioritise' the pupils' emotional wellbeing which is underpinned by the 'vigilance of pastoral leaders' who 'actively promote respect and inclusion.' Such an environment means that pupils are 'happy,' demonstrating **a sense of belonging**, in part because they are 'confident their voices will be heard.' By recognising the 'importance of embracing the view of others' the inspectors praised how our pupils learn to 'become responsible and caring citizens' speaking 'respectfully about those from different races and genders to themselves.' Even at an early age they are aware of the importance of our **global community**.

Boarding received special mention with the parent survey being particularly positive. The pupils spoke very warmly about the homely atmosphere in Thone with experiences that were 'rich and nurturing' with particular focus on the leadership opportunities they enjoyed. The inspectors also highlighted the enthusiasm the pupils have for the wide range of weekend activities.

Despite this praise we do know there is further work to be done and have embraced the recommendations made to combine suitable challenge and support for all pupil's needs in every class and to ensure that teacher feedback always allows the very best pupil progress.

I am very proud indeed of the Prep and Pre-Prep community - students, teachers and operations staff - who all made such a positive impression on the inspectors. I am delighted that the ISI team recognised what a special community we are part of. I hope it is reassuring for you all to know, in a challenging economic climate for all fee-paying parents, that we really do add value both in and out of the classroom.

You can read the full report here: [Click here](#)

Best wishes,
Ed Burnett



A CULTURE OF AMBITION

‘Pupils are self-motivated and focused, nurtured by their teachers in a happy and purposeful learning environment. Teachers’ in-depth subject knowledge inspires pupils.’

‘Pupils speak enthusiastically about the extensive extra-curricular activities open to them.’

‘Pupils are focused and motivated learners, able to apply themselves independently and collaboratively. In the early years, leaders’ detailed understanding of the children’s needs and interests and their strong relationships with their teachers promote the children’s development.’

‘By the end of Year 8, pupils have accelerated their rate of progress, achieving scholarship successes across a range of sporting and academic disciplines.’



‘Pupils are encouraged to ‘find their exceptional’ by embracing the opportunities available and they flourish as a result.’



‘Leaders have identified a strong vision for the direction of the school with a set of aims which are well understood by the pupils.’

‘Pupils speak excitedly about the breadth of sports available and enjoy successes as regional and national champions.’


EXCEPTIONAL

TOGETHER

< PREVIOUS

NEXT >

A MINDSET FOR LIFE



'The breadth of activities engages pupils' interests so that they become rounded individuals for the future'

'Pupils learn how to become responsible and caring citizens.'



'In the early years, children articulate their ideas confidently and they are curious learners.'

'Specialist staff teach subjects such as dance, music, swimming and sport and so offer rich experiences for older children.'

'Leaders provide an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities.'

'Facilities, including astro pitches, cricket facilities and swimming pools, alongside pupil's regular participation in fixtures enhance opportunities for their skills to flourish, simultaneously increasing their self-esteem.'



EXCEPTIONAL

TOGETHER

< PREVIOUS

NEXT >

A SENSE OF BELONGING

‘Taunton Preparatory School is a nurturing and vibrant community, where leaders prioritise the values of respect and inclusion.’



‘Reception children delight in the well-resourced outdoor spaces.’



‘Key persons know their children extremely well. They value their opinions and form positive relationships with them... As a result, children consistently demonstrate that they feel extremely safe and happy.’

‘Leaders give the utmost priority to safeguarding ensuring children are kept safe.’



‘Leaders design well-planned schemes of work which reflect an inclusive society.’

EXCEPTIONAL

TOGETHER

< PREVIOUS

NEXT >

A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

‘Pupils are knowledgeable about the benefits of living in a diverse community. They understand neurodiversity and embrace ways in which they are the same or different to others.’



‘Leaders prioritise pupils’ emotional and physical wellbeing, enabling pupils to feel valued in a dynamic and caring community.’

‘Pupils speak respectfully about those from different races and genders to themselves and they exercise their understanding of right and wrong through respectful interactions.’



‘Pupils are courteous and respectful.’



EXCEPTIONAL

TOGETHER

< PREVIOUS

NEXT >

BOARDING



‘Boarders speak enthusiastically about the diverse programme of weekend activities as well as the chance to relax with friends.’

‘Boarders feel cared for in a welcoming and reassuring environment where their opinions are heard.’



‘Leaders prioritise pupils’ emotional wellbeing by creating a nurturing, inclusive environment where pupils feel happy and confident that their voices will be heard.’

‘Boarders enjoy access to leadership opportunities where they can train as playground ambassadors and heads of house, valuing the chance to mentor the younger boarders.’

‘The boarders’ experience is rich and nurturing.’



‘Boarding leaders are well trained and implement a range of policies for boarders so that their wellbeing remains a priority.’

EXCEPTIONAL

TOGETHER

< PREVIOUS

NEXT >



TAUNTON

— SCHOOL —

Thank you to the whole school community of students, teachers and operations staff, who all made such a positive impression on the inspectors. We are proud and delighted that the ISI team recognised what a special community we are part of.

[Click to view the full Pre-Prep and Preparatory School report](#)

[Click to view the full Senior School report](#)

[< PREVIOUS](#)

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