



ISI

Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

BEESTON HALL SCHOOL

MARCH 2017



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Beeston Hall School			
DfE number	926/6058			
Registered charity number	311274			
Address	Beeston Hall School West Runton Cromer Norfolk NR27 9NQ			
Telephone number	01263 837324			
Email address	office@beestonhall.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Fred de Falbe			
Chair of governors	The Earl of Leicester			
Age range	6 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	122			
	Boys	63	Girls	59
	Day pupils	73	Boarders	49
Inspection dates	08 to 09 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.

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 a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended an assembly. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the younger 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

Mr Richard Johnson	Reporting inspector
Mr Jonathan Milton	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Green	Team inspector for boarding (Former deputy head, IAPS school)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Beeston Hall School is a co-educational boarding and day school for pupils between the ages of six and thirteen. Founded in 1948, it occupies a 30-acre site on the north Norfolk coast near Cromer. The school is a charitable trust, overseen by a board of governors. The school accepts both weekly and full boarders, who are housed in two boarding houses on the school campus.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the age range of the school has been extended, and pupils may now join a new pre-prep department from the age of six. The chair of governors, headmaster and wife team and a new deputy head have all been appointed since September 2016. The school has also refurbished its design technology facilities and increased its information and communication technology (ICT) provision.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school endeavours to provide a caring environment in which children's contributions are valued and encouraged, enabling them to develop their abilities and potential and become 'grounded' young men and women, ready for the future. It seeks to celebrate childhood and deliver a broad and rigorous curriculum led by inspired teaching.

About the pupils

- 1.4 The pupils predominantly come from professional, business and farming families with a White British heritage. The majority of boarders live within a 50-mile radius of the school. A few pupils' families live in London or overseas, predominantly in Europe. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. Thirty-one pupils require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They require support with dyslexia and other learning difficulties. None of these pupils has a statement of educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are three pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), all of whom receive support with this aspect of their learning. Academically more able pupils are identified by the school through its assessment processes, alongside those talented in particular areas, such as sport and music. The school adjusts its curriculum and provides additional activities to support their needs.
- 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 October and November 2010. The recommendations from that inspection were:
 - Set out the school's strategic vision with clearly defined priorities for the short, medium and longer term in a whole-school development plan, and ensure that middle managers play a full part in the self-evaluation of their own areas.
 - Encourage all pupils to think critically and become more independent in their learning through the use of specific teaching methods.
 - Establish uniformity of assessment across all subjects by ensuring that staff consistently adhere to the whole-school marking scheme.

- 1.7 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous inspection. Further detail is given in the main text of the report.
- 1.8 The recommendation of the intermediate boarding inspection in September 2014 was:
 - Ensure that boarders can contact family and friends more easily.
- 1.9 The school has successfully met the recommendation of the previous inspection.

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils are highly successful in gaining entry to senior schools. Their numerous awards also reflect pupils' exceptional achievement in a wide range of activities.
- All pupils, particularly those with SEND and the more able, make at least good and often rapid progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to work are outstanding.
- Pupils' ICT skills are good, but not as highly developed as those in other areas.

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

- Pupils show outstanding social skills. They are polite, respectful of others, show a strong respect for rules and demonstrate high standards of behaviour.
- Boarders benefit from their membership of a wider community and recognise their responsibilities towards it.
- Pupils make a significant contribution to the school and wider community. They are keen to take on responsibility, and enthusiastically support charities and community groups.
- Pupils' strong and growing awareness of the impact of their choices on their futures helps prepare them well for their senior schools.

Recommendations

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

- Strengthen pupils' ICT skills by providing greater opportunities for pupils to practise and develop these in lessons across the curriculum.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 The school does not take part in national curriculum tests, but the available evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own assessment data shows attainment to be above national age-related expectations. Pupils are highly successful in gaining entry to senior schools against strong competition. Results in Common Entrance examinations are consistently high and a large majority of pupils gain awards and scholarships because staff have a secure understanding of the preparation required for these examinations and provide tailored support for potential scholars. Many awards also reflect pupils' exceptional achievements in areas such as sport, music, art and drama. School teams achieve notable success in national and regional levels in hockey, rugby, rounders and cross country. This is especially notable because the school does not have a large pool of pupils from which to select teams. The school effectively identifies pupils' individual talents, and supports these through specialist teaching, while leaders recognise the need to challenge pupils by exposing them to wider regional competition.
- 3.3 Results in music examinations are excellent, with many pupils achieving high grades in instrumental, voice and theory examinations, as well as success in external competitions and events. The strength of the school's rich and varied co-curricular programme can be seen in pupils' achievements in sailing and show-jumping, as well as in their drama and ballet awards. This could also be seen on an individual level in younger boarders who are proud of their ability to speak Arabic. Pupils achieve extremely well in academic and non-academic areas because governors and leaders give a high priority to providing a broad, all-round education, and support individual pupils by allowing them time to train and compete and celebrate their successes as a community.
- 3.4 Pupils make good progress because of the school's high aspirations for them all. The school does not take part in national curriculum tests, but the available evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own assessment data shows attainment to be above, and in some cases well above, national age-related expectations. All ability groups make at least good, and often rapid, progress. This is supported by evidence from lesson observations, interviews and a scrutiny of pupils' written work. Pupils with SEND and the more able make notably strong progress. This is because teachers are aware of individual needs and match activities accordingly. Senior staff monitor progress carefully through data tracking and provide targeted support, where necessary, through the strong and well-resourced learning support department. Pupils with EAL achieve excellent results in nationally recognised examinations in this area of learning. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching enabled their children to make good progress and their children benefited from a suitable range of subjects.
- 3.5 Pupils' attitudes to work are outstanding, nurtured by the high expectations of staff and the encouragement which they are offered. They are not afraid to take risks and get things wrong, and are keen to undertake additional learning tasks. Pupils enjoy setting and meeting their own individual success criteria, for example through the 'chilli challenge', where they choose targets which they see as brave and embodying risk. They demonstrate initiative and independence, and a notable willingness to work collaboratively and take leadership in their learning. This was seen when pupils who arrived early for a hockey training session settled down unprompted to practise their skills. Pupils will often practise their musical instruments without being reminded. Pupils with SEND thrive and make strong progress as their confidence

grows through meeting their individual targets. Pupils take pride in their presentation and personal organisation in lessons.

- 3.6 Pupils display strong independent research skills, as demonstrated by their work in history, where pupils evaluated possible strengths and weaknesses of historical figures and then hypothesised about why their chosen heroes were so successful. The school has successfully met the recommendation of the previous inspection to encourage all pupils to think critically and become more independent in their learning. Staff encourage and enable pupils to think through problems first, rather than ask for support immediately, and teachers are not afraid to try innovative new methods. Lesson observations showed excellent co-operative learning in a Latin lesson where staff encouraged pupils to teach themselves rather than to simply listen to their teacher. Older pupils have effective revision techniques and keep well-organised notes as a result of their study skills programme.
- 3.7 Pupils exhibit substantial levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects. They have notably strong linguistic and scientific skills, as a result of specialist teaching and well-resourced teaching areas. Pupils also demonstrate excellent physical, aesthetic and artistic skills. Exceptional artwork is on display throughout the school, and musicians hone their talents and gain confidence by performing in front of their peers in assemblies. A few pupils who responded to the questionnaire thought that marking does not always help improve their work, and a small minority disagree that they knew how well they are doing in subjects. Inspectors looked at a range of books and found that teachers' marking includes helpful suggestions for improvement which helped promote their progress. Governors and leaders have high expectations and monitor standards of teaching carefully, investing extensively in specialist staff and excellent resources, resulting in excellent achievement.
- 3.8 Pupils are articulate and have excellent communication skills. They could explain clearly to visitors how to use a computer programme to animate a model elephant, while overseas boarders with EAL eloquently described their boarding experience. A recent whole school training session for staff has increased focus on pupils' opportunities to apply and develop literacy skills across all subject areas. Pupils demonstrate their extensive reading abilities through public performance opportunities.
- 3.9 Pupils' skills in ICT are good, but not as highly developed as those in other aspects of their learning. Pupils respond enthusiastically when given the opportunity to apply these on the new tablet computers. They also report that staff do not always give them opportunities to practise and develop their ICT skills across all subjects. However, the new leadership team has already begun to take practical steps to address this issue.
- 3.10 Pupils can apply their outstanding numeracy skills effectively across a range of subjects, such as science and geography, because teachers highlight practical applications for mathematics. For example, pupils with SEND make and sell their own cakes, pricing them appropriately and calculating their profit, whilst more able older pupils show notable confidence in handling numbers and aspects of mathematics such as factorisation using brackets. In another lesson, advantage was made of pupils' naturally competitive nature in an athletics lesson by setting targets for them to improve their best times and distances by a particular percentage.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils show outstanding social skills and are highly respectful of other people. They readily empathise with their peers, and are able to work effectively with others to solve problems and achieve common goals. Staff support this by acting as excellent role models; they are relaxed, humorous and treat pupils with mutual respect. Older pupils enjoy the leadership and teambuilding exercises the school provides for them, and feel that these improve their collaborative skills. Boarders understand that they are part of a wider community and have responsibilities towards it. The positive ethos of the boarding house pervades the school and all members benefit from the shared sense of community. Pupils recognise this, and many choose to board even though they live close enough to attend as day pupils.
- 4.3 Standards of behaviour are extremely high and pupils are notably polite and well-mannered, including during mealtimes. Pupils show substantial respect for the rules which govern their community and the wider world, and recognise the importance of these. The school has a clear code of conduct and high expectations, and pupils play a key role in helping to create these. Rewards are keenly sought after, and older pupils play an important role in promoting the school's system of rewards by encouraging younger pupils to gain merit points through exhibiting excellent behaviour. Through personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and tutorials, staff encourage debate on current world issues. As a result, pupils display a strong moral stance, reflecting upon the wider world, debating issues such as the suffering endured by impoverished children around the world and animal cruelty in the Middle East and raising money to help to alleviate these issues. Pupils understand and support the reasons behind fielding a sports team to enable a fair match for the opposing team, without overwhelming weaker opponents. In questionnaires, all pupils agreed that the school encourages them to behave well.
- 4.4 Pupils make a strong contribution to their own school community and the wider world. Positions on the school and boarding councils and as prefects and monitors are highly sought-after. Pupils also understand why these positions need to be shared amongst their peers. Junior pupils aspire to be a 'Keeper of the Books' and look after the library. In the boarding houses, older pupils naturally help younger ones with their reading, and encourage them to be more adventurous with their food choices during mealtimes. There is enthusiastic fundraising for a variety of local, national and international charities, and through pupils' eager engagement in community activities, visits to hospices, and work with disabled groups and the parish council.
- 4.5 Pupils show a strong and growing awareness of the impact of the choices they make on their own future. They realise that the key to success in their future life is often hard work and practice. Staff give them clear guidance and advice to support their commitment. Older pupils recognise the need to take responsibility for their own learning and progress and are able to decide which study method suits them. They readily make decisions about issues such as how best to raise funds for charities. The boarding house council has a significant say in house decisions and boarders debate changes to routines such as bed times and outings in a sensible and mature fashion. Older pupils choose their own topics for presentations to the remainder of the school; a lecture on a fast food restaurant chain posed ethical questions to the whole school, such as how choices made in our daily lives can affect aspects such as 'food miles' and local employment opportunities. As a result of the opportunities the school provides, such as the extensive leavers programme focusing on personal organisation, safety and working as part of a team, pupils are mature learners and ready for their move to senior school.

- 4.6 Excellent self-confidence characterises many of the pupils, and they take pride in their achievements. They are unaffected, welcoming and interested in visitors. They show notable resilience in many areas, and a willingness to try new sports and activities. As a result, they take pride in their achievements. A group of pupils told inspectors that 'success is cool'. They feel that boarding helps to boost self-confidence and self-esteem and also prepares them well for senior school.
- 4.7 In the questionnaires, all pupils and their parents felt that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Pupils show a strong interest in these during their visits to places of worship and their understanding is enhanced by a new religious studies curriculum which stimulates debate and discussion on religious issues. Younger pupils understand the beliefs inherent in aboriginal art forms. Pupils are notably welcoming to overseas pupils, who feel fully integrated into the boarding house, and enjoy sharing their national festivals and traditions through events such as a Spanish Day.
- 4.8 Pupils show a well-developed sense of spirituality, and take advantage of moments of reflection. The chapel is central to the ethos of the school, and both pupils and staff voluntarily attend quiet prayer sessions during the busy school day. In discussions, they readily reflect upon their own lives, and appreciate the natural beauty around them during visits and walks to the local church and nearby coastline.
- 4.9 Pupils relish their involvement in sports and outdoor activities, and recognise how these contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They are supported in this by an extensive science, PSHE and sports programme. Pupils are highly aware of the importance of a balanced diet; the school council often discusses food choices such as having fruit instead of biscuits in some break times. Older pupils in the boarding house discuss age-related health issues, including the importance of mental well-being, in a mature, open forum. Pupils know how to keep safe online, excitedly talking about the key messages from a recent e-safety lecture, which approached this topic through poems and music.
- 4.10 The excellent outcomes for pupils are due in no small part to the vision shared by both leaders and governors. They have recently reviewed the school's aims and show a strong understanding of how these can be achieved. These aims are communicated effectively to both staff and pupils in such a way which engenders a shared ownership. As a result, the recommendation of the previous inspection to set out the school's strategic vision with clearly defined priorities has been met. All parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school promotes an environment which successfully supports their child's personal development, and almost all parents of boarders indicated that this was enhanced by their children's boarding experience.