



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

LONGRIDGE TOWERS SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 2017



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Longridge Towers School			
DfE number	929/6001			
Registered charity number	513534			
Address	Longridge Towers School Berwick-upon-Tweed Northumberland TD15 2XQ			
Telephone number	01289 307584			
Email address	enquiries@lts.org.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Lee			
Chair of governors	Mr John Smithson			
Age range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	318			
	Boys	160	Girls	158
	Day pupils	288	Boarders	30
	EYFS	19	Juniors	101
	Seniors	152	Sixth Form	46
Inspection dates	01 to 02 February 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 governors including the chair, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended chapel 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

Mr Tony Halliwell	Reporting inspector
Mr Christopher Emmott	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr David Tickner	Team inspector (Head, Society of Heads school)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Longridge Towers School is an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls aged between 3 and 18 years. The school consists of three sections: senior, junior and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It is located on the Longridge Towers estate, close to the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed. The senior school and boarding accommodation is located in a Grade II listed Victorian mansion, with the junior and EYFS pupils located in buildings adjacent to the senior school.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1983, having formerly been St Mary's Convent School for Girls. St Mary's Convent was founded in the 1880s in Berwick-upon-Tweed by the Ursuline Order and moved to Longridge Towers in 1951, occupying the former family home of Sir Hubert and Lady Jerningham. The school is a registered charity and is overseen by a board of governors.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection a new headteacher has been appointed, who took over responsibility for the school in September 2016.

What the school seeks to do.

- 1.4 The school aims to provide opportunities for individuals to achieve their potential, explore new areas of experience, and become effective lifelong learners. It also seeks to educate the whole person in a community in which the pupils feel happy, valued, safe and supported.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds. Most live within a 30-mile radius of the school or come from families who live abroad and choose to board their children at the school. A number of pupils who are from Holy Island board on a temporary basis when unsuitable tide times mean that they are unable to return home overnight.
- 1.6 Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils in the senior school is above average and the ability profile of the sixth form is broadly average. In the junior school, the school's own assessments show the ability of pupils to be above the national norms. The school has thirty-eight pupils who receive support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), mainly dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs and an education, health and care plan. Eight pupils learn English as an additional language, of whom all receive support. The school is non-selective in its admissions.

- 1.7 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>
Junior 1	Year 1
Junior 2	Year 2
Junior 3	Year 3
Junior 4	Year 4
Junior 5	Year 5
Junior 6	Year 6
Form 1	Year 7
Form 2	Year 8
Form 3	Year 9
Form 4	Year 10
Form 5	Year 11
Lower sixth	Year 12
Upper sixth	Year 13

Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.8 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was a standard inspection in March 2011. The recommendations from that inspection were:
- Strengthen the overall quality of marking and target setting, to bring the standard of all up to the best.
 - Ensure that learning support within the classroom, for pupils with SEND and for the most able pupils, is consistent across all teaching.
 - In the senior school, strengthen the monitoring of standards of teaching and learning in each subject by heads of department.
 - Ensure that teachers in the senior school raise their expectation of pupils and regularly share varieties of good practice in the classroom.
 - In the EYFS, ensure sufficient provision of information and communication technology (ICT) to enable children to develop effective skills.
- 1.9 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous full inspection.
- 1.10 The recommendation of the intermediate boarding inspection in November 2013 were:
- Ensure that the arrangements to supervise and appraise boarding staff are underpinned by a written policy.
 - Ensure that the safeguarding policy is explicitly phrased in respect of the arrangements for handling any allegations against boarding staff.
- 1.11 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous intermediate boarding inspection.

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils display good attitudes towards learning, and demonstrate high levels of initiative and independence when provided with the opportunity to do so.
- Pupils are articulate and communicate confidently across all ability groups.
- Pupils' achievement is good, and significantly broadened and deepened through high levels of engagement in the enrichment programme.
- In the senior school, focus on tracking and learning is increasingly in place, although outcomes for pupils are not yet sufficiently improved across all subject areas.
- Pupils' use of ICT to enhance their learning in the senior school is not yet effectively applied across all curriculum areas.
- Pupils in the senior school are not always clear, from the marking of their work, what are areas for progress and improvement.

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

- Pupils' personal development is excellent across all areas of the school, fully supporting the school aims.
- Pupils' relationships with their peers and teachers are excellent, and pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school.
- Pupils of all age groups display consistently high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Pupils have a highly developed sense of right and wrong, take responsibility for their behaviour and actions, and demonstrate a caring attitude and sensitivity towards the needs of others.

Recommendations

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Embed the increased focus on tracking and learning in the senior school fully to improve outcomes for pupils across all subject areas.
- Ensure that senior school pupils are provided with clear written guidance which indicates how they can make further progress in their work.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.2 The pupils are successfully educated in line with the school's aim to achieve their potential, broaden their experience and become lifelong learners in a happy community where they feel valued, safe and supported. They aim for high standards and benefit from small class sizes and the individual attention that they receive. Pupils across the school respond well to the culture of celebrating success, and this is particularly noticeable in the EYFS and junior school. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of parents were positive about the school. Almost all felt that: the teaching enables their children to make good progress and develop skills for the future; the school is well governed, led and managed; and information about the school's routines and policies is readily available. A very large majority of pupils in their questionnaire responses were positive about the school.
- 3.3 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding throughout the school and across a wide range of subjects is good. Their communication skills are excellent; they communicate clearly and with confidence in a variety of informal and formal contexts. Younger senior pupils analysed the prologue to Shakespeare's *Henry V* by very successfully formulating their own questions and answers to the subject matter raised. Pupils of all ages are able to apply their literacy and numeracy skills effectively, for example junior age pupils were able to apply a budget to their allotted shopping list and make appropriate adjustments to ensure that a suitable meal was prepared within budget. The EYFS and Year 1 pupils successfully calculated 'our favourite book vote' in their heads, and could make simple number comparisons. Pupils are increasingly accepting more responsibility for their own learning; they are lively and self-aware, responding enthusiastically to the academic and non-academic challenges available to them. Sixth form pupils ask perceptive questions, as observed in a Year 12 biology practical lesson in which pupils were working out how fish were able to extract oxygen from water. The collaborative approach to learning across all year groups from the EYFS to the sixth form contributes positively to pupil achievement. A small minority of pupils felt that some lessons are not interesting. Discussions with pupils during the inspection and lessons observed did not support these views.
- 3.4 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012 to 2015, which are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Performance at GCSE has been above the national average for maintained schools. Results at A level, where the small number of pupils makes comparison less secure, have been below the national average. Results for GCSE in 2016 indicated an increase in the number of A* and A grades achieved, and results in IGCSE examinations have been higher than worldwide norms in further mathematics and below in the sciences. Results at A level in 2016 indicated an increase in A* to B grades. In the junior school and EYFS, the school does not take part in National Curriculum tests but the available evidence shows attainment to be above national age-related expectations.

- 3.5 These results demonstrate that pupils' progress to GCSE in the senior school is appropriate in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. At A level, progress is appropriate overall. Progress in the EYFS and junior school is good as a result of the well-planned curriculum, supported by clear targets and monitoring procedures. The school is making increasingly careful use of tracking and assessment data across the age groups in order to enhance pupils' progress. Those pupils with SEND and more able pupils have made significant progress in relation to their difficulties or starting points as a result. The implementation of tracking and assessment procedures is not yet fully embedded across all curriculum areas in the senior school. Pupils feel that their teachers know them well and commented that they can easily access individual teacher support when needed, which they valued highly. An emerging aspirational target system in the senior school is beginning to raise pupils' awareness of how they can evaluate their progress for themselves. One-to-one and small group interventions particularly at GCSE and A level are improving academic standards.
- 3.6 Pupils' competence in ICT is good throughout the school. Junior school pupils demonstrate very good initiative in the production of their leaning logs, and younger pupils were able to record their 'hot-seating' session on a tablet and review their performance in the playback plenary. Children in the EYFS use tablets well. Effective use of ICT was observed in GCSE English essay planning, and to support skill development in physical education (PE); A-level pupils used software in design technology to support the making of a coffee table and study desk unit. In a number of subject areas, pupils benefit from access to an online learning environment which allows them to use a range of academic resources for homework and longer-term assignments. This initiative by leadership and management is in an early stage at present but is well planned to assist in the raising of pupils' achievement across all year groups.
- 3.7 Pupils succeed as a result of the successful fulfilment of the school's aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils geared towards their individual needs. Consultation with parents over curriculum matters has resulted in the recent inclusion of Spanish as a GCSE course. Boarding pupils are seamlessly integrated into the school so that they receive good support for their progress. Pupils are able to develop and fulfil their potential thanks to the high levels of pastoral care and to strong oversight of the school by governors. The latter is enabled by regular visits to all sections of the school, and both support and challenge to the staff, ensuring that pupils' achievement and academic progress are high priorities.
- 3.8 Pupils of all abilities are able to succeed in an activity of their choosing due to the school offering a good range of extra-curricular activities. High levels of success are achieved most particularly in sport, drama and music. In the senior school, the girls' hockey teams compete well locally and the under-16 hockey team took part in the national schools' competition. Boys regularly attend regional and local area training squads, and sixth form pupils have attended Scottish national rugby training. Junior school pupils have achieved participation at regional and Scottish national levels in swimming, rugby, gymnastics and tetrathlon. High standards of individual pupil achievement are illustrated by pupils' success in speech and drama qualifications and in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, including at gold level. Pupils have taken part in the tall ships race. They also participate and achieve notable success in regional science festivals and inter-school mathematics challenges. Pupils won a local art competition, and they perform music locally and regionally at a high level. Some participate in the National Boys' Choir of Scotland. Pupils also achieve high levels of success in drama productions including a recent performance of *Medea*, staged locally by sixth-form pupils.
- 3.9 Pupils' work has improved as a result of an increase in the overall quality of marking across the school. Observation of pupils' marked work during the inspection indicated that pupils sometimes do not receive sufficient indication in written responses on how they could improve

their work further. Pupils' academic self-awareness and personal organisation levels have been raised since the previous inspection through encouragement to carry out work beyond the immediate confines of the classroom. Consequently pupils have become more independent learners, especially in the sixth form. Pupil achievement is seen as a priority for the leadership team which has a whole-school focus on improving teaching and learning through the use of analytical data and assessment, with a view to increasing pupils' resilience, creativity and enjoyment of learning.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

The excellent personal development of pupils closely reflects the aims of the school. Discussions with pupils during the inspection confirmed that they enjoy the community feel of the school and the friendly relationships they have with their teachers. Pupils feel well supported by the strong house system and equally able to call on individual teacher support when they require it. The overall integration of pupils of all age groups demonstrates that the interactions of younger and older pupils is excellent. In interview, pupils provided examples of typical situations such as the involvement of senior pupils in special junior activity days, including the Festival of Britain, and the neo-classicism and romanticism days. Significantly, the small number of boarding pupils are completely integrated into the school as members of the house system, allowing the school to function as one community. Boarders spoke of the positive benefits of boarding on their personal development and study habits, and the mix of occasional, temporary boarders from Holy Island adds to the uniqueness of the boarding environment.

4.2 Pupils new to any section of the school are quickly integrated as result of the 'buddy' system, which also helps transition from one section of the school to another. Pupils' confidence and resilience is strengthened due to the high quality of pastoral care, which is a key strength of the school. Pupils commented that the staff know them well and treat them as individuals. They are aware of the importance of safeguarding structures in the school, and in discussion confirmed that they know whom to approach if they have any concerns or worries. In interview, senior pupils were able to articulate a real understanding of internet safety, and both senior and junior pupils demonstrated an age-appropriate awareness of staying safe online and countering cyberbullying. Senior school pupils demonstrate high levels of self-confidence, resilience and self-discipline. Sixth form pupils have a clear understanding of self-improvement, for example in making sensible decisions about their aspirational targets and their well-being. Pupils in the EYFS and junior school are encouraged and confident enough to offer points of view and opinions. Pupils at all levels are creative in their approaches to problem solving, and display high levels of perseverance. Inter-house activities which are sometimes led by the pupils create a healthy atmosphere of competition, which pupils enjoy. Individual sporting success is promoted by older pupils supporting younger pupils. Junior school pupils of all ages were observed playing together during break times. Sixth form pupils in interview demonstrated a genuine interest and enthusiasm in acting as role models for the younger pupils, and they felt a responsibility to do so. The pupils' personal development is well supported by both the governing board and the leadership team who have a clear direction for the school. This is based on detailed self-evaluation, wide consultation and increasingly effective monitoring systems which review the work of the pastoral teams, including boarding.

- 4.3 Pupils throughout the school have an excellent moral awareness and a sense of honesty, fairness, and right and wrong, and this is reflected in their excellent behaviour around the school. The vast majority of parents in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the school successfully promotes good behaviour and encourages pupils to respect and have tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of spirituality and an understanding and appreciation of different faiths, which is reinforced through personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lessons, assemblies in the chapel and house meetings. Good behaviour of pupils is encouraged at all levels by the house point system which allows their achievements to be recognised. All three sections of the school make a point of celebrating pupils' success, including those pupils who are promoted to house and team captain positions and those who are elected to the school council. Pupils' involvement and behaviour in inter-house competitions is exemplary.
- 4.4 Pupils are fit and healthy as a result of developing good eating habits and taking regular exercise. Their active lifestyle is supported by the emphasis placed on physical fitness and topical PSHE and PE lessons, and by making good use of the sports hall facilities. Pupils are very supportive of each other and recognise that others may have particular needs or characteristics. They celebrate the successes of pupils with special needs or those whose first language is not English, as well as those who may be particularly talented or more able. The pupils' cultural and social development is significantly enhanced by older pupils taking part in overseas projects such as visits to Auschwitz, Germany and Spain, and by younger pupils attending residential and adventurous training trips. Pupils' effective contribution to the school and wider community was observed during the inspection in the form of drama and music rehearsals for the next school production, one that involved pupils across all age groups in the senior school.
- 4.5 Pupils appreciate the opportunities that they have for leadership and to take on responsibility, and they enjoy taking an active role in the school community. They are encouraged to seek out leadership opportunities at all ages in the school, whether it is as a team captain or as a member of the school council. Through community service work and their charitable fundraising, pupils at all levels in the school contribute to a range of local activities and raise funds for those who are less fortunate than themselves. The school council choose their own cause to support and these are often close to the heart of the school community or the pupils themselves, such as fundraising for the local hospice and collecting for foodbanks. Members of the school council have gained experience of listening to other people's views and ideas, and this year have suggested a number of improvements to the lunchtime dining arrangements which have been acted on.
- 4.6 Almost all pupils in their questionnaire responses indicated that they feel the school encourages them to behave well. The school succeeds in fulfilling its aim to work in partnership with parents to encourage their children to develop into young adults who are proud of their school, who achieve their potential, broaden their experience and become effective lifelong learners.