



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION**

**HARROGATE LADIES' COLLEGE**

**MARCH 2017**



## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>College</b>	Harrogate Ladies' College			
<b>DfE number</b>	815/6012			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	529579			
<b>Address</b>	Harrogate Ladies' College Clarence Drive Harrogate North Yorkshire HG1 2QG			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01423 504543			
<b>Email address</b>	enquire@hlc.org.uk			
<b>Principal</b>	Mrs Sylvia Brett			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Dr Angela Fahy			
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	535			
	<b>Boys</b>	103	<b>Girls</b>	432
	<b>Day pupils</b>	407	<b>Boarders</b>	128
	<b>EYFS</b>	82	<b>Prep</b>	188
	<b>Seniors</b>	164	<b>Sixth form</b>	101
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29 to 30 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 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, the chair of governors and with one other member of the governing body, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings, chapel and 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 Desmond Dunne	Reporting inspector
Fr Christopher Cann	Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mrs Jane Prescott	Team inspector (Headmistress, GSA school)
Dr Tracey Martin	Team inspector for boarding (Former senior teacher, HMC school)

## **CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>About the school</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>What the school seeks to do</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>About the pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Recommendations from previous inspections</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2 KEY FINDINGS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4 THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>8</b>

## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Harrogate Ladies' College is an independent day and boarding school for pupils aged from two to eighteen years. Originally founded in 1893, it has occupied its present site in Harrogate since 1904. The school is a registered charity comprising a family of three schools on the same campus: Bankfield which opened in 1995 and includes most of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for boys and girls aged between two and four; Highfield, the prep school for boys and girls aged four to eleven which includes the Reception class; and the senior school for girls aged eleven to eighteen. The school has four boarding houses. Three are mixed age houses for girls aged eleven to seventeen, and the fourth is a dedicated house for girls in Year 13.
- 1.2 All three parts of the school and boarding houses are overseen by the same governing body and led by the principal. Since the previous inspection the senior management of the school has changed, including the appointment of a new head at Highfield and a new EYFS leader at Bankfield.

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

- 1.3 The school's aim is to develop a deep passion for learning and a love of life. It also seeks to provide pupils with the freedom and confidence to be who they are, embrace new challenges, discover talents, respect themselves and others, and to understand the wider world. The school's values are trust, compassion and hard work.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.4 Most pupils are White British from North Yorkshire. About one-third of the senior school come from overseas, representing twenty-four different nationalities. Information provided by the school alongside nationally standardised test data indicate that the ability of the pupils in the EYFS, preparatory school and senior school is above the national average, and that of those in the sixth form is in line with the national average. The school has identified sixty-three pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One has an education, health and care plan. Some of these pupils require support with dyslexia and significant difficulties with speech, language and literacy. A total of ninety-eight pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) of whom fifty-four require and receive support, mostly in the senior school and sixth form.

- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names, except for the Reception class, differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Bankfield	Nursery
Prep 1 to 6	Years 1 to 6
Upper 3	Year 7
Lower 4	Year 8
Upper 4	Year 9
Lower 5	Year 10
Upper 5	Year 11
Lower 6	Year 12
Upper 6	Year 13

### **Recommendations from previous inspections**

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was an integrated inspection in May 2011. The recommendations from that inspection were:
- Ensure that all teaching reflects the qualities of the most stimulating, utilising the pupils' highly effective learning skills, and provides targets for improvement and, in the senior school, appropriate levels of challenge for the more able.
  - Improve management and communication in the EYFS by providing a cohesive and unified approach to the development of policy and procedures.
  - Undertake more formal monitoring of the EYFS and use the information gained to identify development priorities.
- 1.7 The recommendations of the intermediate boarding inspection January 2014 were:
- Implement the newly devised arrangements for the induction of boarding staff and appraisal of their boarding practice
  - Ensure that house self-reviews reflect a thorough understanding of the NMS and that house development plans are incorporated into whole school planning
  - Ensure that there are appropriate expectations of senior boarding staff so that initiatives can be implemented and responsibilities suitably delegated
- 1.8 The recommendation of the intermediate EYFS inspection in January 2014 was:
- Extend the children's independence by allowing them more time to solve problems and challenges on their own.
- 1.9 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous inspections. Further detail is given in the main text of the report.

## 2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Academic standards across the school are high.
- Pupils of all ages are confident, and articulate knowledge and understanding well.
- Pupils with SEND achieve in line with their classmates, and pupils with EAL make excellent progress to achieve in line with their abilities.
- Pupils achieve excellent standards and successes in group activities and individually in music, public speaking and sports.
- Pupils develop excellent study skills and take responsibility for their own learning.

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

- All members of the school community respect different faiths and cultures.
- Pupils develop excellent personal skills and enjoy working collaboratively.
- Pupils learn to mix with all age groups, relishing the many opportunities to work together in both house and school activities.
- Pupils contribute very strongly to the school and wider community, and are sensitive to the needs of others.

### Recommendations

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

- Ensuring greater consistency in the use of assessment data across all age groups to help individual pupils maximise their potential.
- Improve opportunities for pupils to use ICT and digital learning across the whole school.

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils of all ages develop a deep curiosity for learning and an enjoyment of life in accordance with the school's values of trust, compassion and hard work. Almost all parents in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses reported that they were highly satisfied with the education provided for their children, and that opportunities are offered for children to make good progress and to develop skills for the future. Pupils take pride in their work and responsibility for their own learning. A culture of high achievement pervades the school, with pupils very responsive to strong skills-based planning to investigate new topics and share their learning with others.
- 3.3 In the EYFS, children enter the school with broadly average ability. By the end of Reception the majority exceed age-related expectations across the range of areas of development. They develop their fine and gross motor skills as a result of well-planned learning with enjoyable and well-structured activities. Children are adept at mark making and painting. They develop a good pincher grip when using readily accessible writing materials, leading on to excellent progress in writing skills. They use the independence of free play to enable more time to solve problems and challenges on their own. For example, Reception class children were challenged to build an emergency vehicle and did so with enthusiasm and creativity. Children can explain the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes such as squares, rectangles and cylinders. They are also able to count objects beyond ten by selecting appropriate numerals.
- 3.4 The preparatory school does not take part in National Curriculum tests, but the available evidence from school information and work scrutiny displays attainment in reading, writing, spelling, mathematics and science to be above national age-related expectations. Pupils develop their knowledge and subject-specific skills as they move through the school due to excellent planning that ensures teaching for different abilities make at least good progress. Pupils know their individual targets and work hard to achieve them, supported by an assessment system that provides them and their teachers with the information they need. The school is developing its use of standardised data to link performance more closely to national norms.
- 3.5 Preparatory school pupils have good investigative skills. For example, pupils in a Year 4 English lesson explained what they had researched about wolves and whether or not they hunt in packs. They then tested truth claims about this topic from different internet websites. Prep pupils are confident mathematicians who apply their knowledge to real life situations such as estimating costs and calculating change, and to the wider curriculum, especially in geography and science. Some classes demonstrate a good level of competence in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum, particularly in the use of the internet for research and of handheld devices for filming and photographing their work. The use of digital learning in this way is inconsistently used elsewhere.

- 3.6 The following analysis for the senior school uses the national data for 2013 to 2015, which are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results at GCSE and IGCSE are above the national average for maintained schools and demonstrate consistent progress in relation to the pupils' starting points. The numbers taking A-level examinations in the sixth form across a range of subjects are too small to enable reliable comparison with national norms. The evidence available indicates that individuals in the sixth form make at least appropriate progress in relation to their starting points. Over the previous three years most pupils have gained places at university, the majority at their first choice of institution.
- 3.7 Pupils across the school have a well-developed ability to communicate their thoughts and ideas clearly and coherently. Children in the EYFS have the opportunity for role play; they enrich their learning when visiting their doctors' surgery corner to make appointments and write prescriptions. Prep school pupils' level of competency in communication is excellent. They readily put forward or defend an opinion confidently. The strong performance culture which is exemplified with high levels of success in recent public speaking events celebrates these skills most effectively with house points, and certificates and mentions in assembly. Senior school pupils and sixth formers are articulate and confident speakers, and use technical language with ease. They carefully extract relevant information from written text. For example, pupils in an English lesson were able to read extracts from their set texts fluently.
- 3.8 Senior school pupils apply their scientific and mathematical skills well when they are faced with challenging problems. They confidently manipulate equations to solve problems and use higher-order analytical skills when interpreting data. Pupils are successful across a range of subjects at a variety of levels, including sixth form textiles. Opportunities for the use of ICT are developing, such as the establishment of a small club for computer coding. There are also instances of pupils using their mobile phones to record answers to questions, which they then play to their partner in lower senior school languages classes. The co-ordinated use of ICT across the curriculum at this level is inconsistent.
- 3.9 A few parents' questionnaire responses expressed dissatisfaction with how the school meets the educational needs of their children, particularly in the preparatory school. A small minority of pupils across the school stated in their responses that they do not find their lessons interesting and that marking is not as helpful as it could be. The inspection found that in the great majority of lessons, pupils enjoy and respond positively to teaching that is well matched to their ability. In interview, pupils expressed a strong appreciation of the large amount of extra support which they feel is always on offer from their teachers. Work scrutiny demonstrates that marking of pupils' work is in line with the whole-school policy, and pupils commented upon the usefulness of teachers' feedback to aid their progress.
- 3.10 Those pupils who require support for SEND or EAL attain standards equivalent to their classmates at all levels. They actively seek support from staff through one-to-one and small group support sessions. Schemes of work across all subjects refer to those with EAL or SEND, and pupils with particular gifts or talents. New arrivals at the school make excellent progress, particularly those with EAL. Pupils with EAL make rapid strides in learning English and settling into the school. More able pupils in the preparatory school are successful, with some achieving 100 per cent success in public speaking examinations. Those in the senior school who are more able have opportunities to excel; Year 9 mathematics pupils were observed working on GCSE A-grade questions with A\* standard extension work, and more able Year 11 mathematicians are offered the opportunity to study further mathematics.
- 3.11 The development of the pupils' study skills is excellent, with a wide range of opportunities both in the curriculum and in extension activities and clubs to promote independent learning. Pupils

analyse their own and each other's work effectively and hypothesise confidently. Senior pupils and sixth formers have well-developed study skills for their age and are able to draw on a wide range of resource material in both individual and collaborative work.

- 3.12 Senior leadership restructuring enables effective checks on roles and responsibilities across the school. As a result, pupil underperformance is beginning to be quickly identified and remedied throughout the school by careful tracking of their progress, similar to that used by senior school teachers and subject leaders. Pupils' focus on continual improvement in some subject areas means that they respond positively to challenges and focus on high achievement. The school is aware of good practice, and leaders are looking at ways of sharing this across all staff. It has also successfully fulfilled recommendations made in previous full inspection and in those focusing on the EYFS and boarding.
- 3.13 The school is successful in competitions at local, regional and national levels. Its chapel choir were runners up in a national choral competition. The school currently holds the division 2 national championship in lacrosse, and individual pupils have been selected for national representation in netball and Paralympic swimming. Girls participate in local girls' football and rugby teams. In each of these cases the pupils' individual talents and interests are nurtured by the school, and opportunities are identified for the pupils to continue developing their special gifts and talents.
- 3.14 A very positive culture of learning permeates the school. Even the youngest pupils recognise that they must take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils of all ages demonstrate high levels of initiative and independence in their studies. They display very positive attitudes towards learning; they work happily and effectively in groups and take responsibility for their progress in the many opportunities they have for independent research. Pupils in the senior school settle quickly in class and are keen to learn. They work just as well with each other or in whole-class settings as they do individually, and they are very mature about deciding how they will work best. Pupils willingly take on roles that allow them to demonstrate excellent leadership skills, and enjoy the camaraderie with pupils of all ages in house music and drama events. Older pupils in particular want to do well and use their study time effectively to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. Sixth formers appreciate the availability of study rooms to further their learning opportunities. They feel well prepared for university life.

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 The school provides a consistently nurturing culture which allows pupils to develop self-confidence, embrace new challenges, discover talents, respect themselves and others, and understand the wider world. The overwhelming majority of parents agreed that the school actively promotes the values of democracy, respect and tolerance; supervises their children in well-maintained premises and accommodation; and provides a suitable range of subjects. Most parents were pleased with how the school cares for their children. The school has addressed fully the areas identified in previous inspections by ensuring that boarding practice and development has been incorporated into whole-school strategic development planning, through self-review. Boarding induction and boarding staff appraisals have been aligned with those of the whole-school staff.
- 4.3 A few pupils' questionnaire responses indicated dissatisfaction with the careers advice provided by the school. During formal interviews, senior pupils and sixth formers made it clear that they are especially pleased with the guidance on careers and the support with university choices. The inspection found that the school works hard to ensure that each transition stage is well supported for the pupils and that they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives. Sixth formers make appropriate decisions about university applications, using the appropriate information provided. Pupils are confident in improving their own work and performance, following excellent advice and pastoral support from teachers. The maturity demonstrated by the pupils reflects the care taken by governance and leadership which place the safety and well-being of the pupils at the centre of all decisions taken.
- 4.4 Pupils have a clear understanding of the spiritual dimension and the significance of non-material aspects of life. The strong Christian ethos of the school ensures that pupils are provided with many opportunities to develop in these areas. For example, chapel services ensure that time for reflection and the themes each week enable pupils to think deeply about topics such as perseverance and the religious meaning of Holy Week. Children in the EYFS celebrated 'Easter bonnet parade' during the inspection, and a donkey visited the chapel the previous week as part of their learning about Palm Sunday. Pupils learn about the celebration of Islamic and Hindu festivals from their international classmates who organise services in the memorial hall.
- 4.5 Pupils have a very strong sense of what is right and wrong. They respect laws and appreciate that these are designed for the good of all. Pupils know and respect the school's rules and recognise the importance of taking responsibility for their own actions while also respecting the opinions of others. Pupils in the preparatory school value the 'fresh start every day' approach and know how lapses in behaviour can affect the learning of the rest of the class. A small number of parents raised concerns about the communication of information about events and their children's performance and progress, no inspection evidence was found to support this view. Parents receive frequent communication and an open-door policy is evident in discussions between staff and parents. The complaints record displays that no concerns reached higher action levels set out in the policy in the past two years. The recorded complaints received have been resolved.

- 4.6 In responses to questionnaires pupils and a small number of parents said that the school had not dealt with bullying effectively or for the pupils, teachers treated them fairly. Formal interviews and informal discussions with pupils together with scrutiny of records indicated that disciplinary measures are appropriate and implemented in line with stated procedures. Such evidence also demonstrated that although occasions of misunderstanding do inevitably occur, mostly amongst Year 9 and 10 girls, bullying and misbehaviour are not judged to be cause for concern.
- 4.7 Pupils enjoy working collaboratively to achieve common goals or solve problems. Those in the senior school spoke of how much they enjoyed designing a doorway for Christmas, while Year 6 pupils are highly valued as buddies by pupils in Reception. The development of pupils' strong teamwork skills is promoted through many different activities including sports, participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and in school drama and music productions. Pupils expressed that the house system enables all age groups to see, come to know by name and befriend others outside of their specific year groups. House captains in school and in boarding support younger pupils by helping them make a positive contribution to activities. Senior pupils said that their views and opinions are encouraged and discussed when new topics are introduced in assemblies and at form time. Three pupils sit on the Harrogate Youth Council, one as the chair. Pupils undertake a whole range of fundraising activities to support their chosen charities, which illustrates their strong awareness of the needs of the more vulnerable in society.
- 4.8 Pupils in the preparatory school sponsor children in Uganda as part of a school-wide project, demonstrating a keen awareness of those less fortunate than themselves. They are keen to learn about other faiths and cultures, and display sensitivity and tolerance to those from different backgrounds and traditions. In Year 6, pupils talked enthusiastically about their religious education topic work on Buddhism. Pupils of all ages and abilities are highly respectful and value one another as unique individuals. Pupils in the senior school demonstrate pride in their own cultures along with a deep respect of those from other cultural traditions. Social events organised in the boarding houses involve pupils from all backgrounds and cultures. Pupils communicated great warmth and sensitivity about their work with local Syrian refugees when attending local charity 'Tea & Talk' sessions. The school values highly its international dimension. Pupils spoke admiringly of the way overseas pupils worked to learn English and quickly settle into school. The inclusion committee which consists of pupils and is supported by staff organised an international celebration of school cultures and an International Women's Day, where one pupil said: 'Don't be afraid to be an individual'. The school champions diversity and individuality across all age groups.
- 4.9 Almost all pupils who completed the pupil questionnaire reported that they know how to keep themselves safe on the internet and other situations that present risks after participating in a detailed programme on e-safety, which they said was informative, and from personal, social and health education lessons. Preparatory school pupils understand and support all the measures and daily routines that are in place to ensure their safety. Pupils throughout the school understand the importance of taking responsibility for both their mental and physical health as part of a healthy and balanced lifestyle, particularly in regard to diet and regular exercise. Younger pupils take plenty of outdoor exercise, and older ones participate in a wide range of sports and exercise activities.

- 4.10 Main school meals are enjoyed by everyone, a healthy choice is offered and pupils make sensible selections. A minority of boarder's questionnaire responses indicated that food is of insufficient quality and quantity, and those interviewed suggested that this is particularly the case at weekends. The school's own recent survey had generated similar information, and the food committee consisting of pupils and staff is working on solutions. A small minority of boarders also said that the balance of free time in the evenings and at weekends is insufficient, with concerns about settling in and contacting friends and family. Parents of boarders do not support these views, and boarders' concerns in interview were more about the quality of wireless connections when contacting home. A small minority raised concerns about security of personal possessions; inspection evidence did not support this view as all boarders are provided with a lockable drawer in their room and a house safe if required. Observation of boarders at an evening party for a staff member who was leaving demonstrated that boarders are disciplined in the way they share facilities, clear kitchens after cooking snacks and tidy common rooms.
- 4.11 Pupils demonstrate a firm grounding about what it is like to be citizens in modern Britain and say that they are well equipped for their future lives. They have an excellent appreciation of the wide range of cultures within the school, are supported by a part time chaplain and become mature young people.