



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION**

**TRURO SCHOOL PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

**JUNE 2017**



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### SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Truro School Preparatory School			
<b>DfE number</b>	908/6086			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	306576			
<b>Address</b>	Truro School Preparatory School Highertown Truro Cornwall TR1 3QN			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01872 272616			
<b>Email address</b>	preenquiries@truroschoool.com			
<b>Headmistress</b>	Miss Sarah Patterson			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Kim Conchie			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	247			
	<b>Boys</b>	151	<b>Girls</b>	96
	<b>Pre-prep including EYFS</b>	101	<b>Prep</b>	146
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14 to 15 June 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 form times and assemblies. Inspectors visited 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 Graham Gorton	Reporting inspector
Mr Martin Morris	Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mrs Hilary Wyatt	Team inspector (Headmistress, ISA school)

## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Truro School Preparatory School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged 3 to 11 years. It is the preparatory school of Truro School, which is a co-educational senior school located around three miles away. The preparatory school was established in 1936 at Treliske. Originally a boys' school, it became co-educational in 1989. The current headmistress was appointed in September 2016.
- 1.2 Truro School is part of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust, with authority of governance being devolved to a local governing body, which also oversees the senior school. Most pupils transfer to the senior school at the age of 11 years.

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

- 1.3 The school aims to challenge, inspire and support its pupils to become individuals who aspire to excellence in the development of their academic and other abilities. It seeks to teach pupils to become creative, thoughtful and responsible, to seek the truth through reason and discussion, and to be aware of their obligations to others and to wider society.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is above average. The school has identified 11 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. Thirteen pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), two of whom receive additional support for their English. Data used by the school has identified 45 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them. There are also a number of pupils identified for their special talents in sport, music, art or drama.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## 2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils display outstanding achievements in a wide variety of areas, especially in outdoor education, that prepare them well for the next stage of their education.
- The ability of the pupils to verbalise their thoughts and ideas, to reason and to discuss is exceptional.
- Pupils' numeracy skills are excellent.
- Pupils show superb attitudes towards learning and every aspect of school life is expertly modelled by the school staff.

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

- The pupils' spiritual development, which centres on their sense of belonging and feeling in tune with their environment, is exceptional.
- Pupils show a natural, heartfelt and excellent respect for one another and towards different faiths and cultures.
- The moral development of the pupils is outstanding as shown through their excellent behaviour and manners.
- Pupils enjoy working together and they support one another, appreciating and celebrating each other's successes.

### Recommendations

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

- Further develop pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills to support other areas of learning, particularly when undertaking research.

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils demonstrate a great depth of understanding across the curriculum. They possess a strong, secure knowledge in many subjects and are able to apply such knowledge extremely well. Scientific skills are excellent, particularly relating to practical work. Pupils demonstrate a high level of attainment in both graphic and dramatic arts. Artwork throughout the school, from the wonderful tones of green and underwater displays in the pre-prep to the stained-glass windows in the conservatory dining room, shows a high level of artistic competency. Much of the three-dimensional artwork is exceptional. The pupils' competency in the dramatic arts is also very strong as evidenced by the moving and highly professional performance of *The Lion King* that was produced at the end of the last school year. Pre-prep pupils perform confidently, revealing great potential in even the youngest children. The singing by the choir, who are due to represent the county in an upcoming international festival, is outstanding. Pupils' skills in design and technology are particularly strong and their work is supported by access to a well-equipped workshop where pupils have the opportunity to make their own bird boxes, boats or radios or design and make a working kit car as part of a collaborative project. Younger children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) make excellent use of the outdoor areas to strengthen their skills and are able to select activities that strengthen their physical, creative and imaginative play. This fully meets a recommendation from the previous inspection.
- 3.3 Pupils celebrate substantial success in many areas of school life, ranging from art, music and drama to sport and outdoor pursuits. This is because the school provides wide-ranging and considerable opportunities to pupils to participate and improve. Team and individual successes in sport are strong in areas such as netball, tennis and fencing. Older pupils extend their talents by participating in specific awards, such as the John Muir award, which focuses on environmental awareness and associated projects, and the Sports Leaders UK National Playmaker Award, which strengthens pupils' sporting prowess and leadership qualities. Pupils leave the school supported by a raft of achievements that prepares them well for their move to the senior school. Every parent who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the school offered a suitable range of activities for their child, and an overwhelming majority of pupils said that they can be involved in a good range of activities. An overwhelming majority of parents also felt that that the teaching enables their child to make good progress and develop skills for the future.
- 3.4 Pupils are confident and demonstrate excellent communication skills, which they apply to all areas of their learning. This is because pupils of all ages and abilities are encouraged to present their work in many different and engaging ways through numerous whole school and class initiatives, such as the house writing competition and the Year 6 Diploma and Leaving Project. In class, pupils listen carefully to each other and show huge respect for one another's views. Children's listening skills in the EYFS are excellent, as shown when they try to distinguish the sounds of letters and identify rhymes. Pupils communicate verbally with confidence within the classroom and can bring forward ideas and explain concepts with clarity and accuracy. For example, when discussing poetry, older pupils speak eloquently about how emotions are stirred by the language and structure of the poem, and they include humour and sadness with skill. Reading skills throughout the school are excellent. The development of pupils' reading is supported by the excellent paired reading sessions where older children in the school work alongside their younger counterparts, with mutually beneficial outcomes.
- 3.5 The development of pupils' numeracy skills is excellent due to imaginative and well-paced lessons. The youngest children learn how to use real coins to purchase their own snack, and number displays and practical scenarios, such as jewel counting in the underwater world, help



them to develop strong early competency in their understanding of numeracy. Older pupils say that teachers make maths fun. Recent initiatives, such as the 'times tables challenge', have had a positive impact on pupil outcomes in mathematics. For example, less able pupils demonstrate that they are able to measure accurately and use the concept of ratios to draw scaled maps. Older pupils demonstrate an extensive appetite for mathematical learning and, when challenged appropriately, love to extend their learning and skills base. For example, exceptional mental arithmetic skills were shown by more able pupils as they skilfully used a given set of numbers to find a final amount.

- 3.6 Pupils' attitudes to learning are exceptional. Pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND or EAL and the more able, enjoy developing their knowledge, skills and understanding. This is because every pupil is made to feel valued and confident that they can succeed through the excellent support offered by teachers, and the appreciation of the success of pupils by their peers. Pupils of all ages collaborate effectively with each other, and are given scope to think for themselves and to work independently on a variety of projects. Projects such as the school diploma and the end of year film making for the oldest pupils encourage and enable pupils to think for themselves, and the 'Lion's Lair' competition develops inventiveness and the art of rhetoric as pupils try and sell their ideas to their teachers and peers. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning, and are proud of their school and of each other. The school is entirely successful in meeting its aims to challenge, inspire and support each and every pupil.
- 3.7 The development of pupils' study skills at the school is excellent, and the school meets its aim to develop pupils' learning through reason and discussion extremely well. Older pupils demonstrated significant higher-order thinking skills as they confidently matched cards that linked text, titles and pictures about the solar system. Children in the EYFS showed that they can successfully evaluate the game they had learnt and offer suggestions as to how it could be improved. Younger pupils demonstrate an ability to analyse their learning, be evaluative and to seek ways to improve. They develop their thinking skills through the extensive outdoor learning project that gives even the youngest children the opportunity to explore the great outdoors and to answer questions such as, 'Is the sky always blue?' and 'How do plants drink?' Such thinking is built upon most successfully as the pupils move through the school and strengthen their abilities to become independent thinkers who challenge and question, thus developing their extensive bank of skills. In science lessons, pupils are encouraged to devise plans to investigate, make predictions and evaluate their results. Teaching encourages a spirit of enquiry in lessons throughout the school.
- 3.8 The school does not take part in National Curriculum tests, but the available evidence from the school's own assessment data, lesson observation, and scrutiny of pupils' work shows attainment to be above, and, in some cases, well above, national age-related expectations. EYFS results show that the number of children reaching, and in many cases exceeding, the learning goals is significantly above the national average. Pupils of all ages speak confidently about their work and are proud of the improvements they have made over time spent at school. This was reflected in the questionnaires, where almost all pupils felt that the school gave them the opportunity to learn and make good progress. Pupils are full of praise for the teachers who they say make lessons fun, know them well and support their learning. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with SEND or EAL and the more able, make progress that is at least good, and often excellent. There are no discernible differences in the levels of progress between different recognised groups within the school. Pupils' learning and progress is supported by the rigorous and thorough systems in place for monitoring and tracking pupil achievement that are used effectively by staff to tailor their teaching to pupils' needs. The curriculum is carefully monitored by school leaders, who maintain an excellent focus on the stages of academic transition across the school, ensuring that a recommendation from the previous inspection is met fully.

- 3.9 Pupils are competent in their use of ICT, and enjoy using technology to support their learning. Younger pupils use the interactive whiteboards successfully and develop a confidence in using the available resources. Older pupils show competency in using a variety of programs such as those for word processing, presentations and coding. When the opportunity is afforded, pupils show how they can effectively apply their ICT skills, as they did in humanities when undertaking personal projects on the history of Truro. However, pupils do not always use ICT to full effect to support other areas of learning, particularly for individual research.

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 The ethos of the school permeates every aspect of school life and ensures that pupils develop an excellent spiritual understanding. Pupils demonstrate an outstanding appreciation for the world and their environment because they are afforded frequent opportunities to marvel at its wonders, diversity and beauty. The pupils' understanding of nature is an outstanding feature of their personal development. Throughout the day, the pupils' spirituality is heightened in a variety of ways. Pupils feel in touch with their environment, reflecting that if they do not respect nature, they will have nowhere to go to be peaceful and calm. Children respond sensitively and really appreciate being in such an uplifting place.
- 4.3 The respect and understanding pupils show toward those of other faiths and cultures are excellent. They fully appreciate that everyone has the same rights and deserves to be judged on their own merits rather than other criteria. Pupils respect and value diversity within society, show respect for and appreciation of their own and other cultures, and demonstrate sensitivity and tolerance to those from different backgrounds and traditions. These qualities are encouraged through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, visits from parents representing different backgrounds, the celebration of world cultural events and visiting speakers. The school rules, produced through a collaborative effort between staff and pupils, encourage the pupils to treat others as they would want to be treated themselves, with respect, tolerance and kindness. In the questionnaire, every pupil who responded felt that the school encourages them to respect other people. The vast majority of parents also felt that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 4.4 The moral development of the pupils is exceptional and is a significant strength of the school. The respect that pupils show toward each other and the school community as a whole engenders a calm, productive atmosphere throughout. Pupils demonstrate an appreciation of the importance of good behaviour, manners and courtesy. They have a deep understanding of the differences between right and wrong and the value of putting others first. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, as seen in lessons and activities where pupils followed instructions promptly and remain focused and engaged. This has a clear and tangible impact on both their learning and their personal development. In their questionnaires, a vast majority of pupils felt that the school encourages them to behave well and most parents felt that the school actively promotes good behaviour.
- 4.5 Pupils display excellent social awareness. They work very well with each other and are eager to celebrate and appreciate the success of others. As well as working successfully as individuals, pupils are also able to work very well within teams to solve problems and complete projects. Pupils say that they see the school as being like one big happy family where all members of the community feel involved and valued. The pupils' social horizons are broadened through regular visitors to the school, such as authors, drumming groups, theatre groups and Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) representatives. Similarly, the trips out of school allow the pupils to learn in a variety of ways that help to give a breadth of experience to benefit everyone. The excellence in the pupils' personal development stems from the outstanding leadership and management of the school. School leaders place the pupils at the heart of everything they undertake, with the result that the aims of the school are fully met.
- 4.6 Pupils' contribution to the lives of others is excellent. The work of the school council is central to the charity fund-raising undertaken by the school each term. Pupils are most willing to contribute and participate in activities for the benefit of others. They rise to the responsibilities they are given. For example, the oldest pupils organise events and support groups of younger

- pupils, through roles such as playground monitors. Pupils' understanding of being part of a wider community is exceptional. They carry out beach cleaning projects as part of the school's environmental project and collect for a local foodbank. Pupils benefit from, and contribute to, community links such as visiting a local Methodist home for the elderly.
- 4.7 Pupils' understanding of how to stay safe and how to be physically and mentally healthy is outstanding. Their development is enabled by a detailed PSHE scheme of work that includes mindfulness and meditation, providing the pupils with the tools to deal with stress. The pupils' understanding of safety is strengthened through visits from other speakers to the school, such as firemen and lifeguards. Pupils' understanding of how to keep safe and avoid risks develops strongly from wider curricular provision such as life-saving training in Year 5. Children learn how to stay safe through the outdoor education programme and the fresh food that is provided on site encourages pupils to make healthy eating choices. Pupils understand the importance of keeping fit and this is supported extremely well through the wide range of sporting activities. Pupils show a keen understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and appreciate the need to keep safe and follow guidelines that would help to ensure their safety, whether this is in the design and technology (DT) workshop or at the swimming pool.
- 4.8 Pupils are competent decision makers. They are adept at selecting materials for projects and can understand how the right, or indeed, wrong choices, will impact on the end result. This is because they are given space and freedom to think for themselves, and to make their own decisions about their learning. The younger pupils take their ballot choices about golden time very seriously. Through the auspices of the school council, pupils chose items of sports equipment to purchase on behalf of the whole school and organise their own fund-raising events. Sports leaders design the sports day for the youngest pupils and run the event, supported by the staff, showing maturity of the highest order when decisions need to be made to ensure a successful event.
- 4.9 Pupils have excellent levels of self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-confidence and resilience. They understand how to improve their own learning and performance, so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives. Pupils are encouraged to share ideas, to support one another, to appreciate success of others, and to evaluate their own learning. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what is required to succeed through clear targets, which are generated by pupils and teachers. High expectations and aspirations enable pupils to learn most effectively, and engender very strong resilience in the pupils. The school's ethos is evident in every aspect. The pupils embody the school motto 'to be rather than seem to be'. They have confidence in being just who they are. In the questionnaire, most parents felt that the school promotes an environment which successfully supports their child's personal development.