



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

LINGFIELD NOTRE DAME

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Lingfield Notre Dame

Full Name of School	Lingfield Notre Dame		
DfE Number	936/6255		
EYFS Number	EY392491		
Registered Charity Number	295598		
Address	Lingfield Notre Dame Racecourse Road Lingfield Surrey RH7 6PH		
Telephone Number	01342 832 407		
Fax Number	01342 836 048		
Email Address	office@lingfieldnotredame.co.uk		
Principal	Mrs Nuala Shepley		
Chair of Governors	Mr Paul Yeates		
Age Range	2 ½ to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	829		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (416 boys; 413 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-3 (EYFS):	3	5-11: 235
	3-5 (EYFS):	88	11-18: 503
Head of EYFS Setting	Ms Dawn Wild		
EYFS Gender	Mixed		
Inspection dates	22 Mar 2011 to 23 Mar 2011		

PREFACE

This report is according to the *Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) schedule for INTERIM inspections*. The inspection is a two-day visit with a focus on compliance with regulatory requirements. ISI inspections occur every three years and have two formats, interim and standard, which usually occur in an alternating pattern. The school's next inspection will therefore follow the standard schedule, which includes two visits totalling five days and places greater emphasis on the quality of education and care in addition to reporting on regulatory compliance. The school's previous inspection was in January 2007.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31st August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Lingfield Notre Dame School is a co-educational day school for pupils aged from 2½ to 18. It is situated on the outskirts of the village of Lingfield, in the south-east corner of Surrey. The school was initially founded in 1940 by the School Sisters of Notre Dame as a convent boarding school for girls. The junior school for pupils up to the age of 11, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), is located on an adjoining site to the senior school. The school functions as one school.
- 1.2 The school aims to enable its pupils to achieve high academic standards in a relaxed, but disciplined atmosphere, to develop self worth in every student and to promote traditional values in a nurturing environment. The school is an educational foundation, a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity administered by trustees and an appointed board of governors.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection there has been further development of accommodation on both sites, and further investment has been made in information and communications technology (ICT).
- 1.4 At the time of the inspection, there were 829 pupils on roll, of whom 91 were in the EYFS. Standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the junior school is above the national average, with pupils demonstrating a wide range of abilities. The ability profile of the senior school to GCSE is above the national average. The majority of pupils demonstrate ability which is at least above average with very few being of below average ability. A significant proportion of pupils have far above average ability. The ability profile of the sixth form remains slightly above the national average, but with a wider spread of abilities represented than in Years 7 to 11. The school reflects the diversity of ethnic and cultural backgrounds of Surrey. Most of the pupils come from professional or business backgrounds.
- 1.5 The school has identified 60 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), of whom 24 are provided with learning support. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs (SEN). All pupils have English as their first language. Most pupils proceed to the senior school in Year 7 and all pupils continue with their education post-16.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and basic skills

- 2.1 In line with the school's aims, achievement is good at each stage. The school succeeds in its aim to enable pupils to achieve high standards. Writing is of a high standard; pupils read well, are articulate and listen attentively. Logical thinking is widely evident and pupils are highly creative, particularly in the arts. Pupils use their mathematical skills well, and are confident with ICT. Pupils achieve outstandingly in a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as sport, music and the arts. They are successful in national mathematics challenges and in speech, drama and graded musical instrument examinations. Pupils excel in charitable fund raising. Sixth form students are successful in university entrance.
- 2.2 Academic attainment is well above average at each stage. Pupils do not take national tests at age 7 or 11, but inspection findings, such as pupils' positive responses to the demanding curriculum and challenging teaching, indicate that attainment is well above average. GCSE and A-level performance is above the national average for maintained schools, and similar to the national average for maintained selective schools, with a high percentage of the highest grades at both levels. Pupils of all ages make good progress relative to pupils of similar ability.
- 2.3 Pupils exhibit very positive attitudes to their learning. Their concentration is excellent, they are highly conscientious and their behaviour is exemplary. They enjoy taking the initiative and are often highly organised. Pupils work effectively together and independently.
- 2.4 The school provides a good curriculum. The junior school curriculum caters effectively for pupils' linguistic development and literacy receives substantial emphasis. In response to the recommendation from the previous inspection, more time is now given to developing handwriting. In the senior school, pupils benefit from a challenging range of subjects including the opportunity to study separate sciences to the age of sixteen. Technological subjects are taught on rotation so that all pupils experience a range of technological activities. The humanities provide well for human and social understanding and a wide range of arts and sports enables pupils to develop their aesthetic, creative and physical skills. A generous range of GCSE and A-level optional subjects is offered. The school responded well to the recommendation from the previous inspection to strengthen curriculum liaison between junior and senior schools. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is closely matched to each stage of the pupils' development. Their experiences are further enriched through many educational visits. The range of extra-curricular activities is wide and is popular with the pupils and enables pupils to extend their education beneficially. Most take part in at least one activity. Pupils particularly enjoy the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme in the senior school, and public speaking.
- 2.5 Learning support is well organised. Pupils' learning needs are thoroughly analysed, suitable plans are made and appropriate help is provided. Provision for pupils identified as gifted and talented has made a good start; pupils have been identified and some teachers provide additional challenges, and some extra-curricular activities are provided for them in both parts of the school.

- 2.6 The overall quality of teaching is good and usually ensures that pupils achieve the high standards of which they are capable, but a wide variation exists across the school. The most successful teaching is carefully organised and thoroughly planned but less successful teaching does not always fully meet the needs of all pupils. Varied activities engage the pupils, and facilitate progress and the achievement of ambitious standards. Teaching usually exhibits good subject knowledge which inspires pupils' confidence. Resources are generally used effectively, but an over-reliance on worksheets limits achievement in the humanities in the junior school. Teachers provide good spoken feedback which pupils find helpful. Regular testing and the analysis of pupil performance data enable pupils' progress to be closely monitored. Throughout the school teachers' marking varies from outstanding to adequate and does not always provide pupils with sufficient guidance as to how to improve their work.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.7 Pupils exhibit excellent personal development. The school achieves its aim to promote the pupils' self-worth in a nurturing environment. Pupils show a keen awareness of the non-material aspects of life. They are confident, assured young people who demonstrate a keen awareness of the needs of others. They are kind and considerate to each other and uphold the ethos of the school. Pupils have knowledge of the diversity of faiths, and in assemblies show a good understanding of bigger questions such as, in a senior school assembly during the inspection, what it means to be a hero. Their moral awareness is outstanding. They demonstrate an acute understanding of the plight of those less fortunate than themselves and organise numerous charitable fundraising activities. Moral issues, often emerging from current affairs, are debated and pupils articulate well informed, mature views. They are socially adept, willing and able in executing duties as prefects, monitors, sports or house captains. They show mature attitudes in the discussion and decision making in the school council. They demonstrate high levels of knowledge and understanding of a wide range of cultures.
- 2.8 Throughout the school pastoral care is outstanding. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent; pupils have considerable confidence in their class or form tutors and know that they can turn to them for help. Measures to reduce bullying and harassment have been successful. Rewards and sanctions are known and respected and generally fairly applied. Safeguarding policies and procedures are exemplary and staff have received appropriate training. Communication with welfare agencies is secure. Pupils' health and safety, including fire safety, are ensured and risk assessments are thorough. Pupils benefit from the high quality meals provided and take plenty of exercise to develop healthy lifestyles. Admission and attendance registers are properly completed and stored. Provision for pupils who are ill, though adequate, is not of the same high standard as other facilities. The school has a suitable plan to improve access for disabled people.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.9 The school benefits from good governance, which ensures that the school achieves its aims. The board of trustees has overall responsibility and the governors provide them with useful advice. Governors are linked to departments and visit regularly; relationships are very positive. Heads of department give presentations periodically to keep governors informed. Some governor training has been attended and in-house arrangements are in place for the induction of new governors. A strategic development plan guides the overall direction of the school well; the school has

generous human and material resources and excellent accommodation. Progress in relation to planning is closely monitored. A constructive and supportive dialogue exists between governors and members of the senior management team. The governors acknowledge the need for closer oversight of the central register of appointments and have taken suitable steps to improve this.

- 2.10 Good leadership and management ensure that the school meets its ambitious aims. A very positive ethos is evident with a strong focus on all-round achievement; morale is high. The school development planning process has been instrumental in effecting school improvement, and policies and procedures guide the school effectively. However, teachers do not always adhere to the marking policies. Suitably qualified members of staff have been appointed and safer recruitment procedures are thorough. Performance appraisal enables teachers to improve their effectiveness. Overall, the systems to monitor aspects of the school's activities are efficient; however, they have permitted the overuse of worksheets in humanities in the junior school and an inconsistency in the quality of marking. In the senior school the inconsistency in marking has been identified and is receiving active attention. Several omissions in the central register of appointments were rectified during the inspection. The premises and accommodation are outstanding; classrooms are matched to their purposes, equipment is of high standard with up-to-date ICT resources, and equipment is in plentiful supply. The grounds provide a magnificent setting.
- 2.11 The school maintains excellent relationships with parents and this strong partnership is beneficial to the pupils. Close communication is maintained and high quality reports and regular newsletters are informative. Parents' concerns are dealt efficiently in accordance with the school policy. The parents' association is highly supportive of the school. The response to the parents' questionnaire was very positive. Parents are particularly pleased with the progress their children make, the range of subjects and areas of experience provided. Parents of pupils and prospective pupils are provided with all the required information by the school. A few were concerned about the provision of worthwhile help for those pupils requiring learning support and the provision for pupils identified as gifted or talented, and about the range of extra-curricular activities and the opportunities they had to be involved in the life and work of the school. These concerns were not corroborated by inspection findings.
- 2.12 The response to the pupils' questionnaire was generally positive. Pupils feel that they can join in a good range of extra-curricular activities and that the school encourages them to do things for themselves. Some pupils had concerns about homework, particularly in Years 7 to 11, but it is not excessive. Contrary to some pupils' views, plenty of opportunities are provided for them to take responsibility and their opinions are taken into account by the school.

3. ACTION POINTS

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 3.1 The school meets all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 3.2 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Across the school, improve the consistency of teachers' marking, and monitor it more rigorously.
 2. In the junior school, make less use of printed worksheets, particularly in the humanities.
 3. In the EYFS, provide appropriate facilities where children under three who stay all day can sleep if they wish.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

4.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.1 This outstanding setting fulfils its aim of providing a safe, secure environment where children can play, explore, experiment, develop confidence, be curious and learn. Children's welfare, learning and development needs are exceptionally well met by caring staff, inspirational teaching, and stimulating, open-ended experiences, recognizing the uniqueness of each child. The EYFS benefits from access to the school's many facilities, including support from subject specialists from the junior school. Considerable development, particularly of the outside area, since the last inspection demonstrates a commitment to improvement, driven by strong leadership and effective teamwork. Further ambitious plans for the future are outlined in the junior school development plan.

4.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Safe recruitment procedures ensure the suitability of staff, and comprehensive policies, including robust risk assessments, are implemented effectively to safeguard children. Staff actively promote equality so that all children, irrespective of background, ability or need, achieve well. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed an overwhelmingly positive view of all aspects of the provision, particularly the many opportunities they have to participate in children's learning. Careful monitoring by senior managers ensures the effective use of plentiful resources, including excellent deployment of staff, and effectively identifies clear priorities for improvement. Close liaison with local agencies provides valuable support and access to a wide range of training. Collaborations with other settings, enabling the sharing of best practice, are in the early stages of development.

4.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.3 The quality of provision in the EYFS, including for children under three, is outstanding. Indoor and outdoor facilities are spacious, well planned, and richly resourced. The balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities both indoors and outside is exemplary. Staff expertly support learning, extending self-initiated activities through role-play, sustained shared thinking and open questioning. Detailed observations inform planning, which accurately reflects individual interests and needs. Progress, linked to the early learning goals, is recorded clearly in informative, accessible profiles, which include contributions from parents. Vigilant, sensitive staff make excellent use of classroom routines and gentle reinforcement promotes independence, personal hygiene and appropriate behaviour. After lunch, time is set aside for resting, although facilities for the under-threes to sleep are limited. The after-school club provides suitable care and activities for children who stay beyond the end of the school day.

4.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

- 4.4 Outcomes in the EYFS are outstanding. Children, including under-threes and those with LDD, are enthusiastic, inquisitive learners who enjoy coming to school and make rapid progress. Most children achieve, and many exceed, the early learning goals by the age of five. Foundations in literacy are strong, with children developing a secure knowledge of letters and sounds. In the Nursery, children count and recognise numbers up to ten, and older children use a wide range of mathematical concepts in self-initiated play. Knowledge and understanding of the world is excellent and children use ICT with confidence and increasing skill. Children are kind, considerate, exhibit highly developed social skills and respond positively to the high expectations of the adults who care for them. Children, including under-threes, are exceptionally well cared for, enjoy the balanced, nutritious lunches, feel safe and have a well-developed understanding of keeping healthy, playing safely and the need for classroom rules.

Compliance with statutory requirements for children under three

- 4.5 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Complaints since the last inspection

- 4.6 Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required any action to meet national requirements.

Section 3 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed a sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair and chair designate of governors/trustees, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr John King	Reporting Inspector
Mr Graham Best	Headmaster, SHMIS school
Miss Mary Regan	Former Headmistress, ISA/GSA school
Mr Chris Manville	Early Years Lead Inspector
Miss Patricia Griffin	Early Years Team Inspector (Headmistress, ISA school)