

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

DURLSTON COURT SCHOOL

By the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

on

November 8 – 12th 2004

SUMMARY REPORT

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

SUMMARY INSPECTION REPORT ON

Durlston Court School

Full Name of the School	Durlston Court School		
DfES Number	8506056		
Address	Becton Lane, Barton on Sea, New Milton, Hampshire, BH25 7AQ		
Telephone Number	01425 610010		
Fax Number	01425 622731		
E-mail Address	headmaster@durlstoncourt.org.uk		
Name of headmaster	David C. Wansey		
Chair of Governors	Nicholas Dunseath		
Age Range	2-13	Gender	Mixed
Number of Pupils	270	Number of Boarders	None
Inspection Dates	November 8th –12th 2004		

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 163(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

MAIN FINDINGS

Overall Summary

Durlston Court School provides very good care for its pupils so that they develop well as happy, confident and considerate individuals. Pupils make full use of the opportunities that the school has to offer. Good teaching and an excellent range of activities enable them to increase their range of interests and to achieve good, and sometimes high standards, both in and out of the classroom. Pupils' learning is good and their behaviour in school is excellent. A good start has been made on curriculum development planning but staff with management and curriculum responsibilities have insufficient non-contact time to enable them to carry these out fully effectively. The very good leadership of the present headmaster, who is supported by an able and committed senior management team, has enabled the school to cope very well with a period of significant change and to make good progress in its development. The school benefits from the active support of its parents.

What the School Does Well

The school has many strengths in its provision; the following are the most significant.

- Very good pastoral care and provision for pupils' personal development encourage pupils to be aware of the needs of others and courteous and considerate to those around them.
- The school has a strong family ethos and community spirit within which relationships are very good.
- The school's links with parents and the community are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes, learning and behaviour are very good.
- Provision for mathematics in the upper school, science, music and extra curricular activities is very good.
- Very good leadership is provided by the present headmaster, who is supported by an able and very committed senior management team.

What the School Should Do Better

The school's many strengths outweigh its weaknesses. However, it should consider the following areas to improve further the education it provides.

- Staff with management and curriculum responsibilities do not have sufficient non-contact time for developing teaching and learning adequately, and for ensuring strong links between the pre-prep and the middle and upper schools.

Standards of Attainment and Progress in Subject

Pupils achieve good standards overall. Their attainment in national tests is good in relation to their abilities. In national tests at age 7 in reading, writing and mathematics, and at age 11 in English and science, results are well above the national average for all maintained schools. In mathematics at age 11, results in national tests are far above the national average for all maintained schools. On leaving at age 11 or 13, most pupils succeed in gaining entry to the school of their parents' choice and, at age 13, in gaining a high proportion of scholarships as a result of their performance in Common Entrance Examinations.

Pupils' attainment is sound in the Foundation Stage and good overall thereafter. It shows steady improvement as pupils move upwards throughout the school, particularly in mathematics. Across the curriculum, pupils demonstrate high standards of spoken English, well-developed skills in literacy and numeracy, and sound ICT skills. In relation to their abilities, pupils' progress is generally good and becomes more rapid as pupils move upwards through the school. Pupils identified as requiring support for special educational needs make rapid progress in relation to their needs and abilities.

The Quality of Pupils' Learning, Attitudes and their Behaviour

The overall quality of pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour is very good. Pupils' behaviour around the school is excellent. They cooperate well with the teacher and each other. Given the opportunity, pupils are able to work well both independently and collaboratively in practical activities such as science, and games where team spirit is strongly encouraged. Around the school, pupils are unfailingly courteous, polite and helpful to visitors. They behave responsibly when moving around the school and show respect for others and for property. Their behaviour towards each other reinforces the school's strong family ethos.

The Quality of Teaching

The quality of teaching is good and contributes well to pupils' attainment and progress. In nearly all of the lessons observed teaching was at least sound and in just over three quarters of the lessons seen it was good or very good. Over a third of the teaching seen was very good or excellent. In the pre-prep teaching ranges from sound to good. It is good throughout the middle school and ranges from good to very good in the upper school. Very good teaching was seen in all subjects and in all age groups. The teaching of pupils in Years 7 and 8 is particularly good.

Teachers have an excellent knowledge of individual pupils and use this well to meet their differing learning needs. They have good subject knowledge, particularly those who provide specialist subject teaching in the middle and upper schools. Planning is sound. Teachers manage their classes well and use a good variety of effective teaching methods, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of independent learning. Relationships between teachers and pupils are relaxed and friendly, based on mutual respect and courtesy.

Other Aspects of the School

Attendance

Throughout the school the level of pupils' attendance is very good and enables them to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the school. There is no unauthorized absence. Registration is taken punctually in the morning and afternoon in an orderly and efficient way. Admission and attendance registers meet legal requirements.

Assessment and Recording

The assessment and recording of pupils' achievements, progress and needs are very good. They are comprehensive and accurate. Throughout the school, teachers have very good knowledge of individual pupils and keep a close eye on their progress. A good start has been made on tracking individual pupils' progress and achievement throughout the school, but this is not yet carried out consistently in all subjects. In most subjects, marking of pupils' work is frequent, accurate and informative.

Curriculum

The curriculum offered by the school is good and provides a broad and balanced education for pupils across the full age and ability range. The quality of planning of the curriculum is sound overall. There is a lack of curriculum coordination between the pre-prep and the middle school, which weakens continuity and progression in subjects other than mathematics and English. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The needs of gifted and talented pupils are addressed well, particularly in music. The curriculum is greatly enriched by a full and varied programme of extracurricular activities.

Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

The quality of the teaching and non-teaching staff is good. All staff are very committed to the school and contribute to its family atmosphere and the well-being and education of the pupils. Procedures for monitoring performance and for professional development are good. A line management appraisal scheme for the classroom assistants and ancillary staff is being introduced and the procedures for the induction of staff new to the school are carried out very effectively. The appropriate checks are carried out on the teaching and non-teaching staff. Criminal Records Bureau checks have been carried out on all staff.

Resources for Learning

Resources for learning are good overall and sufficient in quantity and quality. They are well-organised, easily accessible and are suitable for pupils' ages and stages of development. These resources are used effectively to promote pupils' learning. Provision of equipment for ICT, including both hardware and software, has recently been updated and is good.

Libraries

Library provision is good overall. The pre-prep library has a good range of books, including fiction and non-fiction, and is easily accessible for pupils to borrow for use in their classrooms. The library for the middle and upper schools is well-stocked with a broad range of fiction, non-fiction and reference books. There is a more limited range of non-book resources. Pupils have weekly library lessons from Year 3 onwards. Younger pupils make good use of the library facilities outside of lessons but there is little use of the library during prep.

Premises and Accommodation

The premises and accommodation are good. The school's buildings have been progressively enhanced and extended and, together with the accommodation and the grounds, are appropriate for the numbers, abilities and ages of the pupils. They enable the curriculum to be taught effectively throughout the age range and make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare. The grounds are attractive and maintained well. They provide a very attractive amenity which is enjoyed by all and which contributes to the school's positive ethos.

Links with Parents and the Community

The worthwhile links with the community and the very good links with parents are a strength of the school. There are very good opportunities for parents to be involved in the school and they are well-informed about their children's performance and progress. The parental questionnaire responses show a high level of satisfaction with the accessibility of the headmaster and his staff, and the information provided for parents. The school has in place

suitable procedures for dealing with parents' concerns and complaints, in accordance with current regulations.

Pupils' Personal Development

Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. The school provides a broad range of opportunities through which pupils can develop very well personally, socially and culturally, as well as develop a system of spiritual beliefs and a moral code. The strong family ethos of the school creates a positive and caring atmosphere which contributes strongly to pupils' personal development.

Pastoral Care

The school cares very effectively for pupils' well-being, development and safety through its arrangements for pastoral support, guidance, welfare, and for health and safety. Pastoral care makes an effective contribution to the educational standards achieved and the personal growth of the pupils. The parental questionnaire responses praise staff highly for the care and help given to pupils. Matters of health and safety are taken very seriously by the school and dealt with effectively.

Governance and Management

The management of the school is good and the headmaster provides very good leadership. He engenders a strong sense of team spirit among his staff and has re-established the confidence of staff and parents following the unsettled period which preceded his appointment. He and his very experienced and competent senior management colleagues provide a clear educational direction for the school, which is reflected in the good quality of the pupils' education and the good standards they achieve. However, staff with management and curriculum responsibilities have insufficient non-contact time to enable them to carry these out fully effectively.

Achievement and Quality in Activities

Achievement and quality in the excellent range of activities is high for the ages, aptitudes and abilities of the pupils taking part. Pupils achieve very high standards in activities of many kinds and many pupils gain individual and team awards. Full-time teaching staff and visiting music teachers contribute extensively and very effectively to the programme of activities throughout the school. The excellently-organised programme is heavily subscribed, indicating how much pupils enjoy and appreciate this provision.

Progress Made by the School since its last inspection

The school has made much progress since the last inspection. Expectations and standards of achievement have risen, and an effective senior management team has been created. Detailed and useful records of pupils' achievements are kept and in some subjects are used for curriculum planning. However, subject leaders still do not have enough non-contact time for curriculum coordination and development, including monitoring and evaluating teaching and tracking pupil performance, and there is still some lesson time lost during lesson changeovers.

Compliance with the Regulations for Registration

DfES Standard		Does the school meet the regulatory requirements?
1. Quality of education:	1.(2) Curriculum	Yes
	1.(3)-(5) Teaching	Yes
2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils		Yes
3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils		Yes
4. Suitability of proprietors and staff		Yes
5. Premises and accommodation		Yes
6. Provision of information		Yes
7. Manner in which complaints are to be handled		Yes

Actions Required for Compliance with the Regulatory Requirements

No action is required.