



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION**

**CLIFTON COLLEGE**

**MARCH 2017**



## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Clifton College			
<b>DfE number</b>	801/6000			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	311735			
<b>Address</b>	32 College Road Clifton Bristol BS10 3EZ			
<b>Telephone number</b>	0117 3157000			
<b>Email address</b>	info@cliftoncollege.com			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Tim Greene			
<b>Chairman of governors</b>	Mrs Alison Streatfeild-James			
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 19			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	1197			
	<b>Boys</b>	703	<b>Girls</b>	494
	<b>Day pupils</b>	806	<b>Boarders</b>	391
	<b>EYFS</b>	82	<b>Juniors</b>	412
	<b>Seniors</b>	366	<b>Sixth Form</b>	337
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1 to 2 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 and with the chairman of governors, 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

Mrs Pamela Leech	Reporting inspector
Mrs Linda Horton	Team inspector (Head of year, HMC school)
Dr David James	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Wendy Kempster	Team inspector (Headmistress, GSA school)
Mrs Jennifer Moran	Team inspector (Head of year, IAPS school)
Mr Toby Mullins	Team inspector (Head, Society of Heads and ISA school)
Mr Neil Price	Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr Jon Hammond	Team inspector for boarding (Housemaster and head of year, HMC school)
Dr Robin Harskin	Team inspector for boarding (Academic deputy, IAPS school)

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## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Clifton College is an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls between the ages of two and nineteen, situated in Clifton, Bristol. It is a registered charity. Since the previous inspection, the purchase and refurbishment of a nearby building has created a new venue for the faculty of English and modern foreign languages (MFL) in the Upper School. A new building now accommodates two preparatory day houses and a dance studio, and preparatory school classrooms have also been extensively refurbished. Sports facilities have been updated and a woodland learning environment has been created.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1862, originally comprising a town house for day boys in addition to the boarding accommodation. From its inception, a narrow curriculum was rejected in favour of a more liberal ethos based around the values of tolerance and open-mindedness. A Jewish boarding house was available from 1878 until 2005. The school became co-educational in 1987 and comprises the preparatory and Upper Schools. The preparatory school is divided into a pre-prep for pupils aged between 2 and 8, and a prep for pupils aged 8 to 13. The Upper School caters for pupils from 13 to 19. The preparatory school has six day houses and two boarding houses. Of the eleven houses in the Upper School, seven are boarding houses. Responsibility for governance is undertaken by an elected Council.

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

- 1.3 The school aims to offer an educational experience where pupils are encouraged to develop intellectual agility, a capacity for boldness, social confidence, a sense of fun, strength and decency of character. Adhering to Judeo-Christian values, the school encourages its pupils to become tolerant young people who are able to tackle future challenges with resilience and determination, supported by sound moral principles. The balanced curriculum encourages the pupils to achieve their potential whether it be academic, creative, emotional or physical, and develop the skills needed for adult life.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.4 Pupils come from a wide range of professional backgrounds. The majority live within a 10-mile radius of the school, with a significant amount drawn from a number of countries overseas. The ability profile of the pupils in the preparatory and Upper schools is above the national average, with broadly average ability in Years 12 and 13. The school has identified 176 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia; they receive additional specialist support for this as needed. Also, 1 pupil has an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 374 pupils, 131 of whom receive additional support. Data used by the school identify 232 pupils as the most able on roll.

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

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Third form	Year 9
Fourth form	Year 10
Fifth form	Year 11
Lower VIth	Year 12
Upper VIth	Year 13

### **Recommendations from previous inspections**

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was an interim inspection in March 2011. The recommendation from that inspection was:
- Ensure that the quality of marking and its monitoring is consistent across all teaching in the preparatory and Upper schools.
- 1.7 The school has successfully met this recommendation from the previous full inspection.
- 1.8 The recommendations of the intermediate boarding inspection in December 2013 were:
- Involve all staff in the self-evaluation of boarding standards in their house.
  - Extend the practice of allowing pupils to express concerns and opinions anonymously as well as through the various councils and committees.
- 1.9 The school has successfully met both the recommendations of the previous intermediate boarding inspection.

## 2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils are excellent communicators, confidently applying their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing to all areas of their learning.
- Pupils of all abilities respond positively to academic challenge and this is reflected in the rapid development of their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Pupils apply their numeracy skills with competence across a range of subjects.
- Pupils achieve high levels of success both in their academic and extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes towards their learning; they engage in collaborative tasks with maturity and enthusiasm, but are not always offered sufficient opportunities to demonstrate independence in their learning.

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

- Pupils develop the qualities of self-confidence, self-esteem, self-discipline and resilience, supported by the positive relationships across the school community and underpinned by the strong house culture.
- Pupils are socially aware, with highly developed inter-personal skills enabling them to work together towards common goals.
- Pupils across the school know the importance of staying safe and adopting a healthy lifestyle, guided by excellent programmes of study and workshops.
- Pupils are tolerant and sensitive towards each other, enjoying the cultural diversity of their community and sharing a sense of belonging.

### Recommendation

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

- Providing more opportunities for pupils to work independently.

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

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils throughout the school develop academic curiosity, imaginatively applying their excellent foundation of knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum in accordance with the school's aims to foster intellectual agility. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) extend their learning effectively through high-quality planning, and make excellent progress. Those in the Nursery confidently use name cards to self-register and are competent in their number skills. They develop collaborative learning skills through role-playing and extend their vocabulary through attentive participation in story times. Reception children approach their learning with enthusiasm. They communicate using vocabulary which is advanced for their age and successfully apply their numerical understanding to more complex problem solving. They engage enthusiastically in project work, developing creative appreciation through acting out stories in their artwork and play. Children in both Nursery and Reception are eager learners, stimulated by teachers who are highly successful in planning extremely well resourced lessons which meet the children's individual needs. They gain an understanding of nature as they enjoy regular sessions in the woodland learning environment. They discover the joy of books through their own library, sharing their choices with their parents and successfully extending their understanding of written letters and words with their relation to pictures. Careful arrangements enable the smooth transition into the preparatory school where pupils continue to build upon the excellent start which they receive in the EYFS. Pupils in the preparatory and Upper schools are attentive learners, approaching their work with self-discipline and enthusiasm. They work effectively both collaboratively and independently, and enjoy their lessons.
- 3.3 The following analysis uses the national data for 2013 to 2015, which are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. In the years 2013 to 2015, the results at the end of Year 2 were above the national average for maintained schools. The results at the end of Year 6 were above the national average for the same period, and they were well above average for 2015. At GCSE in the years 2013 to 2015, performance has been well above the national average for maintained schools and in line with those in selective schools. Results in IGCSE have been above worldwide norms. In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2013 to 2015 have been above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools including selective schools; they were well above the average for all schools in 2015.

- 3.4 The pupils develop excellent communication skills. They are mature and competent in their oral responses, demonstrating a highly developed ability to articulate complex ideas and thoughts with confidence. This is supported by a classroom ethos which encourages pupils to participate, secure in the knowledge that mistakes help them to learn. Pupils in Year 8 confidently examined and discussed written evidence to determine the causes of social reform. Older pupils competently argued different positions in a role-play situation. Throughout the school, pupils listen attentively to each other. Children in Reception listened with interest while one of their peers described a story, and pupils in Year 9 listened carefully to instructions so that they could express themselves without using words. Pupils demonstrate fluency and accuracy in their writing. They express themselves well, employing a variety of techniques to produce effective and interesting writing. Pupils enjoy reading aloud in class. They broaden their understanding and vocabulary through the encouragement that they receive to choose suitable texts in class and from their libraries, which are specifically designed to meet the needs of each year group. Pupils participate enthusiastically in debate. They argue their case using appropriate language and examples; pupils in an MFL lesson competently debated issues surrounding stem cell research, while younger pupils discussed a character from *The Chronicles of Narnia* in order to write his diary, with mutual satisfaction. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate high-level communication skills, and as a result develop into articulate young people who are confident in their ability to express themselves clearly and competently.
- 3.5 Pupils of all ages achieve excellent numeracy skills and apply their understanding across the curriculum in other subjects such as the sciences, computer science and business studies. Children in the EYFS successfully assimilate number patterns to include simple additions up to double digits. Pupils in Year 4 enthusiastically demonstrated arm patterns to explain mathematical signs and confidently explained simple fractions. Pupils in Year 10 dexterously employed a range of numerical skills when exploring costs and profit for a mobile curry van. Older pupils were able to draw and analyse graphs on limiting factors for photosynthesis, relating the external variables to the concept of rate. Pupils make excellent progress in their mathematical skills, supported by well-planned teaching and high-quality resources.
- 3.6 Children in the EYFS begin to develop their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) as they explore games on their computer table. Pupils in the preparatory and Upper schools advance their skills through specialist teaching in designated computer lessons, and are able to apply ICT techniques across the curriculum. Online tests, interactive diaries and shared internet spaces allow pupils to engage with ICT in the classroom and when doing their homework. Year 6 pupils demonstrated high levels of competency using computer coding and pupils in Year 4 utilised presentation software. Pupils in Year 12 produced technical reports on the characteristics and causes of dyslexia in psychology. Throughout the school, pupils routinely use ICT to aid their research and utilise technology to improve their speaking and listening skills in MFL. Pupils feel that increasing competency with ICT techniques helps them prepare for their GCSE and A-level examinations.

- 3.7 Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire indicated that the school provides them the opportunity to make good progress in their learning. A very small minority felt that the lessons are not interesting. Pupils make excellent progress when lessons are challenging and well paced. They thrive in the inclusive ethos of the classroom where expectations are high, and are mutually supportive of each other. Pupils' progress is supported by expert teaching and a well-balanced curriculum which successfully covers linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technical, human and social, physical and aesthetic, and creative aspects. Pupils are encouraged to extend their interests and hobbies through a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. In interview, pupils were highly appreciative of the dedication of their teachers. They value the assistance which they routinely receive in lessons, the one-to-one support and the willingness of their teachers to help them with difficult topics. The very large majority of parents responding to the questionnaire agreed that teaching enables their children to make good progress and develop skills for the future. The more able and pupils with SEND or EAL make excellent progress relative to their ability.
- 3.8 From the EYFS through to Year 13, pupils become more confident and accomplished in their study skills. The youngest children develop the ability to work both collaboratively and independently through a variety of opportunities such as making dens in the woodland learning environment together, or creating their own monster face for display. Older pupils successfully engage in collaborative learning across the curriculum. They respond positively when asked to work in pairs or groups, listening carefully to each other and making their own contributions with confidence. Younger pupils challenged each other to find solutions, 'phoning a friend' for timely help. Those in Year 7 worked together to determine how to allocate a relief budget following a tsunami. Pupils relish the opportunity to work independently. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 are highly appreciative of the opportunities that they are offered to undertake independent research. In interview, younger pupils expressed a desire for more opportunities to work independently. Pupils are able to develop the skills needed to work successfully on their own, but such opportunities are not always consistently provided across all subjects.
- 3.9 Pupils are highly successful in their participation in a range of competitive activities including inter-house competitions and sports matches. The overwhelming majority of pupils' questionnaire responses expressed that they value the opportunity to be involved in a variety of clubs and activities outside the classroom. Many pupils compete nationally and internationally in sports matches, academic competitions and in the creative arenas of drama, music, art and literature with a high rate of success. A very large majority of parents' questionnaire responses indicated that the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils gain an understanding of the world around them through educational excursions, ranging from visits to local places of interest to trips abroad.
- 3.10 Throughout the school, pupils display excellent attitudes to learning. Children in the EYFS are intellectually inquisitive and eager to understand the world around them. They enjoy opportunities to work and play together, and demonstrate perseverance in their tasks. Older pupils are focused and attentive learners. They are self-disciplined and willing to challenge themselves inside and beyond the classroom. The education the pupils receive enables the school to fulfil its aim of supporting intellectual agility with the confidence to learn from mistakes.

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

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of self-knowledge and self-esteem. They have a clear understanding of how to improve their learning and performance. Pupils develop into young people who are ready to tackle challenges with integrity and resilience, in accordance with the school's aims to promote mental alertness together with social confidence and decency of character. Through the strong pastoral support offered by their boarding and day houses together with the positive encouragement they receive from their teachers, pupils flourish and grow in self-confidence. They are confident in the guidance of their house staff and teachers, and develop the qualities of self-discipline and perseverance through the pervading culture of praise and encouragement. Scrutiny of their work displays appropriate marking which is supported by verbal feedback in lessons, enabling pupils to understand how they may improve their work. Pupils sustain concentration in lessons and are eager to make progress in their learning.
- 4.3 Pupils throughout the school are confident when making decisions which affect their learning. They develop excellent judgement and understand how their actions influence those around them. Pupils are proud of their school and very willing to support their community as prefects and as representatives on the school council. Older pupils aid younger pupils, and house prefects help to look after younger boarders. Pupils share a sense of common identity and this enables them to make a positive contribution to their day and boarding houses, and to their community in general.
- 4.4 The pupils develop high levels of self-discipline and demonstrate excellent resilience in their studies. Children in the EYFS enjoyed working with moulds, persevering until they had made recognisable gingerbread men shapes. Preparatory pupils demonstrate their ability to see a project through to the end. In their charitable work, they select a charity to support and organise fundraising events. Older pupils develop their ability to persevere through participation in inter-house events including competitions in music, drama, art, sport and debating. Pupils of all ages are polite and disciplined as they move about the school, holding doors open for each other and for visitors. They are proud of their boarding houses and are disciplined in the way they share their facilities, tidying common rooms and clearing away after making snacks in the kitchens.
- 4.5 Fostered by the strong moral ethos of the school, pupils develop a heightened level of spiritual awareness and gain an appreciation for the non-material aspects of life. They are able to reflect on complex issues with maturity. Children in the EYFS find inspiration in their woodland learning environment among the trees and grassland. Younger pupils gained a sense of wonder as they passed through a celestial dome and regarded the starry universe. Pupils in the Upper School contemplated the concept of alienation in Shelley's *Frankenstein* and reflected on the next stage of life through exploring Tennyson's poetry. Pupils across the school display considerable empathy when listening to guest speakers, for example they left the chapel in respectful silence following a chapel service to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. They are proud of the heritage of their school, past and present, participating in memorial matches and passing respectfully through the memorial gates which are patterned with the names of past pupils lost in world wars. Pupils gain appreciation of the non-material aspects of life as they explore the emotions captured in music through their participation in orchestras, ensembles and choirs. They express themselves in their artwork, using a variety of styles and mediums, and through dance and drama.

- 4.6 The overwhelming majority of parents responding to the questionnaire expressed themselves as highly satisfied with the way that the school promotes good behaviour. Pupils are extremely well behaved in their lessons and houses. In the EYFS, children learn to take turns and share their toys. A small minority of pupils in the preparatory school felt that sanctions are not always applied fairly, and the school has implemented new systems to ensure consistency. Pupils in the preparatory school propose and debate class rules, and enjoy the nominations system which recognises those who have done well. Older pupils are confident in the manner in which the school applies the sanctions system. Throughout the school, pupils are morally aware and able to distinguish between right and wrong. They understand and respect British values. This is reinforced through an excellent personal, health, social and economic (PSHE) programme of study, lecture series and regular assemblies. Pupils appreciate the calmness of their environment and said that they feel secure and well supported by the strong pastoral system of house staff and tutors.
- 4.7 From the earliest years, pupils learn to be socially aware and understand how important it is to be able to work with others. In their woodland learning environment, children in the EYFS engage in collaborative activities to keep their area tidy and rubbish free. Through a culture of kindness, preparatory pupils learn the values of respecting each other and how to work effectively to achieve common goals. Older pupils contribute to the local community through voluntary service schemes and work together in the Combined Cadet Force. Pupils are intensely loyal to their houses, and the strong underlying support offered by both day and boarding houses nurtures a deep sense of identity and common purpose. They are also aware of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves and are eager in their efforts to make a difference for the better in the immediate community outside school and abroad.
- 4.8 The wide cultural diversity of the area is reflected in the population of the school, and pupils accept each other's faiths and cultures with tolerance and respect. They gain greater understanding of a variety of cultures through the languages they study, the religious education (RE) programme and from a variety of guest speakers. With a varied spread of cultures represented in boarding houses, boarders say they feel accepted and quickly at home. Many celebrate their religious faiths in Chapel and other quiet places, where everything they need for their worship is provided. Pupils enjoy celebrating each other's cultures through themed assemblies and festive meals with food from around the world. They explore the richness of diversity through RE and in their PSHE studies.
- 4.9 Pupils have a clear understanding of safeguarding generally and of how to stay safe online. They learn about healthy lifestyles and the importance of diet and exercise through science and the PSHE programme. A few pupils and parents in their questionnaire responses did not feel that the school deals well with bullying should it occur. Examination of records indicates that the school is rigorous in its approach to bullying, applying sanctions as appropriate and demonstrating zero tolerance to bullying. In interview, pupils said they feel the school handles any incidents effectively and quickly. Pupils know whom to contact should they need help or guidance, and are well supported by the emphasis that the school places on mental and emotional welfare. They are aware of the benefits of approaching life with a positive physical and mental outlook as the school is meticulous in fulfilling its responsibilities to safeguard pupils and promote their health and well-being. Alongside the rigorous pastoral system, the school has excellent medical provision with fully qualified nurses, ready access to external agencies, and a sufficient number of school counsellors and independent listeners.

4.10 Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Dedicated members of staff work diligently to support the pupils as they progress through the school, giving generously of their expertise and time. A very small minority of pupils and parents felt that they are not provided with sufficient careers guidance. Inspection evidence found that detailed information is available and new appointments have been made to ensure that the information is quickly and effectively disseminated to individuals as needed. The very large majority of the parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed themselves as highly satisfied with the pastoral support that their children receive, and feel that the boarding experience has promoted their children's progress and personal development. Through its teaching, pastoral provision and ethos, the school provides opportunities for pupils to acquire the skills they need to make academic progress and develop into young people who are ready to tackle the next stage of their lives with maturity, spirit and confidence.