



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

FRANCIS HOLLAND SCHOOL, SLOANE SQUARE

INTERIM INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Francis Holland School, Sloane Square

Full Name of School	Francis Holland School, Sloane Square		
DfE Number	213/6046		
Registered Charity Number	312745		
Address	Francis Holland School, Sloane Square 39 Graham Terrace London SW1W 8JF		
Telephone Number	020 7730 2971		
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Email Address	office@fhs-sw1.org.uk		
Headmistress	Miss Stephanie Pattenden		
Chair of Governors	Professor Keith Hoggart		
Age Range	4 to 18		
Total Number of Pupils	453		
Gender of Pupils	Girls		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 136
	3-5 (EYFS):	26	11-18: 291
Head of EYFS Setting	Miss Sarah Styles		
EYFS Gender	Girls		
Inspection dates	10 May 2011 to 11 May 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 March 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 Francis Holland School, Sloane Square, is one of two girls' day schools in London that share the same name and are jointly administered and governed by a charitable trust. It was founded in 1881 as a Church of England school and now educates girls aged from four to eighteen. It took up residence on its present site in Graham Terrace, Westminster in 1884. Since the last inspection in March 2007, a new chair of governors and a new head of the junior school have been appointed, and recently acquired adjacent premises have resulted in significant improvements in space for teaching and extra-curricular activities.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a challenging and stimulating curriculum that encourages an enthusiasm for learning, and intellectual curiosity and creativity. It seeks to value the individual and to encourage independence, motivation and self-confidence. The school sets out to promote respect for others and the development of a responsible attitude towards citizenship. It aims to support personal, moral and spiritual development within a Christian context, and to develop skills of leadership, flexibility and adaptability.
- 1.3 In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting, 26 girls are on roll. There are 136 girls in Years 1 to 6 in the junior school and 291 in Years 7 to 13 in the senior school, of whom 66 are in the sixth form. Entry to the school is by selective assessment, usually at the ages of four and eleven. Approximately a third of the junior school girls transfer to the senior school at the age of eleven; the remainder move either to boarding schools or to other day schools in London. Almost all pupils in the junior school are of at least above average ability, and over a quarter have an ability that is far above average. The ability profile of the senior school is above the national average, with very few pupils having an ability that is below average. The school has identified 41 pupils as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) and 52 who have English as an additional language (EAL). One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Support for these pupils is provided by their teachers in the course of mainstream lessons. Those in need of additional help are put in contact with outside agencies and tutors.
- 1.4 Pupils come primarily from families with professional and business backgrounds, and are from a variety of religious denominations and nationalities. The catchment area is relatively wide, and pupils travel to school from various parts of London. About a fifth of pupils leave each year after completing GCSE examinations; the remainder continue for A-level courses and are joined by a small number of girls who transfer from other schools. Nearly all sixth-form pupils proceed to higher education, some after a GAP Year.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used by the school from the EYFS to Year 11 and throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the sixth form and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

Sixth Form

School	NC name
Lower sixth	Year 12
Upper sixth	Year 13

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

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

- 2.1 From the EYFS onwards achievement is excellent, and the high standards of pupils of all abilities at the time of the previous inspection have been fully maintained, in accordance with the school's aims. Throughout the school, the pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They are purposeful, comfortable working individually or in a group, and are extremely enthusiastic, always showing high levels of concentration and self-motivation. They are highly articulate, and are keen to express their opinions and debate arguments with commitment and feeling. They are focused in lessons and are very ambitious to do well. The volume and quality of work produced in both junior and senior schools are considerable, demonstrating excellent progress. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) skills confidently.
- 2.2 In the junior school, pupils' attainment cannot be measured in relation to average performance in national tests, but on the evidence of the pupils' work it is judged to be well above national age-related expectations. Results at GCSE and A level have been far above the national average for girls in maintained schools, and above the national average for girls in maintained selective schools. Pupils of all ages make excellent progress in relation to their already high abilities. Outstanding achievements are seen in many extra-curricular pursuits, especially ballet, music, musical theatre, speech and drama, and in examination results in these activities. Many pupils enjoy individual and team success in inter-school sporting fixtures and a number have been selected for representative teams in the London area.
- 2.3 The curriculum throughout the school is balanced and well planned, and makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' achievements and progress. It is stimulating and challenging, and includes a wide range of subjects covering the required areas of learning. It assists in fulfilling the school's aim of offering all pupils the opportunity to develop their personal interests, and to extend their knowledge and sense of achievement. The use of ICT across the school has increased since the last inspection, though ICT and other areas of technology have not been fully developed in the curriculum. In the senior school, the programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE), which includes citizenship, is taught effectively both in specific lessons and in tutor time. In the junior school, the PSHE programme promotes a strong sense of community responsibility.
- 2.4 Pupils achieve well in extra-curricular activities and a good range is provided during lunchtimes and after school. Facilities for sport are constrained in the central metropolitan location, but the school tries very hard to overcome this. Extra-curricular opportunities usefully support pupils' academic, musical, creative and sporting interests, giving them the chance to continue to develop their all-round skills and talents. The pupils highly value these as a complement to the curriculum. Music, drama and ballet are particularly popular, well-supported activities, involving challenging repertoires. A number of pupils successfully take part in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- 2.5 In the majority of the lessons observed during the inspection, across all year groups, the teaching was good, with outstanding features, fulfilling the school's aim of making education challenging, and encouraging the achievement of the highest

academic standards and individual potential. In the best lessons, interesting and highly stimulating teaching enabled the pupils to acquire new knowledge, make outstanding progress and increase their understanding. Pupils have a strong respect for their teachers, listen attentively and are supportive of one another's views. Pupils with LDD and those with EAL are supported effectively, enabling them to achieve as well as their peers in relation to their abilities. Increasing provision is also being made for the most able, gifted and talented. The careful use of data for tracking and target setting has enhanced pupil progress and has become increasingly effective. Marking and assessment throughout the school are generally good across all subjects, with the best examples revealing detailed comments that allow pupils to consolidate their work and make good progress. On a few occasions, marking was seen to be cursory, though pupils stated that verbal feedback is often provided to supplement written comment and usefully aids their understanding. The library is well run and resourced, and is effective in promoting independent learning and thinking skills.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 2.6 The quality of the pupils' personal and social development from the EYFS upwards is outstanding and, as at the time of the last inspection, is a real strength of the school. The strong Christian ethos allows pupils to grow and flourish as self-assured young people who have much self-knowledge and self-confidence. All pupils are encouraged to develop their own personalities and characters, and to be open to the values and beliefs of others. Their moral awareness is high. Pupils throughout the whole school show a clear understanding of the positive values of good conduct. In discussions with pupils, it was clear that they have a natural sense of right and wrong and of what is fair. Pupils are very friendly and they enjoy excellent relationships with one another and with their teachers. They show high levels of spiritual development in assemblies and discussions in lessons, and also, for example, through art displays and musical performance. Pupils demonstrate strong teamwork and leadership through the prefect and house systems, through senior and junior school council representation and in undertaking form duties. They show initiative and are keen to contribute to community life, both within and outside school. The school is a welcoming place to those from other faiths, and pupils develop a very good understanding of their own and other cultures through work in lessons and assemblies, and through visits and overseas trips. Much charity work is undertaken, some of which has an international dimension, throughout the year.
- 2.7 Pastoral arrangements are excellent and much valued by pupils and parents. These remain strengths of the school. Throughout the school, pupils are extremely well looked after within a highly supportive, strong pastoral care system. They are very happy and comfortable in their school environment, and find staff approachable, caring and dedicated to their needs. Teachers know the pupils very well. All pupils are encouraged to talk to the person they feel most confident with, from their form tutor to more senior pastoral staff and the school counsellor. The pupils' pre-inspection questionnaire responses showed clearly that they like being in the school, that they feel teachers help them to learn and that they make good progress. A small number of senior school pupils raised concerns that the teachers do not always listen to their views, do not fully monitor their workload and are not always fair in their distribution of rewards and sanctions. Inspection evidence does not support these views. In interviews, many pupils expressed an appreciation of the fairness of their treatment, and of the extra help, advice and support given by teaching staff, academically and pastorally.

- 2.8 The safety and welfare of the pupils are given the highest priority. Good policies and procedures which are clear and effective safeguard and promote the welfare of the pupils. Good behaviour is strongly promoted, and anti-bullying policies are comprehensive, regularly reviewed, and well understood by staff and pupils. Staff, including ancillary personnel and some governors, have participated in recent safeguarding training, involving safer recruitment and internet safety. Arrangements to ensure health and safety are highly effective. Risk assessments are adhered to and these are regularly reviewed. All necessary measures to reduce risk from fire and other hazards have been taken, and the required fire prevention procedures are well known. School fire drills are carried out regularly and the safety of electrical appliances is checked thoroughly. The school has an excellent three-year plan for improving access for pupils with disabilities. The admission registers are kept meticulously. The registration system is efficient and absences are followed up swiftly. The school is careful to ensure that all the required checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are undertaken.

The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management

- 2.9 The governing body has a good insight into how the school operates, and the recently elected chair of governors visits regularly to liaise over school matters with the headmistress. Governors offer a wide breadth of experience, knowledge and interest, which contributes significantly to the routine operation of the school and its future planning. The trustees are effective in fulfilling their regulatory responsibilities for educational standards, child protection, welfare, and health and safety throughout the school.
- 2.10 The school benefits from good leadership and management, and those with management responsibilities carry out their tasks efficiently and capably. The school has responded well to the recommendations of the previous report. The headmistress and senior staff demonstrate determination and insight in identifying the needs of the school and improving the educational experience of the pupils through thorough and inclusive development planning. Good policies have been introduced and implemented at all levels, and they are monitored well in many areas. Comprehensive safeguarding arrangements are in place; due regard is paid to health and safety, and all appropriate checks on staff and governors are made and recorded in a centralised register. An appropriate system of staff review exists for teaching and non-teaching staff, all of whom make a significant contribution to the life of the school. Regular staff training takes place which is well designed to address the school's needs.
- 2.11 Links between the school and parents are excellent, and the Friends of Francis Holland provide outstanding support for the school. Frequent newsletters, the school magazine, the text messaging service, and individual letters, often informing parents of forthcoming events, greatly enhance communication. Parents receive regular and detailed information about their children's progress in useful biannual written reports that indicate current attainment and provide advice on how performance may be improved. Progress meetings for parents of all year groups occur at least annually. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show that parents are very pleased with the education and support provided. They are highly positive about the curriculum, the progress their daughters make, the promotion of worthwhile attitudes and the opportunity for parents to become involved in the life of the school. Some parents expressed concerns about the provision for LDD and the range of extra-curricular activities available. Inspectors found learning support to be appropriate and the general provision of extra-curricular activities to be good.

However, access to specialist sporting facilities is restricted, especially for junior school pupils. The complaints procedure is detailed and appropriate.

3. ACTION POINTS

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 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. Build on current practice in the use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning throughout the school.
 2. In the EYFS, make better use of existing outdoor play space.
 3. Review EYFS management responsibilities within the junior school.

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 The overall effectiveness of the setting is good, providing a caring, secure environment in which all children make outstanding progress in their learning and all-round development. Parents appreciate the particularly high standards of behaviour and the open and friendly atmosphere. Staff are totally committed to their work and have the capacity to sustain and improve current high standards.

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

4.2 Leadership and management are satisfactory. EYFS staff work together in a supportive manner effectively to manage routine matters, thereby ensuring that all children make good and, in many cases, outstanding progress. All safeguarding checks and recruitment procedures are carried out effectively, ensuring the suitability of staff and the safeguarding of the children. Existing staff are well qualified and hold current paediatric first aid certificates. Monitoring of the provision and outcomes is in its early stages, but robust self-evaluation is beginning to take place as part of the drive for improvement. Although the whole-school development plan does not specifically identify EYFS priorities, the recently appointed head of the junior school has identified the need to address this issue as a matter of urgency. Risk assessments identify potential hazards and more frequent monitoring is taking place. Policies meet EYFS requirements and are being incorporated into practice. A wide range of resources is effectively deployed to promote many aspects of the children's indoor learning. Parents express a high level of support for, and satisfaction with, the overall provision. The setting's development plan places importance on providing parents with more information and a greater understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

4.3 The overall quality of provision is good, with many outstanding features. The bright, stimulating indoor learning environment is well equipped to provide opportunities for planned purposeful play, demonstrating a good balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated learning activities. The outdoor learning space is used regularly but is not yet effectively resourced to meet all areas of learning. Thorough and detailed planning, based on observational assessments, provides the opportunity for children to experience a wide range of appropriate learning experiences. Staff know the children very well and relationships are highly positive at all levels, enabling effective learning to take place. Positive reinforcement strategies, sensitively employed, encourage children to be kind, considerate and tolerant towards each other. They are rewarded with "Happy Helper" badges and "Rainbow" kindness certificates on a daily basis. Staff value children's views. The children are listened to respectfully, and many of their suggestions are implemented in the classroom. Healthy eating, regular exercise and reminders about health and safety are an integral part of daily routines. Specialist teaching of music, physical education and ballet provides the children with an extended curriculum.

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

- 4.4 Outcomes for the children in the EYFS are outstanding. Children are eager to attend school, and reach high levels of achievement by the end of the EYFS. Children are active, enthusiastic learners who show a good awareness of the wider world; they learn how other people live and celebrate festivals such as Thanksgiving, Diwali, Eid and Chinese New Year. They are extremely articulate, and their skills in language and literacy, numeracy and ICT are outstanding. They learn to share, take turns and form happy friendships. Children understand about keeping safe, the importance of healthy eating and the need for good hygiene. Their personal development is outstanding and their behaviour is exemplary.

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed a small 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 of governors and other governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the 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 Neil Gamble

Mrs Lynda Anderson-Coe

Mr Richard Evans

Mrs Gill Harris

Reporting Inspector

Former Headmistress, GSA school

Headmaster, IAPS school

Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector