

# Claremont School

Baldslow, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 7PW

## Inspection dates

12–14 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Sixth form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- Inspirational leadership and governance ensure that the school continues to grow, develop and flourish. This happy and successful school has gone from strength to strength since the previous inspection.
- Leaders ensure that pupils learn well, feel secure and have fun within the school's safe, hard-working and friendly environment.
- Consistently strong teaching means that pupils of all ages and at each stage of education achieve exceptionally well throughout the school.
- The school's well-planned curriculum enthuses pupils about learning and prepares them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education.
- Experienced staff, warm relationships and excellent teaching in early years enable children to settle quickly into school life.
- Pupils throughout the school feel very safe, secure and valued.
- The school's broad and varied curriculum provides plenty of interest and challenge for pupils in all year groups.
- High standards of behaviour, good manners and respectful relationships throughout the school make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
- The school gives the development of pupils' personal and social skills a high priority. As a result, pupils become mature, articulate and thoughtful learners.
- Extremely effective teaching in the sixth form ensures that standards of achievement at the end of Year 13 are high.
- Leaders ensure that all the independent school standards are fully in place.
- Leaders have recently updated the English curriculum to strengthen the use of vocabulary in pupils' writing even more. However, it is too soon for these developments to have been established fully throughout the school.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that recent refinements in the teaching of writing skills are fully established throughout the school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- Leaders are extremely ambitious for the school and lead with commitment, integrity and good humour. They are determined to ensure that all pupils make outstanding progress from their different starting points in this non-selective school, regardless of ability or background. As a result, pupils continue to thrive and achieve exceptionally well at each stage of education in the school.
- The principal provides excellent strategic leadership for the school and is understandably proud of the school's achievements. He has developed an impressive leadership team across both school sites whose members are committed to ensuring excellence in every aspect of the school's performance.
- The leadership team continuously searches for ways of enhancing pupils' experience of school and has strengthened aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection. For example, in the past year leaders have updated the curriculum in the light of national changes to GCSE examinations, so that pupils are better prepared for the increased demands and rigour of the examinations. As a result, outcomes at the end of Year 11 continue to be higher than the national average.
- Leaders have introduced a more robust system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. As a result, all members of the staff team are much clearer about pupils' individual starting points than previously and have a detailed view of how well pupils are learning.
- The school's stimulating and lively curriculum emphasises helping pupils to discover and develop their particular skills and preferences. A strong academic focus is complemented exceptionally well by a myriad of opportunities for pupils to develop sporting, artistic and personal skills throughout the school. Clubs, sporting tournaments and other events make a strong contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school and to the development of healthy lifestyles.
- The school's broad curriculum ensures that pupils develop a mature and outward-looking view of the world and of their place in British society. Pupils learn about different cultures, societies and world religions through a range of subjects, including geography, history, music, art and religious education.
- The teaching and promotion of British values is a regular and well-established feature of the school's curriculum. As a result, pupils develop a genuine appreciation for aspects of British life, such as democracy and the rule of law. They demonstrate strong respect for people from different backgrounds and cultures, and for those who have protected characteristics.
- Leaders have tightened up procedures for identifying and improving aspects of the school in need of development. For example, they have established a more rigorous centralised system to check and address aspects of the school's premises which need attention.
- The revised school development plan provides clear direction for the school. As a result, all members of staff are knowledgeable about planned developments and have a detailed understanding of their own role in the school's future. Leaders use coaching and training

very well to develop staff expertise, including in aspects of teaching, behaviour management and safeguarding.

- Teachers and other members of staff are pleased with developments in the school. They share leaders' aspirations for the school's future and staff morale is high.
- The two special educational needs leaders have a thorough understanding of pupils' needs and maintain close checks on pupils' progress. They work very effectively with teachers to review and adjust support for individual pupils. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn exceptionally well.
- Highly effective care for pupils' welfare lies at the heart of the school's work. For example, pupils are regularly consulted about their experiences of school life and their views are carefully considered as part of ongoing procedures to review and improve the school's work.
- Leaders make sure that the independent school standards are met.

## **Governance**

- The proprietor provides strong governance for the school. The International Schools Partnership is committed to working closely with leaders and staff in order to build on the school's considerable strengths.
- In the past year, representatives of the International Schools Partnership have quickly won the respect and trust of the school team. They have established constructive and professional working relationships with school leaders, teachers and other members of staff.
- The proprietor has introduced greater rigour to systems for monitoring the school's work. As a result, leaders are held to account for the school's performance more stringently than in the past. For example, the proprietor's regional director for learning regularly analyses pupils' learning and achievement in fine detail. He holds robust discussions with school leaders about pupils' outcomes, with a strong focus on the quality of learning and progress. The impact of this approach is clear in the school's consistently high-quality teaching and in teachers' and leaders' detailed understanding of their pupils' needs.
- The proprietor and principal instigated the current building project to develop an arts centre on the senior school site, which is well under way. The proprietor continues to focus on improving the premises and the fabric of the buildings.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and all members of staff give pupils' safety the highest priority. The school provides pupils with a pleasant, attractive and secure learning environment. Clear expectations and well-established routines ensure that pupils are safe in school.
- The designated safeguarding leads provide knowledgeable leadership for staff and pupils. They ensure that staff benefit from regular safeguarding training, as well as frequent updates about safeguarding issues. As a result, all members of staff are confident about how to identify and follow up potential concerns. They take good care of pupils and pay close attention to their welfare.

- Leaders have strengthened safeguarding arrangements since the previous inspection. For example, they have introduced more rigorous procedures for making sure that visitors to the school are authorised and identified properly and have developed a culture in which staff will politely challenge anyone without appropriate identification.
- The establishment of centralised systems for recording health, safety and safeguarding has enabled leaders and the proprietor to develop an even sharper view of safety issues across the school than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose and followed consistently throughout the school. The school's safeguarding policy reflects current government requirements and is published on the school's website. Efficient recruitment checks ensure that the workforce is secure.
- The current building project on the senior school site has been carefully planned and effectively managed. As a result, pupils and staff can continue their work safely while the new arts centre is constructed.
- Leaders maintain strong links with parents, agencies and with the local authority. They appreciate the high-quality support provided by the local authority and do not hesitate to contact the local authority designated officer if they have a query or need further advice.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Outstanding**

- Stimulating and engaging teaching makes an extremely strong contribution to pupils' learning and to their personal development. Teachers are experts in their field and have a deep and thorough understanding of their subject areas. They teach confidently, expertly and enthusiastically.
- Teachers have the highest expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. They maintain a calm, focused and active learning atmosphere during lessons. Pupils get on with their work extremely well as a result.
- Teaching challenges pupils of all abilities very effectively. Teachers make full use of a range of approaches, including questioning during lessons, to probe and test pupils' understanding. For example, during the inspection teachers skilfully explored, challenged and extended pupils' knowledge and understanding exceptionally well in a wide range of subjects and topics, including consideration of science investigative skills, an analysis of medieval art and discussion of characters in 'Romeo and Juliet'.
- Teachers build strong relationships with their pupils and are highly knowledgeable about their needs. They are continuously watchful and alert to pupils' individual needs during lessons and over time, and are very sensitive to pupils' personalities. For example, teachers are skilful in recognising when to reassure, when to encourage and when to demand more of their pupils in lessons. As a result, pupils become confident and self-assured learners.
- The teaching of reading is a particular strength in the school, from the youngest year group in early years onwards. The school teaches reading skills extremely well, including the use of phonics, so that pupils rapidly develop confident reading strategies. Teachers use a wide range of high-quality texts very effectively to develop and extend pupils' reading skills and to promote enjoyment of books.

- Excellent mathematics teaching ensures that pupils become confident and proficient mathematicians. Pupils are taught how to use and apply their knowledge of number and calculation to solve mathematical problems in a wide range of challenging contexts. Pupils often find the work demanding and have to think very hard about their work. However, teachers make sure that pupils learn how to tackle mathematical problems steadily, methodically and systematically.
- Recent developments in the teaching of English ensure that pupils are learning how to review and improve their written work more effectively than before. As a result, pupils are developing a better understanding of the significance of vocabulary use for different purposes and audiences. However, these developments are embryonic and not yet fully established in all year groups.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

## **Outstanding**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school's very well established and highly successful programme to support pupils' personal, social and moral development lies at the core of its work. Pupils of all abilities develop the skills, attitudes and attributes needed to achieve well, both personally and academically.
- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning and thoroughly enjoy school. They work exceptionally hard and continuously strive to improve their performance in all areas of school life. Pupils across the school were clearly keen to contribute to the inspection and spoke with great pride about the school's achievements.
- Pupils' exceptionally well developed personal and social skills make a significant contribution to their achievement and prepare them very well for their future lives. Pupils become resilient, determined and ambitious learners who embrace all that school life has to offer. They are articulate and thoughtful learners, expressing ideas confidently and explaining their thinking clearly during lessons.
- Pupils get on exceptionally well together. They listen respectfully to the views of others, support each other unhesitatingly during lessons and cooperate with each other very well.
- Pupils feel extremely safe, valued and respected in school. They have absolute confidence in their teachers to make sure that they are secure and well supported. However, they are not over-reliant on adults to keep them safe and develop a strong sense of individual responsibility for their own personal safety. For example, pupils behave very maturely during practical science lessons, with no need for reminders about the risks or about the importance of taking safety measures, such as wearing goggles and tying long hair back.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons, during breaktimes and when moving between lessons. No incidents of poor behaviour or of low-level disruption were seen during the

inspection. Records of behaviour confirm that this extremely positive view of pupils' behaviour is typical over time.

- Pupils are unwaveringly polite, courteous and well mannered. Pupils of all ages are articulate, thoughtful and considerate learners.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are rare. However, leaders are quick to respond firmly, fairly and proportionately wherever sanctions are required. The school's behaviour policies are consistently followed and provide a framework to guide pupils and staff.
- Pupils move between lessons purposefully and sensibly. They arrive punctually to lessons, well equipped with everything they need to get started promptly.
- Most pupils attend well. A small number of pupils find it difficult to attend as regularly as they should due personal needs and individual circumstances. However, the school has a proven track record of success in winning pupils' confidence and in providing sensitive and successful support.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- All groups of pupils, including the most able and those with SEND, make outstanding progress in English, mathematics and across the wider curriculum and throughout the preparatory and senior schools.
- Highly effective teaching and carefully planned learning ensures that pupils are consistently encouraged, supported and challenged to explore and develop understanding in a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils achieve particularly well in reading. They enjoy books and develop very secure reading skills from an early stage in their education. They quickly learn how to use different strategies, including phonics, to help them to read successfully. National curriculum test results in reading for pupils in the preparatory school are consistently much higher than the national average.
- Pupils achieve extremely well in mathematics. They develop a thorough knowledge of number and a confident grasp of how to use formal calculations successfully to tackle increasingly demanding mathematical problems.
- Outcomes at the end of Year 11 are consistently higher than the national average. Overall, GCSE results in 2018 were well above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the highest grades in the GCSE examinations has been above the national average for the past three years. As a result, pupils are extremely well prepared for sixth-form courses or for programmes of learning in other schools.
- The school ensures that pupils' achievements across the curriculum are recognised and celebrated. As a result, pupils of all abilities become confident and accomplished learners. They are extremely well prepared with the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in the next stage of their education.
- The school's well-established English curriculum ensures that pupils make excellent progress in the development of reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. Pupils develop neat, legible and consistent handwriting styles which contribute well to the



fluency of their written work. Pupils learn how to write effectively for a wide range of purposes and audiences.

- The school has recently been focusing on strengthening pupils' use of vocabulary and sentence structure in their written work to improve the quality of pupils' writing even further. Pupils have already developed a better understanding of how they can make improvements to their writing to suit different purposes and audiences. However, these newly enhanced writing skills are not yet fully established and evident in all year groups.

## Early years provision

## Outstanding

- Extremely strong teaching ensures that children of all abilities achieve exceptionally well during early years, including the most able. In 2018, the proportion of children achieving and exceeding a good level of development was higher than the national average. Boys and girls achieve equally well.
- The school's highly knowledgeable and experienced teachers respond skilfully and sensitively to children's needs. As a result, children feel comfortable and secure. They settle quickly into school life and behave exceptionally well.
- Children make impressive progress in the development of personal and social skills. As a result, children rapidly grow in confidence and independence. For example, during the inspection adults gently and successfully encouraged the youngest children in the nursery to use a spoon to eat their lunch, while the older children sensibly helped adults to tidy up the cups after their lunch.
- Teachers display children's work with care throughout the classrooms. As a result, children of all ages and stage of development feel valued and quickly grow in self-esteem.
- Teachers give the development of children's language and literacy skills a very high priority and teach early reading skills, including phonics, very well. They provide children with a wide range of interesting and engaging activities which capture children's interest in reading and their enthusiasm for books. For example, during the inspection children talked about the characters in a book with great interest while practising phonics skills.
- Adults take great care of the children in the nursery. They establish strong, trusting relationships with the children. As a result, children are settled and comfortable. For example, during the inspection children happily joined adults to prepare for an afternoon nap, accompanied by a favourite toy.
- The early years classrooms are bright, tidy and stimulating. Leaders make sure that children have access to an extensive range of appealing and good-quality resources.
- Teachers make good use of outdoor areas. For example, regular supervised visits to the school's wooded area are a well-established part of the early years curriculum and make a strong contribution to children's learning.
- Adults pay close attention to children's safety. They make sure that all early years classrooms and outdoor areas are well maintained and safe.
- Leaders ensure that the independent school standards relating to early years provision are met.



## Sixth form provision

## Outstanding

- The sixth form's cohesive, friendly and welcoming atmosphere makes a strong contribution to students' enjoyment of learning and to their excellent behaviour.
- Leaders are passionate about education. They are committed to helping pupils to recognise their future potential and to develop a broad range of academic, personal and social skills.
- Teachers have a thorough understanding of the subjects they teach. They challenge, engage and motivate students consistently well.
- Students make very strong progress in a wide range of subjects. Outcomes at the end of Year 13 have increased since the sixth form opened in 2016 and were slightly higher than the national average in 2018. Almost all pupils study A-level courses and achieve exceptionally well. The sixth form is particularly successful in supporting pupils in achieving the highest A-level grades.
- Students have high aspirations for their future and are determined to succeed. They speak confidently about their ideas during lessons and develop a strong sense of responsibility for their own learning.
- Leaders have made significant improvements to the quality of careers guidance since the previous inspection. They make sure that students benefit from the fullest picture possible of the options available to them beyond Year 13. Leaders continue to review and update this aspect of the sixth form's work to reflect national developments, including alternatives to higher education, such as apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships.
- Teachers provide students with highly effective advice and support about post-18 options, including interview practice and work experience. As a result, most students are successful in securing their preferred options at the end of Year 13.
- Students behave maturely and responsibly throughout the sixth form. They concentrate hard during lessons and complete their work diligently.
- Students participate in a wide range of activities which contribute very well to their personal and social development. Students talk enthusiastically about their experiences, such as completing voluntary work in organisations, including schools, nursing homes and a local steam railway.
- Students benefit from an extensive range of opportunities to develop an understanding and appreciation of British values. For example, they participate in regular debating events and listen to a wide range of visiting speakers, including Members of Parliament.
- International students make a strong contribution to the school's positive community atmosphere. They bring a wealth of experiences and perspectives which are valued by teachers and pupils alike and which enrich the school community. Students from different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs get on very well together.

## School details

Unique reference number	114640
DfE registration number	845/6010
Inspection number	10076611

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	1 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	689
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	125
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	International Schools Partnership
Chair	Not applicable
Headteacher	Principal: Giles Perrin Headteacher of nursery and preparatory school: Abra Stoakley Headteacher of senior school and sixth form: Ed Dickie
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,100 (pre-preparatory department) £12,600 (preparatory school) £17,400 (senior school) £17,400 (sixth form)
Telephone number	01424 751555
Website	<a href="http://www.claremontschool.co.uk">www.claremontschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@claremontschool.co.uk">enquiries@claremontschool.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	26–29 April 2016

## Information about this school

- Claremont School is a non-selective, independent, co-educational school for pupils aged from one to 19 years.
- The school was founded in 1925, initially as a nursery and preparatory school.
- In September 2011, the senior school opened on a site near Bodiam. The school also owns a study centre in northern France.
- The school was previously inspected by Ofsted in 2016, when it was judged outstanding.
- In 2017, Ofsted agreed to the school's request for a material change, increasing the school's capacity from 588 pupils to 800 pupils. Since then, the number of pupils on roll has increased to 689.
- The school provides residential care for pupils from 11 to 19 years old in two boarding houses within a short drive from the main school sites. The school's boarding provision was inspected by Ofsted in 2017, when it was judged outstanding.
- A small proportion of pupils in the school speak English as an additional language.
- A very small number of pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The International Schools Partnership became the school's proprietor in 2018.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- A substantial building project to construct the new arts centre was underway on the senior school site during the inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 44 lessons across both school sites, including activities in the 'forest school' and 'co-curricular' afternoon activities. All observations were completed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with the principal, senior leaders, middle leaders and other members of staff on both sites. A meeting was also held with the regional director of the International Schools Partnership.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils at both school sites. They also spoke with pupils during lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors analysed a sample of pupils' work, as well as looking at pupils' work during lessons.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by 95 parents, 76 members of staff and 133 pupils in Ofsted's online questionnaires. They also took account of 94 free-text parental comments.

## Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Clementina Aina	Ofsted Inspector
Gerard Strong	Ofsted Inspector

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