



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Hale Preparatory School

February 2023

Contents

School's Details	3
1. Background Information	4
About the school	4
What the school seeks to do	4
About the pupils	4
2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection	5
Preface	5
Key findings	6
PART 1 – Quality of education provided	6
PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	6
PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils	6
PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors	6
PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools	6
PART 6 – Provision of information	7
PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled	7
PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools	7
3. Educational Quality Inspection	8
Preface	8
Recommendations	8
The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements	8
The quality of the pupils' personal development	10
4. Inspection Evidence	13

School's Details

School	Hale Preparatory School			
DfE number	358/6006			
Address	Hale Preparatory School Broomfield Lane Hale Cheshire WA15 9AS			
Telephone number	0161 928 2386			
Email address	mail@haleprepschool.com			
Headteacher	Mrs Ruth Vayro			
Proprietor	Mr John Connor			
Age range	4 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	205			
	EYFS	22	Juniors	183
Inspection dates	7 to 9 February 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Hale preparatory school is an independent, co-educational day school situated in the south of Manchester. The school was founded in 1980 by the proprietor who is the principal. The school is a limited company whose directors provide oversight of the school.
- 1.2 A new headteacher was appointed in January 2023 and is responsible for the day to day running of the school.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide a well-rounded education in a relaxed and secure environment where pupils feel happy and achieve their full academic potential. The school endeavours to develop pupils' awareness of, and respect for, the beliefs and values of others.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Most pupils live relatively close to the school. Their cultural backgrounds reflect the locality. Standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability profile of the pupils is above average in relation to those taking similar tests nationally. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified 15 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional support. English is an additional language (EAL) for 11 pupils who receive additional help when classroom teachers deem this necessary. Pupils with particular gifts and talents are given opportunities to excel and provision is made to extend these pupils further.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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.

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 published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are

appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils.

2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports 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.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

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

- Pupils of all abilities are highly successful in their academic and other achievements and make rapid progress across all areas of learning.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent knowledge, skills and understanding across the full range of subjects and apply them extremely effectively.
- Pupils are excellent communicators. They use mature vocabulary in their speaking and writing; they read fluently and develop excellent listening skills.
- Pupils' success is underpinned by their highly positive attitudes to learning and their desire to do well.

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

- Pupils demonstrate high levels of self-confidence, self-awareness and resilience, which stand them in good stead for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils have an extremely strong moral sense and, as a result, their behaviour is excellent.
- Pupils mix well across all age groups and are hugely supportive of each other as a result of the strong family ethos within the school.
- Pupils display a genuine concern and respect for others in this inclusive and caring community.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Enable pupils to consistently expand their learning beyond set tasks, use their initiative, share ideas and work things out for themselves in all lessons.
- Enable pupils to apply their well-developed ICT skills more fully in all curriculum areas in order to enhance their learning.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Pupils of all abilities are highly successful in their academic achievements. Evidence from the school's own assessment data, observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work show attainment to be at least above average, and in many cases well above average, in relation to national age related expectations. Pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, make significant progress from their starting

points. This is as a result of the high-quality support and encouragement they receive from their teachers, which is tailored to their individual needs. Teachers' and school leaders' ambitious aspirations help Year 6 pupils to achieve an extremely high success rate in gaining places at keenly competitive local grammar and independent schools. The school successfully meets its aim to ensure that each child achieves their full academic potential.

- 3.6 Throughout the school, pupils make excellent progress in the development of their knowledge, skills and understanding across all subject areas. They achieve at an extremely high level in all subjects, benefiting from a very broad curriculum, taught by experienced, committed and knowledgeable subject specialists. Pupils' skills in art, drama, dance and music are particularly strong for their age. For example, Year 1 pupils showed excellent recognition of pitch and were able to create and perform musical patterns with four beat rhythms. Year 4 pupils showed great understanding of Japanese Notan art techniques to create a balance of light and dark in their designs. In a Year 6 drama lesson, pupils demonstrated outstanding knowledge of how to create and use internal monologues for dramatic effect in their performances of Lady Macbeth. Every pupil who responded to the inspection questionnaire agreed that their skills and knowledge improve in most lessons, that their teachers know their subjects well, and know how to help them learn. Inspection evidence confirms this.
- 3.7 Pupils show extremely well-developed scientific skills as they benefit from regular investigative and practical work which challenges them to plan experiments, predict likely outcomes and analyse results. Scrutiny of Year 3 pupils' work in science showed how they successfully planned and carried out an experiment to compare rocks and hypothesised correctly about which rocks they thought would wear away the most and which were the most hard wearing.
- 3.8 Pupils' communication skills are especially well developed. They successfully apply these skills to all areas of their learning, in lessons and in their everyday interactions. From a very young age, pupils develop confidence in their use of French and Spanish, demonstrating accurate pronunciation and competent recall of vocabulary and phrases. In meetings and informal discussions with inspectors, pupils of all ages expressed themselves fluently and articulately. They speak confidently and clearly in front of an audience, as was seen in assembly where school council members from Reception to Year 6 shared their form's ideas on the design of the new playground. They clearly benefit from the many performance opportunities provided by their teachers and school leaders in drama lessons, concerts, school productions and after school clubs.
- 3.9 Pupils have excellent listening skills. They follow instructions carefully and listen attentively to each other's ideas. This was seen in a Year 6 science lesson where pupils collaborated effectively, building on each other's suggestions to understand how fossils are made. In a Year 2 drama lesson, all pupils listened attentively as others narrated their Helicopter Stories, with all pupils spontaneously making excellent use of actions to demonstrate their understanding. Pupils become fluent readers from an early age, benefiting from school leaders' provision of a reading specialist who gives one-to-one support for all Reception to Year 2 pupils. This helps them to develop a sophisticated vocabulary and understanding of grammatical structures which they use confidently in their writing. Scrutiny of pupils' work confirmed the rapid development they make in their writing. For example, Year 4 pupils used a variety of techniques to add humour and dramatic effect in their persuasive letters to the headteacher about the importance of playtime.
- 3.10 Pupils have outstanding numeracy skills. Their competency develops rapidly as they progress through the school. Year 2 pupils demonstrated accurate skills in estimating and measuring different articles around the classroom. Year 4 pupils showed excellent understanding of how to convert fractions to decimals and then to percentages. In Year 6, all pupils demonstrated a clear grasp of the basics of algebra. Pupils of all ages clearly enjoy mathematics. This was observed in their eagerness in tackling the mental arithmetic starter activities, where they demonstrated their ability to think, apply and share their strategies regarding how they reached a correct answer. Pupils confidently apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in other areas of the curriculum. Year 6 pupils showed incisive

understanding of spreadsheets to work out averages, construct line graphs and bar charts when calculating the costs of a family holiday.

- 3.11 Pupils are extremely proficient in their use of information and communications technology (ICT). Specialist teaching from Year 1 ensures that pupils acquire a very wide range of skills, such as coding, editing, videoing, research and presentation. Year 1 pupils skilfully used photo editing tools to present themselves in different environments. Year 5 pupils demonstrated their excellent coding skills in devising their own video games. Opportunities were seen in some lessons where pupils were able to apply their advanced ICT skills to enhance their learning. For example, Year 5 pupils used their devices to carry out research effectively when preparing presentations in geography on coastal landmarks; Year 3 pupils videoed their performances in dance in order to review and improve their techniques. However, these opportunities are not yet fully embedded by all teachers.
- 3.12 Pupils throughout the school exhibit notably strong study skills. They clearly enjoy learning and show intellectual curiosity when given the opportunity to do so. From the early years, teachers encourage pupils to reason. Reception children were able to recognise the setting of *Handa's Surprise* successfully through identifying different features on a picture and providing reasons to support their ideas. In many lessons pupils demonstrated their ability to think critically, analyse information and present well-considered responses. In Year 6 history, pupils researched the rules associated with air raids during World War Two, synthesising the information and then showing excellent analysis when presenting their ideas.
- 3.13 Pupils of all ages have highly positive attitudes to learning. They arrive at every lesson with a smile, ready and prepared to learn. They are strongly motivated, settle very quickly to their work and remain on task throughout the lesson. Their exercise books show that they take great care and pride in their work. When given the opportunity to do so, pupils enjoy taking the initiative and making decisions about their learning. For example in Year 1 music, some pupils confidently took on the role of leading the warm-up, with all pupils responding to their lead in changing their voice, tone and level. In Year 5, pupils actively discussed a range of strategies to solve complex non-verbal reasoning problems and then shared these for the benefit of the rest of the class. Year 6 pupils spoke about their enjoyment of the investigatory mathematical challenges which they complete either in groups or individually, without support from their teacher. In a small number of lessons, pupils were provided with little opportunity to expand their learning beyond set tasks or to show their initiative, share ideas and work things out for themselves. This led to the pupils being over reliant on the teacher for support and guidance in these lessons.
- 3.14 Pupils achieve high levels of success and develop their skills in an extensive range of activities beyond the formal curriculum, inspired by the school's encouragement to "have a go". They have a healthy sense of competitiveness and are highly motivated to achieve. Pupils spoke proudly about their success as teams and individuals in local and national competitions in a variety of sports, including football, netball, lacrosse, athletics and cross country. They are particularly proud to have been national champions in lacrosse on six occasions. Pupils' achievements in sport are mirrored by those in the performing and creative arts. All pupils take part in the school's biannual productions, and many achieve success in a range of music, speech and drama examinations. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors expressed their satisfaction with the wide range of activities available to them and the positive response of school leaders to their suggestions for new clubs. Pupils are highly successful in gaining places to academically selective secondary schools, as a result of their all-round high achievement.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.15 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.16 Pupils demonstrate high levels of self-confidence, self-awareness and resilience, which stands them in good stead for the next stage of their education. Pupils of all ages respond to challenges with

determination and enthusiasm and without fear of failure. Year 1 pupils showed excellent perseverance in an ICT lesson. They dealt calmly with any technical issues and identified how they could edit and improve their pictures. Year 5 pupils approach practice 11+ papers with confidence, eagerly seeking out the most challenging questions. When discussing their learning with inspectors, pupils were objective about their strengths and very clear as to how to improve their work. Scrutiny of their work in all subjects shows detailed feedback provided by teachers which helps pupils to identify the next steps in their learning. When given the opportunity to do so, pupils accurately self-assess their own work and provide constructive feedback on their peers' work. Responding to the questionnaire, parents overwhelmingly agreed that the school helps their child to be confident and independent, with many parents commenting on the school's nurturing environment as a key contributory factor.

- 3.17 Pupils demonstrate excellent decision-making from an early age. During morning form time, Reception children settled quickly on arrival at school, organising their belongings with minimum guidance, while Year 3 pupils were observed selecting which tasks to complete, appropriate to their ability. Older pupils appreciate the decisions they make can affect their future. Year 5 and 6 pupils said they were fully involved in decisions about their future secondary schools. They spoke of the personal choices they make, such as attending optional extra morning and school holiday sessions to help them prepare for their 11+ examinations. They were keen to point out that they attend these sessions because they want to, and not because they have to. In discussions with inspectors, pupils reflected maturely on how the school provides them with opportunities to make decisions which benefit themselves and the school community, such as through school council and sports crew. They said that they feel that the school listens to them and values their opinions, and that change often happens as a result.
- 3.18 Pupils' spiritual awareness is strong because of the meaningful opportunities provided for personal reflection and appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. Assemblies are clearly a very special time for the pupils as they recalled many instances when they had listened to stories, told by the school's proprietor, and then reflected on different ethical dilemmas. Year 5 and 6 pupils said how moved they had been recently by listening to the experiences of a holocaust survivor, which led them to reflect on the theme of prejudice and intolerance. They commented on the importance of understanding the past to ensure that the same mistakes are not made in the future. Pupils appreciate nature and the outdoors and have requested a quiet area for reflection, reading and drawing in their new playground development. Pupils' aesthetic awareness is evident in the extremely high quality of their artwork displayed around the school, and in their enjoyment of, and participation in, a wide range of music, dance and drama activities.
- 3.19 Pupils have an extremely strong moral sense and, as a result, their behaviour is excellent. They show excellent self-discipline as they move calmly and purposefully around the school between lessons. They are courteous and considerate to other pupils and adults, waiting to let them pass on the stairs, or holding the door for them. This is in part due to the high standards modelled by teachers and the school's ethos of developing good manners and showing mutual respect. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong from an early age and know how their behaviour affects others. They are guided in this by discussions in their PSHE and ethics lessons and by the way in which school leaders and teachers help them to reflect on their actions if they make a wrong decision. Older pupils relate very well to younger pupils and are excellent role models for them. This was seen in older pupils' roles as play leaders as they supported younger pupils in the playground, helping them in their play and to resolve any falling out that might occur.
- 3.20 Pupils' social development and ability to collaborate are excellent. In the playground, in lessons and in after school clubs, boys and girls interact comfortably and respectfully with each other. Year 5 pupils worked extremely effectively with each other, showing empathy as they discussed what life as a chimney sweep would have been like in Victorian times. In their drama lesson, Year 4 pupils demonstrated high levels of collaboration and mutual encouragement when working with their peers. Pupils exhibit a strong sense of responsibility towards their school and the wider community and are

eager to put forward their suggestions to school council members who take their roles very seriously. In discussions with inspectors, pupils demonstrated excellent social awareness. They actively initiate projects to support a number of local and national charities, such as producing and selling a school newspaper to raise money for a local children's hospice.

- 3.21 Pupils of all ages are respectful of their peers and are tolerant and supportive towards each other. They show genuine appreciation for the achievement of others, as was seen in the spontaneous applause in lessons when a pupil was awarded a star for good work or effort and in assembly when nominations for the kindness cup were announced. An ethos of inclusivity permeates the school. Pupils commented that the school is like a big family, where everyone knows and respects each other and the teachers know every child by name. This was summed up by Year 6 pupils as "all children are seen and heard here, no one gets left out or left behind". This was demonstrated by the proprietor and headteacher who greet the pupils and parents by name as they arrive at school each morning and say goodbye at the end of the afternoon. Pupils instinctively show appreciation for each other's differences and this underpins the positive relationships between pupils of all ages. Through the celebration of religious festivals and studying a broad range of religions in their weekly ethics lessons, pupils develop an appreciation and understanding of living in a multi-cultural society. Parents who responded to the questionnaire overwhelmingly agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people and treats pupils fairly.
- 3.22 Throughout the school, pupils show an excellent understanding of how to keep physically and mentally fit and healthy. During discussions, all pupils showed a well-developed understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle through a balanced diet and exercise. This is supported by their high levels of attendance at the many after school sports and exercise activities. In the parent questionnaire a small number of parents felt that the school does not provide sufficient healthy options for their child at lunchtime. Inspectors did not find any evidence to support this and all pupils who were spoken to said how much they enjoy their school lunches. Pupils are clear on what to do if they have any concerns, as was demonstrated by Year 3 pupils who talked in form time about their worries and shared ideas of what they could do to support each other. They clearly appreciate the daily presence of Miss Beryl, the school's trained therapy dog, who provides support for any child who is upset or anxious. All children showed an excellent understanding of how to stay safe online, which they said was covered regularly in PSHE, assemblies, and ICT lessons. Pupils of all ages commented that they feel safe and happy in the school environment, demonstrating successful fulfilment of the school's aim to provide a relaxed and secure environment in which pupils are happy coming to school.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Valerie Dunsford MBE	Reporting inspector
Mrs Bridget Ward	Compliance team inspector (Head, GSA school)
Mr Christopher Burch	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)