



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Halstead Preparatory School

June 2022

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School's Details

School	Halstead Preparatory School		
DfE number	936/6402		
Registered charity number	270525		
Address	Halstead Preparatory School Woodham Rise Woking Surrey GU21 4EE		
Telephone number	01483 772682		
Email address	info@halstead-school.org.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Maher		
Chair of governors	Mr Simon Brookhouse		
Age range	2 to 11		
Number of pupils on roll	178		
	EYFS	41	Years 1 and 2 39
	Years 3 - 6	98	
Inspection dates	7 to 10 June 2022		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Halstead Preparatory School is an independent day school for female pupils. It was founded in 1927 in Kent and moved to its current location in 1947. The school became a charitable trust in 1975 and is administered by a board of governors. The school comprises two sections: Pre-Prep, which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for children and pupils aged between 2 and 7 years, and Prep, for pupils aged between 7 and 11 years. Since the previous inspection the school has developed outdoor learning for pupils throughout the school.
- 1.2 The inspection took into account the circumstances faced by schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed by government guidance at various points of the pandemic.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to ensure that all pupils love learning, enjoy fulfilling their potential and develop confidence, self-belief and respect through a wide range of opportunities. It seeks to provide a nurturing and inspiring community and to prepare pupils for happy, healthy and successful lives in an ever-changing world.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come mostly from the surrounding areas. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 17 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, developmental coordination disorder (dyspraxia), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), speech and language needs. Nine of these pupils receive additional specialist help and one pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 13 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. The needs of the more able are addressed by providing extension work within the classroom. The needs of those with special talents in sport, music and the performing arts are met through access to specialist coaching and facilities.

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, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. 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 well-being 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' attitudes to learning are outstanding; they are enthusiastic, keen to learn and highly supportive of each other in striving to achieve excellence within and beyond the curriculum.
- Most pupils attain above the national average in English and mathematics compared to the national standardised scores for the tests; a small minority of pupils do not always make progress in line with their ability.
- Most pupils demonstrate outstanding literacy and numeracy skills.
- Most pupils use ICT competently and effectively to support their learning across the curriculum.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent study skills in most subjects; opportunities to investigate and apply their knowledge independently are sometimes over-directed.

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

- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to be safe online and how to be physically and mentally healthy.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of self-understanding for their age.
- Pupils develop an excellent understanding of spirituality throughout the curriculum and through many opportunities provided for reflection.
- Pupils are inclusive, showing excellent respect for those from cultures different to their own.
- Throughout the school pupils' moral and social development are excellent.

Recommendations

3.3 The school should make the following improvements

- Enhance pupil progress through the use of data for planning, target setting and intervention.
- Raise pupil attainment further by building upon pupils' prior learning and experiences as they transition to the next stage of learning.
- Deepen pupils' understanding and higher-level thinking through independent research across the curriculum.

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 achieve highly throughout the school in line with the school's aim to ensure that all pupils love learning, enjoy fulfilling their potential and develop confidence, self-belief and respect through a wide range of opportunities. The overwhelming majority of responses from parents to the pre-inspection questionnaires were positive about all aspects of the school, with all those who responded stating that the range of subjects, including online learning, is suitable for their children. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire stated that teachers help them to learn and are supportive. School leaders and governors contribute strongly to the success of pupils by supporting a culture that promotes pupils' academic and personal development and an approach that is based upon making learning active and fun. During discussions pupils spoke proudly about their work and how much the school's recent emphasis on active learning has helped them to learn more effectively. The overwhelming majority of pupils attain places at their first-choice schools with many gaining academic, sporting, creative and performing arts scholarships. Pupils state strongly that they feel well-prepared and ready for their next school.
- 3.6 Teacher assessments in the EYFS indicate that most children meet the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. The school has extended its teacher assessment of children in the EYFS. These assessments indicate that overall, the majority of children achieve beyond the early learning goals. Most pupils attain above the national average in English and mathematics compared to the national standardised scores for the tests. Scrutiny of results indicates that the majority of pupils make progress above their ability scores. A small minority of pupils throughout the school do not always make progress in line with their ability. This is because the analysis of data is not yet used comprehensively throughout the school in order to inform the planning of teaching, and teaching does not always build upon pupils' prior experiences and learning when they transfer to the next stage of learning. Overall, the achievement of pupils with SEND or EAL is excellent, as shown by the excellent progress they make in relation to their ability. This is due to the careful assessment of the needs of pupils throughout the school by highly skilled special needs staff and the implementation by all staff of specific individual education plans (IEPs) and profile summaries that include input from both pupils and parents. During discussions, pupils with SEND stated how much individual support from specialist staff and support from their teachers in the lessons helps them to be confident and to learn well. In the questionnaires almost all parents stated that their child's needs are met effectively.
- 3.7 Pupils throughout the school demonstrate outstanding literacy skills. They listen and respond respectfully to adults and their peers, expressing themselves confidently with sensitive consideration of others. They articulate their thoughts and ideas maturely using an extensive range of appropriate vocabulary. During discussions with inspectors, pupils listened intently to their partners when sharing and reflecting on their work and what helps them to learn. Most pupils participate confidently in presentations, assemblies and class discussions as seen during an assembly when pupils explained why they had received an award and when giving an account of sports matches played. The majority of young children effectively apply their phonic knowledge to decode words when reading from a range of fiction and non-fiction books. By the time they leave the school most pupils read and write confidently at a high level. They write in depth using correct letter formation, punctuation and grammar. From Year One pupils develop excellent linguistic skills in French and from Year Three, Spanish. They make connections between the roots of the language they are learning, and confidently communicate with an understanding of pronunciation and the grammatical rules of the language. For example, pupils read aloud leaflets they had produced in Spanish with fluency and correct pronunciation. Pupils' confidence in languages is enhanced greatly by the school's focus on oral language and language use, including during the residential visit to France.
- 3.8 As they move through the school pupils develop excellent knowledge and skills in number and the wider aspects of mathematics. In the EYFS children were observed applying their knowledge of measurement to order items from longest to shortest using appropriate vocabulary and successfully

identifying repeating patterns when exploring aboriginal art. By Year 6 pupils calculate confidently and accurately using a range of mental and written methods, as exemplified through their practical construction of Sierpinski triangles.

- 3.9 Most pupils use ICT competently and effectively to support their learning across the curriculum. By the time they leave the school, most have developed excellent ICT skills including coding, word processing and robotics. In the work scrutiny, evidence indicated that marking and feedback from staff enables pupils to improve their work and attain high standards. Pupils develop excellent study skills in the majority of subjects, including through the recently introduced *Take Away Homework* which gives them choice from a range of practical and creative challenges. From an early age, pupils develop their scientific skills including observation, classification, prediction and measuring. Children in the EYFS were observed developing their skills of observation and understanding of mini beasts to a high level when examining a caterpillar in a magnifying box. They predicted confidently the steps their caterpillar would take to become a butterfly. By the end of Year 6 pupils have an extensive knowledge in science. However, their learning is not always extended to the highest levels as opportunities to investigate and apply their knowledge independently are sometimes over-directed.
- 3.10 In history pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of chronology, change over time and the impact of significant events on humanity. This was particularly evident in older pupils' study of World War II. Through extended writing and poetry, pupils expressed with exceptional maturity and empathy, the impact of war on peoples' lives. Diary entries convey effectively how people may have felt from the perspective of an evacuee and from the perspective of those receiving evacuees. Pupils' skilful use of expressive language and understanding of poetic techniques captures the reality of war, for example, the noise and pain of fighting on Dunkirk beach. During discussions with inspectors, pupils reflected at a high level including whether war can be just. Most pupils have an excellent understanding of physical and economic geography. Children in the EYFS demonstrate an excellent understanding of the world. They use confidently maps and globes to locate countries, for example finding Australia linked to their interest in koala bears, and Cornwall linked to their seaside play. Older pupils successfully apply their geographical skills when orienteering including collaborating to construct routes for others to follow. Their passion for the environment is evident including writing a letter to the Prime Minister advising him to focus on the environmental issues that affect children's lives.
- 3.11 As they move through the school, pupils develop excellent knowledge and understanding of music including the use of musical terminology, composition and performance. Children in the EYFS demonstrated a secure understanding of the value of musical notes, successfully tapping and interpreting complex rhythms during *Note Bingo*. The half-termly music circus introduced in Year 3 enables pupils to try a range of instruments including woodwind and strings. Pupils effectively draw upon these experiences to select an instrument to play going forward, which greatly enhances their musical knowledge, skills and understanding. All pupils develop the ability to perform confidently to a wide range of audiences including parents, staff and each other. Observation of celebration assembly and rehearsals for the current production of *Oliver* exemplified all pupils performing to an exceptionally high level. Many pupils achieve success in Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) and the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) examinations, with several achieving merits and distinctions.
- 3.12 Throughout the school pupils use a range of tools and materials to produce excellent artwork in different media. The displays of their original work throughout the school deepens pupils' appreciation of art and the work of a range of artists. During discussions pupils spoke in depth about their artwork, the techniques that they use and the influence of other artists on their work, as exemplified by their collaborative piece inspired by Georgia O'Keeffe where pupils successfully blended colour and texture to create powerful images of nature. Pupils of all ages develop their physical skills to a high level. These are particularly enhanced through activities such as building dens in the outdoor learning area and taking part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and sports

including netball, hockey, cricket, swimming, athletics and tennis. Pupils achieve highly in local and national competitions, for example, national awards in swimming, netball and judo.

- 3.13 Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding. They are enthusiastic, keen to learn and highly supportive of each other in striving to achieve excellence within and beyond the curriculum.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 The school successfully fulfils its aim to provide a nurturing and inspiring community and to prepare pupils for happy, healthy and successful lives in an ever-changing world. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school's relationships and sex education programme prepares their children effectively for life in modern society. Governors have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the school's Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) schemes of work. They have supported the school in implementing successfully a PSHEE programme that enhances the all-round development of pupils throughout the school.
- 3.16 All pupils who responded to the questionnaire stated that the school is a safe place to be, that it teaches them about safety and how to stay safe online. Pupils understand and follow safety rules including wearing appropriate safety equipment for science, sport and practical lessons and observing evacuation procedures if the alarm sounds. During discussions pupils demonstrated that they understand how to keep themselves safe including online. They know not to give personal details and to tell a trusted adult if they receive a communication from someone they do not know or messages that may be abusive. They understand how to be physically and mentally healthy, particularly in terms of diet, exercise and sleep. Through their carefully planned PSHEE lessons, they are developing an appropriate understanding of puberty, relationships and consent.
- 3.17 During discussions, pupils demonstrated excellent levels of self-understanding for their age. They are self-confident and extremely considerate of their peers. Pupils are self-reflective and able to evaluate their strengths and areas for development. They stated strongly that if you have self-belief there is no ceiling to what you can achieve. All age-groups are enthusiastic about their PSHEE lessons stating that they support them in understanding emotions and how to develop relationships, resilience, self-discipline and self-esteem. For example, in the work scrutiny when taking on the role of an agony aunt, pupils demonstrated empathy and knowledge of how to be healthy when responding to a child requesting advice regarding toothache linked to sugary drinks.
- 3.18 Throughout the school pupils demonstrate excellent social and collaborative skills. They support and encourage each other effectively achieving common goals and solving problems. In the EYFS, children were observed playing collaboratively and sharing resources generously with each other. Older pupils were observed working effectively together to achieve their common goal of playing chords on the ukulele in unison, to a set rhythm. During discussion with inspectors, pupils efficiently organised themselves into groups and collaborated well with each other when discussing their work and a range of aspects with regard to school life. They demonstrated an excellent understanding of the way decisions can impact their lives. For example, how they choose to respond emotionally to different circumstances and challenges such as when they have a disagreement with their friends or experience bullying behaviour. They said that using *TAG* where they **t**ell the person how they feel, **a**sk them to stop and **g**et support from an adult really enables them to make the right decisions when managing conflict. Where pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and the opportunity to make choices, their learning and development is excellent. For example, they make sensible choices for lunch, demonstrating an understanding of nutrition, balance and portion size. Younger pupils in a drama lesson effectively improvised scenes at the palace including choosing to portray different characters through their body movements, posture and facial expressions. Members of the school council develop their collaborative decision-making skills to a high level when discussing

and agreeing decisions, including choosing a school pet, which charities to support and inter-house competitions.

- 3.19 Most parents who responded to the questionnaire stated that the school actively promotes values of respect and tolerance of other people. The school is aware that bias can be conveyed unconsciously and is in the process of reviewing its curriculum and resources in order to ensure that language used is reflective of the school's aims and values. Work seen in the work scrutiny demonstrated older pupils' extensive understanding of the principles of equality which underpin the declaration of human rights and how it relates to their lives and responsibilities in British society. Pupils are enthusiastic about the opportunity to learn of other cultures and beliefs. During discussions they demonstrated excellent cultural understanding stating sincerely that it is important to understand and respect the beliefs and customs of others. Pupils appreciate being able to share their cultures and traditions within school and the way that they are listened to respectfully. For example, following a traditional Indian dance performed by younger pupils during the inspection, those watching discussed the meaning of the dance enabling appreciation of the meaning of the different movements including pushing away evil spirits, the eye of a bird and a lotus flower.
- 3.20 Pupils demonstrate an excellent appreciation of the non-material aspects of life and understanding of spirituality. During discussions pupils described a wide range of experiences that enabled them to think beyond the physical such as when they are in the school's secret garden and during outdoor learning. They said that they appreciated time in assembly to reflect and pray and that time together such as during the residential trip to France and during cooking activities developed a spirit of friendship. When sharing their work pupils described the emotions behind their paintings at a very high spiritual level. Older pupils said that their religious education (RE) lessons enabled them to understand and develop spirituality particularly through the study of the beliefs of others. They greatly appreciated their visit to the Hindu Temple during the inspection. Pupils said that the beauty of the temple and experiencing Hindu culture first-hand enabled them to deepen their own spirituality.
- 3.21 Pupils develop excellent leadership skills through a wide range of opportunities provided by the school including being prefects, house captains, eco and school councillors and games captains. Older pupils consistently contribute to the positive culture of the school particularly supporting and caring for younger pupils. For example, during mathematics week older pupils created a booklet for younger pupils with problems around a range of themes such as an escape room. This enabled older pupils to enthusiastically promote enjoyment of maths to younger pupils as well as strengthening relationships. Pupils demonstrate a deep appreciation of the circumstances of those less fortunate than themselves. All pupils seize the opportunity to be involved in activities that benefit others, within school and in local and national charities. For example, shoe box appeal, *swimathon* and Christmas carol singing to the local community.
- 3.22 The vast majority of parents stated in the questionnaires that the school actively promotes good behaviour. During discussions pupils demonstrated that they have a mature understanding of right and wrong and that they contribute to, and support class and school rules. Throughout the school pupils are extremely polite and courteous as observed in lessons and during breaks. Older pupils stated strongly the importance of being excellent role models and leaders. Inspectors found that pupils throughout the school demonstrate these qualities at an outstanding level.

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 chair of governors, chair of the education committee, governor responsible for safeguarding, governor responsible for SEND and pastoral care, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and an assembly. 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

Dr Patricia Preedy	Reporting inspector
Miss Victoria Playford	Compliance team inspector (Head teacher, ISA school)
Miss Claire Bailey	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)