



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report

Greenbank Preparatory School

January 2022

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School's Details

School	Greenbank Preparatory School			
DfE number	356/6005			
Early Years registration number	EY287053			
Registered charity number	525930			
Address	Greenbank Preparatory School Heathbank Road Cheadle Hulme Cheadle Cheshire SK8 6HU			
Telephone number	0161 4853724			
Email address	info@greenbankschool.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Malcolm Johnson			
Chair of governors	Mr Philip Enstone			
Age range	6 months to 11 years			
Number of pupils on roll	220			
	EYFS	106		
	Infants	40	Juniors	74
Inspection dates	26 to 28 January 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Greenbank Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged from six months to eleven years. The school consists of two sections: Nursery and Pre-School for children aged 6 months to 4 years; and junior department for pupils aged between 4 years and 11 years.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1951 as a proprietorial school and became a charitable trust in 1971. The school is overseen by a board of trustees who represent a range of experience and expertise with many being parents of former or current pupils. Since the last inspection, a new head has been appointed.
- 1.3 During the period March to August 2020 the whole school remained open for children of key workers and vulnerable children. From June 2020 the school commenced a phased return which meant that all the children returned to school before the end of the summer term in July 2020.
- 1.4 During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.5 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.6 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement, or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.7 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils from Reception to Year 6, other than vulnerable pupils or the children of key workers, received remote learning provision at home. Nursery and pre-school children remained on site throughout this time.
- 1.8 Since 2020, EYFS profiles have not been externally moderated.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.9 The school aims to provide a caring environment where traditional values of courtesy, respect for others and pride in their work enable all children to develop their talents, gain self-esteem and reach their full potential. It strives to meet the social, emotional, and intellectual needs of all pupils, and to ensure that every child feels valued and is able to play an active role in school.

About the pupils

- 1.10 Pupils come from a range of backgrounds reflecting the local community mostly living within 15 miles of the school. Pupils reflect a range of abilities as indicated by standardised tests. The school has identified 21 pupils as having special needs or disabilities (SEND) which include dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD and ASD; these all receive additional help. No pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC). English is an additional language (EAL) for one pupil who receives support from their class teacher. The school has identified 13 pupils as able, gifted, and talented for whom additional challenges are set and extra activities are provided.

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 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 COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such 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 and the school is required to take the actions specified.

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](#).

COVID-19: Inspection judgements do not cover the period March to August 2020 inclusive.

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the 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, and 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 trustees, 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 trustees ensure 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.

The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

- 2.20 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.
- 2.21 The curriculum is well structured and meets the needs and interests of the children. It supports the children's development in the prime areas of their learning extremely well. Good procedures for monitoring mean that leaders know the curriculum is fully covered.
- 2.22 Staff demonstrate a deep knowledge of how children of this age learn and develop. All children under the age of two make good or better progress from their starting points and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- 2.23 All children are extremely happy and feel safe and secure. Dedicated staff form warm and caring relationships with all children and the level of care is consistently high.
- 2.24 All requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare have been fully met. Staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding and welfare requirements, and they fulfil their responsibility for protecting children in their care diligently.
- 2.25 The setting is strongly committed to ongoing improvement thanks to accurate self-evaluation and a clear plan for the future. As a result, children enjoy high quality care and support.

Quality of education

- 2.26 The quality of education is good.
- 2.27 Leaders and managers implement a curriculum that builds on what children know and can do-providing them with the necessary skills for future learning. Systematic evaluation of activities helps staff to plan for individual needs and means that all children are very well supported.
- 2.28 Observations of interaction between children and staff were of a high quality and contributed well to delivering the curriculum intent; however, this is not consistent across the setting.
- 2.29 Staff are successful in planning and providing activities based around children's needs and interests and they have high expectations of what children can achieve in relation to the stage of development of each child. Natural resources and familiar everyday objects in the rooms allow children to explore, discover and be curious. For example, a toddler was observed exploring the different textures of twigs and pinecones, when using them as tools to explore dough.
- 2.30 The majority of staff are skilled in developing children's language and social skills at every available opportunity and interact with them constantly. They read and sing with the children, encouraging them to repeat words, answer simple questions and join in with songs and actions. Toddlers enthusiastically joined in with number rhymes using their fingers to count.
- 2.31 Staff readily use praise and encouragement, and this helpful feedback enables children to gain the skills they need to learn.
- 2.32 Assessments contribute to the staff's knowledge about each child and help to identify the next steps in their learning. However, the revised approach to planning and assessment cannot yet be accessed on the online learning system; therefore, it is not yet fully used in order to assess, and track children's progress.
- 2.33 Their experiences in the setting give children a broad basis for their future learning, and they are very well prepared to move on.

Behaviour and attitudes

- 2.34 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.
- 2.35 The children enjoy learning and are curious and inquisitive. They are keen to explore their surroundings. Babies and toddlers explore indoors and outdoors, playing with what they know and demonstrating a keen willingness to have a go at new activities. High-quality resources and a challenging, investigative curriculum enable children to demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning, confidence, and independence. Children make excellent use of the available resources in the rooms thereby fostering the children's innate curiosity. For example, a baby showed great concentration when exploring items on a board, pressing buttons and operating switches, while toddlers showed great enjoyment using instruments exploring how to make different sounds.
- 2.36 Children are able to concentrate on activities for good periods of time for their age. Toddlers, for example, were able to listen and participate in singing and story time, showing that they were developing good habits for the future. Babies, meanwhile, are eager to attempt activities for themselves and keep going until they get it right. One baby tried different ways to stack wooden blocks to make them balance and was praised for doing so. He then showed great delight when he knocked them down and went on to repeat this activity several times. Children make associations in their play as seen when a baby used real kitchen utensils to stir objects in a pan then put the pan in the oven.
- 2.37 Children demonstrate excellent behaviour and show respect for one another. This is supported by the kind and supportive behaviour staff show towards one another. They respond to gentle reminders from staff about using 'kind hands' and 'kind feet', how to share things and how to play co-operatively.
- 2.38 Partnership with parents is very positive and parents ensure that their children attend regularly, developing secure routines and good habits for future learning. The setting has suitable procedures to investigate unexpected absences.

Personal development

- 2.39 The personal development of children is outstanding.
- 2.40 The exceptional relationships that children have with adults around them are built on strong, secure attachments. Children feel emotionally secure and able to develop their personalities in a supportive and safe environment. They are happy to meet visitors and engage with them.
- 2.41 The nurturing key person system helps children form secure attachments and the high standard of care given to each child promotes their well-being and independence most effectively. They know that they can seek assurance from their key person at any time and they will frequently go straight to them on arrival at the setting. At nap times, children are supported by being gently patted to sleep, which makes them feel secure. Staff send daily diary sheets home to ensure parents are informed of their child's routines and needs.
- 2.42 Mealtimes are a happy and sociable shared experience. Toddlers ably use forks to feed themselves, showing that they are developing independence, although there are missed opportunities at mealtimes to allow them to develop this further. Babies are able to sit at the table and staff are extremely supportive of each child's efforts to feed themselves and drink from cups.
- 2.43 Children are encouraged by the staff to take appropriate risks both indoors and in the outside area. Babies try to be adventurous, such as by taking tentative steps to negotiate walking down the slope to the outdoor area. Gentle reminders, for example to hold on to the rail when going up and down the stairs, help children to understand when they might be at risk.
- 2.44 Staff help children to lead a healthy lifestyle from the very beginning of their time at the setting. They are provided with high quality cooked food, fresh drinking water and fruit. All children have regular access to outside areas that are well equipped to promote physical activity. Babies are taken for walks around the school grounds in their pushchairs and toddlers often visit the wooded area.

- 2.45 All staff ensure that the setting's hygiene practices are strictly followed, so that children's personal needs are met effectively. Staff encourage toddlers to wipe their hands before eating and support those unable to do so independently.
- 2.46 Safeguarding is a priority and everyone in the setting is aware of their responsibility to make sure that the EYFS statutory requirements are met.
- 2.47 Children are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Staff help them to share and take turns, to make decisions and to respect and care about others. The setting celebrates festivals and events from British and other cultures, and British values are fundamental to daily life. All children are offered the same experiences.

Leadership and management

- 2.48 Leadership and management are good.
- 2.49 The leadership team give strong direction which enthuses the staff, who are keen to offer the highest levels of care and teaching. Leaders monitor provision in the setting closely to maintain high standards and quality. They understand what young children can achieve and have a determination to reach the best possible outcomes.
- 2.50 Staff are well qualified and are well supported by leaders and managers. They benefit from regular supervision meetings and annual appraisals and are able to discuss their own well-being and development.
- 2.51 Professional development is strong with training provided for all compulsory requirements. In addition, leaders identify other training needs through evaluation and supervision meetings. This results in a positive impact on the care and outcomes for the children.
- 2.52 All children are well known by leaders, and their needs are swiftly met. This includes those with SEND and additional needs. The setting has ready access to specialist support, both within the school and from outside agencies.
- 2.53 The setting has strong links with parents. In interviews with inspectors, they reported that they are overwhelmingly appreciative of the care their children receive and on the significant progress their children have made. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire reveal that parents have an extremely positive view of the setting. However, parents commented that they would like to receive more information on the recent reforms to EYFS.
- 2.54 Trustees are very familiar with the setting and successful in holding leaders to account for its quality and outcomes. They are knowledgeable and supportive, and make sure that resources are used efficiently.
- 2.55 The setting ensures that safeguarding and health and safety have the highest priority, so that all children are kept safe. Statutory duties are fully met, including those set out in the Equality Act 2010, those linked to safer recruitment, and the duties in relation to the 'Prevent' strategy.
- 2.56 The recommendation from the previous inspection to increase ease of access for the youngest children to their outside play area and opportunities for children under two to select activities for themselves, to enhance children's independence has been fully met.

Compliance with statutory requirements

- 2.57 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

Recommendations for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvements to its provision for children in the early years.

- Improve the monitoring of interactions between children and staff to ensure all interactions are of a consistently high quality.
- Ensure the revised approach to planning and assessment is securely established.
- Strengthen the procedures for supporting parents' understanding of the recent reforms to the EYFS.

3. Inspection Evidence

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair and group of trustees, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended an assembly. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Daphne Cawthorne

Reporting inspector

Mr Kit Perona-Wright

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