



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report

Blue Coat School, Birmingham

May 2021

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School's Details

School	Blue Coat School, Birmingham
DfE number	330/6070
Registered charity number	1152244
Address	Blue Coat School Somerset Road Edgbaston Birmingham West Midlands B17 OHR
Telephone number	01214106800
Email address	hmpa@thebluecoatschool.com
Headmaster	Mr Noel Neeson
Chair of governors	Mr Bernard Singleton
Age range	3 to 11
Number of pupils on roll	621
	Boys 318 Girls 303
	EYFS 120 Pre prep 141
	Prep 360
Inspection dates	12 to 14 May 2021

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 The Blue Coat School is a co-educational independent day school for pupils aged between three and eleven. It was founded in 1722 as a co-educational charity school in the centre of Birmingham. In 1930, the school moved to its current fifteen-acre campus, two miles from the city centre. It is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors.
- 1.2 The school has two sections: the pre-prep department for pupils aged three to seven, which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting, and a prep department for those aged seven to eleven. Since the previous inspection in 2017, the school has restructured the management team, developed a woodland learning environment, refurbished the dining room, created a new library, Year 6 learning hub and artificial grass facility.
- 1.3 During the period March to June 2020, the whole school remained open only for children of key workers. During this period of closure, the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils. There was a phased return for all pupils other than two to three-year-olds during June 2020.
- 1.4 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. 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.
- 1.5 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than the children of key workers or vulnerable pupils received remote learning provision at home.
- 1.6 In 2020 public examinations were not held.
- 1.7 Since 2020, EYFS profiles have not been externally moderated.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.8 The school aims to provide exceptional learning opportunities for every child while nurturing a spirit of fun, adventure, and curiosity within a caring and supportive Christian environment. It seeks to offer a broad curriculum in which pupils can achieve high standards academically, in sport and in the performing arts and in their social, personal, and emotional development. Pupils are encouraged to be truthful, patient and kind while cheerfully trying hard and showing respect.

About the pupils

- 1.9 Pupils come from professional families mostly living within a few miles of the school. They reflect the multi-cultural city they live in and several faiths are represented. 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; these receive additional help. No pupil has an education, health care plan. English is an additional language for 101 pupils and most of these receive support from their class teachers, with 26 receiving additional help for their English. The school has identified 87 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. 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, 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 in the junior school. 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 complaint's 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. 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 of governors and the safeguarding governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings, chapel, and 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

Compliance team inspector (Director of Compliance, IAPS school)