



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Aberdour Preparatory School

28 February – 2 March 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
Key findings	8
Recommendation	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	Aberdour Preparatory School		
DfE number	936/6000		
Registered charity number	312033		
Address	Aberdour Preparatory School Brighton Road Burgh Heath Tadworth Surrey KT20 6AJ		
Telephone number	01737 354119		
Email address	enquiries@abderdourschool.co.uk		
Head	Mr Simon Collins		
Chair of governors	Mr Donald Davie		
Proprietor	Aberdour School Educational Trust		
Age range	2 to 11		
Number of pupils on roll	344		
	EYFS	88	
	Pre-Prep	25	Prep 231
Inspection dates	28 February – 2 March 2023		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Aberdour Preparatory School is a co-educational independent day school for pupils. It was founded in 1928 and is a charitable trust, which is administered by a board of governors.
- 1.2 The school is organised into Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) known as nursery and transition (reception) classes, for children aged 2 to 5 years; a pre-prep department for Year 1; the prep section includes a middle school for Years 2 and 3; and a main school for Years 4 to 6.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has created a middle school by bringing Years 2 and 3 together. The school has ceased offering Years 7 and 8 and pupils now leave to attend senior schools at the age of 11.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school seeks to enable all pupils to realise their potential through providing what it intends to be a personalised curriculum enriched by a creative programme of art, drama, music, technology, sport and entrepreneurialism. The school aims for all pupils to develop self-esteem, entrepreneurial spirit, a sense of respect and tolerance and make a positive contribution as they move through life.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds. Nationally standardised data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is well above average compared to those taking similar tests nationally. The school has identified 57 pupils as having special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and general speech and language difficulties, of whom 46 receive additional support. Twenty-seven pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), with five pupils receiving additional support for English. Three pupils at the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified 14 pupils as being more able, gifted and/or talented.

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.

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. The reception year is known as 'transition' at Aberdour.

Key findings

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

- Pupils' attitudes towards learning are excellent across the school.
- Pupils' achievement and development in the pre-prep is outstanding and lays the foundation for successful application of study skills as the pupils move through the school.
- Pupils' advanced digital literacy skills enable them to use information and communication technology (ICT) particularly well and make a significant positive impact on their learning.
- Pupils achieve excellent academic results, including in external examinations to senior schools.
- Pupils develop high levels of skill and understanding across the curriculum subject areas; art, science and mathematics being of particular note.

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

- Pupils' social development and collaboration is excellent, they work extremely effectively together, both in formal and informal situations.
- Pupils' ability to make decisions is excellent. Across the school, pupils demonstrate they are independent learners, particularly in the pre-prep.
- Pupils' self-understanding is excellent. They display high levels of self-confidence and self-awareness.
- Pupils' moral understanding is excellent. They are reflective, regulate their own behaviour and learn from their mistakes.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement:

- Develop a stronger pupil voice to take into consideration the pupils' passionate interest in, and concern for, the environment and its impact upon their future.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 The achievement of pupils is excellent and particularly rapid in EYFS and pre-prep. It is evident from the pupils' books and discussions with them that pupils make excellent personal progress as a result

of highly effective teaching and a carefully planned curriculum. By the time pupils reach Year 6, their attainment is above the national average for pupils of similar ages. Pupils are successful in obtaining places to highly selective senior schools, many gaining scholarships in sport, art, music and academia. Throughout the school, excellent teacher subject knowledge and assessment of pupils' needs, enables all pupils, including those with SEND, to make excellent progress as a result of lessons being tailored to meet their specific needs. For example, Year 3 pupils with SEND worked successfully to gain greater understanding of interpreting data from a bar graph. Individual learning plans are shared by specialist staff with all teachers via the school's intranet to enable SEND pupils to access the curriculum. Pupils with EHC plans receive effective additional support from assistants. Pupils with EAL receive appropriate support to learn English and access the curriculum in their home language, for example by using a translation application on a tablet computer to access instructions in a Year 5 mathematics lesson. The school is successful in meeting its aims to provide a curriculum suited to each child to enable them to make progress and reach their potential.

- 3.6 Pupils develop high levels of subject knowledge and a depth of understanding across the curriculum, supported by a carefully planned curriculum, excellent teacher subject knowledge and strong leadership and management. The use of ICT resources enhances pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas. Pupils develop excellent scientific skills. Year 5 pupils predicted and drew conclusions as they investigated Hooke's Law and Year 6 pupils took on the role of doctors, using tablet computers to help them research the symptoms of deficiency diseases. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their teachers know their subjects well and help them to learn. As a result, pupils demonstrate high levels of enjoyment and confidence in their learning engagement across the curriculum. EYFS children have access to creative media and produce models, drawings and paintings to a high standard for their age, both within the classroom and using the extensive outdoor provision. Year 4 study cubism and go on to make outstanding 3-D self-portraits. Through the highly effective 'Personalised Achievement Learning' (PAL) curriculum, pupils are continually encouraged to reflect on their learning and in lessons are challenged to extend their subject knowledge and understanding in all subject areas.
- 3.7 Pupils have excellent verbal and written communication skills, supported by a broad based curriculum and knowledgeable teachers. EYFS children speak in full sentences and hold sophisticated conversations for their age with adults and other children. In the pre-prep, pupils make their own 'Pug Hug' books for world book day, carefully considering their characters. From an early age, pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of the conventions of written text. Reading is encouraged and valued throughout the school, through the use of story benches in the pre-prep and the well-stocked library for older pupils. A recent initiative, 'disciplinary literacy', is helping to enrich and enhance pupils' opportunities to use their literacy skills in all subjects. For example, in science pupils look carefully at news reports of the recent UK space project. In Year 3, the quality of persuasive writing is enhanced by displays reminding pupils of the power of emotive language. In most lessons, teachers support the development of excellent communication skills by structuring the use of language and through effective questioning. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 demonstrated particularly confident speaking and listening skills in their rehearsal of the musical *Annie*.
- 3.8 Pupils demonstrate excellent mathematical skills for their age and ability because of excellent teacher knowledge and a carefully planned curriculum, starting in the EYFS. Nursery children start to explore mathematical concepts and one to one correspondence effectively. They learn to read numbers one to five by searching for buried treasure in the sand and reading and counting the numbers found. Year 1 pupils use a range of resources to solve number sentence problems. Interactive white boards are used well to support whole class teaching, while small, focused groups offer support to those pupils needing further support and consolidation. Pupils say how much they enjoy mathematics lessons and how being taught a variety of methods to solve problems helps them to overcome previous challenges. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they know the properties of circles and are able to define the terms radius, circumference, chord, tangent, diameter. Pupils' confidence, resilience and the absence of fear of failure are significant contributory factors in pupils' success and achievement in numeracy.

- 3.9 Pupils display outstanding digital literacy skills throughout the school, starting in the EYFS. This results from planning learning opportunities, a high degree of teacher knowledge and leaders' and governors' purchase of resources. Nursery children are able to program simple robots. Year 1 were observed using tablets to produce stop-motion animations using small world play to re-tell stories on world book day. Other pupils in the pre-prep used tablets to scan QR codes around the classroom and receive instructions, such as to access an online tutorial on how to draw the character 'Zog'. Older pupils make personalised mugs, t-shirts and board games, which could all be sold as part of their PAL curriculum. Year 4 pupils demonstrate excellent coding skills, challenging themselves to resolve the problem as to why their model dolphin would not swim in a straight line down the corridor. Throughout the school, pupils use ICT seamlessly and confidently in many curriculum areas. The school robotics team have been national finalists.
- 3.10 Pupils develop excellent study skills. These are fostered from the youngest age through the daily 'rainbow challenge' and the supportive reward system that promotes the qualities of effective learning, such as the 'concentrating crocodile'. Pre-prep pupils develop reasoning skills through practical challenges to find the odd one out, which is extended to sentence writing, where pupils give reasons for their choices. In conversations, pupils display their mature verbal communication skills and ability, often through debate and reflect on their learning. In lessons observed, pupils applied their study skills well through the teachers' challenging questioning. For example, in the daily science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) challenges, pupils solve problems such as how to make a broom stick for a witch by attaching twigs to a lollipop stick. They draw conclusions from a science experiment into which material was the most waterproof. Some parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed the view that the school did not seek to challenge and prepare pupils adequately for entry to senior schools. The inspection found that all pupils, including those who were particularly academic, were well-supported in their lessons and achieved well.
- 3.11 Pupils are highly successful in their achievements outside the formal curriculum, thus meeting the school's stated aim to value and celebrate pupils' many individual achievements. They participate with much success in an extensive range of sports fixtures, national sports events and robotics competitions. Pupils benefit from a wide variety of extra-curricular and co-curricular opportunities, ranging from sport to music, ballet and martial arts. The school's nurturing culture enables many pupils to achieve their potential. Pupils cite the excellent pupil-teacher relationships and their teachers' passion for and their wide range of interests as contributing factors in driving their own levels of achievement. Many pupils play instruments and benefit from individual tuition at the school, achieving success at Grade 3 or above before leaving the school.
- 3.12 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Teachers nurture a positive attitude toward learning from an early age. Pupils throughout the pre-prep demonstrate exemplary attitudes towards learning and were totally absorbed in the tasks they completed independently. Strong foundations are built in the pre-prep and then developed successfully across the school. Pupils are given encouragement and constructive feedback from their peer as well as their subject teachers. In their pupil interviews, pupils were keen to share their enthusiasm for learning and commented how well the feedback from their teachers helped them to focus on the next steps in learning.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils develop excellent self-understanding, in fulfilment of the school's aims for all pupils to develop self-esteem, entrepreneurial spirit, a sense of respect and tolerance and make a positive contribution as they move through life. This is underpinned by strong pupil-teacher relationships and pastoral support and by the PAL tutor system. Pupils can self-reflect on their work. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils identified that they had mis-read a bar graph. Pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves and move outside of their comfort zone. Nursery children are encouraged to change

clothing themselves and put their own coats on. Year 2 pupils self-understanding is enhanced as a result of opportunities to talk, reflect at the end of assemblies, to use the reading corner for quiet time and meditate during weekly yoga sessions and mindfulness activities. The trust pupils have in staff underpins their willingness to have a go without the fear of failure. In physical education (PE), pupils are familiar with the term 'marvellous mistakes', and in the pre-prep, pupils are encouraged to be 'daring dolphins' as they demonstrate their resilience in their learning. The school's marking system is used well to help pupils reflect on next steps for learning. In the pre-prep, pupils reflect on their work and allocate a heart to the piece of work they are most proud of. During discussions with inspectors, older pupils were able to discuss the results from internal examinations and as a result of feedback, pupils developed excellent knowledge of their own strengths and areas for development.

- 3.15 Pupils have an excellent understanding of the decisions they can make because of the strong relationships throughout the school and the levels of independence encouraged by knowledgeable teachers. Pupils in the pre-prep develop high levels of understanding through a daily 'rainbow challenge', sensibly selecting the difficulty of the challenge they undertake. Year 1 pupils put targets in their own writing books, stating what they would like to get better at, for example using capital letters. Through the school and eco council, pupils are encouraged to democratically look at ways of improving the school and make some decisions, e.g. menu choices. The pupil voice is developing regarding wider school issues, with older pupils expressing their views eloquently and considerately, but pupils felt there were many more areas where they could influence school life, such as their concerns for the environment.
- 3.16 Pupils develop good spiritual understanding, and have opportunities to appreciate the non-material aspects of life. Through their behaviour and interactions, pupils are kind and courteous to all in the school community, including visitors. The 'woodland wonder' lessons effectively contribute to pupils' spiritual understanding, together with opportunities in the 'lifelong learning' curriculum, give pupils of all ages meaningful opportunities to explore awe and wonder in the natural environment. Through the taught curriculum as well as opportunities to share their own faith, pupils develop a very good understanding of spirituality in world faiths and religions.
- 3.17 Pupils have excellent moral understanding; they know right from wrong and carefully follow the school rules, taking responsibility for their own behaviour, which was observed to be excellent. Year 6 pupils were observed during form time entering the room quietly and immediately settled to giving their council representative their full attention as they discussed the changes they wished to see on next term's lunch menu. The teachers help the pupils reflect on their behaviour and as a result, they learn from their mistakes. Pupils speak maturely about accepting the consequences of any poor decisions. Pupils debate the rights and wrongs of eating meat and whether eating meat contributes to climate change. They voice strong opinions on looking after the environment and the impact litter can have on wildlife. Mutual respect and tolerance of others is embedded in the ethos of the school and is supported by the whole school personal, social, health education (PSHE) programme and underpinned by effective leadership. A few pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt that not all pupils were kind to each other. During the inspection, observations in lessons and around school, as well as pupil interviews, did not support this view.
- 3.18 Pupils develop sophisticated social understanding throughout the school. Pupils of all ages seamlessly work together and cooperate in lessons, facilitated by opportunities to interact provided by their teachers. Collaborative work, both in the formal curriculum and co-curricular context is highly effective. Pupils can exemplify situations where they have worked together to achieve common goals, for example in STEM projects. Older pupils demonstrated compassion and empathy through the support they gave to younger pupils.
- 3.19 Pupils' contributions to others, and the school community, are excellent. Pupils give thoughtful consideration to those less fortunate than themselves, expressed in their enthusiasm to raise money for good causes to support charities. Within school, the pupils make positive impact on the experiences of other pupils through the positions of responsibility they hold, ranging from 'helpers of

the day' in the EYFS to being playground monitors and buddies and pupil librarians. Recently, funds have been raised for Ukraine. Each of the four school houses support a local charity, chosen by the house captain. Charities supported include the children's department at a local hospital, where presents were bought for children in hospital over Christmas. Light monitors were responsible for turning off lights around the school and eco monitors in Year 6 were keen to explain they had increased the amount of recycling taking place in the school. Older pupils felt these opportunities would help them feel prepared when they moved to senior school.

- 3.20 Pupils' respect for diversity and cultural understanding is well-developed. Pupils say that the school's culture of respect, underpinned by effective leadership and management, is a key driver in this area. Consequently, pupils are highly respectful towards their peers, teachers, and visitors. Pupils are inclusive, demonstrating maturity and intelligence, tolerance, and sensitivity towards others. The PAL curriculum supports pupils learning about other cultures across the world; for example, in PAL Year 3 pupils were learning about the French culture and festivals, whilst completing a STEM challenge on making a Louvre-style pyramid. They are appreciative about diversity within their own and wider community, taking every opportunity to learn about and share each other's culture and traditions. In discussions, pupils spoke warmly about an assembly taken by some Hindu pupils. Mandarin lessons are helping pupils gain a deeper understanding of the Chinese culture. In pupil interviews and from questionnaire responses, pupils identify that the school is a very caring community.
- 3.21 Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy through the taught curriculum and through the wide range of extra-curricular sports and activities programme. They demonstrate good levels of physical fitness in PE and games lessons and develop further skills and positive attitudes towards exercise through the wide range of sports on offer. During interviews, pupils eloquently explained that they were helped to understand the importance of relaxing and maintaining mental health through their mindfulness and yoga lessons. In the nursery, pupils learn about eating healthy snacks, which develops into a rolling healthy snack bar in the older pre-prep classes. Older pupils also make healthy choices from the lunch menu and are keen to serve themselves salads and vegetables. Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that they understood how to stay safe when online. When interviewed, pupils gave meaningful examples of how to stay safe by not giving out personal information to enable strangers to identify them or where they lived.

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 a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form time. 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

Mr Keith Morrow	Reporting inspector
Mrs Naomi Fowke	Compliance team inspector (retired head, ISA school)
Mrs Helen Snow	Team inspector (retired head, IAPS school)