



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Bablake School

May 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	Bablake School		
DfE number	331/6017		
Registered charity number	528961		
Address	Bablake School Coundon Road Coventry CV1 4AU		
Telephone number	024 7627 1200		
Email address	info.bablake@bkhs.org.uk		
Headmaster	Mr Andrew Wright		
Chair of governors	Prof Ian Dunn		
Proprietor	Coventry School Foundation		
Age range	11 to 18		
Number of pupils on roll	713		
	Seniors	525	Sixth Form 188
Inspection dates	3 to 5 May 2023		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Bablake School is an independent co-educational day school. The school was founded in 1344, moving to its present site in 1890. The school belongs to the Coventry School Foundation which is a registered charity and whose trustees oversee the running of the school. Since the previous inspection the school has reconstituted governance and management structures. During this time there have been significant changes in personnel with the current principal and headmaster appointed in September 2022. There are 40 acres of playing fields approximately one mile from the school.
- 1.2 The other schools in the Coventry School Foundation were inspected separately at the same time.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to develop character, intellect and physical well-being within a happy, scholarly and caring community and to educate and inspire young people to take on the challenges of the world, so that they may lead full and responsible lives, both as individuals and as members of society.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Most pupils live within a 15-mile radius of the school. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is above average compared to those taking similar tests nationally. The school has identified 182 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, autism and physical disabilities, of whom 47 receive additional specialist help. Two pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 41 pupils, of whom three receive additional support. The school has identified 186 pupils as being the most able in the school's population and the curriculum is modified for them.

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 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](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, 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 GCSE and A-level results in the years 2019 to 2022 confirm 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 and sex education, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

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

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

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

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

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

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

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

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

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

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

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

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

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Shell	Year 7

Key findings

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

- Pupils are high achievers who excel academically and across a wide range of co-curricular activities.
- Pupils achieve excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Pupils confidently apply higher-order thinking skills to rapidly extend their academic skills.
- Pupils display exemplary attitudes towards their learning, approaching their studies with rigour and purpose.

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

- Pupils are extremely self-confident and self-disciplined; they are reflective and understand how to improve their learning.
- Pupils demonstrate a highly developed moral sense; they take responsibility for their own behaviour and are sensitive to the needs of others.
- Pupils display a mature social awareness, working together with an excellent sense of purpose and enjoyment.
- Pupils are respectful of each other and understand the value of diversity in their community.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Strengthen pupils' ability to voice their perspectives and influence more effectively the way that the school community functions.

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 demonstrate an extremely high level of achievement in their academic studies and through their co-curricular commitments. This reflects the successful realisation of the school's aim to provide

pupils with a scholarly experience that develops their intellect in a harmonious community. Pupils' attainment at A-level in 2022 was strong, with a quarter achieving A* and over three-quarters achieving A* to B. This high level of attainment mirrors the centre- and teacher-assessed results in 2019, 2020 and 2021 when well over half of results achieved were at top grades. A high percentage of sixth-form pupils take the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) with nearly half achieving A* to A for their submissions. In 2022, over half of GCSE results were at the highest two grades with three-quarters achieving grades 9 to 7. Data indicate similar attainment in 2019, 2020 and 2021 in the centre- and teacher-assessed assessments. This extremely high level of attainment is a consequence of the pupils' excellent attitudes towards their learning, supported by teaching which demonstrates a high level of subject knowledge combined with well-used learning resources. Data analysed show that at GCSE, almost all pupils achieve significantly higher examination grades than expected, with a similar pattern for those taking A levels. These results represent rapid progress in the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding as they move through the school. There is no significant difference in attainment between the different groups within the school, all of whom, including those with SEND, make consistent, rapid progress over time. A very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire that their child's individual needs are met effectively and that teaching enables their child to make progress.

- 3.6 Pupils demonstrate an excellent knowledge of different subjects and effectively apply their understanding across all areas of their learning. In a Year 10 physics lesson, pupils confidently explained energy transfers using Sankey diagrams. Year 12 pupils creatively employed an extensive variety of media in their artwork, using screen printing, oil portraiture, sketch, block printing and photography. In a Year 9 history lesson, pupils displayed an excellent understanding of the key aspects of the United States economy in the 1920s. The work scrutinised across a range of abilities and age groups was demanding and complex, displaying competent application of knowledge, skills and understanding to further learning. Pupils take pride in the high standards they achieve and are strongly supported by the well-structured, broad and challenging curriculum and by the highly effective teaching they receive.
- 3.7 Throughout the school, pupils are highly effective and confident communicators. They rapidly develop these skills, encouraged by the classroom ethos of positive interaction. Pupils are enthusiastic and competent in their participation in debates and discussions, both in their subject lessons and in the activities they pursue. They speak and write with confidence and authority, expressing complex ideas fluently and sensitively. In an English lesson, Year 10 pupils demonstrated sophisticated skills as they analysed and discussed the language in the poem, *Piano*, by D H Lawrence. Year 8 pupils displayed familiarity with the similarities and differences between Greeks and Romans, tackling Latin vocabulary with aplomb. In a Year 12 religion, philosophy and ethics lesson, pupils engaged in a vibrant discussion on meta-ethics, reflecting with maturity upon moral situations within the context of the subject material and their own lives. Pupils demonstrate extremely high levels of achievement in their written work, and this is particularly evident in the high quality of the EPQ theses submitted by Year 13 pupils. This high quality is reflected in the range and depth of essays produced by pupils in Year 8 to 10 who form the symposium group.
- 3.8 Pupils display strong numeracy skills, applying these competently across the curriculum. Year 7 pupils confidently used measurements of mass, volume and quantity of ingredients in their food technology lesson. In a biology lesson, Year 13 pupils displayed excellent applied use of complex mathematics using Simpson's biodiversity index, bacterial cell counts, dilution series and logarithmic functions. Year 9 pupils understand the difference between dependent and independent variables, interpreting data accurately and plotting diffusion gradients in diffusion and osmosis. In their mathematics lessons, pupils of all abilities apply their knowledge, skills and understanding with fluency and confidence. For example, Year 11 pupils successfully completed parallel and perpendicular line graphics, reaching secure outcomes with their calculations.

- 3.9 Pupils develop high levels of competence in information and communication technology (ICT), and routinely apply these skills across a range of subjects. They are creative in their use of technology and use their technical skills to promote all aspects of their learning. In a history lesson, Year 7 pupils studying the siege of Rochester Castle competently produced newspaper accounts using word processing applications. Year 9 pupils effectively used computer aided design and manufacturing applications, laser and 3D printers to create lamps. Pupils are equally dexterous and imaginative in their use of technology outside the classroom. In a house assembly, house captains delivered a well-planned and well-executed electronic presentation exploring different cultures and incorporating an interactive quiz to add interest. In coding club, senior pupils confidently used an advanced computer language programme as they worked on developing an app to construct a marketable game for children. Pupils are confident in their use of technology, competently accessing lesson materials online, conducting independent research and in presenting their work.
- 3.10 Pupils display extremely well-developed study skills. They are confident participants in their lessons, challenging their understanding and extending their knowledge through high levels of engagement with their subject. In an economics lesson, Year 12 pupils were highly adept analysing stimulus material prior to answering examination questions. Year 12 pupils studying history, effectively contextualised the effect of religion on the crown in the Tudor reign. In their approach to their symposium and EPQ submissions, pupils display extremely well-developed levels of analysis, hypothesis and synthesis as they research and present their material. Pupils throughout the school are highly effective in employing their study skills. They approach their studies with maturity and commitment, gaining positive learning experiences from their mistakes. As a result, they rapidly consolidate their subject knowledge and extend their academic understanding.
- 3.11 Pupils achieve at extremely high levels through participation in the school's co-curricular programme. They are highly successful in national Science and Mathematics Challenges, were national finalists in a recent Formula One competition and gained 'Best Teamwork' award last year for the Industrial Cadets. Pupils regularly achieve local, regional and national success in a wide range of sports often working in partnership with King Henry VIII school. Pupils develop self-confidence as they participate in the many orchestras, bands, quartets, choirs and dramatic performances throughout the year. They achieve high grades in external music and drama examinations. Pupils broaden their life skills and gain experience through the comprehensive co-curricular programme, generously supported by the provision made by school's leaders and governors.
- 3.12 Pupils throughout the school demonstrate excellent attitudes towards their learning. They are diligent and dedicated in their approach to their academic studies, working hard to succeed. They successfully work with each other and with their teachers. Pupils take responsibility for the quality of their work and are proud of their achievements. Pupils work independently and collaboratively with a strong sense of purpose, and this was evidenced in their lessons and through scrutiny of their written work. Pupils are extremely supportive of each other, demonstrating high levels of perseverance and resilience as they work towards gaining academic excellence. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire stated that the school helps their children to be confident and independent, and this is evidenced in the mature approach of pupils towards their learning.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils demonstrate very high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem in their academic studies and in their lives beyond the classroom, successfully reflecting the school's aims to develop character and promote wellbeing. Pupils successfully combine the demands of their academic timetables with a full programme of activities, and as a result, develop personal qualities of organisation and self-discipline. Pupils are self-reliant and reflective learners: they understand their own qualities and know how to improve themselves in all aspects of their lives. Year 12 art sketchbooks demonstrate a thorough

process of self-evaluation and reflection and incorporate a strategic process of experimentation in the style of researched artists. Pupils displayed confidence and skill as they worked to support individual improvisations on the gamelan orchestra, successfully experimenting with sequencing and volume. In a Year 7 drama lesson, pupils confidently utilised a range of techniques to enhance their physical performance skills, using slow motion, stillness, freeze frame to create sophisticated sequences. Pupils of all ages and abilities, approach their studies with maturity and resilience, understanding the need to persevere in order to succeed and this was clearly evidenced in the scrutiny of pupils' work. Throughout the school, pupils are willing participants in the co-curricular programme of activities and clubs, gaining self-awareness as they experience new skill sets.

- 3.15 Pupils understand the importance of making decisions and taking responsibility for their lives. They are aware of how their decisions may affect their futures and impact on their wellbeing. Senior pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of the importance of the subject choices they make and are appreciative of the careers guidance they receive. Pupils view mistakes as positive learning opportunities, encouraged by the support routinely offered by their teachers. In their practical science sessions, pupils of all ages act sensibly with proper regard to the safety of themselves and their peers. Pupils are encouraged to make sensible choices and decisions which they do effectively supported by their teachers and, as a result, pupils confidently take ownership of their own learning and gain self-confidence. Pupils of all ages are highly successful in balancing the considerable demands of their academic and co-curricular choices.
- 3.16 Pupils demonstrate a strong appreciation of the non-material elements of life and speak maturely of how this strengthens their self-awareness. They are thoughtful and reflective, incorporating their awareness of non-tangible elements in their artwork and in classroom discussions on ethical topics. Pupils in a Year 11 geography lesson accurately described the consequences of poverty in an urban conurbation, where lack of housing and high levels of unemployment are frequently manifested in poor education, drugs, soaring infection rates and crime. Scrutiny of pupils' work in their 'life choices' studies reveals a mature understanding of correlation between behaviours and wellbeing. Pupils in the symposium group demonstrate a keen awareness of the extent and wonder of the non-material aspects of our world, researching topics such as parapsychology, how gyroscopes work, the photographic memory and the theory of dark matter. Pupils display a genuine understanding of different cultures and religions, discussing these with sensitivity in their religious studies. They value the faith room where they can spend quiet time during the day.
- 3.17 Pupils display a strong moral understanding and a clear sense of right and wrong. In an English lesson, Year 13 pupils demonstrated maturity of understanding as they discussed the morality of individualism and the consequences of putting oneself above others in order to rise in status. Pupils in a classical civilization lesson, considered morality in the ancient world, their conclusions informing a pertinent discussion and reflection on contemporary practice. Pupils gain a strong understanding of how to build positive relationships supported by the robust 'life choices' programme. Almost all pupils and a very large majority of parents in their questionnaire responses stated that the school expects pupils to behave well. Inspectors found that behaviour within the classroom and around the campus is exemplary.
- 3.18 Pupils develop excellent social skills and employ these effectively in their academic and leisure times. They develop positive attitudes towards each other and demonstrate a genuine willingness to work together, enabled through the strong house and pastoral system. Pupils develop high levels of social understanding through the many opportunities the school offers, both academically and through the extensive co-curricular programme. Pupils from mixed age groups worked harmoniously together in recorder club, while in a Year 7 tutor session, peers engaged in chess matches, held impromptu play rehearsals or discussed revision strategies together. In a Year 9 chemistry practical, pupils worked effectively in small groups to produce crystals of copper sulphate. An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school enables their children to develop strong teamwork and social skills.

- 3.19 Pupils develop strong leadership skills as they undertake roles of responsibility within their school community. Senior pupils contribute as prefects and house captains, gaining valuable experience as leaders. Year 10 pupils engage in volunteer work with the junior school and as readers with Year 7, while trained peer mentors offer support to their contemporaries. Older pupils run the weekly Chocolate and Chat club within school, while many undertake volunteer roles in the local community, for example, working in charity shops, assisting the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and collecting for food banks. A high number of pupils undertake The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Throughout the school, pupils are active in raising money for local, national and international charities. Pupils have many opportunities to express themselves, for example, through school councils, tutor sessions, pupil surveys, anonymous online forums and through the pastoral hub. However, a small minority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt that school does not listen to their views. Inspectors found that, at present, pupils' ability to voice their perspectives to influence the way that the school community functions is not as effective as possible.
- 3.20 Pupils say that they are proud of their school and of its welcoming, inclusive ethos which is firmly based on the value of respect, regardless of ethnicity, culture, gender or disability. Senior pupils in an English lesson ably identified and discussed emotive language used in newspaper headlines that had the potential to create bias against females. Pupils of all ages listen respectfully to each other and are sensitive in their responses. The highly popular 'Inclusivity club' meets weekly and produces a digital newsletter emailed to the whole school. Pupils run a thriving LGBTQ+ club, which is led by two sixth formers and where discussions are freely encouraged. In their discussions, pupils readily demonstrated an awareness for the need for equality, diversity and inclusion and spoke positively of the inclusive culture of the school. Pupils develop a strong awareness and understanding of diverse cultures and religions from their peers, through the curriculum, visits from external speakers and trips outside school. A very large majority of parents stated that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people.
- 3.21 Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe and lead healthy lives, supported by the well-planned programmes of study and by their tutors. Pupils throughout the school take advantage of the many sporting opportunities available to them to maintain their physical fitness and mental wellbeing supported by experienced sports coaches and trained mental health first aiders. Pupils are encouraged to make healthy choices through suitable menu options or may bring in their own lunches. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online, receiving appropriate training through the curriculum and events arranged by the school. Pupils understand the importance of a balanced lifestyle and the need to develop mental resilience, and there are strong structures to support them. Pupils are appreciative of the support they receive from their teachers and know how to report any concerns they may have. Pupils say they are valued as individuals and feel well looked after, supported by the very high quality of pastoral care they routinely receive.

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, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house and year group assemblies, and tutor meetings. Inspectors visited the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Pamela Johnson	Reporting inspector
Mr David Williams	Compliance team inspector (Former head, IAPS school)
Mrs Sandra Clements	Team inspector (Former deputy head, GDST and GSA school)
Mrs Pamela Hutley	Team inspector (Former headteacher, ISA school)
Dr Antony Johns	Team inspector (Former senior leader, HMC school)
Mr Simon Leyshon	Team inspector (Former head, ISA school)