

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Bickley Park School

March 2023

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School's Details

School	Bickley Park	School			
DfE number	305/6002				
Registered charity number	307915				
Address	Bickley Park	School			
	24 Page Hea	ath Lane			
	Bickley				
	Bromley				
	Kent				
	BR1 2DS				
Telephone number	020 8467 23	195			
Email address	info@bickle	yparkschool.d	co.uk		
Acting heads	Mr Sam Pat	el			
	Mr Jonatha	n Poole			
Chair of governors	Mr Mandee	Mr Mandeep Hansra			
Proprietor	Bickley Park	Bickley Park School Ltd			
Age range	2 to 13	2 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	379				
	EYFS	75	Pre-Prep	82	
	Prep	222			
		arch 2023			

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1. Background Information

About the school

1.1 Bickley Park is an independent day school for male pupils between the ages of two and a half and thirteen years. Girls are admitted to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The pre-preparatory and preparatory departments are on separate sites, a short walk apart, and they share facilities such as the swimming pool and theatre. The school is a registered charity administered by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection a new science block has opened, a major digital strategy has been implemented and the curriculum has been expanded. The school is currently led by two acting heads.

What the school seeks to do

1.2 The school aims to deliver a balanced, challenging and quality curriculum that arms pupils with the skills and attributes to thrive in their later lives. It seeks to provide an education tailored to how boys learn and aimed at motivating them to achieve. The school aspires to enable boys to stand out from the crowd in a globally inter-connected world.

About the pupils

1.3 Pupils come from professional and business backgrounds living within a ten-mile radius. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is above average compared with those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 30 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include a range of specific learning difficulties, hearing impairment, visual impairment, speech and language and neurodevelopmental disorders. Twenty-nine pupils receive support that is different from or additional to their peers. One pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language for 105 pupils, none of whom require additional support with their English. Data used by the school have identified 14 pupils as being the more able in the school's population, and their needs are met through enrichment clubs, clinics and the scholarship programme.

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 <u>met</u> or as <u>not met</u>. 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: <u>The Education (Independent School Standards)</u> <u>Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.</u>

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 and relationships and sex education in the senior school, 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.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
 - Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning and are enthusiastic and hard-working.
 - Pupils make rapid progress and attain highly, showing significant strengths in both literacy and mathematics.
 - Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) extremely effectively, both in computing and to support their learning across the curriculum.
 - Pupils are successful in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils develop a perceptive self-knowledge and the resilience to persevere when they encounter difficulties.
 - Pupils are polite and well behaved; they thrive on competition and show excellent teamwork in work and play.
 - Pupils have a well-developed sense of social responsibility, as seen in their contribution to the school community and to worthwhile causes.
 - Pupils have a strong appreciation of the school's values which positively influence their thinking.

Recommendation

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
 - Explore as a school community further ways of listening and responding to the views of pupils concerning their wellbeing.

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 throughout the school achieve excellent levels of attainment for their age. In the EYFS, most children achieve the early learning goals by the end of Reception, some working beyond this level. Pupils make excellent progress as confirmed by assessment data provided by the school, lesson observations and scrutiny of their work. Leaders ensure that assessment data are rigorously analysed, and anomalies investigated, so that interventions are promptly put in place to support any pupil whose progress dips or for whom there is a marked difference between their attainment and ability. As a

result, all pupils including any with special needs make good progress commensurate with their peers and abilities. The school employs a wide range of effective highly personalised strategies to promote progress, which include clinics to improve progress in English and mathematics. The impact of interventions is regularly assessed to ensure they are having a positive effect. Progress in lessons was observed to be rapid due to the regular inclusion of varied activities that foster pupils' attention and enjoyment. Pupils are successful in securing places at their chosen senior school with fifty-one scholarships having been won over the last three years, both for academic and specific talents in equal measure.

- 3.6 Pupils show extremely high communication skills since they make rapid progress through the school. These have enabled their consistent success in creative writing and poetry competitions. Most are attentive listeners, and they are articulate, expressing themselves with clarity and confidence when speaking in front of their peers. The youngest children in Nursery respond enthusiastically to stories, for example, joining in repetitive phrases in Owl Babies. The strong culture of reading in the school results in high standards of literacy. Pupils read fluently and with expression and comprehension, benefiting from planned activities in the library where books are classified to correlate with the wholeschool reading programme. These guided activities encourage pupils' interest in a wide range of books and improving their reading. Progress in the development of writing skills is rapid, from writing sentences with simple punctuation in Reception to clear explanations of how a dishwasher works in Year 4 and a murder mystery in Year 7, which included figures of speech such as the pathetic fallacy. Pupils write in a neat cursive script with excellent spelling and advanced grammatical skills due to carefully structured teaching of technical aspects of English. Planning ideas for writing collaboratively, such as in Year 4, was observed to be highly effective in enabling individual pupils to produce imaginative ideas and introduce highly descriptive vocabulary.
- 3.7 Pupils become highly competent in numeracy and respond enthusiastically to challenging teaching in class. They stated that they are happy to seek help to clarify any misunderstandings. They answer the frequently used open questions enthusiastically and explain their reasoning well. Standards are high, whether in Year 1 where pupils readily count in multiples of 2, 5 and 10, in Year 6 solving simultaneous equations using a graphical method, or in Year 8 solving algebraic fractions. Throughout the school, pupils show an excellent understanding and use of mathematical terminology. Tasks are effectively suited to ability, and setting for older pupils enables lessons to proceed at a pace which promotes rapid learning appropriate to pupils' ability. Pupils readily apply numeracy skills in other subjects such as geography and science, for example using bar graphs to show world population and recording and then calculating the energy released by different foods using the appropriate scientific formula.
- 3.8 In accordance with the school's aims, pupils make excellent progress in the development of their knowledge, skills and understanding supported by a broad curriculum which distinguishes four quadrants of learning: academic, arts, sports and community. Children in Reception use their imagination to hypothesise cause and effect when toasting marshmallows over an open fire in their woodland learning, their understanding enhanced by specialist-trained staff. Pupils show capable skills of observation and enquiry. For example, in a science lesson, Year 4 pupils effectively and accurately described the impact on a drum's sound with a tuning fork and adding rice, using accurately technical words such as vibration and surface area. In Spanish, pupils in Year 7 acquire and use new vocabulary to ask and answer questions using conjunctions, and in French apply their knowledge of three- and four-digit numbers to translate historical dates. Pupils develop high levels of technical skills for their age in physical education (PE) as observed in Year 3's ability to pass, shoot and dribble in hockey. In drama, Year 6 pupils demonstrated excellent imaginative skills with body language and facial expression, including slow motion when creating a short trailer for a film. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school offers a suitable range of subjects and that teaching enables progress. Similarly, almost all pupils indicated that their knowledge and skills improve in most lessons, and that teachers have good subject knowledge and help them to learn.

- 3.9 As they move through the school, pupils develop excellent ICT skills, facilitated by governors' support of investment to provide excellent resources and specialist teaching from the pre-prep. These skills provide pupils with a securely embedded technical foundation in handling data, presentation software, animation, email and research, as well as coding, on which to build future learning. They use tablet devices confidently and consistently as a learning tool across the whole curriculum, such as when composing rhythms and melodies in music or when researching the work of different artists before creating cell patterns in art. Pupils in Year 8 were observed coding with high levels of understanding which enabled them to move robotic cars from their tablets. They spoke enthusiastically of further developing these skills in coding club. High expectations and teachers' own capability ensure that pupils understand the varied uses and benefits of ICT, such as when undertaking a quickfire quiz on numbers in French, and for homework.
- 3.10 Pupils demonstrate excellent study skills as they grow older because teachers constantly challenge their ability to think critically. Pupils ask searching questions of staff, for example, when editing their writing and can efficiently take notes and answer questions from a text. They understand how to use mind maps in planning their work and demonstrate excellent analytical awareness. For example, in drama, pupils in Year 6 offered sensible critiques of their peers' performances, and Year 8 pupils demonstrated analytical and synthetical skills to discuss the structure and language techniques of poems. Pupils competently draw on a range of resources such as the internet and the wide selection of non-fiction books in the school library for research. Younger pupils in the prep develop these skills systematically through the school's creative curriculum which links humanities subjects with their work in English. For example, pupils in Year 2 competently researched evidence for a biography on Amelia Earhart in English, and Year 3 pupils capably interpreted a range of sources in their topic on the ancient Egyptians.
- 3.11 In addition to their academic successes, including in international public speaking and national mathematics and general knowledge competitions, pupils are highly successful in a wide variety of activities, the breadth of their success reflecting successful implementation of all the quadrants of learning. As a result, every pupil in the prep school is given the opportunity to represent the school in inter-school fixtures, and each pupil in Year 3 learns an instrument and performs in a concert in Buzz Band. Leaders prioritise fulfilling individual potential by identifying and then developing pupils' individual skills and talents. Specialist staff in all non-academic curriculum areas and access to high-quality facilities further support success. Pupils take part in annual productions such as Oliver which was being performed during the inspection. They are successful in local music festivals and the choir has been selected to perform at a public concert hall in the near future. The school mounts an annual art exhibition and submits pupils' work to the Royal Academy for their summer schools' exhibition. Sports teams are successful in local fixtures and many pupils compete successfully in national competitions such as in fencing, tennis and gymnastics. Others make regional teams for cricket, tennis, football and rugby. Many achievements outside of school were either started in school or facilitated through school connections with outside groups.
- 3.12 Most pupils have an outstanding attitude to their learning as observed in their consistent enthusiasm and effort in lessons. They settle quickly to work and older pupils maintain high levels of concentration, keen to improve their performance, so reflecting the school's aims. Thus, a conducive learning environment is created largely by the pupils themselves, particularly the older ones. Pupils respond well to a teaching approach which fosters competition. Consequently, most strive to do their best and enjoy the rewards they earn for personal effort and achievement. This was observed in the prep inter-house rugby tournament where the pupils demonstrated an extremely competitive but positive attitude throughout the afternoon.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 As they move through the school, pupils develop excellent self-knowledge and a perceptive understanding of their personal strengths and weaknesses. They demonstrate resilience which enables them to persevere, as seen in mathematics, when Year 6 pupils handled tricky problems on simultaneous equations. Through regular opportunities to reflect and self-assess, such as in science and English, they learn to take responsibility for their own success. Pupils are given many opportunities to present their work to their peers or other classes, developing self-confidence as they receive praise from both staff and their peers. This was observed in Year 3 where pupils were eager to share their work on the Book of the Dead because they were proud of their efforts. Pupils' self-esteem is promoted by the prominent display in each room of their certificates which, together with regular celebratory assemblies, they say, is a strong incentive to further effort. Pupils talk very positively about the support and encouragement they receive from staff. This is modelled by school leaders who set the tone for staff-pupil relationships within school. Opportunities such as adventure school, which develops pupils' response to challenge and their management of risk, together with the school's personalised learning approach, strongly underpin pupils' self-development and enable them to feel well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Inspection evidence supports the view of almost all parents in response to the questionnaire, that the school helps their children to be confident and independent.
- 3.15 As they grow older, pupils enjoy the challenge of making decisions about their work, unafraid of making mistakes. In discussion with older pupils, it was evident that they understand that decisions they make both academically and in their social relationships, together with personal choices about their lifestyle, have an impact both now and in the future. Pupils told inspectors that the school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and having supportive relationships with teachers are important to them. For example, pupils in Year 3 were observed being gently helped to organise themselves and their kit more independently. Whilst younger pupils report that their voice is heard and valued, for example in school council, some older pupils are less positive. Inspection evidence noted that, while pupils regularly make suggestions about practical issues in the school councils, these forums are not used to enable them to collectively discuss matters affecting their wellbeing.
- 3.16 As pupils progress through the school, they develop a good spiritual understanding through the PSHE and religious studies (RS) programme, supported by assemblies and the expertise of outside speakers. In discussions, they showed an appreciation of values such as kindness, truth and honesty. Pupils in Year 2 showed empathy when explaining to one another how their families observed Ramadan. The pupils' charity work further develops their appreciation of their own good fortune, and they cite the importance to them personally of non-material aspects of life such as family, friends and happiness. Pupils demonstrate great respect for the natural world, which is developed highly effectively through their woodland learning activities. Their aesthetic awareness is enhanced by the many experiences they have within and outside the curriculum to develop an appreciation of art, music, and drama. Pupils speak with passion about their artwork, demonstrating appreciation and awareness of the nature and quality of artists' work. Older pupils discuss deeper questions of philosophy and faith in RS, such as 'Why believe in God', their comments showing a forensic ability to think beyond the superficial. For example, they offer rational ideas about whether belief is inferior to fact and whether science fully disproves God.
- 3.17 Pupils understand and appreciate the importance of taking responsibility for their behaviour and as a result display a strong moral sense. For example, pupils in Year 7 wrote, 'Human rights are so important as they help keep peace and give everybody equal chances.' Pupils can distinguish right from wrong and fully understand the need for school rules and the law. Behaviour observed around the school is exuberant yet well-mannered, and pupils are friendly and polite. In response to the questionnaire, every pupil agreed that the school expects high standards of behaviour. This is due to

- consistently high expectations from staff who are role models for pupils, as well as discussions within PSHE. Older pupils are strongly aware of the consequences of their own and others' actions. They can identify the impact of poor attitudes and behaviour and have an acute awareness of fairness, since the school values underpin the school culture.
- 3.18 The social awareness and collaboration of the pupils are excellent. They work and play together with an easy camaraderie and are generally respectful to one another. For example, no-one was excluded from games during breaktime in Year 2. Whilst many are competitive, they fully understand the need to work as a team and co-operate extremely effectively with others, displaying good negotiating skills. Effective teamwork was observed in activities such as sport, music and drama as well as frequently in lessons, where pupils readily share their ideas and support one another, allocating tasks sensibly to achieve a successful outcome. Pupils in Year 5, for example, purposefully discussed in small groups the reasons why migrants might have wanted to move to the UK in 1940 and then explained their reasoning to the class. Most parents responding to the questionnaire agree that the school helps their children to develop strong teamwork and social skills and inspection evidence supports this view.
- 3.19 Pupils show a keen awareness of the need to contribute both to the school and wider community, and the leadership ensures that the community quadrant of learning supports pupils in looking outwards from school. Younger pupils readily offer help within class or as litter pickers, and the oldest pupils fulfil a wide range of leadership responsibilities. Older pupils support younger ones, such as reading with them. Pupils are aware of the need to protect the environment both locally and globally, as seen in the eco club. They vote and raise funds for local charities as well as providing worthwhile contributions to community projects. Pupils serve on the school council and make suggestions for good causes such as their spontaneous response to the recent earthquake in Turkey and Syria. They fully understand the importance of supporting others, manifested in their participation in the school's global outreach link with Gujerat, which includes reciprocal visits. This has led them to collecting shoes and raincoats for use in the monsoon season.
- 3.20 Pupils embrace the diversity they experience within the school community and develop strong friendships irrespective of cultural differences. From a young age they show great interest in learning about different cultural traditions, such as recently celebrating Holi. Their excellent appreciation and deepening understanding of cultural traditions is gained through their work in PSHE and RS lessons, as well as in assemblies and educational visits. Although in response to the questionnaire a small minority of pupils did not agree that pupils are kind and respect one another, in discussions with inspectors, pupils were adamant that there is a strong emphasis within school on respect for others. Evidence indicates that pupils set themselves a high bar for respect and supports the view of most parents that the school actively promotes values of respect and tolerance of other people.
- 3.21 Pupils have an excellent age-appropriate awareness of the need to stay safe and healthy, including online and know how this may be achieved. This is the result of the school's PSHE programme and teaching in computing lessons and assemblies, together with woodland learning and visiting speakers. For example, in PSHE, pupils in Year 3 identified how to stay safe in various situations such as around water, rail platforms and if approached by a stranger, and in woodland activities learn to manage risk around fire and handling tools. As a result of the extensive PE and games programme and the pastoral curriculum, pupils learn to eat sensibly and the importance of keeping physically and mentally fit and healthy. They fully recognise these aspects as essential to their personal wellbeing and development. In the response to the questionnaires, almost all the parents and pupils agreed that the school promotes a healthy lifestyle. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about how well they are individually supported and advised by their teachers who are readily available for advice.

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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 and both safeguarding governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended a form meeting and assembly. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Jan Preece Reporting inspector

Mrs Charlotte Bingham Brindle Compliance team inspector (Director of compliance, IAPS school)

Mr Richard Evans Team inspector (Former headmaster, IAPS school)

Mrs Kaye Lovejoy Team inspector (Former head, ISA school)