

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Brighton College Nursery, Pre-Prep and Prep School

November 2021

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School	Brighton College Nursery, Pre-prep and Prep Sc
DfE number	846/6015
Registered charity number	307061
Address	Brighton College Preparatory School
	Walpole Lodge
	2 Walpole Road
	Brighton
	East Sussex
	BN2 OEU
Telephone number	01273 704210
Email address	prepoffice@brightoncollege.net
Headteacher	Mr John Weeks
Chair of governors	The Lord Mogg KCMG
Age range	3 to 13
Number of pupils on roll	519
	EYFS 68 Juniors
	Seniors 117
Inspection dates	16 to 19 November 2021

School's Details

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Brighton College Nursery, Pre-Prep and Prep School is an independent day school for pupils aged from three to thirteen years. It is located on two sites: the nursery and pre-prep are situated in a purpose-built building a short distance from the prep, which is adjacent to the main site of Brighton College.
- 1.2 The school is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. It is led by a board of governors who are trustees of the charity and directors of the company. A prep school committee, which includes members of the main governing body, oversees the administration of the school.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the nursery and pre-prep have merged with the prep to become one school. Over the past four years policy and practice have been aligned, alongside a merging of the senior management teams.
- 1.4 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school remained open only for children of key workers.
- 1.5 During this period of closure, the school provided remote learning for all pupils.
- 1.6 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.7 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.8 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than the nursery and vulnerable pupils or children of key workers received remote learning provision at home.
- 1.9 Since 2020, EYFS profiles have not been externally moderated.

What the school seeks to do

1.10 The school aims for its pupils to be well-educated, tolerant and curious, and to enjoy taking a full, active and positive role in our society and their own communities.

About the pupils

1.11 The school's own data indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. Most pupils live within the local area and come from business and professional backgrounds. The school has identified 62 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including dyslexia and dyspraxia, of whom 29 receive additional support. No pupil has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language for 146 pupils, 18 of whom receive additional support. Data used by the school have identified 70 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 112 other pupils because of their special talents in non-academic subjects.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a 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</u>, <u>Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework</u>.

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

Key findings

2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education in the EYFS to Year 6 and relationships and sex education in Years 7 and 8, 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

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'.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
 - Pupils' attainment and progress is outstanding as a result of the effective framework of assessment, successful planning for individual needs and the nurturing approach of their teachers.
 - Pupils' communication skills are highly advanced in their speaking, reading and writing; they use vocabulary appropriately and are excellent listeners from a very young age.
 - Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are excellent and their willingness to work collaboratively is exemplary.
 - Pupils' study skills are excellent; they demonstrate a consistently inquisitive approach as they progress through the school.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils demonstrate outstanding levels of self-understanding, self-confidence, self-knowledge and resilience.
 - Pupils have excellent social skills and show very high levels of self-awareness and a strong sense of belonging.
 - Pupils have a robust moral awareness, value one another and are very respectful of their community and its rules.
 - Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the importance of physical and mental health and of how to keep themselves safe.

Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school may wish to consider making the following improvement:
 - Increase levels of challenge in lessons for younger pupils, enabling them to learn more independently.

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 of all ages and abilities make outstanding progress over time, successfully fulfilling the school's aims for pupils to be well-educated and curious. This is the result of cohesive leadership, quality of teaching and a broad, exciting and challenging curriculum which effectively supports learning. In the

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), children make rapid progress from their various starting points, actively encouraged by sensitive teaching and a nurturing environment, so that almost all exceed the expected levels of development for their age. The school does not take part in National Curriculum tests, but the available evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own assessment data, show attainment to be well above average in relation to national age-related expectations. Most pupils proceed to the senior school and many are awarded academic or all-round scholarships. Highly effective support ensures that pupils with SEND or EAL make excellent progress. More able pupils achieve in line with their potential as the result of the challenge they receive in lessons. Responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of parents agreed that the school enables their child to make progress and most agreed that their educational needs are effectively met.

- 3.6 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are strong across the curriculum. Their linguistic and mathematical skills are outstanding due to the many opportunities provided to develop these skills in challenging tasks at every step. In the EYFS, children develop secure foundations in their early literacy and numeracy skills and rapidly progress through a range of well-planned, interesting and purposeful activities. In an EYFS French lesson, imaginative teaching engaged the pupils, enabling them to increase their understanding, use new words and make rapid progress in their learning. Throughout the school, careful, regular tracking of pupils' progress identifies any concerns at an early stage and individual plans, in which parents are fully involved, introduce the strategies necessary to improve progress and attainment. In interviews with inspectors, pupils with SEND said that they are making good progress because of the excellent support they receive from teachers. In a Year 7 science lesson on how matters change their state, pupils of all abilities responded to the lesson's excellent balance of pace, rigour and humour which kept them engaged, leading to their understanding that chemical changes are irreversible. Pupils take great pride in their excellent written work, appreciating helpful marking and feedback from teachers. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in interviews, most pupils agreed that their skills and knowledge improve in most lessons.
- 3.7 Pupils display outstanding communication skills, applying and extending them in all subjects. They speak with poise and confidence and listen with care and attention. In interviews, younger pupils expressed themselves eloquently when speaking of their love of and pride in the school showing growing confidence in expressing their ideas and opinions. Pupils were observed confidently speaking in the weekly chapel service, in a pre-prep assembly and in drama club. They take presentation skills as part of their 'Super Curriculum' in Years 7 and 8, extended learning opportunities which increase their progress significantly. They listen well and show an enjoyment of sharing knowledge with one another. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils collaborated to find the 'odd one out', speaking confidently to one another in French, demonstrating high levels of communication skills in another language and confidently assimilating and using new words. Similarly, in a house assembly, older pupils encouraged younger ones to express their views, showing mutual respect and appreciating one another's opinions. Pupils happily engage in conversation about the world around them. Speaking to inspectors, pupils initiated purposeful conversations about their successes, activities and friendships. They develop strong writing skills from an early age, using their skills effectively in their work and topic books. Their writing is fluent, well-written and applied successfully in history, geography, science and independent project work. Pupils with SEND or EAL make rapid progress in their communication skills, aided by teaching that develops their confidence and is well matched to their individual needs.
- 3.8 Pupils are excellent mathematicians, producing an impressive quantity and quality of work as their mathematical skills are developed thoroughly and systematically. Encouraged by skilled teaching, they respond positively to the levels of challenge available to further enrich their skills and understanding. As they progress through the school, pupils are able to use a variety of different methods to work things out, often displaying reasoning skills to solve advanced mathematical problems. Pupils can articulate their understanding of different methods, and successfully apply them to increasingly challenging work. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils demonstrated a strong mathematical understanding of the methods used to work out near doubles, using correct vocabulary in their explanations. In a lesson on

percentage increase and decrease, older pupils discussed their understanding of the basic principles and applied this to the increasingly complex problems. In both lessons, suitable levels of challenge to match the range of ability and focused discussion ensured that all pupils gained a strong understanding of the subject matter. Mathematical opportunities across the curriculum consolidate pupils' learning through imaginative and challenging lessons which give mathematics practical relevance. Pupils develop the ability to use different strategies to solve problems. More able pupils are challenged in advanced mathematics and are highly successful in national mathematics competitions.

- 3.9 Pupils are competent in the use of information, communication technology (ICT), using these skills well across the curriculum. Children in the EYFS were observed proficiently programming a basic robot to follow a defined route, working with confidence and enjoyment and collaborating with one another to input commands. ICT was used in an exciting way in an art lesson where older pupils were recording their journey to produce a surrealist photograph. They organised their work online and used a variety of filters to manipulate their images. Pupils' ICT skills are steadily built on and improved. In their work, many examples were seen where ICT had been used for presentation, consolidation and research. This successfully fulfils the recommendation from the previous full inspection to develop the use of ICT as an integral part of lesson planning.
- 3.10 Pupils have highly developed study skills and analyse, synthesise and hypothesise data and information confidently across different curriculum areas. This is because of skilful questioning and a positive and highly supportive learning environment. There are many opportunities for higher-order thinking, within lessons which challenge pupils, who evaluate and reflect upon information provided to predict outcomes and solve complex problems. In an imaginative lesson in Year 2, pupils hypothesised to consider the feelings of characters in a book, putting forward their theories about how the story would develop, given what they had already ascertained. They used a wide range of vocabulary to describe the characters and the situation they found themselves in. Pupils display mature analytical skills; Year 6 pupils confidently identified similes and metaphors in a World War 1 poem and clearly explained the effect of these emotive devices on the reader, maturely recognising the irony of the poem and relating it to a previous work they had studied which celebrated the glory of war. Pupils show initiative with their own research; for instance, during Black History month, pupils chose to research Black people from history who had made a significant contribution to society and the world. Great rapport and trust between pupils and teachers allows opportunities for pupils to take initiative in their own learning, to 'have a go' and take risks. However, there is less evidence of this in the pre-prep where the level of challenge in some lessons does not offer pupils as many of these opportunities to learn independently.
- 3.11 Pupils achieve excellent success in a range of non-academic activities. The school's ethos supports sport for everyone, encouraging all pupils to participate and develop skills in their sports of choice. Pupils spoke proudly about their success in a variety of sports, including local and national competitions. Considerable success in art, drama, music and dance reflects pupils' interests. Many pupils gain distinctions and those who work towards national speaking examinations achieve outstanding results.
- 3.12 All children and pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning because the curriculum often creates opportunities for pupils to develop initiative, independence and creativity, and success is recognised and celebrated. These attitudes enabled pupils to continue to work successfully during the Covid lockdown, maintaining their high standards of work. The three pillars of the school's 'Pelican Pathway' (Participation, Progress and Partnership) promote clear incentives for effort and pupils keenly strive for 'Pelican points' towards their house totals. Pupils demonstrated entirely positive attitudes to learning, and a keenness to learn and achieve in all lessons observed during the inspection and in the very high quality of presentation of their work. The school promotes and encourages a learning environment in which the pupils see the value of mistakes as learning opportunities, and

teachers and leadership are committed to this approach. Pupils feel supported and are prepared to attempt tasks that might seem difficult because they are not afraid of making mistakes.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils' self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-confidence and self-discipline are outstanding, and their 3.14 behaviour is exemplary from a young age. Pupils embrace the school ethos underpinned by the 'Pelican Pathway' which provides a clear framework for personal development. This results in pupils who are confident, well-rounded and curious, enabling them to develop into respectful, resilient young people who are self-confident, yet possessed of humility. They have excellent levels of perseverance and resilience and respond to challenges at all levels with commitment and enthusiasm. In the EYFS, children show strong self-confidence in their activities and play because of the warm, encouraging interactions with their teachers. In interviews, the pupils said that they value and use the advice given by the staff. They were able to explain what they are good at and what they need to work at in order to make progress. Pupils have confidence in their own abilities: in a design and technology lesson, for example, they followed their original plans rather than being influenced by other pupils' ideas when creating circuit boards for the LED lamps they had designed. Scrutiny of work in their books identifies that pupils assess their own work effectively, when they reflect for themselves using the success criteria from the task, supported by teachers' comments. The leadership of the school is highly effective in creating the space and the time for pupils to develop excellent personal skills and selfawareness.
- 3.15 Pupils display assurance and confidence in their decision-making. Older pupils are able to consider options evaluatively, for instance selecting from a range of language choices within the modern foreign languages department. Pupils are expected to make decisions in their lessons as they choose which level of challenge they would like to tackle and staff build in other elements of choice. For instance, pupils can choose to work together or independently and can choose how to present their work. A good example was seen in an art lesson on the painting techniques of Cezanne. Following their research on the topic, the pupils had made decisions about which angle of a still life they would photograph on their tablets, and then on how to translate this into their painting of the edited image. They also have numerous opportunities to make important decisions together, for example working in the school, including the election of house and sports captains and through the elected school council, choosing which charities to support. They feel they have a voice and make a positive difference.
- 3.16 Pupils' spiritual understanding is excellent. They show strong appreciation of the non-material aspects of life, describing them as things that make us feel good inside and do not have to be made or bought. Curriculum leaders and teachers, supported by the leadership and governors, have developed strategies through the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme which encourage pupils to form their own opinions and enables them to consider and discuss a variety of spiritual, musical, artistic and religious topics. From the EYFS onwards, children learn how to take time to reflect on their own well-being and practise strategies such as mindfulness and yoga to introduce calm in their daily lives. Weekly chapel services also offer pupils the opportunity for quiet reflection. In conversation at lunchtime, older pupils are proud of their artwork, and writing on display in classrooms and in other areas illustrates that the pupils think deeply about the non-material aspects of life.
- 3.17 The pupils have a strong moral awareness and are deeply caring and respectful of one another and the school community. Pupils said in interviews that they regarded members of staff and older pupils as role models and very much looked up to and respected them. Pupils value and support the school's code of conduct and feel that the coloured card system of rewards and sanctions works really well to

support the expectations of teachers, unanimously agreeing that it is fairly and consistently applied. They say that it teaches them to be the best they can be, highlighting the school motto, 'Be good, be kind, be honest, be the best you'. Older pupils take on responsibilities and their leadership qualities are celebrated. Pupils consistently exhibit the traits of kindness and respecting others and reflect the school ethos in general. Even young pupils who noticed inspectors looking lost walking round the school immediately offered to help them, conversing confidently about how much they enjoyed their school, while acting as guides. Evidence from interviews and observations around the school show that pupils are very aware of the expectations made of them by the school.

- 3.18 Pupils display excellent collaboration skills throughout the school and their social development is strong. There are multiple opportunities in lessons for younger pupils to collaborate with older ones. Challenges take place across the school, such as that in a house assembly observed during the inspection. Here pupils from Years 4 to 8 actively and enthusiastically shared their views about a house competition to design a Christmas tree using only recycled materials. Older pupils encouraged the younger pupils to express their views and there was a real sense of mutual respect and appreciation of one another's ideas. During the house meeting, pupils showed enthusiasm about working together to achieve higher 'Pelican Points' totals in order to win the termly prize of a house feast. Pupils in mixed age groups worked very effectively together on their ideas and were joined remotely by pupils who were isolating at home because of Covid restrictions. They were able to take an active and positive part in the deliberations and debate. In an interesting health education and cookery lesson, Year 4 pupils making biscuits were showing excellent collaborative skills. They were measuring, weighing and forming their biscuits with great enjoyment, working well together and helping each other. However, as a result of the excellent facilitation and light-touch management of the teaching, there was individual challenge, and competition at the same time.
- 3.19 Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and the wider community. The school council has made a positive impact in such areas as the uniform and changing the timing of the lunch break. Not satisfied with simply raising money for local and national charities and engaging with local organisations, the school ensures that pupils gain a deeper understanding of why they are embarking on such a project, through assemblies and PSHE lessons.
- 3.20 The pupils reported in interviews that everyone feels valued in the school community, which was highlighted in the recent school 'respect' week. During the inspection, younger pupils were introduced to the idea of neurodiversity in an assembly presentation by a small group of Year 6 pupils who had initiated this themselves. Their confident presentation explained the importance of understanding neurodiversity, such as dyslexia, as a super-power. The presenters, who were dressed in yellow for dyslexia awareness, explained to younger pupils that although they themselves were dyslexic, they were as successful as anyone else. The thoughtful presentation was moving and insightful and showed a high level of understanding and maturity. The pupils listening displayed deep respect.
- 3.21 Pupils' understanding of how to stay safe is excellent and well-established within the school community. They make sensible food choices demonstrating their understanding of how to maintain a balanced lifestyle. In interviews, pupils gave clear explanations of the steps they take to stay safe, particularly when online. They actively participate in and enjoy the school sports and games, and older pupils spoke about recognising that mental health was crucial in ensuring their well-being and physical fitness. They explained how ICT lessons and discussions in PSHE about online safety had deepened their understanding significantly. Almost all pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire thought that the school teaches them about safety and helps them to understand how to stay safe online.

4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with two governors, one of whom is the chair of the prep committee, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house meetings, chapel and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Loraine Cavanagh	Reporting inspector
Mr John Abbott	Compliance team inspector (Head, ISA school)
Mr Ian Griffin	Team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Mrs Sarah Marsh	Team inspector (Head of Prep, ISA school)