



ISI

Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

CHASE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 2017



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Chase Grammar School			
DfE number	860/6008			
Address	Convent Close St John's Road Cannock Staffordshire WS11 0UR			
Telephone number	01543 501800			
Email address	info@chasegrammar.com			
Principal	Dr Paul Silverwood			
Proprietors	Mrs Tong Zhou and Mr Chenming Bao			
Age range	2 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	192			
	Boys	95	Girls	97
	Day pupils	172	Boarders	20
	EYFS	14	Prep	57
	Seniors	82	Sixth Form	39
Inspection dates	8 to 9 February 2017			

PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any unmet standards identified at their previous inspection.

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.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting 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.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

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 the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

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

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Inspectors

Mrs Gwen Caddock	Reporting inspector
Mr Robert Lilley	Team inspector (Head of junior school, HMC and IAPS school)
Mr James Sheridan	Team inspector (Former head, GSA school)
Mr Andrew Williams	Team inspector for boarding, (Senior school principal, HMC school)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1 Chase Grammar School is an independent co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between 2 and 19 years. The school was purchased in 2014 by Achieve Education, a Chinese company specialising in education. There are two proprietors, one based in China and the other based in London. The school has appointed an advisory committee of education specialists to support the proprietor and the leadership team of the school. The current principal took up his post in July 2016. The school was founded on the current site in the centre of Cannock in 1879 by the Sisters of the Holy Rosary as a primary school. As the school developed, a senior department, a sixth form and then an International Study Centre were established on the campus. The International Study Centre is inspected separately from the school. The site includes administrative and educational buildings with a sports hall, four boarding houses and areas for relaxation. Pupils go to a range of local sports facilities, a local church for special services and a local theatre for school productions.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, developments include a new medical centre staffed by school nurses, and the introduction of a wider curriculum which now includes Mandarin, computer science, drama, dance and at A level, religious studies and philosophy. The nursery has been opened to 2 year olds.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to encourage pupils to think for themselves, discover a passion for life-long learning and thrive in the happy and caring environment of the school.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Day pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds. The majority of pupils come from White British families who live in the local town and surrounding district, some travelling 20 miles to school. International pupils come mainly from Europe and countries in central and east Asia, including China and Vietnam. The results of nationally standardised tests show that prep school pupils are of above average ability and that pupils in the senior school and sixth form are of average ability. The school has identified 37 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and 14 of these pupils receive additional support. Two pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Twenty pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), all of whom receive specialist support for their English.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was a standard inspection in March 2011. The recommendations from that inspection were:
- Improve the library facilities for the senior school and the prep school.
 - Expand the provision of Information and communication technology (ICT) as a resource for teaching and learning.
 - Adopt a comprehensive system of professional development and appraisal for all staff and implement it consistently.
 - Provide parents of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with more opportunities to be involved in their children's learning.
 - Further develop the outdoor learning area in the EYFS.
- 1.7 The recommendations of the intermediate boarding inspection in March 2014 were:

- Implement the plans under discussion to define more clearly the roles and responsibilities of boarding staff.
- Improve the balance of free time and choice of activities for boarders in the evenings and at weekends.

1.8 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of the previous inspections.

2. KEY FINDINGS

2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

- Pupils of all ages make good progress, including those with SEND, EAL and the more able. However, the school tracking system which is well used to identify the needs and progress of individual pupils is not yet used to monitor the progress of groups of pupils with SEND, EAL or those who are more able, which limits the information available to staff about the progress of these groups.
- Pupils are competent in a wide range of skills. They have outstanding oral communication skills, are highly articulate and listen well. Older pupils have excellent mathematical skills and understanding.
- Pupils develop excellent study skills and attitudes to learning, they work well together and take responsibility for their learning.
- Pupils respond very positively to the marking system, which gives them detailed feedback and information on how to improve their work, but as yet this scheme is not used consistently across the school.

2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.

- Pupils of all ages are happy and confident individuals who feel well supported by their teachers.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- Pupils learn to mix with pupils of all ages, to take responsibility and to work collaboratively, for example, to fund raise for charity through their enthusiastic participation in house activities,

Recommendations

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Develop the use of the school's performance data to determine trends in pupils' attainment over time and monitor the progress of groups of pupils, including those with SEND, EAL and those who are more able, in order to further support pupils' progress.
- Extend the use of the detailed marking scheme, which includes dialogue with staff and is in use in some areas of the senior school, to give all pupils strategies to improve their work.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.2 In the EYFS, the pupil profiles show that children meet or exceed age expectations. Records show that in the past, children with SEND made steady progress in line with their abilities. Overall progress is judged to be good. Pupils in the prep school do not take National Curriculum tests but the results of nationally standardised tests show that pupils achieve well and make good progress. In the senior school, achievement and progress at GCSE is judged to be in line with pupils' abilities, measured using nationally standardised tests. Results at A-level examinations were above the national average in 2013 and were in line with the national average in 2014. The judgement includes pupils with SEND, and the more able. Pupils with EAL, who are usually overseas boarders, join the school at various stages and quickly acquire effective skills in English, which enable them to make rapid progress. In an A-level economics lesson, pupils with EAL displayed excellent verbal skills and the ability to sustain a discussion on economic failure, making evaluative and moral judgements about environmental issues. Based on work in books scrutinised and pupils' performance in class, pupils of all ages were seen to be making good, and in some cases, excellent progress. This progress is underpinned by the teachers' knowledge of each pupil and careful planning. Staff keep excellent records, and set appropriate targets to ensure that pupils know what they must do to improve. The school has developed a thorough tracking system providing useful information to staff about individual pupils to support planning for individual needs. This tracking system is not yet used consistently to review the progress of various groups of pupils, for example those with SEND or EAL, in order to identify where further intervention is needed.
- 3.3 In the prep school, the pupils' basic learning skills in all the required areas are secure. Work on display in the classrooms showed standards above those expected for pupils of the same age range. Skilful questioning by their teacher enabled children in the EYFS to make rapid progress in communication skills, especially in the understanding of new vocabulary. A display in the setting of children's writing showed clear development of skills and understanding. In a games lesson which used a logical progression of skills, Year 1 pupils quickly developed good dribbling and passing skills. Year 5 pupils developed a wide range of skills when working on a cross-curricular topic to create a distinctive Victorian museum. In a Mandarin lesson, Year 5 showed an understanding of key phrases which they were able to use with some confidence.
- 3.4 Senior school pupils display good literacy skills in subjects across the curriculum, including extended writing in English, religious education (RE) and history. In Mandarin and German lessons, pupils communicate with ease amongst themselves and with their teachers in the target language. In music, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of scales and patterns which they used successfully in a composition task and in discussion of their work. In mathematics, senior school pupils had a good grasp of both the language and principles of probability which they used to explore the chance of two independent events occurring. Pre-A level pupils possess a strong background in pure mathematics, as they showed when carrying out advanced work on functions and mappings. Artwork on display and in pupils' portfolios and sketchbooks shows confident creativity. Pupils spoke about their work with pride. At all levels in the school, this successful learning is inspired by the teachers' love of their subjects and their careful planning to create well-structured lessons and logical progression so that pupils build on previous learning. The teachers understand the needs of pupils and give considerable individual support which pupils appreciate greatly; they say they can always ask for help.
- 3.5 Pupils of all ages communicate well. They are friendly, confident and articulate, and in discussions they show a great pride in their school. EYFS children spoke confidently as they took part in a discussion about the emergency services, explaining which services might come in response to a 999 call and using technical words, such as paramedic, correctly. They also listened carefully. Pupils of all ages have outstanding oral communication skills and read and write well. The presentation of pupils' work in books and folders is excellent. Older pupils use subject specific and technical language confidently.

- 3.6 In the prep school, pupils develop secure mathematical skills and are confident to use them in a range of subjects. Year 6 pupils described how they had used their mathematical skills in a swimming lesson to calculate how far they had swum. Senior school pupils demonstrate excellent numerical skills, as seen in their maths lessons, their work in other subjects and in the books considered during the work scrutiny. This was seen in a Year 13 accounting lesson, where pupils successfully tackled standard costing problems.
- 3.7 Prep school pupils learn a good range of ICT skills which they use confidently, for example in researching Victorian toys for their topic work, and they enjoy consolidating and extending their skills through a mathematics programme. Pupils of all ages are enthusiastic about their work on coding and senior school pupils are developing an understanding of software packages and the role of the internet. They used their skills efficiently when collaboratively researching the history of the atom and creating a timeline. Older pupils spoke appreciatively of the change in policy which is allowing them to use their own devices in lessons in a range of ways, such as when pupils with EAL use their phones to take a photo of the whiteboard screen to support their learning. Pupils of all ages are taught how to keep safe online, enabling them to speak knowledgeably about their understanding of the dangers.
- 3.8 Pupils of all ages develop strong study skills through the excellent questioning techniques used by teachers to stimulate pupils' ability to hypothesise. During EYFS lessons on the emergency services, skilful open-ended questions challenged the children to predict what might be in a doctor's bag. Year 2 pupils were challenged to think of ways they might measure a wiggly line and were encouraged to use some experimentation to explore the ideas they were able to come up with in order to see whether it would be a workable solution. Pupils know how to use information from different sources and synthesise it to solve problems and answer questions. They work well together; Year 10 pupils worked collectively to pool their knowledge and understanding to create comprehensive responses to an examination question. Pupils in Year 12 entered into a sophisticated discussion to interpret the word "logos", bringing together knowledge from a variety of sources and using their ability to analyse, synthesise and reach clear conclusions. These high-level study skills are developed by careful planning, challenge and high expectations from teachers who delight in their subjects.
- 3.9 Pupils achieve a good level of success in academic, cultural and sporting challenges, including national mathematics challenges, music examinations, and a national art competition. Pupils compete successfully in both individual and team events in ISA sporting competitions at local, regional and national levels. Pupils who compete in sports, such as swimming for local clubs or other sports at county or higher levels, are well supported by the school. The choir and various music groups perform in school and local events, some with a fundraising focus. The annual drama production is a valued feature of life at the school. Older pupils take part successfully in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- 3.10 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and contribute to their success and enjoyment in all areas of the school. The youngest pupils engage in their work with enthusiasm, concentrate well, are eager to learn and often work together to improve. All pupils display enjoyment and pride in their achievements and their school. Older pupils are highly engaged and work very successfully together in groups and teams. Collaborations produce some excellent work. In the responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a small minority of pupils indicated that they did not think marking helped them to improve their work. During the inspection, pupils said that they know how to improve, greatly appreciating the feedback given in class and the use of the positive marking system, which identifies what went well and how their work could be improved. In work scrutinised, it was seen that where this marking technique is used consistently, pupils engage responsibly in the ensuing dialogue with their teacher about what they should do to improve and are thorough in completing the agreed task to the required standard. This system is not yet used consistently in all areas of the school, but pupils are sure that when it is used, they are able to improve and develop their work. In questionnaire responses, a small minority of pupils indicated concerns with careers advice, the range of activities on offer and lessons being interesting. Evidence gathered from various sources during the inspection,

including discussions with pupils, did not support these concerns. A very large majority of pupils indicated that they felt that the school gave them the opportunity to learn and make progress.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 4.2 Pupils' personal development is good at all stages of the school. Pupils are happy, confident individuals who learn to be responsible for their own decisions. They live well in this multicultural community. Pupils are thoroughly supported by the Life Skills programme and the vertical house structure which has been recently introduced. This underpins many areas of the pupils' personal development and is a strength of the school.
- 4.3 Pupils in the prep school are happy and self-confident learners. In discussions, pupils said that they felt supported by the staff, that they are always willing to try, and know that they can always ask for help if they need it. Pupils greatly value the 'Star of the Week' award presented by the head and feel that it boosts their confidence and self-esteem.
- 4.4 Older pupils value the small size of the school, the small classes and the full integration of boarding pupils with day pupils as the bedrock of their development. They are articulate, confident, keen to develop and willing to persevere. They feel that they are encouraged to have an opinion and that through the school councils, their views regarding the development and daily life of the school are taken into account. Pupils are excited at the recent establishment of three vertical houses. They are gaining new skills through a huge range of opportunities, including learning to speak in public through taking assemblies. Older pupils take responsibility for younger ones and become capable organisers and leaders, as is evident when they raise money for charity.
- 4.5 As pupils move through the school, they learn the importance of making their own decisions about their subject options and career choices. They are well supported by the Life Skills course and the diverse speakers who come to school as part of the programme. Prep school pupils understand that they make important choices about what they eat, and older pupils are thinking carefully about the subjects they will choose for GCSE. Pupils take responsibility for their own learning through the goal setting work done in their Life Skills lessons. Pupils who participate in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme take responsibility for planning their expeditions and making the key decisions needed to ensure the success of the expedition. Pupils make appropriate decisions about university applications, using information provided by a range of speakers from universities.
- 4.6 Prep school pupils have a well-developed aesthetic and cultural awareness, showing their spiritual understanding in the way they appreciate the opportunities they are given for reflection, for example in whole school assemblies. They value their house assemblies with the older pupils where they can take part. Pupils have an awareness of the non-material aspects of life, as demonstrated when they appreciated the beauty of William Morris tiles which they had been studying in art. Older pupils are respectful of each other and their whole school community. In class and around the school, they display an appreciation for their environment and conduct themselves well. In discussions, pupils said that they understand and appreciate that the Friday assemblies with prayers, a Bible reading and a time for reflection reflect the history of the school, which has its roots in a Christian tradition. One group of pupils explained how much they value the woodland walk with its quiet seating area as a place to go and think about things. The new house system has created common rooms for senior school pupils who said they appreciate these rooms, which often have music playing, as somewhere quiet to go and relax or think.
- 4.7 Across the school, good behaviour is the norm and pupils clearly distinguish right from wrong. Pupils respect the school rules and accept responsibility for their own behaviour. The prep school pupils understand the rewards and sanctions system, say that it is fair and believe that it helps them to behave well. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a minority of pupils indicated that they did not think staff treated them fairly. However, this was not supported in their written comments. During the inspection, pupils spoke well of the rewards and sanctions system, saying that it was clear and helped them to behave well. Records scrutinised showed that major sanctions are

used appropriately when needed and that the day-to-day sanctions and rewards are used well. In the Life Skills programme, through the house system and in lessons, pupils are encouraged to reflect on and discuss moral issues and form their own opinions and ideas. Pupils of various ages act as buddies to younger children, especially when they move into the senior school. Pupils' views and opinions are encouraged and discussed when news topics are introduced at form time and this is a fundamental aspect of the development of pupils in the school, meeting the aim of the school to develop all aspects of good character. Pupils feel that the atmosphere and ethos of the school supports them in their development.

- 4.8 In the prep school, pupils form strong relationships and work well together. They learn to work collaboratively through the many opportunities that are provided in extra-curricular activities, such as the board games club and construction club. Children in the EYFS are ready to listen to others and take turns to speak. In the senior school, the pupils' social development is excellent, and they enjoy collaborating in many different contexts both in and out of lessons. Pupils negotiate and solve problems through their work on the school council. Older pupils interact well with younger ones, both when mentoring and in the vertical houses, where there is a good level of contact between older and younger pupils, with many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. Pupils are experienced in working together in the classroom to achieve some very positive outcomes.
- 4.9 Pupils of all ages fulfil responsibilities and contribute positively to the lives of others within the school, including in the boarding house, the local community and the wider society. The prep school pupils appreciate the circumstances of those less fortunate than themselves and many are involved in significant activities which benefit others. Awards are given in assembly to recognise those who have raised funds for local charities. The choir performed with the Salvation Army and other schools at a Christmas fundraising concert. Individual contributions to the school community are recognised by an award for making someone's day, which pupils value highly. Older pupils take great pride in their roles as house captains and prefects, which they carry out conscientiously. They are respected by younger pupils who aspire to take on such responsibilities. The pupils are proud of the achievements of the school council and can see successes arising out of the negotiations, such as changes to policies, improvements made to the Friday tuck shop and the introduction of the squash club for seniors. Pupils in the school have been instrumental in setting up a youth group for the local community under the auspices of the Rotary Club with an international link through current pupils. They demonstrate their commitment to others in a long list of charities which have benefitted from their efforts and generosity.
- 4.10 This is a multi-cultural school where boarding and day pupils respect each other and work together harmoniously. In the prep school, all pupils play together happily in the playground. Older pupils believe that the house system is the foundation of the good relations between different groups of pupils who work well together and are supported by staff who are also involved in the system. Pupils learn cultural understanding and respect in many ways: teachers plan strategies to develop an understanding of other cultures and engage pupils in thoughtful discussion using a wide range of resources. Similarly, in the Life Skills course, pupils learn to respect all cultures and religions through modules in diversity, tolerance and stereotyping. They then put what they have learned into practice in the daily life of the school. Boarders, who are primarily from overseas, and local day pupils are integrated in the houses and work together in house activities, gaining understanding from these experiences. Pupils greatly enjoy celebrating festivals from their friends' cultures.
- 4.11 Pupils from the EYFS onwards know how to stay safe, including when they are accessing the internet. They understand the importance of a healthy diet, making good choices of food, and taking plenty of exercise. Older pupils make healthy choices, having learned about a healthy diet in their Life Skills courses and can select from a range of healthy food in the menus offered in the dining room. Pupils understand the importance of exercise and put this into practice in their games lessons and in the many sporting activities on offer. Many use their exercise activities as a further fundraising opportunity.