



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION**

**Cheadle Hulme School**

**MARCH 2017**



## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

|                                  |   |      |                   |     |
|----------------------------------|---|------|-------------------|-----|
| <b>School</b>                    | Cheadle Hulme School  |      |                   |     |
| <b>DfE number</b>                | 356/6019  |      |                   |     |
| <b>Registered charity number</b> | 1077017   |      |                   |     |
| <b>Address</b>                   | Claremont Road<br>Cheadle Hulme<br>Cheadle<br>Cheshire<br>SK8 6EF |      |                   |     |
| <b>Telephone number</b>          | 0161 4883330  |      |                   |     |
| <b>Email address</b>             | head@chschoo.co.uk  |      |                   |     |
| <b>Headteacher</b>               | Miss Lucy Pearson   |      |                   |     |
| <b>Chair of governors</b>        | Mr Philip Johnson   |      |                   |     |
| <b>Age range</b>                 | 4 to 18   |      |                   |     |
| <b>Number of pupils on roll</b>  | 1396  |      |                   |     |
|                                  | <b>Boys</b>   | 764  | <b>Girls</b>      | 631 |
|                                  | <b>Day pupils</b>   | 1396 | <b>Boarders</b>   | 0   |
|                                  | <b>Reception</b>  | 41   | <b>Juniors</b>    | 276 |
|                                  | <b>Seniors</b>  | 825  | <b>Sixth Form</b> | 254 |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>          | 22 to 23 March 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 a governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited 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 Maureen Bradley   | Reporting inspector                                       |
| Mr Edward Rees        | Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)                  |
| Mrs Sian Woosnam      | Team inspector (Head of infants, Society of Heads school) |
| Ms Pat Clayfield      | Team inspector (Headmistress, Society of Heads school)    |
| Mrs Lynne Renwick     | Team inspector (Headmistress, GSA school)                 |
| Mrs Katherine Walters | Team inspector (SENCO, HMC school)                        |
| Mr Matt Williams      | Team inspector (Senior assistant head, GSA school)        |

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## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Cheadle Hulme School is a co-educational independent day school in Cheadle Hulme, Stockport, for pupils aged 4 to 18 years. It was founded in 1855 as the Manchester Warehousemen and Clerks' Orphans' School and moved to its present site in a suburb of Manchester in 1869. The school was a direct grant school until 1974 and a boarding school until 1993. The school is a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection in 2011, the school has extended their sports facilities, including the building of a new sports centre (The Pavilion) and new pitches and the refurbishment of the school gymnasium. Further refurbishment of school buildings has taken place including the dining hall, classrooms and the library resource centre.

### **What the school seeks to do**

- 1.3 The school aims to ensure that each pupil experiences a challenging, dynamic and relevant education which enables them to reach their full academic potential and flourish in a rapidly changing world. They seek to develop a love of learning that extends beyond the confines of examination courses, and to help each pupil to discover and develop a broad, relevant set of skills and aptitudes which enable them to undertake useful and effective roles in their communities. They also aim to offer an environment where each pupil develops a strong set of personal values and learns to value themselves and others, appreciating difference and individuality and supporting those in need or less fortunate than themselves.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of backgrounds with a wide social and ethnic mix and from a large catchment area. The school continues to value its heritage by supporting pupils whose family incomes would otherwise prevent them from accessing and benefitting from the education on offer.
- 1.5 Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the majority of pupils is above national norms, with low numbers of pupils having below average ability. The school has identified 146 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), predominantly with dyslexia, 20 of whom receive additional specialist help. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 30 pupils who do not require any specialist support.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

### **Recommendations from previous inspections**

- 1.7 The previous inspection of the school by ISI was an Interim inspection in March 2011. The recommendations from that inspection were:
  - Ensure that the recent re-structuring of learning support leads to better provision for pupils with SEND.
  - In the EYFS, provide a suitable and accessible area where the young children have the opportunity to rest.

- 1.8 The school has fully met the recommendation for the EYFS and partially addressed the recommendation to ensure that the restructuring of learning support has led to better provision for those pupils with SEND. Further detail is given in the main text of the report.

## **2. KEY FINDINGS**

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

- Pupils in the junior school achieve to an excellent standard across all their areas of learning.
- High academic standards achieved throughout the senior school are reflected in the pupils' success in public examinations at GCSE and A level, where results since 2014 have been above or well above the national average.
- Throughout the school, pupils achieve excellent standards in a wide range of co-curricular activities and pursuits, and have gained considerable success in local, regional and national competitions.
- From the youngest child in Reception through to the sixth form, pupils display excellent attitudes to learning and try their best at all times, encouraged by a supportive leadership team and staff.

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

- Pupils develop confidence, resilience and perseverance as they thrive in the culture of challenge which is fostered through the extensive range of opportunities and experiences that are provided for them. The pupils are proactive in their school community and benefit from the excellent relationships between staff and pupils.
- Pupils are kind, compassionate and thoughtful young people who understand the value of service to others both in their local community and across the world.
- Pupils' social development is characterised by high standards of self-discipline and behaviour which is an important contributory factor to the calm and organised learning environment in the school.

### **Recommendations**

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement:

- Ensure the additional help given to pupils in the learning support department is further consolidated by the teaching in the classroom.



### **3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Through encouragement to do their best in everything they do, pupils aim high and persevere to achieve the highest of standards in a full range of academic subjects and co-curricular activities. Pupils thrive in the school culture, which aims to offer an education for each pupil that develops and extends beyond the confines of examination courses and promotes a love of learning. Strongly supported by excellent governance and inspirational leadership, pupils gain intellectual confidence, develop their academic potential and enjoy considerable success in the areas of learning in which they are most talented or interested. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding and are a major contribution to their excellent achievements.
- 3.3 Children in Reception demonstrate exceptional achievement and most exceed the required levels of the early learning expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. In well-planned lessons with a good balance of indoor and outdoor activities, the children have fun whilst learning. With encouragement and support from dedicated teachers, they can identify what they would like to learn about, and enjoy being allowed to explore and learn independently. Children's writing skills are well developed and they are confident readers, being able to identify how letters combine in words such as 'pink' and 'twinkle'. They demonstrate their knowledge of numeracy through fun play activities such as completing practical counting exercises and working with shapes and numbers to create clock faces. They particularly like singing in music lessons, demonstrating a good sense of rhythm, and are creative in their art and drama. Their physical skills are well developed through the many opportunities provided for play and physical education.
- 3.4 As pupils progress through Years 1 and 2, they develop their ability to solve problems, self-evaluate their work and verbalise their learning. They can apply their learning to other curriculum areas and practical everyday experiences, such as shopping, and their numeracy skills are well grounded. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used with ease when they are encouraged to do so. Pupils demonstrate their creativity and imagination in their extended story writing. They have excellent oral communication when they discuss their work, and they are comfortable when conversing with adults and peers. School displays show their talent in art, music and drama and their strong physical skills are well developed in swimming and physical education (PE) lessons.
- 3.5 Pupils continue to achieve excellent standards across all their areas of learning as they progress to Year 6. They are not entered for national curriculum tests, but in work completed in the school's internal assessment tests, pupils make good progress overall with the highest standards being consistently maintained in writing, reading and mathematics. These excellent standards are found in their books and in their classroom work, which are closely monitored by the junior leadership team and class teachers. Pupils demonstrate well-developed study skills, including the ability to take notes, learn individually and collaborate on project work. They understand their own ability and the next steps they need to take to extend their learning, as demonstrated by the skill with which they are able to evaluate their own work and others' work. They use subject-specific language confidently. Year 4 pupils explained clearly how to work out the perimeter of a shape using the correct terminology, and pupils in Year 6 explained how a protractor is used to calculate bearings. They apply their excellent writing and communication skills to all areas of learning and enjoy many opportunities to make presentations, being articulate and confident when asked to do so. Pupils are adept at working

in groups, pairs or independently and can use their initiative when tackling challenging or unfamiliar work.

- 3.6 In the senior school, pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND and the more able, develop skills, knowledge and understanding to a high standard across a wide range of subjects. Pupils are diligent in their working habits and respond positively to the encouraging and supportive culture promoted by the leadership and the teachers. They enjoy working in pairs and groups, and are able to work independently when required, demonstrating excellent study skills. They have the confidence to try hard when faced with challenge and are not afraid of failing, knowing that they are surrounded by supportive peers and teachers who immediately offer to help. In a few lessons, pupils of the highest ability do not always benefit from this readiness of teachers to offer support. Opportunities for deductive thinking and analysis are sometimes lost because too little time is devoted to academically rigorous discussions in class, or teachers are too willing to give help quickly. In other lessons, the most able are intellectually challenged through extension work and excellent questioning techniques.
- 3.7 Pupils have well-developed standards of numeracy, and achievement in mathematics is strong by the time they reach the sixth form. Written communication is also of a high standard. The pupil contributions to the school magazine *'The Waconian'* show outstanding examples of journalism and creative writing. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 demonstrate excellent communication skills when they take part in thinking skills projects, which enable them to develop confidence in public speaking. Pupils are able to communicate effectively with each other and adults, adapting their language accordingly. They remain respectful of others' views and do not dominate discussions in an unhelpful manner. Pupil competence in the use of ICT is growing as the school's digital learning strategy progresses, especially in Years 7 and 8, where pupils are increasingly integrating the use of ICT into their work. Older pupils show that they understand how to use it when required.
- 3.8 The high academic standards promoted in the senior school are reflected in their success in public examinations. In GCSE examinations between 2012 and 2014, results were above the national average, and in 2015 and 2016 they were well above the national average. Since 2012, on average, sixty-seven percent of all GCSE grades were A\* or A grades. Results at IGCSE have been higher than worldwide norms overall. These results and standardised measures of progress indicate that pupils make good progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Results at A-level have consistently been above the national average, with almost eighty percent of grades awarded being A\*-B each year, demonstrating that appropriate progress is made. In GCSE subjects, girls slightly outperform boys, but this is reversed in A-level examinations. Almost all parents and pupils in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire reported that they are highly satisfied with the progress being made. During the inspection, it was evident through the scrutiny of pupils' work and in the lessons observed that progress is good and in some lessons it is excellent. Where maximum progress is not achieved, it is the result of low expectations by the teacher and the acceptance of work that is not of a good enough standard. The majority of pupils leaving the school after sixth form progress to their first choice of university, often gaining entry to universities that have rigorous academic entry requirements.
- 3.9 Following the recommendation of the previous inspection, the school has introduced a learning support department which offers better help for those with special educational needs. Throughout the school, pupils with SEND make similar progress to their peers as a result of the specialist support they receive and the help given by teaching assistants in the junior school. Senior school pupils, when interviewed, were appreciative of the extra time given to them by teachers when they found examination work difficult. During the inspection, however, there

was little evidence of any learning support strategies being deployed by classroom teachers or specific needs being taken into consideration in the teaching or in the marking.

- 3.10 Pupils' achievements beyond the formal curriculum are excellent as they take advantage of the rich variety of opportunities given to them in the co-curriculum programme. In accordance with the school aim to develop achievement beyond public examinations, pupils feel valued for what more they can offer. Pupils of all ages have achieved success in local, regional and national competitions in sport, music, drama, debating and academic pursuits and competitions. Pupils' achievement in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) is exceptional with over 200 pupils involved, and as many as 20 pupils gain the gold level award and up to 70 achieve the silver award annually. In recent years, team success at national level has been achieved in tennis, netball, football (both boys and girls), hockey and dressage. Teams regularly reach regional finals in competitions. Individual success is excellent, with pupils representing their country or county in many sports including those mentioned above but additionally in cricket, badminton, karate, golf, rowing and skiing. Pupils' success in sport has been promoted by an increased focus on improving the quality of PE by the leadership of the school and by the provision of outstanding facilities by the governing body. Large numbers of pupils at all ages engage in music and drama of excellent quality, with many pupils performing in a wide range of bands and orchestral groups, often performing in national concert halls and theatres. Pupils believe that their proudest achievements are the amount of money they raise each year for charity, both local and overseas, and their voluntary work in the community.

#### **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils of all ages develop a strong set of personal values, and in accordance with the school's aim, learn to value themselves and others. They are developing into happy, thoughtful, modest and kind young people who exhibit a quiet confidence in their own abilities and self-worth. Through a fully co-educational experience, gender does not limit their thinking or participation in the school curriculum and extensive co-curricular programme. In the questionnaires, almost all pupils and parents recognised the important contribution made to the pupils' personal development by the excellent environment promoted by the leadership and the high standard of pastoral care and support provided throughout the school.
- 4.3 Pupils understand the importance of the five core values promoted by the pastoral programme that runs through the whole school: integrity, compassion, endeavour, resilience and contribution. From a young age, pupils recognise the importance of endeavour and resilience in understanding their own strengths and weaknesses. Junior school pupils say they want to persevere when it is hard and 'have a go' at new experiences even when they are difficult. They eagerly join clubs and try anything to develop their self-confidence. They then reflect on their efforts and fill in 'how I think I am doing' questionnaires. Pupils listened attentively in assembly to the story of Sir Ernest Shackleton and his bid to cross Antarctica and talked about the resilience shown by him and his men. Throughout the school pupils understand the progress they are making in their work and activities through the constant oral and written feedback provided by teachers. From the earliest age, they learn to evaluate their own work and effort and set targets for themselves. The well-being and mindfulness programmes help pupils to understand their emotions and how to think positively. Year 7 and 8 pupils draw upon a 'toolbox' of suggestions to help them cope better and become more resilient when faced with challenges. Year 11 and 12 pupils showed great understanding of their own personal development path because the school encourages them to be reflective and make use of their experiences in new situations.
- 4.4 Pupils easily accept cultural and religious differences as the school's increasingly diverse mix of pupils gives them opportunities to demonstrate tolerance and equality. Pupils have good spiritual development. In the junior school, pupils report that their 'Learning for Life' programme teaches them to be compassionate and understand about spiritual values and different religions. The pupils' workbooks show that they learn about the world's major religions and can talk about bible stories they have studied. Pupils report that assemblies throughout the year encourage them to consider their spiritual understanding and help them to appreciate the non-material aspects of life. A recent focus on National Holocaust Day made them think deeply about the importance of religion to people's lives. Senior school pupils are able to attend a number of faith-based groups within school, for example, the Jewish and Muslim societies, where they explore their spiritual understanding. Societies such as the Debating Society, Think Tank Society and Philosophy Club also enable them to consider the world beyond school. High levels of engagement in the various societies, which raise awareness of injustice and unfairness, also demonstrate that pupils appreciate non-materialism. Pupils talk positively about the weekly 'Time to Think' published through the 'Daily Bulletin' and shown on screens around the school site. They say it helps them to think about issues even if only for a few moments.
- 4.5 Pupils develop and demonstrate a strong moral understanding and understand right from wrong. Social development is characterised by high levels of excellent behaviour and respectful attitudes towards each other and their teachers. They understand the school's systems of rules

and discipline and the junior code of conduct. Reception children know that some behaviour is unacceptable and know how to follow rules. The junior school pupils report that they are good at accepting responsibility for their behaviour and that most pupils behave well. All pupils move sensibly around the school and respect the support provided by their teachers, all of which contribute towards a happy and calm learning environment. At all ages, they learn to work with each other and older and younger pupils mix well together. Reception children show a sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children. All pupils develop skills of collaboration and co-operation through house competitions, with groups having to organise themselves, exercise leadership and make decisions. A strength of the school is the positive relationships pupils develop with staff. A culture of support and care for each other is evident as pupils report any concerns they have for themselves or others with the confidence that they will be taken seriously by the teachers and pastoral team. Effective leadership by pupils of all ages is developed through a wide range of responsibilities. Older pupils take an active part in the mentoring and support of the Year 7 and 8 pupils, who in turn act as mentors for the older junior pupils as they progress through to the senior school.

- 4.6 Pupils are enthusiastic in their desire to have a positive influence on their school community and be proactive in promoting changes to benefit all, especially through *Student Voice*, which acts as a school council. They are natural decision makers, knowing that they will be listened to and respected for their ideas. They show initiative in their promotion of clubs and societies which they lead and organise efficiently, such as those set up by sixth form pupils to explore issues of equality and discrimination. Many pupil discussions and decisions concentrate on the school theme of an altruistic community. They think carefully about what matters most to those who have least in society. Service to others is intrinsic within the school and is demonstrated especially by the pupils' exceptional levels of charity work at home and overseas. They are responsible young people who enjoy contributing to their local community with their extensive voluntary work including mentoring pupils in local schools, contributing to a local children's hospital and the sharing of their school events. They generously give their time to raise funds to help children overseas who are less fortunate than themselves. Overseas trips to South Africa and The Gambia in 2013, 2014 and 2015 have given opportunities for sixth form pupils to meet and work with African children in extremely deprived areas.
- 4.7 Pupils respect the diversity of wider society and show respect for and appreciation of their own and other cultures. Their engagement in activities such as their annual MUNCH (Model United Nations Cheadle Hulme) conference, which attracts over 400 delegates from other schools and backgrounds, including from overseas, allows them to meet other young people with varying beliefs and share in their diverse cultural experiences. Parents reported in the questionnaires that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Pupils could talk about the work they have done on the importance of British values and institutions and how they compare with nations with similar and different cultures.
- 4.8 Throughout the school, pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. Pupils benefit from a comprehensive well-being programme that runs through the whole school and focuses on emotional health and safety. They take seriously the need to keep physically healthy and understand the positive impact of exercise and healthy eating. In the junior school, pupils follow 'mindset' courses to build mental strength. They also follow healthy eating topics. In the senior school, the pupils engage in yoga and meditation and a range of health-related fitness activities. Learning how to stay healthy in terms of diet, exercise and a balanced lifestyle is an important part of the well-developed pastoral programme. Pupils report that they know how to stay safe online. They are aware of the risks associated with social media and have received

an in-depth education on how to protect themselves. By the time pupils leave the school to enter university or the world of work, they are well prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of adult life.