



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Great Ballard School

May 2023

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School's Details

School	Great Ballard School			
DfE number	938/6174			
Address	Great Ballard School Eartham House Eartham Chichester West Sussex PO18 0LR			
Telephone number	01243 814236			
Email address	office@greatballard.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Matthew King			
Chair of Proprietors	Mrs Susan Jay			
Proprietor	Great Ballard School Limited			
Age range	2 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	166			
	Nursery	16	Pre-Prep	19
	Prep	52	Seniors	79
Inspection dates	10 to 12 May 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Great Ballard School is a proprietorial independent co-educational day school. The school comprises four sections: nursery, for children aged from two to four years; pre-prep, for Reception children up to Year 2; prep, for pupils in Years 3 to 6; and seniors, for pupils in Years 7 to Year 10.
- 1.2 Governance is provided by the proprietor, members of her family and non-executive directors. They are supported by a board of advisors.
- 1.3 The school was founded in 1924 and moved to its present location in 1961. The current headmaster has been in post since September 2020. Since the previous inspection the school has increased the size of its campus, extended the age range of the pupils taught and ceased to offer residential provision.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school's aim is to provide a happy, safe and stimulating environment in which each pupil is nurtured to become the best versions of themselves. It seeks to inspire intellectual curiosity and to promote amongst its pupils ambition, kindness, empathy, sense of service and the self-confidence necessary for them to flourish in the next phase of their lives.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds mostly within a 15-mile radius of the school. Standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is average compared with those taking similar tests nationally. Eight pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified 35 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include dyslexia and a range of other learning difficulties; of these, 31 receive additional specialist help. English is an additional language (EAL) for 21 pupils, of whom six require additional support for their English. The school modifies the curriculum for more able pupils and those with particular gifts or talents.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

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

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

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

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

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

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

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

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are

maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

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

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

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

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

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

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

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

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

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

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

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

- Pupils demonstrate good understanding, knowledge and skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils' study skills are well developed.
- Most pupils display highly positive attitudes towards their work when working independently and in groups.
- Most pupils make good progress.

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

- Pupils display high levels of self-understanding.
- Pupils have a strong spiritual awareness and deep appreciation for the world around them.
- Pupils show considerable respect and support for one another and form productive relationships.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to be physically and mentally healthy.
- Pupils demonstrate a strong moral understanding and most pupils take responsibility for their behaviour.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Enable pupils to accelerate their academic progress through increasing independent challenge.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Standardised assessment data provided by the school indicate that pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, make good progress with some progressing rapidly. In the EYFS, children joining with a broad range of ability, make good progress. Most achieve the expected levels of development for their age by the end of Reception. Pupils throughout the school benefit from the monitoring and assessment that leads to the setting of measurable and achievable targets. Staff support pupils in achieving their individual goals and identify areas of improvement for whole cohorts, for example with spelling and grammar targets in English. More able pupils are encouraged to achieve at a higher level through the provision of work that allows them to go beyond initial objectives. All parents agree that teaching enables their child to make progress and inspection evidence mostly supports this view. In some of

the lessons observed, however, teaching did not always enable pupils to undertake enough responsibility for their work and thus accelerate their progress.

- 3.6 Pupils develop secure knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of their learning, sometimes displaying excellent prior knowledge and high levels of technical ability. Children in the Nursery make good progress in developing their gross motor skills and balance through activities they initiate. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils refined and improved their throwing and jumping techniques incrementally during their athletics session. Pupils in a Year 3 art lesson demonstrated excellent technical ability for their age as they crafted Mongolian figurines from clay. They also showed an appreciation of wider aesthetic aspects of the country, such as throat singing. Pupils' creative skills are effectively nurtured across the curriculum that successfully embraces art, music and drama. In a music lesson, Year 5 pupils showed good knowledge of basic chords when playing ukuleles. Pupils' linguistic skills are well developed. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils conjugated verbs correctly in preparation for describing scenes in French. In a Year 10 English lesson pupils showed a strong understanding of literary devices and a well-developed technical vocabulary using words such as 'juxtaposition' accurately. Pupils' achievement across the curriculum is supported by highly structured planning and well-resourced and knowledgeable teaching. All pupils responding to the pre-inspection questionnaires agreed that teachers know their subject well and know how to help them to learn.
- 3.7 Pupils develop strong study skills which they apply well. They are adept at using a variety of resources for research and they analyse and hypothesise effectively. This is because the school's leadership places a high importance and value on two bespoke subjects that are timetabled weekly. Mental academic physical (MAP) and learning to learn (L2L) dovetail to underpin pupils' learning most effectively. From the EYFS, pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and share questions they have and how they might tackle them. For example, a Reception class display featured open questions about dinosaurs and children's suggestions as to how they might find the answers. Pupils in a Year 5 personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lesson demonstrated a high level of understanding of cause and effect when hypothesising about mental health issues. Year 7 pupils' work seen in MAP illustrated how well they formulate hypotheses and investigate their validity. They independently selected variables to test whether exercise could improve their problem-solving abilities and drew logical conclusions. Year 10 pupils showed skilful analysis when interrogating sources on the Battle of Hastings. Pupils successfully develop their study skills because the school's outward looking curriculum is supported by well-planned teaching with excellent open-ended questioning and encouragement of critical thinking.
- 3.8 Pupils demonstrate a wide range of communication skills often with a high degree of competence. Most are very attentive listeners. Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to develop their oracy skills because teachers provide opportunities for spoken contributions in all lessons as well as outlets such as presentations in assemblies, enterprise projects and in debating. Children in Nursery communicated clear instructions to one another when using outdoor play equipment. Older pupils spoke confidently and eloquently when articulating their thoughts on school life in discussions with inspectors. They listened to each other effectively and responded thoughtfully to each other's comments. Pupils develop good reading skills and are well supported individually and in groups. Pupils write well descriptively and persuasively. From an early age they learn to write in a range of contexts as seen in Year 2 pupils' work on narration, scientific accounts and invitations to the King's coronation. Older pupils produce good discursive and objective writing for example in history, when explaining why William became the first Norman king of England. In other areas pupils wrote letters of complaint effectively and drafted excellent letters to support their job applications.
- 3.9 Pupils develop strong numeracy skills from an early age. Those in the pre-prep gain a secure understanding of number, which is regularly incorporated into other activities such as the STEAM Day for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. Older pupils show high levels of proficiency in their mathematics. For example, Year 9 pupils showed a good understanding of scale and transformations that included successfully enlarging shapes with negative scale factors. Pupils apply their numeracy skills highly

effectively across the curriculum. Pupils in a Year 5 and Year 6 games lesson accurately measured their achievements when practising their athletic field events. Work undertaken by Year 10 pupils in physics showed excellent application of mathematical skills. This included measuring and graphing electrical resistance, using equations to work out the density of solids and calculating specific latent heat, all of which were undertaken proficiently. Pupils are successful in their transference of skills because of well-planned schemes of work, such as the financial element of the L2L programme. Enterprise projects allow pupils to apply their numeracy skills to real life situations. The practical value of mathematics is successfully promoted by staff, school leaders and visiting speakers from industry.

- 3.10 Pupils are suitably competent and confident in their use of information and communication technology (ICT). They acquire proficient skills through discrete timetabled lessons and apply these most effectively to other areas of their learning. Pupils develop good understanding and skill in coding as they progress through the school. Pupils with SEND reported that access to personal devices aids their progress and seniors say that it helps with the organisation of their learning. Pupils use tablets assuredly to film and view their physical education activities enabling them to make technical adjustments and improve performance. In English lessons, Year 6 pupils used digital technology skilfully to research poisonous plants that they incorporated into poetry in the style of William Blake. Older pupils effectively enhanced their study of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* by designing an island which they printed in 3D and senior pupils have made excellent use of spreadsheets for the financial planning element of their enterprise projects.
- 3.11 Pupils achieve a good level of success across a range of extra-curricular activities, including scholarships in art, music, sport, ICT, service and leadership. All parents responding to the questionnaire agreed that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. Inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils have achieved success in ABRSM and LAMDA examinations as well as achieving notable commendations on performances in a local drama festival. Year 9 pupils have gained lifeguarding awards and made a promising start to The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Staff contribute greatly to the enrichment programme, responding enthusiastically to the leadership's ambitious plans for sport, the performing arts and an expedition programme. In sport, pupils have represented the England prep schools U11 girls' football team and the U11 girls' county cricket team. Pupils have represented Great Britain on the ski slopes and in ballroom dancing. At other levels pupils have achieved success in the Junior UK Maths Challenge and in a local photography competition.
- 3.12 Overall pupils display excellent attitudes towards their work. Children in the EYFS tackle tasks with a great deal of enthusiasm and are highly successful in leading their own learning. For example, Nursery children independently constructed a rudimentary balance beam and worked well together to test it. Children in Reception showed initiative in setting up a car run, using a large cardboard tube. Staff use questions skilfully to support the children in achieving self-determined aims. Pupils engage enthusiastically in lessons, for example in Year 7 PSHE where they animatedly discussed making connections in relationships. They show high levels of concentration and perseverance such as in Year 8 science when deducing the atomic structure of various elements. These positive attitudes stem from stimulating lessons, motivation from praise and teachers' strong rapport with pupils. Pupils develop initiative and independence successfully through the excellent opportunities provided in the curriculum with its well embedded focus on plentiful outdoor learning and pupil-led exploration. The school successfully meets its objective to inspire intellectual curiosity.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils exhibit a high degree of self-awareness. They recognise the positive impact of being in a supportive environment which enables them to develop their self-esteem and self-confidence. In discussion with inspectors, pupils showed that they understand their strengths and weaknesses well. They say that their resilience has increased since joining the school because they trust their highly

supportive teachers and the school's environment of mutual aid which is conducive to their self-esteem. Pupils with SEND explained how they persevere in overcoming the barriers to learning that they face as staff equip them with the necessary tools and coping strategies. They value the flexibility they have in timetable arrangements and the option of seeking support with their learning in the Shine Hub. Most parents responding to the questionnaire strongly agreed that the school helps their child to be confident and independent. Pupils are well prepared for the next phase of their lives as they are made aware of future expectations. For example, pupils from pre-prep collect passport stamps during taster sessions in Year 3 and gain confidence in their transition to the prep section of the school.

- 3.15 Pupils show a strong appreciation for their environment and the non-material aspects of life. They speak highly enthusiastically about the privilege of their location, appreciating their proximity to a rich natural environment. Pupils describe their surroundings as 'spectacular' and 'a lovely place to be'. Staff encourage pupils to be inspired by their environment and pupils joining the early morning dog walk said they just enjoyed being in the moment. Pupils in Year 5 expressed their joy at seeing deer in the grounds. Children in Reception demonstrated their curiosity as they pondered on what happens after life following their discovery of a dead shrew and discussed their religious beliefs confidently. Younger pupils said that being members of the school makes them feel like they have an even bigger family and makes them happy and joyful. Pupils display a mature appreciation of what moves their spirit. Older pupils spoke of the amazing music performed by their peers, and in a Year 10 English lesson, pupils described the depth of feeling inspired by Tony Harrison's poem, 'The Bright Lights of Sarajevo'. Pupils' personal development is successfully promoted through opportunities to discuss responsibilities, ideologies and debate philosophical issues such as the values of masculinity.
- 3.16 Pupils develop strong levels of social awareness and relish opportunities to work together within and beyond the classroom. Pupils have frequent opportunities for this in MAP and L2L lessons where they are consistently required and encouraged to support one another. Older pupils are trained as peer mentors and have opportunities to support in Nursery and pre-prep. They carry out these responsibilities effectively. Pupils in Year 7 said that the school gives them a great sense of community and inclusion and helps them build positive friendships. Almost all parents responding to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their child to develop strong teamwork and social skills and inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils in a Year 4 English lesson displayed great teamwork as they enacted poems by Michael Rosen. In a Year 8 drama lesson pupils worked well in groups to achieve their goal of portraying a London landmark through physical movement. They accepted ideas from each other and were keen to include everyone. Senior pupils form highly productive teams, for example when tackling the enterprise business scheme. Pupils' success in this is engendered by staff and senior leaders who are fully committed to promoting and supporting this and other elements of the school's diploma award.
- 3.17 Pupils show a clear understanding of right and wrong and the overwhelming majority take responsibility for their actions extremely well. In their demeanour and response to the questionnaires, pupils show a clear understanding of the school's expectations. They show great mutual respect, responding positively to the school ethos that asks them to be ready, safe and respectful. In discussion, pupils displayed a keen sense of justice and appreciated the community service element of sanctions. Children in the EYFS are encouraged to consider the impact of their actions on others and respond positively when given the chance to make better choices. Whilst in most lessons pupils demonstrated high levels of self-discipline, there were occasions in pre-prep, when pupils failed to settle or focus as requested. Pupils are prepared to challenge unkind behaviour, confident in the knowledge that staff will support them. They acknowledge the approachability of the staff and the excellent modelling of behaviour that they provide. Pupils recognise that all in the school community are responsible for looking out for each other. This is exemplified by the way that pupils who are new to the school are rapidly made to feel welcome.
- 3.18 Pupils make an excellent contribution to the wider life of the school through a variety of initiatives and fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously and enthusiastically. Pupils speak positively about the

value of the school council which enables them to achieve the school improvements that they suggest. Pupils are delighted that they now have an option to take their lunch out to picnic benches and have a five minute changeover time between lessons because of school council initiatives. Pupils make decisions about targets for things they would like to change in their school or beyond through a weekly after school club, 'Agents for Change'. They hold charity days and beach walks and promote environmental change, energy conservation and more. The school's service and leadership scholars successfully organised and hosted a dinner with guest speakers that included supporting charities in Ukraine. Pupils worked effectively to remodel the entrance to the woodland learning environment. That the school successfully meets its aim of developing pupils' sense of service is due to the shared vision and investment of the school's management and governance.

- 3.19 Pupils show a good understanding of how the decisions that they make affect their learning, personal development and wellbeing. Children in Nursery make excellent decisions about what equipment to use and how best to arrange it in order to aid their physical development. Pupils who are struggling or have issues regulating their behaviour make good decisions to take themselves to a quiet safe space where they can calm down and receive the necessary support when they are ready. Pupils consistently respond well when challenged to consider their personal options. For example, pupils in a Year 5 PSHE lesson made good choices when devising health tips for their wellbeing. In a Year 7 PSHE lesson, pupils revealed a well-informed understanding of how to aid or sustain wellbeing as they discussed relationship issues and coping strategies. In responding to the questionnaires, most senior pupils agreed that they received helpful advice about subject choices and careers. Pupils in Year 10 have visited careers fairs, completed online profiles and applied for work experience virtually to aid their understanding of how to make sensible choices about their future.
- 3.20 Pupils are highly inclusive and respectful of those with different cultural backgrounds. Within the school, pupils have been very welcoming of children who have arrived from other countries, appreciating the challenges faced. Those from different cultures feel able to share their experiences, such as German Easter celebrations. Pupils have a strong awareness of others and confidently share their views, for example in diversity week when considering differences in society. Staff model positive behaviours and tolerances and this encourages pupils to be open and honest in expressing themselves. Pupils develop a good understanding of the major world faiths through the religious studies programme, which includes visits to a local mosque and Hindu temple. All parents responding to the questionnaire agree that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. Pupils understanding of difference is deepened through shared presentations on issues such as their specific neurodiversity or native language. Pupils throughout the school are highly aware of the range of learning differences amongst their peers and are very accepting of this.
- 3.21 Pupils understanding of how to be physically and mentally healthy is well advanced. They recognise that being safe is one of the three key school rules and are well versed in how to stay safe online. Good physical and mental health is consistently promoted through MAP lessons, PE lessons and PSHE. In MAP pupils learn about nutrition, budgeting, planning, sustainability and food sources. They create healthy recipes that they then cook and eat such as nettle and sweet potato soup and dandelion scones. Children in the EYFS understand the need for oral and personal hygiene and use their toothbrushes correctly. Pupils in a Year 5 PSHE lesson spoke knowledgeably about the links between factors affecting their physical and mental health and made intelligent suggestions about how to counter these. Pupils' understanding of physical health is further developed in the MAP programme of personal fitness plans, lifesaving skills, gardening and hiking. Pupils benefit greatly from the investment and effort the school's leaders have made to ensure high-quality pastoral care to support the wellbeing of all.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the deputy chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended form meetings. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Vaughan Jelley	Reporting inspector
Mr Peter Sharp	Compliance team inspector (Former deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Thomas Mylne	Team inspector (Former head, IAPS school)