

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION
GREENBANK PREPARATORY SCHOOL

MAY 2017



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Greenbank Preparatory School			
DfE number	356/6005			
Registered charity number	525930			
Address	Greenbank Preparatory School Heathbank Road Cheadle Hulme Cheadle Cheshire SK8 6HU			
Telephone number	0161 4853724			
Email address	info@greenbankschool.co.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Janet Lowe			
Chair of governors	Mr Philip Enstone			
Age range	0 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	300			
	Boys	162	Girls	138
	EYFS	177	Infants	33
	Juniors	90		
Inspection dates	24 to 25 May 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 un-met 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 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. 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

Mr William Ibbetson-Price	Reporting inspector
Mrs Angela Russell	Team inspector (former Head, IAPS school)
Mr Robert Francis	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Greenbank Preparatory School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged between 0 and 11 years. Children aged 0 to 4 years are accommodated in separate Nursery and Preschool buildings. The school welcomes pupils of all faiths. Since the previous inspection, the school has extended the hall and created a covered outdoor area.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1951 as a proprietorial school. In 1971 it became a charitable, educational trust, administered by a board of trustees. The trustees are almost all parents of either current or former pupils at the school, and many are ex-pupils themselves. The school occupies a site on the outskirts of Cheadle Hulme and has three sections: the Nursery, the Preschool and the prep school.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide a caring environment where traditional values of courtesy, respect for others and pride in their work enable all children to develop their talents, gain self-esteem and reach their full potential. It strives to meet the social, emotional and intellectual needs of all pupils, and to ensure that every child feels valued and is able to play an active role in school.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional and ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the local community. Most pupils live within a 15-mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 15 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 6 pupils, 1 of whom receives specialist support. Data used by the school have identified 25 pupils as the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 10 other pupils due to their special talents in sport, art and music. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 18 children have been identified as requiring suitable support for development at levels above those expected for their age.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Nursery	Nursery (ages 6 months to 3)
Pre-school	Nursery (ages 3 to 4)

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils throughout the school demonstrate excellent levels of skills, knowledge and understanding across all areas of the curriculum and in their extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils of all ages and abilities make excellent progress, encouraged and supported in their efforts by teaching and a stimulating learning environment.
- All pupils demonstrate high levels of resilience and perseverance in lessons and activities.
- Pupils have a very positive attitude towards learning.

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

- Pupils are confident and articulate, have a strong moral integrity and enjoy taking responsibility.
- Pupils understand the importance of service to others, especially those less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent, and they display great respect for each other and to adults.

Recommendation

2.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes the school might wish to consider:

- Expanding existing provision of information and communication technology (ICT) still further within the school to better support pupils' learning across all subject areas.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 The school fulfils its aim to enable all children to develop their talents, gain self-esteem and reach their full potential with much success. It does not take part in National Curriculum tests but the inspection evidence gained from sources such as the results of standardised tests in English and mathematics, development indicated in the end-of-Reception profile, scrutiny of books and lesson observations demonstrates attainment to be high in relation to national age-related expectations. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make excellent progress. Pupils achieve excellent results in entrance examinations for academically selective senior schools, with a number gaining awards and scholarships for academic success and for sport. The overwhelming majority of parents' pre-inspection questionnaire responses agreed that the school enables their children to make good progress and develop skills for the future. This was a view supported by all pupils in their questionnaire responses.
- 3.3 From their individual starting points, children in the EYFS make excellent progress. Each child develops successfully through participation in engaging activities which are tailored to ensure that their particular interests and aptitudes are well supported. This is aided by a thorough and effective tracking system which displays progress and allows for appropriate interventions and support to be put in place where gaps in learning are identified. Children actively enjoy their learning and rapidly develop significant key skills which allow them to become independent learners who can make their own decisions.
- 3.4 Throughout the school, pupils with SEND or EAL achieve at a high level in relation to their starting points due to the good quality of support they receive. When areas of concern are identified, appropriate screening takes place to produce an individual education plan. This is monitored regularly against specific targets to ensure that it is implemented consistently and is working. One-to-one support and careful planning by class teachers ensure that pupils make good progress in all areas of the curriculum. All pupils extend their own learning through undertaking research projects in their own time. More able pupils make very good progress in response to suitable extension work in class and appropriate levels of challenge provided in teaching. They enjoy masterclasses in English and maths at the local university. Pupils from a very early stage make their own decision about the level of work they tackle, depending on how confident they feel in a particular area of study. Pupils as a result are able to take their own learning forward, take risks with their learning, and develop independence and resilience.
- 3.5 Pupils enjoy mathematics actively through a set of programmes which provide a personalised approach to learning mathematics and build enthusiasm for the subject. These ensure that each child is able to progress at his or her own rate. Throughout the school, pupils develop excellent skills for mathematics which they enthusiastically apply to other subjects such as science and geography. The youngest pupils confidently manipulate numbers to 20 or beyond, and use addition and subtraction to solve problems, while senior pupils demonstrated excellent mental computation skills in a starter activity.

- 3.6 By the time they leave the school, pupils are skilled in the use of modern technology. Using a range of devices, they learn how to code, utilise the internet for research and use presentation software with confidence, recording their work in interesting ways. Younger children demonstrated good keyboard skills as they presented information about the germination of bean seeds. Very young children were adept at using the keys on programmable toys to navigate obstacles on a course. Older pupils regularly undertake research projects in many subjects and present their findings in a variety of imaginative ways. They were observed confidently using coding. Research skills develop throughout the school, and pupils use a range of sources of information such as the library and the internet. As a result, pupils are adept at analysing the results of their research and are able to use their findings to create presentations suitable for a range of audiences. The school has worked hard and successfully to address the recommendation in the previous report to develop the use of ICT throughout the school. Opportunities to extend the use of ICT further in lessons are restricted by limited provision.
- 3.7 Pupils' skills in the performing arts develop rapidly from an early stage as all pupils benefit from specialist teaching and learn to play an instrument from a very early age. The numerous opportunities that the pupils have to perform result in extremely confident and capable performances at all levels. For example, EYFS children performed a carefully choreographed dance routine for their parents and junior pupils sang to a very high standard in a rehearsal for a concert. Older pupils are successful in instrumental examinations. Results in examinations for speech and drama are notably high, which is reflected in the way that pupils take an active role in assemblies and speak publicly in a range of situations including presentations to parents. Recently a number of pupils won first prize for their artwork in a regional competition for independent schools.
- 3.8 Pupils demonstrate sporting ability of a high level as they move up the school, resulting in an excellent range of success in local, regional and national competitions for both individuals and teams. During the inspection, three pupils gained places at a national athletics final for independent schools. Pupils of all ages develop their physical fitness and skills for particular sports due to high-quality teaching and coaching. School teams have recently won a range of regional competitions in a variety of sports including water polo, badminton and football.
- 3.9 Pupils achieve well in an extensive programme of clubs and activities which includes music, cooking, dance, sports and creative subjects. The overwhelming majority of parents agreed in their questionnaire responses that the school provides a good range of activities. Chess is a particularly popular activity. Eight pupils have recently progressed to the regional finals of a chess competition with one pupil winning a place at the national finals. These clubs and activities enable achievement at a very high standard and are taken seriously by both the school and the pupils, as observed when strategies for chess were displayed on an interactive whiteboard and then discussed by the club.

- 3.10 Pupils' attitudes to learning are exceptionally positive. They are enthusiastic, very supportive of each other and understand how to improve their own learning. Pupils enjoy working together to achieve common goals. They demonstrate mature levels of independence from an early age as they choose their own activities and take responsibility for their own personal hygiene. As a result, pupils demonstrate very well-developed abilities to reflect upon their own learning and take it forward; they are willing to take risks, and celebrate their own and others' success. From the EYFS onwards, pupils learn to review their work in order to improve their own learning. Helpful marking strategies provide immediate feedback about what has gone well and what requires further improvement. Older pupils confidently use self-assessment for effort and outcome, for example when applying agreed success criteria to evaluate the extent to which they had met the learning objective set at the start of an English lesson.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 By the time they leave the school, pupils display a level of maturity that is advanced for their age. Pupils feel valued, safe, well supported and happy within the school community. The highly committed management team regularly consults parents and pupils to develop systems that help improve personal development across the age range of the school. Almost all parents' questionnaire responses agreed that the school meets their children's pastoral and welfare needs effectively. Pupils develop their knowledge of themselves and their place in the wider world fruitfully in response to a well-structured personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum, a thoughtful assembly programme and daily opportunities for them to spend time with their form tutors. Pupils develop confidence, flexibility and resilience through the wide range of opportunities for them to take on meaningful responsibilities within the school from a young age. They know that their efforts will be celebrated and that they will be well supported even when they get things wrong.
- 4.3 From the EYFS onwards, pupils have a very strong awareness of who they are and understand that their decisions may have an impact on themselves and others. Reception children sign themselves in every morning and understand the importance of doing this accurately. They learn to make decisions for themselves about their daily routines and how to manage friendships with their peers. Older pupils develop excellent organisational skills, as was observed in the high standard of homework throughout the school. In preparation for life at their next school, pupils are encouraged to keep their books at home and must remember to select the ones they need for school each day. Homework is set in advance and pupils have to prioritise and organise their own personal work timetable. They do this successfully.
- 4.4 Pupils reflect upon and articulate their thoughts on spirituality sensitively during opportunities such as form time, PSHE lessons and assemblies. This process begins at a very young age, and strengthens and deepens as pupils progress through the school. Reception pupils reflected upon those less fortunate than themselves and then discussed how they could help anyone who was feeling sad. Pupils display a mature appreciation of non-material aspects of life, and the school provides a range of experiences which contribute to their development including provision of a hide in the garden so that pupils may watch the birds. Residential trips for older pupils including to the Lake District and France also provide pupils with opportunities to wonder both at the power of nature and at man's inventiveness. The garden, in which the pupils grow herbs for use in the school kitchens, provides an area for calm reflection which the pupils greatly appreciate. Pupils' knowledge of the need to preserve the diversity of the planet is developed through the school's exceptionally strong commitment to ecological awareness.
- 4.5 From an early age, pupils develop a strong moral awareness. They have an excellent understanding and respect for the school's core values of courtesy, honesty, and respect for all regardless of cultural differences. Pupils understand the need for school rules and are able to adapt this understanding to apply to the wider community, thus recognising the need to respect the rule of law. Behaviour throughout the school is exemplary. Pupils demonstrate a thoughtful understanding of the needs of others and are strongly supportive of each other and of the school as a whole. They work with staff to ensure a happy and safe school environment. Strong leadership by senior managers has ensured that a clear system of rewards and sanctions is in place which is understood and supported by all. In their responses to the questionnaire, almost all parents agreed that the school actively supports good behaviour.
- 4.6 The pupils' social skills are very strong, and these are developed from an early age. Very young children took great delight in working together in the role play café where they used appropriate language to buy and sell items and confidently handled coins. Pupils at all levels

work effectively with each other. They support each other across year groups and celebrate the achievement of common and personal goals, such as supporting each other in class when solving problems. The school has strong links with a school in Kenya, and pupils raise funds for this school and also exchange letters and photographs. Teachers take it in turns to visit the school on an annual basis and then share their experiences with the pupils. These discussions, supported by a study of the photographs, enables the pupils to deepen their understanding of the cultural and material differences and thus their appreciation of the need to help those less well off than themselves.

- 4.7 Pupils take on a wide range of responsibilities within the school with enthusiasm and success. The youngest children take pride in their classroom and readily volunteer to tidy up at the end of the day. Older pupils enjoy mentoring and supporting the younger children and collecting ideas to discuss at the school and eco councils. In the school council, pupils make an active contribution and decisions are made which will benefit their school and the wider community. Pupils participate in a variety of local competitions and sing carols in the local church, and so contribute to the wider community. They also contribute through a strong structure of charitable fundraising. Each year they help to choose a children's charity to support, and help to organise and run a range of fundraising events such as cake sales to support their chosen charity. Harvest festival collections are donated to a local foodbank.
- 4.8 Pupils display high levels of respect, tolerance and acceptance of different cultural traditions, and actively enjoy sharing their own customs with others. They develop an increasing awareness of world faiths and regularly share festivals with their peers from other faiths and backgrounds. Parents are invited to come and talk to the pupils about their own faiths and festivals. The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school does everything it can to ensure that their children learn in a healthy and safe environment, and that it actively promotes values of democracy, tolerance and respect for those with different faiths or beliefs.
- 4.9 Pupils throughout the school understand how to keep safe physically, emotionally and when using the internet. They enjoy the broad range of opportunities to further their knowledge of what constitutes a balanced lifestyle. Younger pupils learn how to make healthy choices in their diet, understand the need for personal hygiene and know when to wear their sunhats. Older pupils deepen their knowledge of what makes for a healthy diet and they understand the positive impact that regular exercise has on their health. Staff provide an excellent level of pastoral care, and frequent staff discussions ensure that pupils' needs are fully understood and met.
- 4.10 Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education. As they leave the school, they are ready to meet their next set of challenges as capable, resilient and confident young people.