



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Micklefield School

March 2023

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School's Details

School	Micklefield School			
DfE number	936/6080			
Registered charity number	312069			
Address	Micklefield School 10 Somers Road Reigate Surrey RH2 9DU			
Telephone number	01737 224212			
Email address	office@micklefieldschool.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Ryan Ardé			
Chair of governors	Mrs Joosje Hamilton			
Proprietor	Micklefield School (Reigate) Ltd			
Age range	2 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	240			
	Nursery	50	Lower school	59
	Upper school	131		
Inspection dates	14 to 16 March 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Micklefield School is an independent co-educational day school in Reigate. It was founded in 1910 and moved to its current location in 1925. The school is overseen by a board of governors. It comprises three sections: nursery, for children aged 2 years and nine months to 4 years; lower school, for pupils aged 4 to 7 years; and upper school, for pupils aged 7 to 11 years.
- 1.2 The current headmaster took up his position in September 2019. The current head of nursery took up her post in June 2022.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to be a vibrant independent school with a warm, family environment. It seeks to maximise the potential in each child by focusing on them as individuals and encourage its children to thrive and achieve through a rich, broad and ambitious curriculum. The school endeavours to develop happy, confident and well-rounded children who are future ready with a life-long love for learning.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Most pupils come from local families representing a range of professional and business backgrounds. The school's own assessment data indicate that the ability of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 43 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. Of these, 16 receive additional specialist help. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for five pupils, one of whom receives additional support for their English. The school has identified 28 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them.

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. 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 excellent.
- Pupils' academic and non-academic achievements are excellent.
 - Pupils exhibit advanced skills, knowledge and understanding.
 - Pupils throughout the school display consistently excellent attitudes towards school, achievement, and learning.
 - Pupils demonstrate advanced information and communication technology (ICT) skills.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils exhibit outstanding self-awareness and confidence.
 - Pupils' spiritual awareness and appreciation of non-material aspects of life are excellent.
 - Pupils exhibit substantial moral sensibilities.
 - Pupils display advanced social and collaborative skills and a strong sense of social responsibility.

Recommendation

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.
- Further strengthen pupils' creativity and depth of understanding by enabling them to determine for themselves how to explore and deepen their own learning equally strongly across all subjects.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils' attainment is excellent. Assessment data provided by the school confirm that all groups of pupils attain very highly compared to those taking similar tests nationally. Children make rapid progress, with a greater percentage than average attaining national expectations by the end of their time in the EYFS. Leaders ensure that pupils are prepared very well for their senior schools. They make effective use of assessment data and information to remedy any gaps in learning. Almost all leavers attain places at senior schools of their choice, with an extremely high number obtaining scholarships for the size of the school. Scrutiny of pupils' books, lesson observations and the school's own assessment data confirm that all groups of pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, make at least good and sometimes excellent progress from their starting points. Almost all parents who responded

to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that teaching enables their child to make progress. Inspection evidence supports this view. The school fully meets its aim to maximise the potential in each child.

- 3.6 Pupils display excellent skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, the youngest pupils displayed outstanding understanding of musical notation, including rests, notes and rhythm, and the skills to put these into practice on the xylophone. Young pupils' science books contain their individual observations and conclusions, such as about the relationship between age and head size. In art, older pupils demonstrated excellent knowledge and creative skills to design African adinkra canvasses. The oldest pupils showed excellent knowledge of electrical circuits and how these could be adapted to form parallel circuitry. Older pupils' independent historical writing on Henry VIII focused on the aspects of his life that the individual pupils have found most interesting. This writing demonstrated very strong attention to detail and advanced historical knowledge. Many pupils who responded to the questionnaire and spoke to the inspectors said that their teachers made learning fun. In addition, all pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that their teachers know how to help them to learn. These views are supported by inspection evidence.
- 3.7 Pupils' creativity and depth of understanding are strongest when they are able to direct for themselves how to explore and deepen their own learning. The extent of this is variable across the curriculum. There are times when pupils' work exhibits high levels of imagination and deep understanding of the subject at hand, often when they have been able to pursue independently the aspects of the subject that most interest them. However, such qualities are less strong when the extent of learning is prescribed, such as by some of the worksheets used.
- 3.8 Pupils throughout the school are consistently enthusiastic about all aspects of school life. Children in the EYFS settled very happily to early morning 'space adding' activities, demonstrating much eagerness to engage and try to add accurately. During the 'Roman Day', which took place during the inspection, pupils eagerly made Roman shields and used them to make a defensive tortoise. In a celebration assembly, children and younger pupils showed much pride in the work they had done that led to the award of achievement certificates. Pupils watching exhibited genuine delight in the other pupils' achievements. In all lessons seen, pupils were eager to engage and achieve the best they could, often displaying considerable excitement at their achievements. The school fully meets its aim to equip pupils with a life-long love for learning.
- 3.9 Pupils demonstrate advanced information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They readily use ICT to enhance their learning and demonstrate the outcomes of their studies. Younger pupils studying English accessed images and sounds to stimulate their creative writing about Little Red Riding Hood. Pupils in the middle of the school made excellent use of an application to confirm and stretch their understanding of fractions. In geography, older pupils made very competent videos to illustrate coastal erosion. They made excellent use of an animation programme to track Sir Francis Drake's progress around the globe. Pupils make effective use of devices to communicate with their teachers for advice and support, and about homework and targets. They also use ICT collaboratively to aid their learning during homework club. Leaders have created a platform of relevant information, including links to useful websites, for pupils to use across their studies. Pupils' ICT skills also develop because they receive highly effective specialist teaching.
- 3.10 Pupils' communication skills are excellent. Older children were able to sound out digraphs such as 'ng', 'ch', 'ee' and 'ar' accurately and confidently. The most able children were able to suggest words that contained 'ar', showing excellent understanding that the 'ar' in 'earth' sounded different to that in 'park'. Younger pupils' English books feature accurately punctuated and imaginative writing that makes highly effective use of writing techniques such as alliteration and powerful vocabulary. Handwriting is of a high standard. The most able pupils' writing is extremely advanced for their age. Older pupils analysed the poem *The Highwayman* in perceptive detail, utilising their historical knowledge about red coats to do so. Pupils are excellent speakers in and out of the classroom, as seen in the quality of discussions witnessed during the inspection. Pupils' writing skills are strongest when they are set tasks which challenge them to write in detail and depth. Staff make highly effective use

of what they term 'boomtastic' writing, a selection of particular writing techniques, including the use of simile and metaphor.

- 3.11 Pupils have an outstanding command of numerical and wider mathematical concepts. They enjoy being set challenges. Younger children used words such as 'longer', 'shorter' and 'shortest' with understanding. Older children's mathematics books demonstrate excellent formation of numerals and an ability to add accurately to create numbers over the value of 20. Pupils in the middle of the school considered the use of denominators and numerators in fractions carefully and understood how these related to each other. The oldest pupils showed an excellent command of 3D shapes and how these are used in the real world. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoyed the awards for outstanding work on multiplication tables, including advanced tables they had created themselves.
- 3.12 Pupils' study skills are excellent. The youngest children made intelligent predictions about which soft toy worms and snakes being revealed would be shorter or longer. They were able to suggest ways they could measure the snakes to check their predictions. Young pupils' design and technology (DT) books demonstrate developing independent research skills, such as finding out information about different fruits and vegetables. The oldest pupils' independent research projects, such as those on different aspects of music around the world, demonstrate the pupils' capacity to identify and select pertinent information from reliable sources and present cohesive arguments. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school equips their child with the team-working, collaborative and research skills they need in later life.
- 3.13 Pupils' academic and non-academic achievements are excellent. A high number of leavers achieve academic, performing arts and sports scholarships. Teams have won a large majority of the football, rugby, netball, hockey and cricket fixtures they have participated in over the previous two years. Over the same period of time, male pupils have been plate semi-finalists in the football county cup, Under-10 winners in RSM cross country, winners and placed third in Lingfield athletics, U9 winners at Lingfield football, and Under11 ISFS sevens semi-finalists. Female pupils have been plate winners in IAPS cricket, third place Under-11 netball winners at Seaton House and Hawthorns, and netball quarter-finalists at Cranleigh. There has been individual success at county level in cricket, netball and in a professional football club academy. Almost all entrants to English Speaking Board and LAMDA examinations have achieved distinctions, with the others achieving merits. Pupils who enter ABRSM examinations achieve grades 1 and 2 in singing and a wide range of instruments. Governors have supported the use of specialist teachers and the resurfacing of the outdoor play areas. Leaders provide a very wide variety of clubs and extra-curricular activities that enable pupils to hone their abilities and broaden their outlook.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 Pupils exhibit excellent self-confidence and awareness. Children in the EYFS were highly confident to join in phonics games and activities and express their own thoughts. The youngest pupils demonstrated excellent self-confidence while speaking to the rest of their group on the topic of food groups. Young pupils' personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) books include very confidently expressed ideas of what the individual pupils feel proud of. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors did so with much self-assurance and were very confident to talk about their own experiences. They conveyed an outstanding willingness to overcome any setbacks, look positively at their achievements and learn from any mistakes. Children in the EYFS settle in and become at ease as a result of the very encouraging and cheerful manner of staff and effective use of humour that relaxes children. Across the school, teachers treat pupils with courtesy at all times, and this encourages the pupils to feel free and express themselves. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire said that the school helps their child to be confident and independent. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said how much the school had enabled their confidence to grow, including through the

many opportunities for public speaking. The school fully meets its aim to develop happy, confident and well-rounded children.

- 3.16 Pupils' appreciation of non-material aspects of life and spiritual awareness are outstanding. In an assembly, pupils across the school responded with glee to South African songs. Older pupils demonstrated wonder at the force of coastal erosion while giving ICT presentations on the formation of arches and stacks. Young pupils' work on the theme 'Our wonderful world' featured self-chosen images that indicated an appreciation of animals and nature. While listening to a rendition of *The Highwayman*, older pupils were clearly entranced by the drama of the story. There was a real sense of awe at the dénouement. The work of pupils in the middle of the school on the power of prayer resulted in deep and passionate reflection on the importance of not taking anything for granted and that all people should have enough to eat. The oldest pupils' PSHE books contain highly imaginative and reflective ideas about how one can know that something that cannot be seen exists, such as love, kindness and God. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors articulated complex and deep ideas about how music, stories and ideas from different religions had affected them emotionally and made them think. Questions posed to pupils in religious education lessons prompt their considered reflection on the issues raised.
- 3.17 Pupils exhibit highly developed moral sensibilities. Nursery children readily followed staff's prompts and instructions, including lining up efficiently and with much consideration for each other. During break, all pupils demonstrated entirely positive and inclusive behaviour in the playground. Pupils from a range of year groups who spoke to the inspectors reflected deeply and intelligently about why caring, kindness and honesty were values of importance, and why lying was not acceptable or sensible. They demonstrated a keen awareness of the importance of doing the right thing and an understanding that poor behaviour has consequences for others and for oneself. The oldest pupils reflected on and explained in depth why they found certain moral values and behaviours, such as kindness and fairness, so significant. They also conveyed highly intelligent thoughts about ethical issues raised by recent events in recent world history, such as Nazism and apartheid. Leaders and staff promote and model the 'KRs', the school's core values of kindness, respect, responsibility and resilience, highly effectively.
- 3.18 Pupils display advanced social and collaborative skills. Pupils demonstrated excellent collaboration in all lessons seen, working extremely effectively in pairs or groups towards shared outcomes. They supported each other exceptionally well in discussions, listening to each other carefully and ensuring that everyone had the chance to speak. In a rugby session, pupils exhibited outstanding teamwork in the way that they utilised each other's strengths, such as passing skills. During lunchtime, pupils played happily and collaboratively, sharing equipment and devising games and make-believe, such as a game about surviving in World War Two. Pupils returning from a football fixture demonstrated a very strong camaraderie and team spirit.
- 3.19 Pupils contribute strongly to others, both within and beyond the school. For example, during morning break, younger pupils acting as 'red caps' talked enthusiastically about their role in helping others find playmates, sorting out any friendship issues or helping others if they get hurt during break. They monitored the playground carefully to see whether any pupils did need support. Older pupils take on many roles to support others in the school, such as those of peer mediator, form captain, house captain and well-being champions. All the oldest pupils take on monitoring responsibilities which they carry out with much consideration. For example, inspectors witnessed some of the oldest pupils supporting children in the EYFS to get ready for registration and assembly. They did so with warmth and clear enjoyment. The school trains pupils to take on these roles, thus strengthening their sense of responsibility towards others. Pupils also represent others' views through the school council, including the choice of which charities to support, such as a local food bank and those relating to supporting children's mental health and children with life-limiting conditions. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors about these activities conveyed a very strong sense of social responsibility.
- 3.20 Pupils' decision-making skills are advanced. Young pupils made excellent decisions about what level of work to attempt while solving addition and subtraction trios. The oldest pupils' PSHE books include

very sensible ideas of personal goals and what needs to be worked on in order to meet them, including intelligent ideas about how success in particular GCSE and A-level examinations might contribute to their achievement. The oldest pupils explained very thoughtfully to inspectors how they selected and prepared for their chosen senior schools. They also spoke about the importance of maintaining a positive attitude and not 'giving up' on themselves when trying to prepare for the application process.

- 3.21 Pupils exhibit entirely inclusive attitudes and a deep appreciation of diversity and of how different cultures have something valuable to offer the world. For instance, during a discussion about herbivores and carnivores in a science lesson, the youngest pupils demonstrated an excellent appreciation of the way in which words stemming from one language inform words used in another, in this case the Italian 'carne' reflected in the word 'carnivore'. The oldest pupils convey a very strong understanding that racism is a form of prejudice, and that prejudice needs to be challenged. Their work expresses deep feelings about the importance of equal treatment. In discussion with the inspectors, pupils of different ages spoke with passion about the importance of equality and with dismay at the existence of discrimination and prejudice. They showed a particularly mature understanding of the fallacy of judging people by appearance and of the importance of respecting rights and difference. Pupils also spoke passionately about the existence and value of the many religions in the world. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. Leaders and staff effectively promote the school motto of 'No Outsiders – everyone is welcome at Micklefield'.
- 3.22 Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and stay safe, including when online. In a PSHE lesson, the youngest pupils showed outstanding understanding of the need to stay safe in relation to keeping secrets. They were able to distinguish very well between 'good secrets' and 'bad secrets', such as people hurting you, and that 'bad' secrets should not be kept but told to trusted adults. Pupils involved in science experiments knew to wash their hands afterwards to remove any potentially harmful substances. Older pupils spoke eloquently about how, in their opinion, well-being was a form of 'anti-bullying'. They explained maturely the strategies they used to protect themselves from stress and anxiety. The oldest pupils accurately differentiated between medicines, vaccines and other types of drugs. They demonstrated a very good understanding of the existence and uses of steroids, vaccines, inhalers and common medicines such as paracetamol. The pupils also exhibited a very strong knowledge of news stories relating to drugs and sports and an appreciation of some drugs being illegal or harmful. Pupils of different ages explained to the inspectors the very sensible key 'do's and don'ts' that they bear in mind when using the internet. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school encourages their child to adopt a healthy lifestyle. All pupils who responded said that they understand how to stay safe online.

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 chair of governors and safeguarding 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. 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 Steven Popper	Reporting inspector
Mr Stephen Challoner	Compliance team inspector (Former director of staffing, HMC school)
Mrs Jeanette Adams	Team inspector (Former deputy head, IAPS school)