

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

The Gregg School

November 2019



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School's Details

School	The Gregg School
DfE number	852/6000
Registered charity number	1089055
Address	The Gregg School Townhill Park House Cutbush Lane Southampton Hampshire SO18 2GF
Telephone number	023804 72133
Email address	office@thegreggschool.org
Headteacher	Mrs Sherilee Sellers
Chair of governors	Mrs Joanna Preston
Age range	11 to 16
Number of pupils on roll	295
Inspection dates	26 to 28 November 2019

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 The Gregg School is a non-selective, co-educational day school for pupils aged from 11 to 16 years. The school was founded in 1901 in Southampton city centre and moved to its present site, on the northern edge of Southampton, in 1994. It occupies Townhill Park House and gardens, a 23-acre site comprising Grade II listed buildings and grounds. Classrooms are located in the main house, with the library, art, music and design departments situated in converted stables and cottages. The recently opened (2016) Hart building provides purpose-built accommodation for science, English, drama and food technology. The Gregg Schools' Trust, a registered charity, is the parent company of The Gregg School and is the proprietor of both The Gregg School and The Gregg Preparatory School. The schools share a governing body. The school has four teaching groups in Years 7 and 8, and five teaching groups in Years 9, 10 and 11 for English, mathematics and science.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school seeks to inspire pupils to engage actively with learning and to enable pupils to acquire intellectual curiosity, ambition and aspiration. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour, to show respect and tolerance for others and to develop independence and confidence. The school aims to help pupils reach their potential both academically and personally, so that they are ready to take their place in the modern world.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a broad range of socio-economic, cultural and religious backgrounds, mostly from the Southampton area. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability range of the pupils is above average. Five pupils have an Educational and Health Care Plan (EHC) and a further 48 pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, all of whom receive specialist support. There are six pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), who also receive specialist support. Data used by the school have identified 62 pupils as the most able within the school's population and the curriculum and activities are modified for them.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

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. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. Additionally, the inspection reports 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. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

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 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.

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 a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The 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 regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; 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 full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#), [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 associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 At GCSE, in the years 2016 to 2018, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.
- 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 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 **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

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 **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

- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.13 A range of information is variously 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.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 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 well-being of the pupils.

2.18 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.

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.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. 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'.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- The Pupils with SEND make excellent progress and all pupils make good progress overall.
 - The pupils demonstrate excellent communication skills.
 - The pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) skilfully and confidently to support their learning.
 - The pupils are enthusiastic learners but teaching does not always allow them sufficient opportunity to develop independent learning skills.
 - More able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- The pupils show high levels of self-confidence and appropriate self-esteem.
 - The pupils have highly developed social skills and work together very well.
 - The pupils' behaviour is excellent throughout the school.
 - The pupils display a strong commitment to serving others in the school and in the wider community.
 - The pupils' understanding of staying safe and keeping healthy is excellent.

Recommendations

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:
- Continue to embed the plans to raise the attainment of the most able pupils through offering higher levels of challenge.
 - Ensure that pupils fully utilise their independent learning skills by providing sufficient opportunities for them to do so.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.5 Pupils have excellent communication skills. They engage enthusiastically in discussion, expressing their views forcefully and often perceptively; for example in a drama lesson when considering Hamlet's soliloquy, pupils spoke insightfully about the nature of self-reflection and how to construct a persuasive argument. Pupils' natural openness and ability to express their views effectively are fostered by the many discussion groups such as the charity group and the eco group, where teachers encourage pupils to take the lead in suggesting and developing ideas. Pupils are very confident when speaking in front of others and the recent introduction of drama lessons is evidence of the positive impact of governance, leadership and management on developing pupils' communication skills by supporting the expansion of the curriculum in this area. Pupils are very good listeners to both adults and their peers when working together in lessons. Their written communication skills are also strong. Most pupils produce neat and well organised work and evidence from the scrutiny of their work showed that pupils of all abilities were able to write fluently. A recent school-wide initiative to develop good literacy habits continues to have a positive impact on pupils by encouraging their reading and focusing on effective writing skills across all subject areas.

- 3.6 The school's standardised assessment data show that pupils with SEND make excellent progress overall in comparison to their peers. These pupils are very well supported by the learning support department, which develops detailed programmes that are tailored for each pupil's needs and enable staff to adapt their teaching appropriately. For example, in English, SEND pupils were given highly structured writing tasks to provide a framework for their learning. Pupils with SEND benefit considerably from one-to-one support, which gives them more time to complete work, and they develop confidence in their learning as a result of the help given by skilful and patient classroom assistants.
- 3.7 Data show that pupils, whom the school has identified as more able, make progress in line with their peers but do not always show progress in line with their higher ability. The school has identified this concern and is taking steps to provide higher levels of challenge for these pupils, but these initiatives are not yet fully embedded in the teaching. In the best lessons, work is well matched to pupils' needs but, in other lessons, there is not sufficient challenge for more able pupils.
- 3.8 In 2016–18 results in GCSE examinations were above the national average for maintained schools and in line with the overall ability profile of the pupils, which is also above the national average. This level of attainment was maintained in 2019, when 95% of students achieved five or more passes at grade 4 and above. These levels of attainment, together with the evidence from lesson observations, interviews with pupils and scrutiny of their work, show that pupils make good progress over time. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that teaching enables their child to make progress.
- 3.9 Pupils of all ages achieve good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding and, when given the opportunity in lessons, more able pupils display excellent higher order skills of analysis and hypothesis. For example, in geography, pupils showed an excellent analytical awareness of the impact of critical factors, such as birth rate, on a country's development. Pupils in art have highly developed technical skills in screen printing, textiles and photography. Pupils involved in the elite sports programme demonstrate high levels of skill in their specialist sports and develop their expertise as a result of the focused guidance offered by sports staff.
- 3.10 Pupils have good numeracy skills. In mathematics, pupils show a good application of appropriate methods to solve problems, employing solid numeracy skills acquired through the good teaching of basic principles. A few pupils lack confidence in the application of numeracy when faced with more challenging questions and become very reliant on the teacher, but most were able to apply their skills effectively and able to use them in other subjects, for example when creating a product in design technology or undertaking graphical work in science.
- 3.11 Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are strong and they are confident and enthusiastic when using ICT in their learning. In art, pupils are highly skilled in the application of commercial packages to manipulate images or to facilitate the production of architectural drawings; these skills continue to be developed through the expert training they receive. In English, pupils used ICT resources creatively to produce a presentation to market their product. Pupils developed their use of laptops when using excellent research skills in both religious education (RE) and geography lessons, and they practised and extended their advanced coding skills in an ICT lesson. Pupils with SEND are highly adept at using laptops to support their learning, helped and guided by staff in the learning support and ICT departments. The positive impact of governance, leadership and management has been demonstrated recently in the provision of more ICT equipment throughout the school.

- 3.12 Most pupils are enthusiastic and well-motivated learners. Pupils of all abilities have high expectations of themselves, want to improve and are keen to achieve their targets. Pupils embrace the chance to take charge of their learning and to show higher order thinking skills such as critical reasoning and analysing. For example, in a science lesson, pupils were keen to explore and hypothesise about the nature of light. In media studies, pupils analysed in detail the relative value of commercial and non-commercial advertising and were able to identify key factors. Pupils collaborate very well in lessons and enjoy opportunities to work together on a common task. In RE, pupils shared ideas enthusiastically to reach a group understanding when researching naming ceremonies in Hinduism and, in a physical education (PE) lesson, pupils worked together purposefully to identify and demonstrate different muscles. In responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, most pupils felt that teachers help them learn and make progress. Inspection evidence supports this view overall. Pupils are excited and motivated by the recently introduced scheme to promote key learning habits, such as resilience, risk-taking and self-reflection but not all the teaching has yet adapted to incorporate opportunities for pupils to practise these habits or to experience more independent learning. In some lessons, where teaching was too highly structured and did not allow pupils sufficient opportunity to work independently or to explore their own ideas, pupils were more reluctant to engage and their progress was slower. Where teaching is more flexible, pupils engage much more enthusiastically and productively.
- 3.13 Pupils achieve well in a range of activities. They are enabled by the willingness and enthusiasm of staff, who run teams and clubs and by the support of senior leaders in promoting schemes such as *Valor Aditus*, which both monitors and rewards pupil participation. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, most parents agreed that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities and this was supported by evidence from interviews with pupils. Data gathered by the school show that almost all pupils are involved in an extra-curricular activity and that many are active across a range of options. They enjoy the sense of spirited competition which pervades the many sports and activities organised by the committed house staff. Pupils of all ages eagerly challenge one another in the many informal table tennis matches at lunchtimes. Pupils interested in sport benefit from specialist coaching, and both the cross-country teams and the swimming squads have both been particularly successful in local and national competitions. Pupils who enjoy music develop their talent through involvement in a range of ensembles and in the school choir. Those in the flute choir have reached a high standard of performance for their age. Pupils have achieved notable successes in the national maths challenge with four progressing into the European competition in 2018. Participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE) is particularly high with most pupils reaching their bronze award before leaving the school and some gaining the silver award.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent
- 3.15 Pupils show high levels of self-confidence for their age, which grows as they progress through the school. They show equally high levels of self-esteem. Pupils are proud of their achievements and many spoke about their successes, both academic and in extracurricular activities. They are very self-aware and know their strengths and weaknesses, many displaying strong resilience when faced with academic or personal challenges. Pupils are increasingly self-reflective, enabled by recent initiatives to embed key learning habits, which encourage pupils to identify ways to improve their academic work and to persevere to complete more difficult tasks in class. Pupils know where to seek help and support, and they value the highly effective arrangements for pastoral care which create a nurturing and caring environment that allows them to develop as individuals. They willingly attend subject clinics to improve their understanding and are serious about meeting or exceeding targets set by teachers. In pre-inspection questionnaire responses, almost all parents indicated that the school enables pupils to be confident and independent and most pupils agreed. This confirms that the leadership and management of the school have successfully supported staff in promoting the aim of the school to help pupils become confident and self-aware.
- 3.16 Pupils make wise and sensible decisions. They are fiercely proud of their school and are eager to make suggestions to help the school run better through the various pupil-led representative meetings, such as the Eco Group and the Charity Group. A recent initiative by Year 10 students has set up a peer-support programme for younger students; older pupils spoke about how the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE) has helped them to be decisive when faced with navigational challenges. In GCSE art, pupils reflected maturely on how to develop their work, enabled by expert suggestions from staff, who foster an ethos of self-improvement. In interviews with pupils, inspectors found that Year 11 pupils had made very clear decisions about the next stage of their education and most felt that the school's careers guidance had helped them make appropriate choices. This was confirmed by the pre-inspection pupil questionnaires, which showed that a very large majority of pupils, and most parents, felt the school offered helpful advice about subject choice and careers.
- 3.17 Pupils' spiritual awareness is good. They understand the school's values and have a strong sense of community. Pupils develop a good understanding of other faiths through lessons in religion and ethics which often offer opportunities for pupils to consider the non-material aspects of life. In a GCSE lesson on Hinduism, pupils shared deep personal insights as they considered the differences between the spiritual and non-spiritual world. Pupils appreciate excellence and beauty in art, exemplified by the many colourful displays of pupils' work around the school. Pupils commented that the school gardens are beautiful and offer space for personal reflection, while others said they value the mindfulness club that provides a quiet time in a busy day. Pupils spoke sensitively about how the recent remembrance assembly had challenged them to consider issues of war and peace but added that other assemblies are often focused on developing good social awareness or dealing with routine matters, rather than creating space for spiritual reflection.
- 3.18 Pupils' behaviour is excellent and their understanding of moral and ethical issues is strong. They respect the school rules and see them as fair and necessary to maintain good order. Pupils are polite to one another and to adults, often exchanging a smile or friendly greeting and holding open doors as they pass on the narrow corridors and stairs. They queue patiently for lunch and the dining room is a place of civilised conversation and good manners. Year 7 pupils commented that they had settled quickly and that their work in personal and social development lessons (PSD) about establishing strong friendships had helped to create a strong sense of community in the year group. Pupils wrote movingly on a noticeboard entitled: *'what have you done to make someone loved?'* noting their small acts of kindness, such as lending a pen or helping someone get to the medical room.

- 3.19 Pupils develop a very strong social awareness, which fulfils the aim of the school to produce pupils who are engaged in the life of the school community. Pupils co-operate enthusiastically in house competitions and develop team skills, often across year groups, in sport and other activities. Older pupils are proud to be mentors and devise imaginative ways of connecting with younger pupils through a variety of social events such as pizza parties and picnics. Peer supporters in Year 10 are highly motivated to help younger students deal with personal issues and are supported and encouraged by pastoral staff, who offer training and guidance. Year 10 and 11 pupils commented how, through participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, they have made close friends and learned how to work together in group situations and reconcile differences of opinion amicably. Pupils collaborate well in lessons, working with one another eagerly and purposefully to reach common goals through respecting the views and contributions of others. For example, in a history lesson, pupils took turns to play the role of the teacher in a group to help each other learn more effectively.
- 3.20 Pupils' commitment to social activity in the local community is also very strong. They are enthusiastic about charitable work and, through the pupil-led charity committee, they organise frequent and highly successful fund-raising events, such as a recent cake sale in support of a health charity. Other pupils spoke about their enjoyment of participating in the annual senior citizens' Christmas event, when they entertain the guests by singing and performing musical pieces. Pupils involved in the repair bike club, which sends bikes to Africa, are committed to producing a high quality product and are proud to be able to make a difference to the lives of those who receive the bikes.
- 3.21 Pupils are highly respectful of diversity within the school community and willing to engage sensitively and openly in discussion about issues of religion, ethnicity, gender and disability. In a PSD lesson, pupils engaged maturely in a card sort exercise that promoted a discussion of sexuality and gender identity. Year 11 students had a deep appreciation of LGBT issues, prompted by a recent presentation in school. Pupils' awareness of other religions and belief systems is well developed through work in religion and ethics lessons combined with visits to local places of worship, such as a local Hindu centre. Responding to the pre-inspection questionnaires, the vast majority of parents agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance for others and a large majority of pupils agreed. A small minority of pupils felt that not all are treated equally in school but inspectors did not find evidence to support these views.
- 3.22 Pupils' knowledge of how to stay healthy and safe is excellent. Pupils' awareness of on-line safety is very strong, supported by specific lessons in ICT and PSD and confirmed by their pre-inspection questionnaire responses in which almost all pupils said they know how to stay safe on-line. Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of physical and mental health and pursue both with equal purpose, participating with enthusiasm in the varied programme of sporting activities and also engaging positively with mindfulness techniques taught in PSD lessons. Peer supporters value the high level training in safeguarding they receive which has helped them feel confident about their role. Pupils learn to eat healthily as a result of discussions in PSD lessons and because of the excellent choice of nutritious food on offer at lunch time.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 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 group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. Inspectors visited the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Stephen Holliday	Reporting inspector
Mr Ieuan Weir	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Luke Ramsden	Team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)