



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports**

**The Hall School**

**December 2019**



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### School's Details

<b>School</b>	The Hall School			
<b>DfE number</b>	202/6017			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	312722			
<b>Address</b>	25 Crossfield Road Hampstead London NW3 4NU			
<b>Telephone number</b>	02077 221700			
<b>Email address</b>	office@hallschool.co.uk			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Christopher Godwin			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Anthony Fobel			
<b>Age range</b>	4 to 13			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	444			
	<b>EYFS</b>	34	<b>Junior School</b>	156
	<b>Middle School</b>	108	<b>Senior School</b>	146
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3 to 5 December 2019			

## Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 The Hall is an independent day school for pupils aged between 4 and 13 years. It is registered as a single-sex school for male pupils. It was established in 1889 and based in the Belsize Park, Hampstead area of North London. The school is a registered charity overseen by a governing body whose members are the charity's trustees. Its foundation is Christian but welcomes boys of all denominations and faiths. The pupils are divided between the junior school (Reception to Year 3) which is a short walk away from the middle (Years 4 and 5) and senior (Years 6 to 8) schools. These premises are opposite each other. Since the previous inspection there have been changes to the organisation of governance.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims for all pupils to flourish in an ambitious and aspirational environment, fully supported in a friendly and supportive community, where every child is valued. Through a stimulating curriculum and a sensitive pastoral system, the school seeks to produce confident and versatile young people, capable of high achievement and of rising to any challenge.

### About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a range of professional and other family backgrounds. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicates that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 109 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, 70 of whom receive additional specialist help. One pupil has an education, health and care plan. There are 18 pupils who have English as an additional language, two of whom require additional support. Data used by the school has identified a number of older pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for other pupils because of their special talents in sport, music and drama.

## 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. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. 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](#), [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 uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 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 excellent.
- Pupils make rapid progress and achieve highly in relation to their abilities.
  - Pupils are able to develop their learning and interests well across a wide range of opportunities.
  - Pupils of all ages show exemplary attitudes towards their learning. As a result they persevere, and are resilient, confident and active learners who involve themselves fully in all they do.
  - Pupils apply their skill sets to further their learning across the curriculum, demonstrating strong ability to successfully analyse, hypothesise and synthesise.
  - Pupils are articulate and assured when speaking.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils' self-confidence, self-esteem and self-knowledge are highly developed.
  - Pupils of all ages are fully supportive of the ethos of the school and successfully embody the school's values.
  - Pupils display an excellent understanding of behavioural expectations, and right and wrong.
  - Decision-making amongst all pupils is of the highest quality.

## Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:
- To further enhance the use of individual targets for all areas of the curriculum so that pupils are helped to form an even clearer and consistent idea of their next steps.

## 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 attain excellent academic results. In the last three years, the majority of pupils leaving at the end of Year 8 have gained admission to their first choice senior school, including to those with demanding entrance requirements. Pupils' levels of attainment, as indicated by the evidence from lesson observations, interviews with pupils and scrutiny of their work, show that most pupils make above average progress over time from their starting points. The information from academic assessments is used well to inform teaching strategies and to improve pupil performance. The leadership and management ensure that systems of tracking and monitoring are consistent across all three sites of the school. Pupils achieve according to their capabilities because the more able are given challenging work matched to their abilities. Pupils with SEND make rapid progress as a result of the excellent specialist support they receive and the detailed tracking of their needs. Pupils of all ages show exemplary attitudes towards their learning and they are able to apply their skill sets to further their learning in all subject areas. For example, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) displayed great curiosity and high levels of achievement when given a variety of tasks to explore number using weighing scales and cubes. The pupils approach their lessons with great enthusiasm and a willingness to work and thrive in response to challenges and high expectations of staff. They are attentive to their teachers and to one another.
- 3.6 Pupils of all ages and abilities show excellent knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum. Many pupils show excellent skills in painting and other artwork. They produce music of a high quality in ensembles, individual instruments and chorally. Pupils show good knowledge which they apply to suggest reasons and arguments, such as when older pupils discussed Edward 111's battle

success in history. The medieval weapons day enabled pupils to enjoy physical fun as well as learn about different weapons and armour that have been used over the years. The activity week gave pupils the opportunity to learn a multitude of different enterprises ranging from candle making to rafting. In the EYFS children make a rapid start in achieving strong learning qualities and skills through a mixture of group work, individual and whole class activities. Younger pupils know how to record and conduct experiments in science due to systematic teaching. Pupils develop independence and a love of learning as a result of the well-planned programme of activities and trips. The pre-inspection questionnaire findings showed that all the pupils and parents were positive about the range of subjects offered and almost all agreed that there was a suitable range of activities. In the questionnaire, almost all pupils and parents alike were positive that teaching at the school helps learning and progress.

- 3.7 Pupils are articulate and eager to share ideas when speaking. When debating they will stand their ground as well as listen to the views of others. For example, senior school pupils discussed, with passion and enthusiasm, the reasons why the battle of Crecy was successful. The clarity of their expression is demonstrated across the curriculum. Junior school pupils, when writing letters to Father Christmas used powerful adjectives, vivid verbs, paragraphs and very detailed vocabulary. From a young age pupils are accustomed to speaking confidently in assemblies and in drama productions. Pupils' written work is often excellent. Children in the EYFS show excellent fine-motor control in the formation of letters. Older pupils enjoy writing at length in continuous prose when tackling open ended tasks; they especially enjoy creative writing using a range of genres. Writing displayed throughout the school demonstrates creativity and empathy and great care is taken with the presentation of their work. From an early age reading is popular and pupils confirmed this is an area of pleasure for them. Children in Reception are able to sound out words using their Freddy Fingers. Pupils read with confidence and expression, and convey meaning when reading aloud. They are able to retell a story accurately and with enjoyment from an early age. Listening skills are also highly developed, and pupils are polite and attentive. Evidence of pupils' refining of written work highlights the adjustments they make to feedback from teachers and their peers.
- 3.8 Almost all pupils demonstrate excellent numeracy skills due to engaging lessons that present mathematical concepts through practical activity and games. Staff are very knowledgeable and enthusiastic. As a result pupils apply their skills effectively to solving problems and have an excellent understanding of mathematical terminology. In the junior school, where they were designing catapults, pupils explained their work using their measuring and calculation skills. The individual needs of the pupils are met by careful selection of activities, and intervention in class is available to support those that find numeracy more challenging. More able pupils work at a particularly high level since open-ended opportunities provide additional challenges for their abilities. In the senior school extension work includes scholarship examination questions.
- 3.9 Pupils of all ages have strong information and communication technology (ICT) skills and use them effectively in other subjects, for example, for research in history in the middle school. From an early age pupils use tablets quite naturally to support their learning. Pupils can add text and pictures and manipulate size and position to produce high-quality presentations independently. In the EYFS, pupils use ICT appropriately and can manipulate the mouse accurately. In the senior school pupils continue to use a range of technology and software packages across the curriculum with increasing confidence. This is due to the structured ICT programme that allows skills to develop organically as pupils complete meaningful projects. For example junior school pupils designed smart watches using technology alongside traditional methods and pupils in the middle school devised a token machine for quicker and fairer use of the ICT room during breaks. Pupils' ICT skills are further enhanced through the introduction to computer coding that begins in the senior school.
- 3.10 Pupils grow into effective learners with an inquisitive approach and a determination to make progress. They take full advantage of the school's study skills programme and can analyse data and material confidently across different curriculum areas because of well-established classroom management and

routines, challenging questions and a positive and highly supportive learning environment. They become reflective learners able to make independent choices through the thought provoking tasks which encourage them to think logically, creatively and innovatively. Furthermore, teaching at all stages of the school is effectively planned, well-resourced and indicative of the strong knowledge teachers have of the pupils' personalities and learning traits. This enables pupils to understand how feedback from teachers helps to support their learning and recognise the benefit of finding out answers for themselves. They know that learning happens in many ways and understand they can apply different methods to various challenges that they face.

- 3.11 The success of pupils of all ages in a diverse range of activities, sporting and academic, is exceptionally strong. They are proud of their successes, recognising that achievement comes through endeavour, encouragement and application. Senior school pupils relish the challenge of working towards scholarships for the next steps of their education and many gain awards to their senior schools for their academic achievements and for music, sport and art. The different choirs and musical groups perform in a range of prestigious arenas. Pupils enthusiastically share successes achieved both in and out of school, and personal achievement in a wide range of sporting and other activities is recognised and celebrated on a regular basis. Pupils work positively together across a broad curriculum which provides excellent opportunities to produce high-quality end results in their academic studies and notable performances in sport, art, design technology, music and drama.
- 3.12 The excellent progress that pupils make is in accordance with the schools stated aim that every pupil is encouraged and supported to delve into the variety of learning on offer. Pupils benefit from the specialist teaching as they relish challenge from well-informed staff and respond positively to high expectations. They readily take leadership in their learning and this is promoted by the teaching methods used so that pupils are eager to learn, engaged and apply their skills and knowledge.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils are effective learners with high levels of self-confidence, self-esteem, self-discipline and a strong understanding of resilience. They are, therefore, willing to make mistakes in class and use these as an opportunity to learn. All pupils have an excellent understanding of how to improve their own learning, especially when marking is constructive and gives targets for their next steps, and so contributes to their excellent self-awareness. The school atmosphere, epitomised by the mutual respect and warm relationships evident in the classroom, encourages pupils to be open in expressing their thoughts and feelings. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education by the life skills (personal, social, health and economic education) programme. Pupils state they are well informed about their choices of future schools through discussions with staff. In the questionnaires, almost all pupils and parents said that the school enables pupils to become confident and independent. In addition, parents were unanimous that their children are acquiring good skills for their future.
- 3.15 Pupils develop strong decision-making abilities. They recognise that the decisions they take are influential to their own success and well-being. Pupils say they enjoy the sense of duty they feel when making informed decisions about the direction the school can take through their representation on the school council as house captains. In their academic work, they are regularly invited to choose which tasks to try. Extra challenges are commonly available for those who finish their work early. In the EYFS children are capable of choosing their own activities for example with the Elves Workshop in the playground they chose to make toys, build models with bricks or dress up as elves. In the rest of the school, pupils make autonomous decisions, guided by the promotion of the school's values by leadership and management.
- 3.16 Pupils gain a strong understanding of the non-material aspects of life through their involvement with the creative arts. The success they enjoy in art, and their enjoyment of the many opportunities to

participate in music and dramatic events, is evidence of their highly developed aesthetic awareness. Participation at all levels is encouraged and positive attitudes are fostered by the wealth of plays, concerts and exhibitions on offer. For example, during the inspection pupils were preparing eagerly for a concert at the Royal Festival Hall, as well as competing in the school's internal public reading competition. Older pupils in the junior school have an excellent understanding of what contributes to well-being, explaining how exchanging Christmas cards are important to non-material aspects of life, helping people to feel happy. All pupils are reflective individuals who recognise the importance of supporting others. They have a good awareness of a range of religions, gained from celebrating festivals such as Diwali to assemblies run by visiting religious leaders.

- 3.17 Pupils display an outstanding sense of right and wrong, and they readily accept responsibility for their own behaviour, aware of the consequences when they fall short. They understand that the system of rules and laws play an important part in society, and that they serve their own best interests by being a positive influence on others. Excellent behaviour is promoted strongly and there are well established relationships at all levels throughout the school. Respect for teachers is matched by teacher's concern for the well-being of their pupils. Leadership and management throughout the school along with all the pastoral care staff play a central part in the pupils' welfare and development.
- 3.18 Throughout the school, pupils' social interaction and communication are highly developed. They reflect the kindness and respect with which pupils customarily treat each other. This is encouraged by teachers who give clear guideline and regular reminders on how to work together most effectively. For example, pupils worked collaboratively and with full engagement in drama to create a play script based on a book they have read in class. They attach a particular value to the house system which creates a sense of belonging and community. They enjoy working together to help produce different musical arrangements. Almost all the parents and most pupils agreed in the questionnaire that the school promotes strong teamwork and social skills in the pupils.
- 3.19 Pupils make an excellent contribution to the wider community as part of the extensive activities programme. They realise that not everyone has the same opportunities that they have, both in and out of school, and they are encouraged to appreciate the circumstances of those less fortunate than themselves and actively support them through fundraising throughout the year. The recent music tour to South Africa raised money to help underprivileged children in a township. During this tour the pupils had the opportunity to mix with some of the children who would benefit from the fundraising, which encouraged them to see for themselves how the money raised would be spent. In addition to fund raising they give of their time to sing in residential care homes. Being part of the school council, which is chaired by members of the school, allows pupils to contribute ideas for how the school can be developed. Pupils are actively involved in discussing and agreeing suggestions for popular house charity events such as promoting green living. The *Eco Action* plan and the life skills programme promote responsibility and encourage social behaviour. Across the age range pupils look out for each other through informal day to day interactions and formal activities including the buddy system and transition days.
- 3.20 Pupils state clearly that they respect and appreciate their own and other cultures, because they feel it is natural to do so. Their understanding of the African culture was increased in the senior school when pupils produced African masks in the style of Basquiat during art lessons. They assert that the school reflects the multi-cultural nature of the community in which it stands and so tolerance comes naturally to them. Furthermore, the pupils exhibit tolerance and respect in accordance with the school's values. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of British culture and values through the life skills programme which shows pupils how democracy, individual freedom and the rule of law, for instance, feature in their daily lives. The leadership of the school and the pastoral care systems ensure pupils have someone they trust to go to with any concerns or anxiety.
- 3.21 Pupils have a strong awareness of both physical and online safety. They say that if they feel they are being treated unkindly, they are confident that they can seek help from any adult. All pupils are aware of the importance of diet and exercise for their well-being. This is enhanced by the provision of well-

cooked healthy meals at lunchtime. Pupils demonstrated a positive mental attitude to health and relationships and risk taking. Pupils embrace the plentiful opportunities for physical exercise and understand its contribution to their overall health. Pupils have a very good understanding of pedestrian safety as they move between buildings, gained from the leadership's establishment and implementation of safe routines.

## 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 the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. 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

Mrs Anne Camm	Reporting inspector
Mrs Naomi Fowke	Compliance team inspector (Compliance officer/director of summer school, HMC school)
Mr Malcolm Gough	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Luke Harrison	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)