

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

The Manchester Grammar School

May 2019



Contents

School's Details		3
1. Background Information		4
About the school		4
What the school seeks to do		4
About the pupils		4
2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection		5
Preface		5
Key findings		6
PART 1 – Quality of education provided		6
PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils		6
PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils		6
PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors		6
PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools		6
PART 6 – Provision of information		7
PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled		7
PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools		7
3. Educational Quality Inspection		8
Preface		8
Key findings.		9
Recommendation		9
The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements		9
The quality of the pupils' personal development		11
4. Inspection Evidence		14

School's Details

School	The Manchester Grammar School		
DfE number	352/6029		
Registered charity number	529909		
Address	The Manchester Grammar School Old Hall Lane Manchester M13 0XT		
Telephone number	0161 224 7201		
Email address	general@mgs.org		
High Master	Dr Martin Boulton		
Chair of governors	Mr Maurice Watkins CBE		
Age range	7 to 18		
Number of pupils on roll	1567		
	Boys	1567	
	Juniors	256	
	Seniors	985	Sixth Form 326
Inspection dates	30 April to 02 May 2019		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 The Manchester Grammar School is an independent day school for boys aged between 7 and 18. The school was founded in 1515 by the Bishop of Exeter, and was based in the centre of Manchester until 1930 when it relocated to its current site two miles to the south of the city centre. The school has representative, ex-officio and co-opted governors and is a private company, limited by guarantee, which acts as a corporate trustee (The Manchester Grammar School Foundation Trustee Ltd) for the charity. Since the previous integrated inspection in 2013 a new sports hall and hockey pitch which meets Olympic standards have been built, the school has extended the sixth-form curriculum and increased the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to educate the brightest young men in the North of England, regardless of their social, cultural, religious and financial background; to equip them to have the courage to use the understanding gained; to teach them to think for themselves and to develop a life-long love of learning; to create an environment in which every boy feels valued as an individual, and is challenged to fulfil his potential, whatever his talents and attributes; to produce young men who in their well-rounded characters have a true sense of service to their communities; to enable all boys to explore and develop new interests, challenge themselves and take responsibility, develop teamwork and leadership skills.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a broad range of socio-economic, cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Pupils attend from across the north west of England. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils in the junior school is above average and in the senior school, well above average. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified 157 pupils as having SEND, which include autistic spectrum disorder, hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical disability, dyslexia and dyspraxia. There are 128 who receive additional specialist help. English is an additional language (EAL) for 240 pupils, of whom the two pupils who require it receive additional support. All pupils have access to provision suitable for the very able, and those with particular talents receive specialist support.

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](#).

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 The junior school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2016 to 2018, performance has been far above the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2017 to 2019 have been far above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 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

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.12 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

- 2.13 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.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.15 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include 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 pupils with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include 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.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.17 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.19 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.

2.20 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'.

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.

- The progress made by pupils is exceptional, even when considered in the light of their high ability on entry. Pupils consistently achieve results in public examinations that are far above national averages.
- Pupils naturally collaborate, respecting all abilities. This inclusive attitude supports pupils with SEND in making progress at least in line with other pupils, aided by the strategy of the school's leadership.
- Pupils enjoy intellectual challenge and are articulate, drawing on a rich depth of vocabulary; they listen critically and write fluently.
- Pupils throughout the school are mathematically agile; many have developed a strong creativity in computing, art and the performing arts.

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

- Pupils are aware of their own and others' strengths and limitations, and their attitude to each other is sensitive and well-judged.
- Pupils respond positively to the school's promotion of choice, and the strong guidance they receive in making good decisions. Their initiatives and actions are frequently a force for good in the school and surrounding community.
- Pupils develop rapidly, intellectually and socially, in the context of ethnic, social and religious diversity supported by a well-funded bursary scheme which reflects the founder's objective to provide a high-quality education to pupils of all backgrounds and financial positions.
- Pupils develop exceptional resilience through the wide variety of sport, trips and activities provided, and the school has introduced initiatives to encourage all pupils to participate more widely.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements in the context of the school very successfully providing a high-quality education in line with the wishes of its founder:

- Maintain and extend its already successful initiatives to enable and encourage more pupils to participate in the abundance of activities outside the classroom.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Pupils develop exceptionally strong knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas. They respond positively to the school's strategy of teaching the most demanding courses possible, but still follow intellectual interests far beyond the examination specifications. Pupils respond avidly to the concept of pursuing knowledge for its own sake, which is embedded in the culture of the school, in particular to teaching that is passionate about subject and that confronts entrenched conviction. Their learning is guided by the imperative of the school's motto: *sapere aude* (dare to be wise). In an enrichment lesson about apotropaic marks, used to charm away evil, pupils' persistent questioning reflected their deep commitment to learning for learning's sake. Pupils are developing their knowledge and skills at a speed well in excess of the expected rate in response to clearly being exposed to a wide range of stimulating intellectual ideas. Pupils naturally collaborate, respecting all abilities. Their inclusive attitude and the decision of the school's leadership in introducing further high-quality academic and

pastoral support ensures that pupils of all ability, including those with SEND, make progress at least in line with other pupils.

- 3.6 Pupils are extremely articulate, with sophisticated vocabularies. They are avid readers. They speak and write English, modern and classical foreign languages with technical accuracy. For example, written work shows a strong grasp of Greek grammar, such as the recognition of irregular aorist verbs. Yet pupils also appreciate the beauty of language. In discussion, pupils described how the fluidity and looseness of Mandarin allowed the poetry of the Tang dynasty to be evocative. Junior school pupils develop a strong understanding of linguistics by studying several Romance languages and Latin. Sixth-form pupils regularly win prestigious language competitions, and gain places on competitive university courses to study for example, Russian, Mandarin and Ancient Greek. Pupils' high levels of language skills enables them to intelligently craft arguments. They converse and discuss with respect for others' views and make timely interjections.
- 3.7 Pupils write creatively and critically, and with fervour. In exercise books senior school pupils showed that they had gained a very full understanding of the philosophical thinking of different writers such as Anselm, Bentham and Mill, and were able to examine the strengths and weaknesses of their claims in a detailed and clear way. The large entry produced by pupils for internal essay prizes reflects their love of writing and argument. The work of many has been short listed for well-known national awards. The level of writing by junior school pupils is exceptional. These pupils make very rapid progress as a result of the demands placed on them for accurate spelling and grammar, and their thirst for greater detail. Written work showed a complexity of structure far beyond that expected for their age. Lower school pupils showed strong understanding of the differences between descriptive and narrative writing and several pupils offered a sophisticated analysis of the difference between cliché and convincing devices. Pupils develop their creativity through computing, art and the performing arts. They regularly win places in national instrumental ensembles and choirs, and similar groups attached to professional orchestras, and gain entry to music colleges and conservatoires. Participation levels in choirs and drama are strong, and the levels achieved consistently extremely high. Pupils' performance in a Greek play was exceptional for their age.
- 3.8 Pupils' numeracy skills are excellent for their age. They manipulate numbers with agility and analyse and extrapolate data quickly. History pupils interpreted graphs of hyperinflation in the 1920s rapidly and in physics, sixth form pupils used sophisticated techniques in a simple harmonic motion practical to explain clearly how error bars suggest reliability of readings. In the junior school, pupils accurately calculated ratios to their measurements to test Leonardo da Vinci's ideas about Vitruvian Man and the proportions of the human body. Junior school pupils to develop sophisticated problem-solving skills.
- 3.9 The progress made by pupils from Year 7 to IGCSE is very rapid, even in the light of the high ability of the pupils on entry. School data shows that pupils continue to make strong progress throughout the sixth form. Examination results at IGCSE, A level and the Pre-U have been consistently far above national averages, and the vast majority of papers are awarded top grades. There is little difference between the examination attainment in different subject areas. Pupils reported that they value the school's emphasis on unpressurised subject choice and cited the school's optional *University Challenge* enrichment classes in providing them with opportunities to explore areas of subjects they had not previously encountered. Almost all leavers proceed to universities in the UK and in the USA with demanding entry requirements.
- 3.10 Pupils have incisive minds and show a range of study skills far beyond the norm for their age. They display well developed higher-order analytical skills through projects undertaken in both the junior school, such as the history of number project, and in the senior school where dedicated problem-solving lessons very effectively develop those skills. Nearly 150 pupils achieved gold medals in the most recent national mathematics Olympiads, and many of them were selected for the subsequent rounds; the mathematics team regularly reaches the top ten of the national team competition. Pupils process information quickly and synthesize ideas. In computing lessons pupils showed good skill in breaking complex problems into smaller elements to create a board game; and in physics when

reasoning how unaccounted heat loss would affect their deduced value of specific heat capacity. Many pupils win medals in science Olympiads, and a large number of the leavers study medicine or engineering at university.

- 3.11 Pupils welcome intellectual challenge, respond positively to criticism and recognise that lessons are the training grounds on which to sharpen their skills and deepen their understanding. Most pupils have excellent computing and coding skills, and those with exceptional talent in the area win national recognition. Many pupils stated that they often preferred direct encounter with highly knowledgeable teachers than use of information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils are ambitious, willing to work hard, competitive in a supportive spirit, and work highly effectively with one another. They win awards at Model United Nations conferences and general knowledge competitions. The governors' investment in a new sports hall and hockey pitch has resulted in almost all lower school pupils representing the school. School teams have recently been national champions or finalists in cricket, rugby, and hockey, and pupils in both the senior and junior school have represented their country at individual sports.
- 3.12 The overwhelming majority of parents responding to the questionnaire were supportive of every aspect of the school. In discussion it was apparent that pupils' prevailing attitudes derive from gratitude at the opportunities they are offered, so that they are determined to make the most of their time.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils have exceptional awareness of themselves and others around them. They value highly their place in the history of the school, and take pride in its achievements and its social, ethnic and religious diversity. Staff commented that pupils see beyond gender, race or faith, and respect the intellectual ability of teachers and each other. In an extremely positive parental response to the questionnaires, many cited the school's culture as paramount in developing their sons' confidence. Pupils have a strong understanding of their strengths and potential from first entering the school and are highly self-critical in a beneficial way.
- 3.15 In written work, junior school pupils had analysed with maturity how the quality of personal relationships creates personal respect, and the consequences for self-understanding. Pupils of this age write with honesty about how taking risks allows them to enjoy being challenged. In the middle school, pupils reflected carefully on the failure of their written work to support argument, for example, in a piece of work on the consequences of the Treaty of Versailles: subsequent essays on the League of Nations included many more detailed examples.
- 3.16 Pupils recognise the elements of personal strength. In a prize essay, junior school pupils identified that the ability to handle pressure, wisdom, cleverness and bravery were the qualities that made a convincing case for Odysseus being the greatest Greek hero. Other pupils talked of developing the adaptability to change and challenge. They described their own growth in resilience as a direct consequence of trekking trips to Norway and Tenerife, and how they are now much more effective in confronting subsequent challenges. Pupils feel responsible for their own futures and are keen to make sensible decisions to support these. They actively seek out opportunities to understand the decisions facing them and explore whether their plans are well formulated. Pupils understand that success in any field depends on lifestyle, commenting that 'if you want to succeed, you don't get it for free'.
- 3.17 Pupils value the school's emphasis on choice and the consequent trust the school places in them. One thread running through the curriculum is the exploration of the idea that the consequences of decisions can be significant. For example, in a history lesson, pupils discussed whether Mao's mishandling of the Lushan Conference was the main reason for the failure of the Great Leap Forward. They drew different pieces of information and came up with different, very well evidenced and argued

answers. Pupils reported that they had learnt that valid research was central to good decision making. Junior school pupils had observed parking habits before recommending changes in traffic flow to improve road safety. Senior school pupils spoke of how their ability to plan and make choices had been enhanced by participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme: the levels of participation are high with many pupils achieving gold awards.

- 3.18 Pupils' strong spiritual awareness is apparent in their worship, their art, music and their writing. Many pupils are active participants in traditional religious worship, study texts, and share in prayer. Religious assemblies organised by pupils are held weekly and are well attended, often by pupils from different cultural or religious traditions. Religious societies are well supported and are the focus for intellectual debate. Pupils are not fearful of challenging each other or teachers. In response to a question about religious diversity members of the school's Jewish and Islamic societies engaged reverently about the place of prayer in their respective faiths. Pupils are highly politically and culturally aware. Pupils share the deeper meaning and significance of their faith persuasively because religious education lessons encourage study beyond the descriptive. Pupils' spiritual understanding is sharpened in the school's Berkeley Society where pupils and outside speakers address philosophical and scientific issues: during the visit pupils discussed the meaning of making reparation for a being which has not had life. Pupils are not afraid to confront the non-tangible: a winning prize essay entitled 'divine intent' included the phrase that 'beauty is not found in what artists try to say in their art, but what art itself says to us'. Pupils who had taken part in an educational enrichment visit described a 'stones and stars' project as a spiritual experience that included the opportunity to reflect on coincidence and the length of human history in a philosophical way. In discussions, pupils reported that they valued the time allowed for quiet reflection and the introduction of mindfulness and mental health initiatives as it allowed them to focus on life beyond themselves.
- 3.19 Pupils have a very strong moral code and a balanced approach to some of the moral conundrums in the world. Their clear corporate and individual understanding of right and wrong is apparent in their excellent behaviour. Junior school pupils have created their own ten commandments. Lower school pupils discussed the difference between rules and morality in the context of a recent football match. Senior pupils articulate the issues of right and wrong facing young people under peer-pressure intelligently.
- 3.20 Pupils are very socially aware because of the diversity of the school population and their work in local academies, primary schools and hospitals, amongst other community institutions. The school's 'Community Action' scheme is long-standing, and all pupils understand the inherent value of service as a benefit to others and to self-development. Pupils across the school work together successfully to raise considerable amounts for charity. Their strong collaboration is seeded within the classroom and in co-curricular activities. Pupils showed perceptive self-awareness in describing the positive impact of activities week, shared camps, expeditions and residential trips both in the UK and overseas, particularly on those of them who were previously less socially confident. In the context of insisting that pupils retain choice, the school is encouraging every pupil to participate in the extensive range of clubs and societies. Pupils of all ages show strong leadership and organisational ability. The majority of school events and societies are directed by pupils. Although the school has increased the amount of pastoral support since the previous inspection, those in the lower school will often seek informal advice from senior pupils.
- 3.21 Pupils' respect for, and value of, diversity within society is exceptional. They show reverence for and appreciation of their own and other cultures and demonstrate deep understanding of those from different backgrounds and traditions. Jewish and Islamic societies, plus shared assemblies give religious faith a high profile. Many spoke of the positive impact on their personal development of the bursary scheme, which enables boys of all backgrounds to benefit from the school's high-quality education, in line with the wishes of the founder. Friendships and collaboration transcend differences in religious, ethnic or economic upbringing.

- 3.22 Although a school where individual opinion is sought and respected, pupils' contributions to formal school councils have accelerated change, particularly in the school's approach to environmental issues and health. Pupils have worked with the senior leadership to underpin successful approaches to mental health education, to healthy eating, and to staying safe. The recent increase in sporting opportunities has allowed more pupils to choose physical exercise that suits them, enabling them to develop a healthy life style that encompasses their commitment to academic work and service.

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 tutor meetings and 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

Mr Stephen Cole	Reporting inspector
Mr Bill Burn	Accompanying reporting inspector
Mr Philip Bowd	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, HMC school)
Mrs Susan Clifford	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Michael Clennett	Team inspector (Former deputy head, GSA school)
Mr David Lloyd	Team inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mr Alistair McConville	Team inspector (Director of teaching and learning, HMC school)
Mr Simon Mozley	Team inspector (Former deputy head, GSA school)
Mrs Caroline Rogerson	Team inspector (Assistant head, SofH school)
Mrs Yvonne Silk Jones	Team inspector (Director of studies, ISA school)