



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

WOODHOUSE GROVE SCHOOL

MARCH 2017



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Woodhouse Grove School			
DfE number	383/6113			
Registered charity number	529205			
Address	Apperley Bridge Bradford West Yorkshire BD10 ONR			
Telephone number	0113 2502477			
Email address	enquiries@woodhousegrove.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr James Lockwood			
Chair of governors	Mr Alan Wintersgill			
Age range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	1018			
	Boys	588	Girls	430
	Day pupils	942	Boarders	76
	EYFS	83	Juniors	238
	Seniors	495	Sixth Form	202
Inspection dates	15 to 16 March 2017			

PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any unmet standards identified at their previous inspection.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the acting chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings, chapel and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Honoree Gordon	Reporting inspector
Mr Garry Binks	Team inspector for boarding (Housemaster, HMC school)
Mr Ian Griffin	Team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)
Ms Laura Turner	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Richard Honey	Team inspector (Head of faculty, HMC school)
Mrs Deborah Leonard	Team inspector (Head, HMC school)
Mr Ian Lovat	Team inspector (Former director of studies, HMC school)
Mrs Elaine Purves	Team inspector (Head, HMC school)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Woodhouse Grove School is an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls aged between 3 and 18 years. Woodhouse Grove School, including Bronte House and Ashdowne Lodge, is one of 13 schools owned by the Management Board of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust and is governed by a local advisory board of governors. The school has a formal link within the Trust with Moorlands School in Leeds. Since the previous inspection, a new headmaster was appointed in January 2016, and the school's senior leadership team was restructured, to include new posts which carry responsibility for teaching and learning, pupil welfare and digital technology. The junior school has built a new dining hall as well as a suite of rooms for music, including for music technology. At the senior school, a climbing wall and a sixth-form centre, complete with a café and an extra all-weather sports pitch, have been added. A new swimming pool has been built. The design technology department has been extended and relocated.
- 1.2 The school was founded in 1812, originally for the sons of Methodist ministers but has been fully co-educational since 1985. It comprises a junior school for pupils aged from 3 to 11 years, Bronte House, incorporating on the same site an Early Years Foundation Stage setting, Ashdown Lodge, for pupils aged from 3 to 5 years, and a senior school, including the sixth form centre, The Grove, on a site close by. Boarders are accommodated in three houses, two for boys and one for girls, on the senior school site. There are currently no boarders below the age of 11 years.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school's aim is to promote academic excellence and to realise the full potential of every individual to be the best that he or she can be, preparing them for the world they will encounter when they leave school. It aims to pursue excellence in the creative arts and in sport, developing fitness and well-being as well as engendering a spirit of healthy competition across the whole school. Equally, the school seeks to foster mature, caring behaviour, to promote high standards of social responsibility and to encourage leadership, adventure and self-discovery. The school wishes to endorse the values of integrity, loyalty and commitment, upholding its Christian heritage.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of families with professional and business backgrounds living within a 25-mile radius of the school. Boarders are from the UK and from abroad. Nationally standardised data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. Pupils from the junior school normally proceed to the senior school and a number of pupils join the school from local maintained and independent schools at 11+ and beyond. The ability of the pupils in the senior school is above average up to Year 11. Sixth form entry is non-selective by ability. In Years 12 and 13, the pupils' ability profile is in line with the norm for pupils taking A-level courses. Five pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified 155 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Many of these pupils are dyslexic. Sixty-nine of these pupils also receive additional specialist help. English is an additional language (EAL) for 34 pupils. Together with a further 66 pupils who have some difficulties with literacy, they receive additional support in improving their skills in English. Data used by the school have identified 138 pupils as being the more able in the senior school's population. No specific,

additional provision is made for these pupils.

- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was an interim inspection in March 2011. The recommendations from that inspection were:
- Build on existing good practice in the school to improve the quality of marking.
 - Continue with strategies that address the remaining inconsistencies in curriculum planning.
 - Consider ways of enabling the EYFS coordinator to monitor teaching and learning throughout the department.
- 1.7 The school has fully met the recommendations to refine curriculum planning and to enable the EYFS coordinator to exercise a monitoring role, and has partially addressed the recommendation to improve the quality of marking.
- 1.8 The recommendations of the intermediate boarding inspection in October 2014 were to:
- Simplify policies and paperwork, avoiding unnecessary duplication, while ensuring recording is thorough.
 - Ensure the consistency of application of arrangements to promote positive behaviour.
- 1.9 The school has successfully met all the recommendations of this previous inspection.

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, achieve highly from their various starting points.
- Pupils excel in in sport, music, performing and creative arts, fulfilling the school's aims.
- Pupils' skills in oral communication and mathematics are excellent.
- Pupils are resilient, self-motivated learners, reflecting the 'I am Grovian' positive ethos.
- Pupils' independent thinking and learning skills are underdeveloped, as some lessons draw on a limited range of teaching strategies and lack sufficient challenge.

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

- Pupils are highly confident but modest, and are well prepared for their life beyond school.
- Pupils co-operate to achieve common goals, fulfilling their shared responsibilities as a community.
- Pupils' strong moral compass is fostered by the Methodist ethos.
- Pupils form a diverse, friendly and well-integrated school community.

Recommendations

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

- developing pupils' thinking skills and broadening teaching strategies to include more effective use of new technologies to enhance the pupils' learning.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 Pupils' attainment in both the junior and senior schools, as demonstrated by external standardised tests and examinations, is consistently above average. Given the varied starting points of pupils, including the significant number of pupils with SEND and the broad spectrum of ability in the sixth form, this represents, for many pupils, excellent rates of progress. The school wholly fulfils its aims of pursuing academic, sporting and creative excellence.
- 3.3 Children's attainment in the EYFS is excellent. Since the previous inspection, the EYFS leadership has been able to devote more time to ensuring that children make a swift, enthusiastic start to learning, providing a highly secure basis for moving up through the school. The plentiful resources, well-planned teaching and happy environment promote children's excellent progress in acquiring the early foundations of literacy and numeracy and developing their strong social skills. Pupils' profiles at the end of the EYFS show that they are exceeding national expectations.
- 3.4 In the junior school, scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations show that pupils continue to make good progress. The pace of learning is more varied across subjects, but by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment, as measured by externally standardised tests, is above national norms in both literacy and numeracy. The recent move to a more creative curriculum and away from standardised national testing is designed to promote achievement further, by freeing up teaching approaches to provide greater challenge to pupils. Pupils thrive on the stimulus afforded through music and drama lessons.
- 3.5 Pupils' attainment at GCSE is above the national average, with over one-third of results in 2016 being A* or A, reflecting good quality teaching over time. Standards at A-level are in line with national norms and reflect the wider spread of ability at that stage, with some pupils embarking on A-level study having obtained quite modest grades at GCSE. Close support from staff helps to maximise their achievement. The vast majority of pupils progress into higher education, most to their first choice of university.
- 3.6 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding develop rapidly in most areas of the school as the curriculum is better planned than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' oral communication is a notable strength. They have excellent speaking and listening skills. Pupils at all ages are confident and articulate, using sophisticated language. They are as confident in conversation with adults as they are with their peers. The positive encouragement to 'have a go' and the outgoing ethos of the school promote active communication. Classroom activities support pupils' ability to converse, question and debate with ease. Expressing views and opinions is a regular part of school life, as seen in lessons. Pupils' written skills are good, with good opportunities for extended writing in the senior school, including the Extended Project Qualification, science projects, and imaginative writing in many subjects.
- 3.7 Pupils throughout the school are highly numerate, as evidenced through their attainment in mathematics and their confidence in applying their skills in other subjects, such as physics in the senior school, and beyond the classroom in activities including mathematics challenges and house enterprise and science events. A number of pupils obtain good grades at GCSE mathematics a year early. Pupils benefit from highly competent mathematics teaching, offering them a good degree of challenge.
- 3.8 Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good, supported by investment in suitable resources, notably in the junior school, where there are, for example, new resources for music technology. There are also plentiful resources in the senior school.

However, pupils' application of ICT skills to other areas of learning is inconsistent and underdeveloped across the two schools.

- 3.9 Pupils have competent study skills; these develop rapidly in the EYFS, where children show early responsibility in their learning, but the pace of development then slows. Senior school pupils receive specific study skills training through the programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). Some subjects foster pupils' thinking skills more consciously than others. In these, teachers offer greater stimulus and higher levels of challenge, including for the most able, to develop their independence and their skills in analysis.
- 3.10 The school's leadership team have made a good start to improving the range of teaching strategies across the school, aimed at promoting pupils' achievement further, with a faster pace of learning. This is reflected in their recent appointments of senior leaders with specific responsibility for promoting teaching and learning and for digital strategy, to tap into the potential offered by information and communication technology. Leadership is seeking to encourage greater initiative and independence on the part of the pupils, so that all pupils, particularly the most able, maximise their individual potential, seeking to probe further, using their imagination and creativity to extend the boundaries of their learning. For example, pupils are beginning to use ICT more extensively as a tool for learning; teachers' higher-order questioning skills are being developed in the junior school; and staff are increasingly sharing their best practice across subject departments. Pupils gain a deeper understanding of how they can improve their work from the better quality of marking in many subjects. Marking has improved since the previous inspection, although this is not yet consistent across the curriculum.
- 3.11 Pupils who have difficulties in learning and pupils with EAL make particularly good progress due to excellent, nurturing support. Systems for identifying and supporting pupils with SEND or EAL are well established, and a comprehensive list of support classes and drop-in sessions ensure that these pupils do not fall behind. Suitable assessment systems track pupils' progress, although this is more effective in the EYFS than further up the school. A broad, well-balanced curriculum appropriate to the various ability levels, needs and interests of the pupils ensures pupils' engagement in learning. The curriculum continues to evolve as demonstrated by the introduction of a wider range of courses, such as BTec Sport and finance courses, and the adoption of a more creative curriculum in the junior school.
- 3.12 Pupils respond with enthusiasm to the high expectations of staff. Good teaching and strong pupil-teacher relationships underpin learning across the school. The school ethos promotes positive attitudes. Pupils' achievement is excellent beyond the academic curriculum, especially in sport, music and the performing arts. A well-planned daily timetable separates music practice at lunchtime and after-school sport to allow for full participation, ensuring that the academic and extra-curricular aspects go hand in hand. Staff and parents are highly committed to promoting extra-curricular achievement, and it is a much-valued strength of the school. Excellence in extra-curricular fields is a particular hallmark of the pupils who attend this school, reflecting the extensive provision, wide-ranging opportunities and excellent coaching they receive.
- 3.13 Success in extra-curricular activities begins early in the junior school, where pupils get off to a flying start in music, drama and sports, expertly guided by specialist teachers. Alongside their numerous sporting and music successes, pupils take part in the Royal Horticultural Society Young Gardeners' scheme. Pupils throughout the school achieve highly because the school expects that they will and encourages them to be 'the best that they can be'. Rugby teams represent the school in competitions in all age groups and are consistently successful at national, regional and local levels, usually emerging as winners, if not then highly placed. Many

pupils play rugby at regional and national level and across four countries.

- 3.14 Individual and team success in cricket, swimming, squash, cross country, climbing, athletics, netball and tennis also abound, the norm being at district level and above, with pupils holding representative honours at regional and national level in tennis, for example. In addition to this, almost 20 pupils have represented their city in athletics; four pupils played for the regional under 19 cricket team in 2015 and ten pupils have played cricket at city or regional level in 2016. In netball, 12 pupils represent at county level and four represent at city level.
- 3.15 Pupils have countless opportunities to perform in music and drama, staging school productions and performing in musical groups such as choirs, the school orchestra and the school swing band, both within school and further afield, playing in the local community or on tour. Many pupils gain distinctions or merits in external music examinations, for a range of instruments as well as vocally, and many receive the highest grade. They do equally well in external speech and drama examinations, with most achieving merit or distinction. Eight pupils are currently members of city orchestras and cathedral choirs, including the National Children's Choir, the English Youth Ballet and the Opera North Youth Company, all ventures the school actively encourages. Excellent facilities, such as a music recording studio, a theatre, all-weather pitches, squash courts, the new swimming pool and a climbing wall support the vast range of extra-curricular activities at which pupils, including boarding pupils, who have easy access to these, are so successful. The governors demonstrate their commitment to sustaining the school's excellent reputation for sport and music through their effective strategic planning and the provision of these superb facilities.
- 3.16 Twenty-four pupils were successful at bronze level of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme in the year 2015 to 2016, and pupils emerge as winners in competitions such as Enterprise Challenge, debating, the mathematics Olympiad and science competitions. Senior pupils gained a volunteering award with the Holocaust Educational Trust.
- 3.17 Pupils work enthusiastically and collaboratively with teachers and with each other, an indicator of the ethos and expectations of their vibrant school community. At times, usually when insufficiently challenged, they show less leadership and independence in their learning.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 The school fully realises its stated aims for the development of pupils' personal qualities and character. Pupils across the school are open, friendly and highly confident. They clearly enjoy being at the school and seek out opportunities to take an active part in whatever is going on. They are energetic and busy, without being pressurised, because they know they are supported and encouraged by the staff to 'have a go'. A myriad of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities on offer throughout the school means that there is something for everyone to be doing, and it is possible to do so without compromising their studies. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and in discussions, pupils said they really enjoyed having a good range of subjects and activities in which to get involved. The parents of boarders who responded were satisfied that evening and weekend activities were well balanced between work and free time and that boarding enhanced their child's academic progress and personal development. Pupils are highly motivated in all spheres of their school lives and often display a maturity beyond their years as aspects of their character develop securely through involvement in teams, as participants or leaders in regular sports teams and music groups in particular.
- 4.3 Pupils have strong decision-making skills as a result of the extensive range of opportunities and the balanced information the school provides. The school's supportive ethos develops their trust in relationships and guides them at key junctures. As a result, they are able to make informed decisions when choosing their courses at GCSE, their future career direction and their universities. They leave school well-prepared for the next stages of education and life. Boarding fosters the pupils' independence; the vast majority of boarders said in the questionnaires that boarding had helped them become more confident and independent. Parents' responses backed this up, commenting frequently on the positive benefits they had noted for their child's development.
- 4.4 Pupils are reflective and tolerant young people. The underlying Methodist ethos and framework and the understated work of the chaplaincy steer pupils to have a clear appreciation of non-material aspects of life. This prompts older pupils to take part in local community service. The inclusion of other faiths and cultures amongst those who are boarders enhances pupils' experience of boarding, bringing an understanding of these other cultures and respect for the rights of others to hold different views. Pupils from the EYFS through to Year 13 have a good sense of what is right and wrong and a good awareness of how their actions can impact on others. Boarders appreciate that rules are necessary in any community. These traits are fostered by the outstanding personal, social, health and education (PSHE) programme and the regular services in chapel, which offer time for quiet or communal reflection. Pupils' eyes are opened to the natural elements of the world around them through art, music, cultural events and trips, as well as outdoor activities, such as the eco garden for the junior school and EYFS, and bush craft activities.
- 4.5 Pupils work together effectively, solving problems, achieving common goals and fulfilling their responsibilities to each other and the school community. They organise house events, sports teams and fixtures, drama and music productions, and clubs, for service to the school or as part of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. They also take part in adventure and team building days in all year groups. They also support their peers who have physical or learning difficulties on a daily basis in lessons, to help them overcome barriers to learning and collaborate successfully in pair and group work in drama, languages and other subjects. This strong community spirit extends to those who have left school but still return to support it. The aims

and ethos of the school are articulated by all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, and are supported by parents and the Old Grovian network.

- 4.6 Pupils across the school embrace the strong tradition of service to others and act on it. All pupils, including those in the junior school, take their responsibilities seriously when serving as prefects, team captains or school council representatives. These roles give them a sense of pride both within and beyond the school community. Pupils show a high degree of empathy towards others: as peer mentors, older pupils help younger ones, while charitable activities and local community service allow pupils to contribute beyond the school. The school both encourages and facilitates charitable service. Pupils choose which charities they wish to support, for example one that is supporting a school in Uganda, and boarders have their own charitable targets supported by their tuck shop. Pupils value 'The Hub' as a place in school set aside where pupils can discuss concerns informally with staff or pupils who have been trained as listeners.
- 4.7 The open-mindedness of pupils is evident across both schools. There is a broad ethnic mix, notably in the boarding houses. The school has high expectations of pupils living within a multi-cultural community. Pupils report that diversity is a positive feature of the school community. They are proud of their integrated community and feel strongly that they are encouraged to respect others. Inspectors agree; this was evident in pupils' behaviour during the inspection, but also in discussion, where if a criticism was ventured, an explanation of context, or an understanding of the other viewpoint invariably came through.
- 4.8 Pupils agree that the school provides them with a healthy and safe environment. This is strongly influenced by the senior leadership's focus on the importance of leading a healthy life. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and seek to maintain a good work-life balance. The wide range of sporting facilities encourages healthy habits of regular exercise, and the food provided by the catering department is nutritious. The new dining hall in the junior school reflects the school's drive to encourage healthy eating habits. Pupils learn about a healthy diet and discuss emotional well-being through the comprehensive PSHE programme, which emphasises the ways in which pupils can learn to build the good relationships essential for their adult lives.
- 4.9 Pupils feel staff care for them well. Although a small minority replied in their questionnaires that that the school did not deal well with any bullying and that sanctions were not always fair, inspectors found no evidence to support this view in logs or in discussions with staff and pupils during the inspection. In discussion, pupils gave a more positive response and commented that, as they mature, pupils tended to be more self-regulating in their behaviour. The vast majority of pupils responded in the questionnaire that the rules encouraged them to behave well, but a number of girls perceive the rules related to sports dress as unfair.
- 4.10 Since the appointment of the new leadership, the school has reinforced the importance of pupils' welfare by bringing together at senior leadership level oversight of pupil welfare with boarding, and compliance with the regulations to safeguard pupils. Recording systems have improved as a result. This more cohesive approach puts pupils at the forefront of strategic decisions and is reflected in boarders' comments in their questionnaires that boarding staff are sympathetic to their individual circumstances. They help them to settle in quickly when they join the school. Pupils in the junior school commented warmly and effusively on the friendly community and their real enjoyment of school, often employing quite sophisticated language: they are used to expressing their views openly and honestly.