Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Haberdashers' Boys' Prep School

January 2022

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School's Details

School	Haberdashers' Boys' Prep School			
DfE number	919/6221			
Registered charity number	313996			
Address	Haberdashers' Boys' Prep School Butterfly Lane Elstree Borehamwood Hertfordshire WD6 3AF			
Telephone number	020 8266 1934			
Email address	rossetti_m@habsboys.org.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Matteo Rossetti			
Chair of governors	Mr Simon Cartmell			
Age range	5 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	287			
	Pre-Prep	74	**Prep**	213
Inspection dates	25 to 28 January 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

1.1 Haberdashers' Boys' Prep School is an independent day school for male pupils. The school comprises two sections: the pre-prep department for pupils in Years 1 to 2, and the prep department for pupils in Years 3 to 6.

1.2 Founded in 1947 and located in Elstree since 1961, the school shares a site and governance, the Haberdashers' Aske's Elstree Schools Board, with the senior boys' and the girls' school. The pre-preparatory department is located about five miles away from the main campus. Since the previous inspection the school has appointed a new head, re-structured its leadership team and opened new learning, performance and support facilities.

1.3 The senior boys' school was inspected at the same time.

1.4 During the period March to June 2020, the prep school remained open only for children of key workers.

1.5 During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.

1.6 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on-site to reduce contact within the school setting.

1.7 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.

1.8 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than vulnerable pupils or the children of key workers received remote learning provision at home.

What the school seeks to do

1.9 The school aims to provide an environment designed to empower young people to flourish and positively impact the world. It seeks to instil a joy for learning and the values of curiosity, courage, kindness and a deep sense of community. The objective is to provide breadth of opportunity and challenge through inspirational teaching by staff who know the pupils well.

About the pupils

1.10 Pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Data provided by the school indicate the ability of pupils is above average and well above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 15 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 12 receive additional specialist help. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 170 pupils whose needs are met by their classroom teachers. The school modifies the curriculum for those pupils it has identified as having particular talents.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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

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

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

COVID-19: Inspection judgements do not cover the period March to August 2020 inclusive.

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 school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).

2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.

2.4 Pupils receive relationships education. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.

2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

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

2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.

2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.

2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

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

2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are

appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

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

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

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

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

- Pupils achieve advanced levels of knowledge, skill and understanding across the curriculum for their age.
- Pupils are outstanding communicators. They listen most attentively and speak and write clearly and confidently with highly developed vocabularies.
- Pupils display excellent study skills and demonstrate high levels of ability when analysing and interpreting a wide range of sources.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent.

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

- Pupils show extremely high levels of self-understanding for their age.
- Pupils are highly socially aware and collaborate with others most effectively.
- Pupils show a notably strong appreciation for the non-material aspects of life.
- Pupils display an outstanding respect for their own and other cultures and value diversity greatly.
- Pupils demonstrate a strong moral compass and a highly developed sense of responsibility for their behaviour, including towards others.

Recommendation

3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following improvement:

- Further develop pupils' higher-order thinking skills by increasing the range of opportunities for them to apply these in lessons.

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 make good and excellent progress from their starting points in comparison to pupils of similar ability nationally. All groups including the more able, those with individual needs and those from diverse ethnic backgrounds make similar rates of progress. Progress and attainment are at similarly high levels across all areas of the curriculum. Pupils transferring to the senior school exceed expectations in terms of progress and attainment. Leaders' highly effective monitoring and tracking

of pupils' achievement, combined with staff's knowledge of the pupils, ensures appropriate support strategies as well as appropriate challenge for all pupils. The overwhelming majority of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that their teachers know how to help them learn, know their subjects well and are supportive. Almost all parents responding to the questionnaires agreed that teaching, including any online provision, helped their children make progress.

3.6 Pupils achieve a high degree of success in a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activity both within and beyond school. Their talents are recognised in county representation at cricket, swimming, athletics, judo and badminton and national success in tennis and chess. The pupils' successful achievement in activities is partly founded on the scope of opportunity that the extensive selection provides for their engagement. Almost all parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaires agreed that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils participate with notable success in the National Primary Mathematics Challenge and the National Science Challenge. Pupils' achievements in music are excellent. They benefit from a wealth of opportunities to sing or play an instrument and regularly participate in many ensembles and performances such as *Lunchtime Live*. Pupils gain success in their ABRSM examinations and in competitions such as *Young Musician of the Year* and *Battle of the Bands*. Pupils develop excellent skills in drama, public speaking and poetry reading helped by encouragement to perform in the wide array of opportunities made available for them. Pupils are highly successful in debating as they learn to develop and advance a variety of arguments. This is promoted by in house debates and competitions between local independent and maintained schools organised by their teachers. Pupils at age of transfer have been successful in gaining academic, music and drama scholarships.

3.7 Pupils display outstanding communication skills. They are extremely attentive listeners. Pupils expressing their own understanding of the term resilience in a Year 4 personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lesson listened acutely enabling them to build on each other's answers. Pupils are highly articulate and use sophisticated language for their age when expressing their knowledge and ideas. For instance, Year 2 pupils spoke with great clarity using advanced descriptive vocabulary to express their feelings when handling a snake. In a debate, pupils spoke with great eloquence for three minutes when determining whether this house would ban the eating of animals. Year 5 pupils created an absorbing atmosphere through their use of intonation and expression when reading poetry aloud. Pupils write evocatively and expressively for a range of audiences. This is because they are encouraged from a young age to expand their vocabulary and use expressive language in which they are highly successful. Pupils use their excellent communication skills confidently whether publishing a newspaper or standing up to address the entire community. This is promoted by skilful and empathetic teaching that makes judicious use of active listening and open-ended questioning.

3.8 Pupils display excellent levels of knowledge and understanding for their age. They are highly competent in applying their skills effectively to the different areas of their learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 use powerful adjectives such as 'ferocious' when writing about animals. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 readily use a wide range of grammatical terms to discuss enhancing their written work. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of scientific terminology. For instance, Year 5 pupils displayed clear understanding of exothermic and endothermic reactions when studying the Bhopal disaster. Year 6 pupils showed an excellent awareness of the principles of aerodynamics as applied to a model racing car. Pupils can apply their knowledge contextually as the teaching consistently references previous work. Pupils' creative flair and talents are nurtured and developed to a high standard by teaching that aims to stimulate and motivate their learning and development.

3.9 Pupils achieve high levels of numerical and core mathematical skills that are at least one year ahead of national age-related expectations at the upper end of the school. They apply these skills effectively across areas of their learning, such as Year 3 pupils using *greater* and *less than* symbols on their key to earthquake magnitude maps. Mathematical vocabulary is understood used effectively from a young

age. Year 2 pupils spoke of diagonal lines and working at right angles confidently and accurately when folding their paper to make a chatterbox. Pupils apply their numerical skills effectively in the context of science, tabulating results, calculating means, plotting and interpreting graphs. Examples of pupils' work demonstrate excellent application of numeracy across the curriculum. Such work includes correlation in geography, forces in design technology (DT) and graphical presentation and analysis in science. Highly planned teaching ensures opportunities to consolidate numeracy skills across the curriculum and that there is appropriate challenge for all pupils.

3.10 Pupils are highly competent users of digital technology. Their core information and communication technology (ICT) skills are excellent for their age. They make highly effective use of these skills and ICT resources to enhance their learning. From an early age, pupils use the school's interactive tablets to access resources, manipulate data and present project work using an increasingly sophisticated variety of software applications. In a Robotics activity, pupils displayed a mature understanding of the need to use programming strategically to achieve the best possible outcome against the task brief. Pupils use tablets to access lesson content and to edit it, saving their answers independently. In many lessons observed by the inspection team pupils joined remotely due to COVID-19 isolation measures. They were frequently paired with pupils in class and made excellent progress because of their complete ease using the technology. The pupils benefit from the investment that governance and leadership have made in digital technology and in staff who are very adept at using digital resources to aid and enhance the pupils' learning effectively.

3.11 Pupils clearly enjoy learning and demonstrate excellent attitudes to their studies. They are confident, highly enthusiastic and, with few exceptions, fully focused on meeting the intended learning outcomes to the best of their ability. Young pupils work with high levels of concentration, determination and patience when cutting out shapes accurately in their arts and craft activity. Pupils collaborate most effectively in lessons and activities. For example, Year 3 pupils demonstrated excellent teamwork in their assembly on community spirit. Pupils show much initiative and take responsibility for their learning when tasks or activities allow. This is because creative topic choice and high expectations from staff inspire and motivate them. Pupils were not fully focused in a very few instances. This was when there was a lack of opportunity for them to lead their own learning. Pupils' attitudes to their work indicate that the school values of ambition, curiosity, courage and community are deeply instilled.

3.12 Pupils develop increasingly sophisticated study skills. They become able to manage a wide range of sources, analyse, formulate hypotheses and draw conclusions highly effectively across the curriculum. Year 3 pupils provided excellent hypotheses in a stimulating discussion on fixed and growth mindsets. Year 5 pupils applied sophisticated skills in identifying literary devices and inference in the study of Alfred Noyes' *the Highwayman*. In a science experiment using paper helicopters, their advanced analytical skills and evaluations enabled pupils to identify anomalous results and suggest reasons for their occurrence. Pupils' higher-level thinking and development of initiative is encouraged by highly skilled teaching that promotes discussion and debate, is highly supportive and fosters pupils' self-review. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed the school equipped their children with the team working, collaborative and research skills they needed in later life. The vast majority of lessons and activities observed provided stimulating and challenging tasks supported by effective open-ended questioning. However, in a small minority of lessons overly structured tasks provided fewer opportunities for pupils to apply higher-order thinking skills. Pupils' excellent study skills equip them extremely well for life in the senior school.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

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

3.14 Pupils' levels of self-understanding for their age are extremely high. They develop their confidence and self-esteem rapidly as they progress through the school as a result of entirely positive interactions

with adults and each other. Young pupils show confidence and positive self-esteem in their swimming lessons. Older pupils face and overcome challenge in activities such as climbing, which they report helps develop their self-confidence and resilience. This results from pupils being actively encouraged to challenge themselves and move outside what they see as their 'comfort zone'. Pupils demonstrate strong perseverance. They exhibit the courage to openly discuss what they find difficult as well as suggesting potential solutions. Pupils with diverse individual needs show positive self-esteem and persevere well to overcome their personal challenges as a result of highly effective support from staff. Pupils' habitual self-reflection is engendered by teaching that consistently focuses their efforts on self-improvement. This can be seen, for example, through the planning of their next steps with written targets, in their character journals and in their response to marking in exercise books. By Year 6 pupils have a highly developed understanding of the benefits of a 'can do' attitude and apply this effectively to improving their learning and personal development. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their children to be confident and independent.

3.15 Pupils display excellent social skills in their everyday lives. They form highly productive relationships. Pupils' ability to collaborate with each other and adults is outstanding and helps to enable progression and high achievement. Their willingness and enthusiasm to meet objectives contribute to a positive and supportive culture that promotes further development. Their outstanding collaboration stems from the deeply embedded culture of mutual respect. Pupils listen respectfully to one another and show a highly developed ability to adapt their responses to others in various situations to achieve success. For example, Year 1 pupils worked together to achieve their common goal effectively in a physical education (PE) lesson, supported by staff who highlight the value of teamwork and ensure pupils have clear objectives. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their children to develop strong teamwork and social skills. Pupils demonstrate a mature empathy and relish the frequent opportunities to celebrate the achievements of others. Older pupils enjoy supporting the younger pupils when they can. At the time of the inspection, the appropriate COVID-19 measures in place restricted these opportunities.

3.16 Pupils show a keen awareness and notably strong appreciation of non-material aspects of life. They reflect deeply on philosophical issues, including developing a growing understanding of the teachings of other religions and faiths. Year 4 pupils showed a heightened spiritual awareness when discussing a painting by Turner. They exhibited appreciation of the use of colour, light and shade, abstract and contrast to show mood and atmosphere and stimulate the imagination. Pupils fully appreciate the outdoor learning opportunities to interact with nature in the woodland environment. Year 2 pupils responded with great delight when introduced to some exotic animals. Year 6 pupils were captivated by the creativity and talent of their peers' musical compositions and performances. Older pupils spoke openly of what spirituality means to them and how it transpires in their work such as poetry. They exhibited strong respect for the different religious views of others. Pupils' spiritual understanding is well developed because they are afforded many diverse opportunities to be calm and reflective.

3.17 Pupils show an outstanding respect and tolerance for difference, diversity and faiths and cultures other than their own. They express genuine delight in belonging to a diverse community made up of individuals with very different personalities and characteristics. Pupils were heard to respectfully discuss how people of different cultures and faiths helped those less fortunate in their society. Pupils in Year 5 showed an excellent appreciation of the diverse cultures making up the Commonwealth and a heightened awareness of the impacts of democracy, human rights and rule of law in those countries. Pupils have a strong awareness and understanding of the values of British society which they perceptively relate to their own school values. Examples of celebrating diversity were seen in work on influential women through history and in exploring neurodiversity. Pupils elected to form a neurodiversity club raise awareness across the school. In responding to the questionnaires, almost all parents agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people.

3.18 Pupils' exemplary conduct and excellent understanding of the impact of their own actions on others is promoted by leaders' and teachers' clear reference to the school's values. The embedding of these, further encouraged by highly-prized 'values' award badges, is a key factor in pupil's outstanding personal development. Older pupils are also able to respond to wider values in debates and talks when considering issues such as eating meat or if reality television shows exploit people. Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. They understand that their behaviour is a consequence of their own decisions. They will challenge anti-social behaviour. For instance, reporting the use of inappropriate language. They benefit from a strong culture of mutual respect, with staff and older pupils providing excellent role models. From an early age, pupils display an excellent understanding of the school's rules and of fundamental British values including the rule of law and democracy. Pupils create and take ownership of their own class rules and they have created their own codes of conduct for sports trips and for the daily coach service. Pupils show an outstanding ability to moderate their own behaviour in everyday life supported by staff who ensure that the school's values are firmly established.

3.19 Pupils show highly refined decision-making skills in many areas of their life in school. The quality of decisions they make in the development of their relationships with peers and in ensuring their well-being and that of others is outstanding. Pupils in the pre-prep make excellent decisions in setting their personal goals which are then displayed on their *Promise Tree.* Older pupils make positive choices in determining their learning. For example, they decide which activities or summer sports to pursue, how to plan their own revision and which level of mathematical challenge to tackle. Pupils are encouraged to consider the steps required to achieve success by teaching that builds progressively on previous learning.

3.20 Pupils show a high degree of initiative in contributing to the lives of others particularly within the school community. In activities such as the school council, pupils contribute extremely effectively to improve and benefit the community. Year 6 pupils produce rival weekly newspapers that are circulated widely and during lockdown an animation art club was organised and run remotely through pupil initiative. The challenges that COVID-19 has presented have reduced the number of opportunities for more personal involvement in local and community projects. However, this has not curtailed fund-raising projects and donations to a range of good causes. Pupils decide which charities that they as a school or house will support. They appreciate opportunities to hold positions of responsibility, such as prefects and house captains. The older pupils become outstanding role models and ambassadors for the school. They are conscientious in discharging their responsibilities and show outstanding levels of leadership for their age. The school council leaders ensured meetings were held remotely during national lockdown. Pupils benefit from an enlightened approach from the school's senior leaders who enable them to have complete ownership of their council. Staff also facilitate shared experiences with the school council of a local maintained school to appreciate different issues that their peers face.

3.21 Pupils understand well how to stay safe including when online. All pupils responding to the questionnaire agreed that they knew how to stay safe online. They are supported by staff who help develop pupils' awareness of the dangers posed to themselves and others by those seeking to stifle differing views. For example, in an ICT lesson where Year 2 pupils successfully distinguished facts from opinions. Pupils are aware of the need to establish a balance in all they do to stay physically and mentally healthy. Healthy lifestyles are supported by the provision of excellent sporting facilities. Pupils are comfortable to openly discuss issues. They show a mature appreciation of how participation in various activities, such as the morning fitness and well-being session, can have a positive impact on their mental and emotional health. Highly astute governance is fully aware of the escalating needs in these areas and has supported staffing and pastoral resources. Pupils' well-being is supported by a programme of tailored activities and frequent opportunities to practise mindfulness and calming strategies. Pupils' understanding of how to support their own well-being is also informed by a well-structured PSHEE programme and highly effective pastoral care.

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 proprietor a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form 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 Vaughan Jelley	Reporting inspector
Mr Roger Tapping	Accompanying inspector
Mrs Naomi Fowke	Compliance team inspector (Former head, ISA school)
Mrs Nathalie Roberts	Team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)