



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION**  
**BUCKINGHAM PREPARATORY SCHOOL**

**MAY 2017**



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### SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Buckingham Preparatory School			
<b>DfE number</b>	310/6079			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	293623			
<b>Address</b>	458 Rayners Lane Pinner Middlesex HA5 5DT			
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 8662737			
<b>Email address</b>	office@buckprep.org			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sarah Hollis			
<b>Proprietor Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Lynn Grimes			
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 11			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	129			
	<b>Boys</b>	121	<b>Girls</b>	8
	<b>Day pupils</b>	129	<b>Boarders</b>	0
	<b>EYFS</b>	42	<b>Juniors</b>	87
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17 to 18 May 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 un-met 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 chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies and a school council meeting. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils. 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

Mr Steven Popper

Reporting inspector

Mr Chris Davies

Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)

## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### About the school

- 1.1 Buckingham Preparatory School is an independent day school catering for boys aged 2 to 11 years and girls aged 2 to 4 years. It is owned and governed by E. Ivor Hughes Educational Foundation. The school was founded in Kenton in 1937 as part of a through school, becoming a separate school in 1959. It moved to its present location in 1997 and the current headteacher took up her post in September 2015.
- 1.2 The school consists of three departments: Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for pupils aged 2 to 5 years; Pre-Prep, for pupils aged 5 to 7 years; and Prep, for pupils aged 7 to 11 years. The school does not cater for boarders.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to fulfil pupils' academic and social potential and enable them to develop the skills necessary for the next stage of their lives. It seeks to develop pupils' self-confidence and resilience, their ability to distinguish between right and wrong, and their understanding of cultural diversity and the meaning of community. The school strives to provide a positive and supportive learning environment in order to develop adaptability, self-discipline and perseverance.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils represent a large range of religious and ethnic groups and are drawn from a wide area in north-west London. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils on entry is above average. The school has identified ten pupils who require support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include delayed language skills and other difficulties. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 30 pupils, none of whom require additional support for their English. Data used by the school have identified 33 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for 11 other pupils because of their special talents in art, design and technology (DT), sport and music.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Caterpillars	Nursery
Butterflies	Nursery

## **2. KEY FINDINGS**

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

- Pupils' attainment and progress are outstanding. School leavers regularly achieve scholarships and grammar school places.
- Pupils exhibit excellent subject knowledge across the curriculum.
- Children and pupils demonstrate advanced communication and mathematical skills for their age.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and achievement are superb.

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

- Children and pupils show substantial self-confidence and belief in their own abilities.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral understanding are outstanding.
- Pupils are consistently collaborative and supportive towards each other.
- Pupils demonstrate a notably strong respect for and appreciation of diversity.

### **Recommendation**

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

- Strengthening pupils' opportunities to apply their information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the full range of subjects.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.2 School leaders and governors are entirely successful in their aim to fulfil pupils' academic potential and enable them to develop the skills necessary for the next stage of their lives. The school does not take part in national curriculum tests, but the available evidence from scrutiny of leavers' destinations, pupils' written work, lesson observations, and the school's own assessment data shows attainment to be above, and often well above, national age-related expectations across the school. A very large majority of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) achieve or exceed national expectations for their age, while school leavers regularly achieve places and scholarships in academically selective and competitive senior schools. Pupils' books show that pupils from all ability groups and across all age ranges produce work to an excellent standard. Pupils' outstanding attainment largely results from the highly effective use of school assessment data that leaders have introduced to the school. Teachers now make very efficient use of this data to identify any gaps in pupils' learning and plan their lessons to remediate these. The school has entirely met the recommendation of the previous standard inspection of 2011 to improve the use made of assessment so that information about pupils' progress is incorporated into teachers' planning to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met.
- 3.3 Pupils make at least good and often rapid progress across the school. This is demonstrated by the work in pupils' books, which shows typically rapid improvements since the start of the academic year. It is also shown by the school's own assessment data, which show large increases in the proportion of pupils in most year groups exceeding national age-related expectations over the previous school year. School data and scrutiny of pupils' books show that pupils from all different ability groups make equivalent progress over time. Most parents and all pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that teaching enabled pupils to make good progress and develop skills for the future. Pupils progress well because leaders and governors have raised expectations of teaching since the current headteacher took up her position in the school, and because all teachers focus strongly on improving individual pupils' learning and achievement.
- 3.4 Pupils exhibit excellent subject knowledge across the curriculum. This was demonstrated in pupils' work in books and during lessons observed. During a science lesson, pupils in the top half of the school were able to identify and discuss the effects of ultra violet light in a way that demonstrated substantial understanding. Similarly, younger pupils' history books showed that they were able to make observant and accurate comparisons between their lives and the lives of some historical characters. Pupils' very strong subject knowledge is supported by a consistently high level of challenge during lessons, and by teachers highly effective use of clear explanations and well-pitched open-ended questions that provoke thought, encourage experimentation, and cement understanding. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire and spoke to the inspectors said that teachers made lessons interesting.
- 3.5 Pupils demonstrate communication skills beyond their age. Young children in the EYFS were observed matching letters and sounds to each other very well and demonstrated very advanced reading skills for their age, while older children's writing on display was highly advanced. Children's communication skills were supported by constantly warm and encouraging guidance by staff about different words, letters and the meaning of the text. Children's abilities were also extended because staff took excellent advantage of spontaneous opportunities to reinforce letter/sound relationships and letter formation, and through staff's constantly stimulating use of language and conversation. Older pupils' books (including those of less able and SEND pupils) showed their writing to be of an excellent standard. Lesson



observations demonstrated that pupils in the middle of the school were able to select and identify different features of effective writing and use these in the newspaper articles that they were writing. Similarly, pupils near the top end of the school could spot superfluous words in a sentence and identify the way that particular individual words and phrases impacted on the meaning of the text they were studying. These skills resulted from the teachers' sharing of well-chosen examples on the smartboard, extremely precise and clear explanations, and acute and probing questioning that used subject-specific vocabulary, such as 'alliteration', 'rhetorical questions', and 'exaggeration'. Pupils also demonstrate an excellent ability to read out loud and verbally express their ideas with confidence, as was seen through pupils' responses to questions asked during science, physical education (PE) and English lessons. This is because teachers encourage and praise pupils for their use of ambitious vocabulary, and because leaders ensure that pupils receive many opportunities to practise their public speaking skills.

- 3.6 Children and pupils exhibit substantial mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding from an early age. In lesson observations, younger children in the EYFS demonstrated excellent matching skills and were able to compare and name different colours and shapes very well, while older children's work on display demonstrated number work of an extremely high standard for children of their age. In one lesson, older pupils engaged confidently in a sophisticated discussion about how square numbers worked and about the product of their factors. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils' mathematical development through modelling the correct use of mathematical vocabulary and giving pupils very clear explanations. They make highly effective use of visual and physical resources to engage children and pupils and enable them to make mathematical observations and discoveries of their own, with the result that EYFS children constantly express their mathematical understanding of number, shape and colour, while older pupils can confidently articulate ways of measuring reflex angles and work out challenging calculations in their heads. Teachers also take excellent advantage of spontaneous opportunities to reinforce pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge effectively.
- 3.7 Superb attitudes to learning and achievement are demonstrated by all children and pupils. Children in the EYFS display a huge delight in learning and working together, such as when involved in self-chosen activities together, or while passing balls to each other during a PE lesson. Pupils demonstrated entirely positive attitudes to learning, such as a keenness to learn and achieve in all lessons observed during the inspection, and through the very high quality of pupils' presentation of their work. Older pupils who spoke to the inspectors were proud of their achievements and warm in their praise for other pupils who performed well. This is because leaders and governors have embedded a school ethos that encourages and expects such attitudes. It is also because teachers have very high expectations and focus very strongly on improvement while acknowledging and celebrating pupils' successes.
- 3.8 Excellent study and research skills are demonstrated through pupils' work and are developed through the regular opportunities they receive to initiate and carry out their own independent research projects. Older pupils' research projects show pupils' outstanding ability to identify whether there is sufficient evidence to establish the veracity of an assertion from a piece of text, to organise and initiate independent research in a systematic manner, and to determine success criteria for their own and other pupils' work. These abilities are nurtured by teachers' use of open ended questions and discussions that give pupils opportunities to develop and expand their thoughts and explanations. Pupils achieve excellent non-academic successes. For example, the schools' under-elevens cricket and judo teams have enjoyed local success. The school has won the inter-schools cross country and swimming trophies and the Metropolitan Police art prize. Individual pupils have achieved success in local art competitions, the junior mathematics challenge, and a high number of merits and distinctions in music and drama examinations. Pupils' achievements in these areas are promoted through the large number of

sports in which they participate and by focussed individual support and specialist teaching that develops their dramatic and musical skills and prepares them for scholarships.

- 3.9 Pupils demonstrate appropriate skills in information and communication technology (ICT), but do not apply these to other subjects across the curriculum as strongly as possible. This is because ICT is not yet embedded in all subjects across the school, though leaders are aware of this and are currently working to strengthen the use of ICT across the curriculum.

#### 4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

##### 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

The school fully meets its aims to promote pupils' personal development. A very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school promoted an environment which successfully supports their children's personal development and met their pastoral and welfare needs effectively.

##### 4.2 Children and pupils show substantial self-awareness and belief in their own abilities. During observations of the EYFS, all children, including the very youngest, demonstrated extremely strong self-confidence through their entirely relaxed and settled behaviour because of staff's entirely warm and encouraging interactions and relationships with them. Pupils' personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) books from across the school demonstrated pupils' clear delight in their own identities and personalities. Younger pupils were extremely confident when presenting their dramatization of the three witches from *'Macbeth'* to their peers, as result of very encouraging feedback from the teacher and very high levels of interest, delight and respect shown by their peers in the audience. Lesson observations and pupils' books showed that pupils are very able to identify what they need to do to improve their work, and confident that they can improve it. This is because teachers' feedback to pupils clearly identifies the strengths of their work, while encouraging them to consider what they need to do to improve it further. Pupils' self-confidence develops as a result of the many opportunities they receive to speak publicly to an audience.

##### 4.3 Pupils demonstrate notably strong spiritual understanding. Their reflections, as seen in the religious education (RE and Philosophy of Thinking), and PSHE books, show a deep appreciation of spiritual considerations and non-material aspects of life. Pupils are able to articulate their ideas about spirituality and religion and the importance of these. This is because the school ethos promotes respect and appreciation of different religions and because teachers enable pupils to explore ideas about different faiths. Teachers make very effective use of visual images, for example, of groups of pupils joining together in prayer, to illustrate and develop a sense of the serene.

##### 4.4 Pupils' moral understanding is excellent. They treat each other with enormous courtesy, consideration and respect. Pupils' are able to explore ethical issues, such as those raised by prejudice and discrimination, in depth. They demonstrate a very strong sense of moral responsibility and show a very strong awareness of the differences between right and wrong. For instance, pupils' PSHE books demonstrate very strong understanding of the destructive impact of bullying and unkind behaviour and why these should be avoided. Pupils' moral sensibilities owe much to the school's entirely positive ethos and values, which leaders have successfully embedded across the school, and because of the opportunities that teachers give them to explore deep moral issues. An overwhelming majority of parents and all pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that the school encouraged pupils to behave well.

##### 4.5 Pupils are consistently collaborative and helpful towards each other and actively seek to aid each other learn and succeed. They demonstrate and develop an excellent ability to work together well from the time they start school in the EYFS, sharing their games, resources and activities very willingly and spontaneously. Pupils' willingness to support each other and help each other succeed was demonstrated in all lessons and activities observed during the inspection. For example, during an English lesson, older pupils were extremely supportive to each other during discussions and paired work and helped each other to understand and check ideas about the accuracy of possible answers to comprehension questions. This is because the collaborative ethos of the school is entirely embedded in lessons, and because pupils

- constantly experience leaders' and staff's high expectations of collaboration and modelling of warm and friendly teamwork.
- 4.6 Pupils demonstrate a notably strong respect for and appreciation of diversity. Children and pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds work together with complete acceptance and delight. This is because of the excellent modelling of such behaviour by leaders and staff and because the school's wholly inclusive values are embedded across the school. Teachers open pupils' eyes to events such as International Women's Day, and PHSE teaching makes extremely effective use of real-life scenarios, such as different types of discrimination, to enable pupils to develop their understanding. Most parents and all pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that school encourages pupils to be tolerant of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 4.7 Pupils are skilled and confident decision-makers. They can make decisions on behalf of others as well as of themselves, as shown through the work of the school council and the discussions they had about how to represent the opinions of others when determining how to spend supermarket vouchers. Pupils are very aware of the impact that decisions that they make can have upon their future success. For example, during an English lesson, pupils responded very thoughtfully to challenging questions in a way that strongly demonstrated their understanding of what might be expected from them in grammar school entrance exams. Pupils' decision-making skills develop because staff give them many opportunities to make their own decisions and choose the direction of some of their work for themselves.
- 4.8 Pupils display a very strong sense of being community members, and can articulate ways that they can contribute to the lives of others and take responsibility for improving their communities. Pupils are able to democratically represent the opinions of others and work on their behalf. This was shown during a school council meeting, where pupils determined what votes about how to spend a supermarket's vouchers told them about the majority views of the school population. The pupils were able to decide what decisions they would therefore adopt to represent these views as fairly as possible. Pupils show an age-appropriate appreciation of human rights from an early age, as seen in a display of EYFS children's work which reflected how the individual children's activities and daily routines related to rights to learn, play and rest. Older pupils are keen to support younger ones through the school's 'buddy' system. Pupils eagerly support charities and appreciate the impact of their work. The school actively promotes such work on behalf of others through, for example, the 'Kindness Cup' awarded in assemblies, and newsletters that wholeheartedly applaud the pupils for their selflessness.
- 4.9 Pupils demonstrate an excellent awareness of how to keep safe, including when on-line, and the importance of sharing and expressing any worries or concerns. They also demonstrate excellent understanding of the importance of good physical health. The youngest children's relaxed behaviour (including that of two-year olds) shows that they feel very safe and secure at school. This is because of staff's very warm relationships and interactions with children and pupils, and because teachers give pupils excellent guidance about how to avoid risk and remain safe.