



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

BEECH HOUSE SCHOOL

MARCH 2017



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School College	Beech House School
DfE number	354/6001
Address	Beech House School 184 Manchester Road Rochdale Lancashire OL11 4JQ
Telephone number	01706646309
Email address	info@beechhouseschool.co.uk
Headteacher	Mr Kevin Sartain
Proprietor	Mr Kevin Sartain
Age range	2 to 16
Number of pupils on roll	212
	Boys 108 Girls 104
	EYFS 60 Preparatory 55
	Seniors 97
Inspection dates	22 to 23 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 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 proprietor. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited 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 Linda Donowho

Reporting inspector

Miss Joanna Parry

Team inspector (Deputy head, SoH school)

Mrs Susan Webb

Team inspector (Head ISA school)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Beech House School is a co-educational day school for pupils from the ages of 2 to 16. It was founded prior to 1850 and occupies four large Victorian houses close to Rochdale town centre. The Lower Preparatory Department, situated about half a mile from the main school, admits pupils up to the age of seven. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for children aged from two to five years old, is an integral part of this department. The headmaster is the proprietor of the school and is responsible for governance.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The aim of the school is to blend the best of traditional education with the skills and resources of the modern system to ensure that pupils' talents are exercised to the full, providing pupils with a challenging, yet supportive environment to stimulate, maintain and develop a lively enquiring mind. The school aims to help pupils develop a sense of moral values which can form a framework for a sense of self-worth and meaningful relationships with others so that they may in time become responsible members of society.

About the pupils

- 1.3 The pupils come from families of diverse faiths and nationalities, reflecting the local community. Their ability profile is above the national average. The school has identified 23 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), all of whom receive additional specialist help. Four of these pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. Almost half of the pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), only a small number of whom require additional support. More able or talented pupils are catered for in lessons.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.5 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was an intermediate EYFS inspection in February 2014 and an integrated inspection at the same time. The recommendations from these inspections were:
- Ensure marking provides pupils with consistent guidance for improvement.
 - Provide more opportunities to access ICT to further support learning.
 - In the EYFS implement plans to enhance the outdoor provision to extend children's learning.
 - In the EYFS ensure that one-one supervisions are well embedded in practice
- 1.6 The school has successfully met most of the recommendations of the previous inspection. Further detail is in given in the main text of the report.

2. KEY FINDINGS

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

- Pupils can adeptly apply their strong numeracy skills across other subjects particularly science.
- Pupils have excellent literacy and reading skills and express themselves orally extremely well; they have fewer opportunities to develop writing skills to the same level, particularly for older pupils.
- Pupils with SEND or EAL achieve their well because they receive appropriate teaching and encouragement to suit their needs.
- Pupils are determined to succeed and welcome and respond well to teacher's advice. They find the best marking extremely helpful in this quest.
- Pupils delight in the fact that their individual talents are recognised and they are encouraged to develop these.

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

- Pupils understand how important making the right decision is, to their future lives.
- Pupils are particularly self-disciplined and their behaviour is exemplary, ensuring harmony around school.
- Pupils take on responsibilities within the school with enthusiasm and maturity when given the opportunity however, opportunities for younger pupils are limited.
- Pupils feel extremely well known and cared for.
- Pupils have a strong appreciation of their own culture and that of others and show considerable sensitivity towards those less fortunate than themselves.

Recommendations

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Ensure consistency in marking so that it gives pupils clear advice on how to improve.
- Provide more opportunities for younger pupils to take on responsibilities.
- Provide older pupils with more opportunities for extended writing to enable them to maintain their well-developed skills.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.2 Pupils respond with success to the well-planned initiatives to provide a challenging, yet supportive environment to stimulate, maintain and develop a lively enquiring mind. As a result, in line with the school's aims, pupils develop application, perseverance, initiative, independent thought and action, as well as co-operative endeavours within a curriculum that facilitates the requisition of knowledge and promotes enjoyment in learning, providing knowledge and skills to equip pupils for work and leisure as potentially active, confident and responsible members of a rapidly developing and changing society. Within this framework, Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. There is a palpable desire to achieve and pupils work well towards common goals, as in collaborative student-led projects outside the classroom. Here, showed real passion, expressing clearly how much they gain from having room to think independently and to take initiative in their learning.
- 3.3 Pupils with particular needs achieve appropriately because the school's arrangements carefully consider the strengths and the needs of individual pupils. In almost all respects, these outcomes show that the school has responded appropriately to the recommendations of previous inspections.
- 3.4 In the EYFS, children make good and often rapid progress in their learning and development relative to their individual starting points, abilities and needs. Almost all children meet or exceed the age-related expectations. In the prep school, attainment by the end of Year 6 is judged to be above the average for maintained schools, based on inspection evidence drawn from the observation of lessons, a scrutiny of work and discussions with individual pupils and checks of school data. This level of attainment, as judged, indicates that pupils make good progress in relation to pupils of similar ability. Pupils with SEND or EAL make excellent progress because they are extremely well supported and their progress is carefully monitored by the leadership and management. More able pupils respond to the challenge in lessons so that they can accelerate their progress, making at least good progress. Results in GCSE examinations were above the national average in 2013, and in line with the national average in 2014 and 2015.
- 3.5 Pupils demonstrate excellent speaking and listening skills together with strong mathematical application. Pupils demonstrate their ability to apply their communication skills in a range of contexts, whether in the classroom or in social situations. They express themselves with confidence and listen carefully to the views of others. In the EYFS these skills are encouraged as a matter of course; they become inquisitive learners and enthusiastically ask questions. They join in with stories with great gusto and eagerly ask and answer questions. They are excited to learn and quickly engage any visitors to their classroom in conversation. Older pupils build on these skills and confidently explore ideas and debate and discuss at a high level. For example, in an English lesson, senior school pupils were willing to disagree with the poet and the teacher, exploring their true understanding of what was written, supported by the teacher who encouraged pupils to look at and express different viewpoints in the light of the evidence.
- 3.6 Children in the EYFS gain excellent reading and writing skills early in their education and enthuse greatly about books. Children in Reception are eager to read to visitors, sharing their confidence and skill in reading. Children respond very positively to the system that encourages them to read to visitors. They relish the opportunity and enjoy demonstrating their skills. In the EYFS, the strong focus on reading ensures that children quickly gain a thorough knowledge of the sounds and letters and begin to transfer this knowledge to their

writing. Writing skills are carefully and systematically taught and encouraged throughout the school. For example, in a lesson with older pupils associated with war poetry, pupils were focused on the task in hand, writing with confidence and in detail having an excellent use of subject specific terminology. This was especially evident where pupils had been challenged to put together extended pieces to present on contentious issues such as sexism in society and the treatment of war veterans. However, in the senior school, opportunities to use these skills for extended writing become limited as pupils prepare for examinations.

- 3.7 Pupils achieve particularly high results in mathematics and participate enthusiastically in mathematics activities. In the EYFS, children use numbers confidently in their play and teachers use every opportunity to demonstrate the correct use of mathematical language. Older pupils show a strong knowledge and understanding of mathematical principles and apply these well in problem solving; more able pupils regularly meet challenges using their mathematical knowledge. Pupils apply their numeracy to other subjects adroitly, particularly in the senior school, for example in work in science. Pupils have the confidence to discuss with each other how they can apply these skills and transfer them to real life problems. They apply their excellent study skills adeptly; the senior pupils are enthusiastic about the research they are required to do in preparation for their controlled assessments and spoke of how empowering it was to focus on their own projects and being given the freedom to develop their own ideas and opinions. Pupils build on their understanding and use this to analyse different and diverse situations, including poems, faith-related pieces and scientific data. Many pupils show good ability to look at a scenario and make a hypothesis about what could happen and why; this was especially evident in science. Pupils synthesise raw information and turn it into results, not only in mathematics and science, but also in English and religious studies. Pupils take good advantage of opportunities to evaluate their work in order to set themselves targets for further learning. A strong focus from an early age on basic skills and understanding, and the small class sizes, ensure that teachers can give individual support. Teaching throughout the school makes numeracy fun and challenging.
- 3.8 The pupils' ICT skills are good, developed by it being taught as a discrete subject. They quickly gain a high level of skills however, there are only limited opportunities for these skills to be used across the rest of the curriculum. The school's evolving tracking system focuses on English and mathematics at present. The marking of work does not always provide pupils with the information needed for them to improve. The best marking gives clear guidance and clearly illustrates ways to improve but as noted in previous inspection findings, this is still not done consistently well across subjects and year groups.
- 3.9 Pupils achieve extremely well in a wide range of sporting events and academic areas. The school determinedly encourages each pupil to succeed in whatever their interests or strength may be and pupils are appreciative of the school's efforts to arrange and accommodate their interests. There is a strong focus on academic and sporting success the school will partake in most sporting events to give the pupils experience of competitive events. These range from swimming water polo, dance and football to academic challenges and competitions.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Throughout the school, pupils' personal skills are excellent. They are strongly aware of their strengths and weaknesses and are highly confident and eager to explain life in school. In line with the school's aim to promote application and perseverance, pupils are confident to tackle things which are difficult and have strategies in place to ensure their success. This is partly due to the individual support given to pupils but also the encouragement and recognition of specific needs from staff and pupils. There is a sense of harmony across the school and pupils genuinely care for each other. Behaviour in lessons displays a respect for all within the school community.
- 4.3 Pupils enjoy identifying their own achievements and are quick to celebrate those of their peers. They are confident that their efforts are valued and that they are valued and cared for by staff throughout the school. They delight in the regular assemblies that acknowledge success and the school ensures that all pupils have an opportunity to shine. In lessons, they are confident in putting forward their ideas and unafraid of being wrong, knowing that this is a way of improving their work. Pupils show an awareness of the need to succeed knowing how to be assertive without being aggressive and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The school is determined to provide pupils with individual advice on their move to this next stage and are careful that it reflects pupil's strengths and interests. As noted earlier, the contribution of tracking systems and marking to this is still being developed. Pupils have a mature approach to learning and are determined to improve and give of their best at all times. Their high self-esteem is promoted through the variety of reward systems in place and pupils understand value this recognition. Children in the EYFS are confident and enthusiastic learners who concentrate extremely well for their age and are always keen to proudly share their successes with adults and their peers. Opportunities for this are abundant either in assemblies, with visitors or in regular group sessions in which they are encouraged to share news and experiences.
- 4.4 Pupils show a clear sense of social responsibility. They take on responsibilities in school conscientiously. They respond enthusiastically to the opportunities when they are provided; they work well with others. Older pupils conscientiously take on the responsibility of leading and refereeing local lacrosse matches which they do with a high level of professionalism. In the EYFS, children enthusiastically help around the classroom and are proud to given the opportunity to 'help their teacher'. Older pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of their personal freedom and decisions which they can take at each stage in their development. However, in the preparatory department responsibilities are mostly given to senior school pupils; younger pupils are keen to have greater opportunities to take on responsibilities but these are limited.
- 4.5 In the EYFS, children are regularly encouraged to choose their own activities and in collaboration with their peers make decisions whilst choosing resources and deciding on roles. They are encouraged to make choices in the books that they look at and they independently take full advantage of the plentiful resources on offer both in the classroom and outdoors which ensure that all areas of learning are represented, further promoting decision making and collaboration. Older pupils are aware that decisions they make affect their future lives; senior pupils carefully listen to advice with regard to the next stage in their education and appreciate the time given to this.
- 4.6 From the EYFS onwards, pupils, know how to keep safe. Through the personal and social development programme, pupils are advised and given regular opportunities to discuss

safety and health issues. However, pupils in discussion felt that they would welcome more opportunities to discuss specific health issues. There is a tutor system, whereby pupils meet regularly in small groups at the beginning of the school day but not enough time is given to ensure that pupils have opportunities to discuss personal matters. Pupils are aware of how to keep safe when using computers and pupils report that they are regularly educated in the dangers of social media. They are confident that if they have any concerns, there is a member of staff to turn to for support and advice. The regular reminders and specialist speakers reinforce pupil's safety. Pupils understand the need to stay fit and healthy. Regular exercise is paramount in school activities and the school ensures that it is frequent and enjoyable. The regular sports activities help all pupils gain resilience and positive attitudes; they appreciate that losing is not a negative result as long as they have tried their best. Pupils enjoy the inclusiveness of sports activities, confident that their efforts are always appreciated.

- 4.7 Pupils have a keen sense of community and an appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. Their self-worth is strongly evident and fostered through many aspects of school life. They recognise the abilities and skills of all members of the school community and are able to reflect on their own achievements. The school continually seek out pupil's strengths and ensure that every opportunity is given for pupils to engage in activities that celebrate these personal strengths.
- 4.8 Pupils demonstrate strong empathy and respect for their peers, they were observed to have a keen sense of right and wrong and a respect for rules and expectations. Pupils talked about taking responsibility for their own actions and discussed being honest when they made bad behaviour choices. They also talked about supporting their peers when they encountered difficulties. Older pupils regularly support younger pupils and look at this practice as their duty. They have excellent understanding of what bullying is and are confident that any unkindness will be dealt with should it happen.
- 4.9 Pupils show high levels of appreciation and a deep understanding of cultural traditions different to their own. Pupils talked about a feeling of togetherness. They celebrate diversity and talk about people being individuals. In a PSD lesson pupils were passionate in their views that people should not be judged according to their colour or beliefs. In discussions, pupils talked about people being individuals and not being defined by their backgrounds or beliefs. The school is determined to be an inclusive school and celebrate diversity. To promote cultural understanding different faith leaders are invited into the school to talk with the community and through PSD and RS pupils are able to visit places of different faiths.