



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Grantham Preparatory International School

January 2023

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School's Details

School	Grantham Preparatory International School			
DfE number	925/6031			
Address	Grantham Preparatory International School Gorse Lane Grantham Lincs NG31 7UF			
Telephone number	01476 593 293			
Email address	contact.grantham@iesmail.com			
Head	Mrs Kathryn Korcz			
Chair of proprietors	Dr J Segovia Bonet			
Proprietor	A for E Ltd			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	114			
	EYFS	12	Juniors	102
Inspection dates	17 to 19 January 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Grantham Preparatory International School is an independent co-educational day school. Founded in 1981, it is operated by A for E Ltd, a subsidiary of International Education Systems (IES) Ltd, which owns schools in the UK and overseas. It is administered by a board of directors who are not resident in the UK. Day to day governance is provided by the group's academic director, who is based in Sweden.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to nurture and inspire its pupils to become independent, confident individuals, who value tolerance and respect and strive to become better in all that they do. It seeks to provide the best opportunities for all pupils, through a broad and balanced curriculum.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a range of backgrounds, mostly from families living in Grantham and the surrounding area. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is generally average when compared with those taking similar tests nationally. The school has identified thirteen pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include physical, emotional difficulties and dyslexia, of whom seven receive additional specialist help. Two pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for thirteen pupils, two of whom receive additional support. Data used by the school have identified fourteen pupils as being the more able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them with extension work and booster sessions, and for five other pupils because of their particular talents in sport.

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. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. 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.

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, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 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 school

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 wellbeing 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 make at least good and often excellent progress so that by the time they leave their attainment is high.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent competency in literacy and mathematics.
- Pupils' high level of achievement extends to a wide range of sporting and creative pursuits.
- Pupils' consistently positive attitudes towards learning underpin their high standards.

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

- Pupils demonstrate outstanding self-esteem and the resilience to tackle challenges for their own improvement. They fulfil the school's aim to be better in all that they do.
- Pupils' mature moral understanding is reflected in their behaviour and consideration to one another.
- Pupils' successful collaborative work, including in mixed age groups, demonstrates their strong social development.
- Pupils develop a deep and natural respect for diversity, a commitment to inclusion and acceptance of individuality.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

- Enable pupils to further develop their independence in preparation for the next stage of their education, by allowing them to exercise greater initiative and self-discipline outside of the classroom.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 The overall achievement of pupils is excellent and fulfils the school's aims. Children in the EYFS make rapid progress from their varying starting points. Most achieve the early learning goals well before the end of Reception and are deemed to have a good level of development as determined by the EYFS framework. Most pupils continue to make excellent progress so that, by the end of Year 6, their attainment is high in relation to their abilities. This is confirmed by nationally standardised test data

as well as the school's own assessments. Scrutiny of work from a range of subjects and year groups and observations in lessons, demonstrates that pupils, including those with SEND, EAL and the most able, make at least good progress in lessons. This is reflected in the pre-inspection questionnaires where all the pupils agreed that their skills and knowledge improve in most lessons and that teachers know their subjects well and help them to learn. Almost all parents agreed that teaching enables their child to make progress. Pupils' needs are met highly effectively by teaching which provides much individual attention in small classes. Pupils also achieve well due to their results in standardised assessments being carefully tracked. Prompt action is then taken to identify any emerging learning needs and additional support or challenge is provided. As a result, almost all pupils are successful in competitive entrance examinations to state grammar and independent senior schools.

- 3.6 Pupils demonstrate excellent knowledge, skills and understanding across a broad curriculum which includes Spanish and drama. For example, pupils in Year 5 converse well in Spanish due to familiarity with instruction being given in the target language. Pupils in Year 4 were able to dramatised characters from a CS Lewis novel extremely effectively. Many pupils enjoy learning a musical instrument and gain confidence in performing, as well as a good grasp of technique and musical notation. Pupils learn and apply scientific concepts capably, such as when pupils in Year 3 displayed an excellent knowledge of scientific vocabulary in describing rock types and their properties. Teaching enables a steady improvement in skills through inclusion of activities which pupils find fun. Whilst younger pupils, for example, display age-appropriate ball skills, by Years 5 and 6 high levels of skill in football and netball are evident. Pupils' progress across the curriculum is strongly developed due to teachers' confident subject knowledge which enables them to utilise a range of effective teaching strategies to capture their interest and structure their learning securely.
- 3.7 Pupils across the school display an outstanding ability to communicate. Children in the EYFS develop their range of vocabulary in an environment rich in oral language, where questioning and modelling continuously develops their speech and confidence. As they grow older, pupils present as articulate and able to use complex vocabulary. Their ability to listen carefully is evident in all lessons. Children in the EYFS quickly learn to recognise and write sounds, enabling them to make rapid strides in the development of their literacy skills. Most pupils read well for their age and demonstrate excellent comprehension, such as in Year 3 where the class showed a perceptive understanding of characters' feelings and actions in the story *Charlotte's Web*. Literacy standards are promoted effectively through the frequent provision of time dedicated to reading for all age groups. Pupils develop excellent competence in technical English so that most write with accurate grammar and spelling and in a neat cursive script. Their independent writing is of high quality across a range of genres such as factual, creative, and poetry. This is the result of the leadership taking clear action in response to results in standardised assessments which showed this skill had dipped during remote learning. Pupils' high standards are also the result of the priority given to the systematic teaching of skills in English and their understanding of the clear targets they are given for their writing development.
- 3.8 Pupils demonstrate excellent mathematical competence from an early age, as confirmed in scrutiny of their work and observations. Children in the EYFS, for example, showed high levels of enthusiasm, accuracy, and confidence in estimating and then measuring the height of a child in cubes. This motivated them to measure other lengths in the room using a range of resources. Pupils quickly acquire advanced numerical and computational skills due to the leadership giving priority to mental agility as well as problem solving to challenge and extend their understanding. As they grow older, their self-confidence and progress are fostered through being able to choose their own level of difficulty when tackling a new topic. This ensures that each child is working at an appropriate level. Pupils successfully apply mathematical principles in science, such as when Year 5 were constructing a geocentric system. In geography, younger pupils required no prompting from the teacher to apply their mathematical skills when displaying data about rainfall.
- 3.9 As they progress through the school, pupils systematically develop high levels of competence in information and communications technology (ICT). This enables them to use search engines for

research, and digital technology for a range of purposes, from coding and robotics to office and presentation skills. For example, Year 6 recently engaged successfully in 3D printing and website building. Pupils regularly conduct their own research such as in history and science, making efficient use of ready access to tablet devices to support their work. Use of an online artificial intelligence programme for homework supports pupils' progress in numeracy and literacy most effectively.

- 3.10 Across the curriculum, pupils display excellent skills for learning. Their ability to focus and commitment to completing tasks is excellent. This was evident when children in Reception showed great concentration and speedy response in highly enjoyable brain, hand and eye co-ordination songs which prepared them most effectively for a formal learning task. Pupils are able to edit their work, such as when Year 6 were preparing a newspaper on The First World War. Year 4's rain forest project showed that pupils can analyse information gained in research and present it in their own words. In many lessons pupils display excellent recall of prior learning which, coupled with their keen curiosity to find out more, forms a solid foundation for moving forwards. In their individual project work, older pupils show that they can derive information from a variety of sources independently and use critical thinking to apply it to their own research.
- 3.11 For a small school, pupils do well in a range of sports such as netball, cricket, football, gymnastics, swimming and cross country. Every child in Years 3 to 6 has participated in at least three competitive events and pupils state that sport is a strength of their school. In the questionnaire, all the parents responding agreed that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities which enable pupils to develop their interests and talents. Pupils do well in LAMDA examinations and drama is a strength, culminating in a public performance at a local theatre. The choirs and instrumental ensembles achieve success in local music festivals and provide breadth of opportunity, whether it be playing in the rock band or flute trio. The school has been successful in the Independent Schools Association national art exhibition and also stages its own exhibition, in which every pupil is proud to have their high-quality work displayed. During the inspection, the school received news that several pupils were through to the bonus round in the Primary Maths Challenge.
- 3.12 Pupils exhibit outstanding attitudes towards their learning. They take pride in their efforts and the qualities of perseverance and diligence are much in evidence. For example, despite enjoying the company of their friends at the beginning of the school day, pupils in Year 2 simultaneously became highly focused on a handwriting task. The curiosity and enthusiasm of children in the EYFS is palpable and stimulated by the creative use of resources and interesting activities offered. Whilst preparation for 11+ examinations is relatively formulaic, the leadership ensures that opportunities to develop pupils' wider interests and learning receive sufficient attention. Pupils' positivity is a result of high teacher expectations and effective class management. Staff provide a calm yet purposeful atmosphere which is conducive to learning and the warm and encouraging relationships between teachers and pupils motivate them to work hard.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils demonstrate excellent self-esteem. In discussions with inspectors, they were well aware of both their abilities and weaker areas and demonstrated the conviction that they would achieve their targets. In so doing, they stated their confidence in the availability of individualised support from staff who, rather than providing answers, help them see problems in a different way to achieve a solution for themselves. Pupils receive comprehensive feedback from staff to help them know how to improve their learning and performance. Older pupils are quietly proud of their successes, as evident when they showed inspectors their *Personal Journey Books* which capture their progress over time. Children in Reception know their targets and in trying hard to achieve them exude great happiness in their successes. Many pupils are self-confident as a result of activities in class such as role plays, which prepare them for presentation to wider audiences including inter-house competitions. The wide range

of extra-curricular activities and opportunities to perform both in sport as well as music and drama, further promotes this attribute. Pupils in Year 6 show high levels of resilience in sport, understanding that particular skills may not be mastered immediately; in this example, supported by patient teaching. The leadership has embedded a culture where teaching which promotes perseverance with positive affirmation of success, alongside highly effective pastoral care, successfully develops pupils academically as well as personally. All the pupils in Year 6 agreed in the questionnaire that they feel well prepared for senior school.

- 3.15 Within the classroom, pupils are highly effective in making decisions about their learning and assert they have many opportunities to make choices in their work. For example, pupils in Year 4 confidently decide which level of work in mathematics will best promote their success, as seen when they were manipulating fractions. In many lessons pupils of all ages show significant self-discipline, such as when Year 3 restricted themselves to only choosing paint colours matched to ancient Greek ornament patterns in art. Younger pupils regularly work in groups where they adopt a working strategy and sensibly decide on team roles. The youngest children are encouraged to make choices, well supported by open questioning from adults and independent, easy access to toys and equipment. Teaching invariably combines challenging pupils' efforts with collaborative working where group decisions will need to be made. For example, pupils from Years 3 to 6 work in mixed age groups in weekly science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics and STEAM activities, and all articulate the benefit of learning to work alongside different ages. To a small degree, highly conscientious supervision such as when moving around the school, limits pupils' ability to develop their initiative and independence outside of the classroom.
- 3.16 Pupils' excellent moral development is embedded in the school's culture. They show a strong sense of right and wrong which is reflected in their high standards of behaviour, good manners, and consideration for one another. Almost all parents and pupils expressed the view in the questionnaire that good behaviour is promoted in school. In all lessons observed, kindness and sensitivity between pupils were present. Older pupils show a mature awareness of the impact of thoughtless words and actions, stating their understanding that a thoughtless, mean comment can lead to prolonged sadness which may be hard to rectify. Staff take time to work with pupils who have more difficulty conforming to the high standards expected and use specific praise to help pupils make the right choices. Older pupils understand that the rules in school evolve into a system of laws which exist for the good of the whole community.
- 3.17 For their age, pupils have a strong appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. Through personal, social and health education (PSHE) and assemblies they develop a committed regard for the values promoted in school and understand the important role they play both in their own personal happiness and well-being, as well as in their social relationships and the wider world. They appreciate the aesthetic benefit of music and art. Pupils understand and have great respect for the natural world, displaying an acute awareness of the need to conserve natural resources. This is promoted through their observation of the seasonal changes in the countryside surrounding the school, as well as activities such as learning songs about the environment for a forthcoming production. Pupils also have a well-informed appreciation of the part religious belief plays in some people's lives since they are introduced to these in assemblies and religious education lessons where they reflect on their key tenets.
- 3.18 Pupils display excellent collaboration when working together. For example, when making spaghetti towers in a much enjoyed STEAM session, pupils communicated their ideas effectively and worked as a successful team. They engage in partner work from an early age and listen to one another's contributions with respect. In the questionnaire, almost all parents agreed that the school helps their children to develop strong teamwork and social skills. Older pupils articulate their perceptive view that successful collaboration requires skills such as listening, sharing, unselfishness, effort and generous praise. For example, pupils in Year 4 displayed significant fairness in ensuring all pupils were able to offer their views in a discussion in English. Older pupils also state that they may need to resolve

disagreements through a range of approaches, such as being kind, taking a vote, seeking adult advice or being willing to apologise.

- 3.19 Pupils from a range of cultures and backgrounds show a deep respect for diversity and the importance of inclusion. In so doing they fulfil the school's aims. They enjoy learning and playing together and view diversity as an interesting opportunity to find out about one another's cultures. Older pupils are adamant that all in the school respect one another, regardless of any differences, which they embrace. As part of an international group of schools, seeing other pupils their age wearing the same uniform in different global locations through video conferencing, promotes their awareness of their commonality. Pupils' tolerant and well-informed attitudes are promoted by the leadership and staff who consistently model behaviour that is appreciative of peoples' differences and similarities. Books, resources and displays about the world, together with assemblies, enhance pupils' understanding of other cultural backgrounds. As a result, almost all parents agreed in the questionnaire that values of tolerance and respect are promoted in school.
- 3.20 Pupils are keen to make a positive contribution within school, particularly in Year 6 when all have the opportunity to undertake a position of responsibility. Pupils of all ages are represented on the school council which meets regularly with the head to discuss issues suggested by their peers. A friendship bench was installed in the playground following a request by pupils that all have the chance to be happy at breaktime. Within the wider community, pupils speak enthusiastically of their charitable efforts, such as independently organising games and stalls to raise money for *Children in Need* and taking produce to the local food bank at harvest time.
- 3.21 Pupils display a well-developed understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. They identify that diet, exercise and self-care including sleep are important to a healthy lifestyle. Older pupils know that it is important to warm up before engaging in sport. Their knowledge is promoted well by topics in science and PSHE which are re-visited at age-appropriate levels, as well as the availability of a range of sports within the curriculum and clubs. Pupils are encouraged to develop prudence in relation to their safety. For example, in a PSHE lesson, pupils in Year 2 confidently looked at a range of scenarios, able to distinguish which were likely to be hazardous and how the risk might be mitigated. From a young age, pupils express informed ideas about online safety and know how to report anything untoward. Pupils unanimously agree that there is a range of adults they trust to confide in regarding any worries and that school is a safe place to be. They cite, as an example, the availability of a trained mental health mentor. Through work carried out in subjects such as PSHE, pupils are aware of the importance of good relationships to their mental health, stating that activities within their family or caring for pets improve their sense of wellbeing.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor's representative, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form times, and an assembly. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Jan Preece	Reporting inspector
Mrs Caroline Rogerson	Compliance team inspector (Head of senior school, HMC and IAPS school)
Mr Jack Williams	Team inspector (Assistant head, HMC school)