



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Chard School

June 2019



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School's Details

School	Chard School			
DfE number	933/6165			
Registered charity number	310219			
Address	Chard School Fore Street Chard Somerset TA20 1QA			
Telephone number	01460 63234			
Email address	secretary@chardschool.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Katie Hill			
Chair of governors	Mr Edward Colgan			
Age range	4 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	74			
	Boys	42	Girls	32
	EYFS	10	Years 1-6	64
Inspection dates	11 to 13 June 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Chard School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged between 4 and 11 years. Founded in 1671, and established into its present form in 1972, the school is owned by a charitable trust and overseen by a board of governors who are also trustees.
- 1.2 The school comprises an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and a junior department
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher and a new chairman of governors.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school's aim is to provide a broad, balanced curriculum, encouraging high achievement, whilst recognising that success comes in different forms for different pupils. It seeks to instil the values of care and consideration for others and to develop pupils' self-discipline and self-esteem, so that they leave the school as confident and well-presented individuals, who are courteous and able to work cooperatively within teams or individually.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds, mostly from white British families living within a 20-mile radius of the school. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability range of pupils is above the national average. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. The school has identified eight pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include dyslexia and medical needs, all of whom receive additional specialist help. English is an additional language (EAL) for one pupil, whose needs are supported by the teachers. The school has identified 20 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

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. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports 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. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

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 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.

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 a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The 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 regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; 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 full regulations 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 uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 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 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 **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

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

- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 **The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.13 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include 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 pupils with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include 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.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.15 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.17 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.

2.18 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.

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.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. 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'.

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 good.
- Pupils have excellent communication skills.
 - Pupils make good progress.
 - Pupils achieve well in sports.
 - Pupils' achievement in some lessons is less successful when the quality of teaching is not consistent with the best practice demonstrated within the school.
 - Pupils' opportunities for successful collaboration are at times constrained by the furniture and its organisation in some classrooms.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- Pupils behave very well.
 - Pupils exhibit strong social awareness.
 - Although respectful to others, pupils' have insufficient knowledge and understanding of those from different traditions, cultures and faiths.
 - Pupils find it difficult to express and explain their understanding of the world in spiritual and philosophical terms.

Recommendations

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:
- Enable pupils to achieve well in all lessons, by ensuring that the best practice in teaching is shared between staff.
 - Enable pupils to learn collaboratively in more lessons, by ensuring that all classrooms have suitable furniture that can be easily rearranged.
 - Enable pupils to learn more about different traditions, cultures and faiths.
 - Enable pupils to better express and explain their understanding of the world in spiritual and philosophical terms.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.5 Pupils of all abilities make good progress over time, with achievement of the most able pupils and those with English as an additional language (EAL) exceeding the expectation for their age. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve at least in line with their ability and often above, because of the effective support they receive and the school's individualised approach to their learning. Most pupils gain entry to their first choice of senior school and about a third each year are successful in being awarded scholarships. This good achievement represents the successful fulfilment of the school's aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum encouraging high achievement whilst recognising that success comes in different forms for different pupils. All parents and pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires agreed that the school enables pupils to make good progress, and almost all agreed the school meets their individual needs effectively.

- 3.6 Across the curriculum, pupils demonstrate good knowledge, skills and understanding for their age. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) pupils make rapid progress for their age and ability, supported by teaching that is appropriately planned across all areas of development, meeting the recommendation from the inspection of June 2013. Throughout the school, pupils have good knowledge, skills and understanding for their age in mathematics, English and science. This is supported by a greater focus on assessment and learning by the senior leadership team, which has been enhanced in line with the recommendation from the inspection of June 2013 to strengthen the management structure of the school. In science lessons, younger pupils are able to explain how fossils are formed within sedimentary rocks, whilst older pupils understand the requirements needed to make a test fair. In some curricular areas, however, such as those covering the humanities, the pupils' achievements are, at times, less successful where the approach to teaching places too much emphasis on the learning of facts at the expense of pupils engaging collaboratively with each other to actively find out more for themselves. Pupils of all ages, achieve very well in physical education, developing very good movement skills, benefitting from teachers' skills and encouragement. Pupils have high levels of physical fitness, taking an active and enthusiastic part in sporting activities, which they complete with resilience and determination. In their questionnaire responses, parents agreed that pupils make good progress, particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics.
- 3.7 Pupils have very effective communication skills, which they use with success across all areas of the curriculum. They listen intently and are able to follow instructions, prompts and guidance to great effect for their ages and abilities. They speak articulately in lessons and are able to reflect on how to improve their work. Older pupils in an English lesson were able to read with expression and accuracy from a book being used as a text by the class. Their writing is mostly accurate and well thought out, employing a broad and appropriate vocabulary. Younger pupils, in a creative writing lesson, were able to identify and then use interesting adjectives to enliven their descriptions of photographs depicting a variety of unusual scenes. The pupils' success in writing is supported by the systematic approach of the teachers, with a clear focus on accuracy in grammar and spelling, the development and use of interesting vocabulary, poetry, factual accounts, and biographies. Pupils acquire confident reading skills from an early age as a result of carefully planned phonics teaching within a positive culture of encouragement and praise from teachers, who make the learning environment challenging, dynamic and fun. Pupils also demonstrate confidence when learning modern foreign languages, achieving good standards in speaking and listening, supported by a creative approach to skills development.
- 3.8 Pupils demonstrate good levels of mathematical competence and understanding, which they are able to successfully apply in their work in other subjects. They have very positive attitudes to learning in numeracy. Most children by the end of the EYFS have a secure understanding of the foundations of numeracy and are able to count confidently on their fingers to a level appropriate for their age. Pupils are able to apply problem-solving skills with increasing effectiveness as they progress through the school, taking responsibility for their learning by choosing the appropriate arithmetical methods and resources needed. Older pupils successfully explain their workings, applying their knowledge and understanding to solve problems and challenges. Pupils understand how to improve, demonstrating increasing confidence and resilience in their mathematical learning. They also know that when difficulties arise, they are able to get the support needed from staff, ensuring that all pupils, including those with SEND, are successful. Older pupils speak of how much they enjoy lessons in mathematics as a result of the engaging and challenging teaching.
- 3.9 Pupils achieve well in information and communications technology (ICT), showing particular competence in the use of coding to create simple games. Older pupils successfully use more complex coding for writing and organising web pages. They make effective use of ICT for research, for example when writing biographies of famous scientists. They are able to edit and change their own digital photographs for art assignments. Younger pupils are confident users of classroom technology manipulating devices such as a computer mouse or the interactive whiteboard with accuracy.

- 3.10 Pupils demonstrate good study skills for their ages and abilities, being able to successfully organise their work to facilitate later revision and review. Pupils are able to reflect on and learn from mistakes in order to make further progress by adding appropriate comments to feedback from teachers in their written work. They are very successful at solving problems, especially when working collaboratively in teams, although restrictions presented by some classroom furniture sometimes inhibits this. They enhance their understanding of topics by drawing upon a suitably wide range of sources, such as online information, library reference books and meeting with visitors or members of the community, such as the local police officer, who shared road safety advice. Pupils respond with confidence to open-ended questions, demonstrating the ability to think at a higher-order. However, not all the teaching observed gave pupils sufficient opportunities to do this, sometimes limiting their achievements in some subjects.
- 3.11 Pupils are very successful members of the school's sports teams, participating in a range of local and regional sports tournaments, with the girls' netball team, for example, attaining third place in a regional tournament in 2019. Pupils have had significant successes in an essay writing competition organised as part of a local literary festival, and in a prestigious national computer coding competition for designing and writing computer games. Pupils sing and perform to a very good standard and many achieve success in individual instrumental music exams.
- 3.12 Pupils have very positive attitudes to their education. Those in the EYFS take effective leadership in their learning by making independent choices of activity, often choosing new and more challenging tasks over the safer more familiar activities. Many older pupils are effective independent learners and also work well in collaboration with one another, particularly when given challenging puzzles to solve. Collaborative learning, however, is occasionally limited by the furniture and organisation of some classrooms, which prevents pupils being able to move around freely to work in groups.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 3.14 All pupils have good self-knowledge and as they progress through the school demonstrate increasing resilience. They show high levels of self-discipline in and out of the classroom and are mutually supportive of each other. They speak enthusiastically about each other's successes and whilst they are confident, they are often modest when talking about their own achievements. They have a good understanding of how to improve as learners: younger pupils in a literacy lesson told their teacher what they had to do next to improve their handwriting; older pupils demonstrated sensible strategies for overcoming difficulties in mathematics. Pupils are supported by an increasingly dynamic approach to encouraging self-reflection adopted by staff in many areas of the curriculum, and through personal social and health education (PSHE) and the assembly programme. The oldest pupils feel that they are very well prepared for entry to their senior schools in the next academic year. All of these gains made by pupils in their personal development represent the successful fulfilment of the school's aim to enable them to leave the school as confident and well-presented individuals, who are courteous and able to work cooperatively within teams or alone as individuals.
- 3.15 Pupils of all ages are effective decision makers. Those in the EYFS make sensible choices from different activities, recognising the value of being challenged by new and unusual activities. Older pupils understand and are able to reflect with maturity on how the decisions they make can have a positive or negative impact on their daily lives. For example, they understand that by completing their homework quickly in the evening, they can then have more time for their hobbies.

- 3.16 Pupils appreciate that there are different ways of looking at the world and that everyone has the right to be respected for their beliefs, but do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of those from different traditions, cultures and faiths. They maintain attention and show respect during collective acts of worship and participate with enthusiasm when singing hymns of praise. The older pupils articulately explain that whilst it is nice to own things, material possessions do not necessarily make you happier. They appreciate that participating in artistic and creative activities, such as music and drama, offers different ways to explore and experience the world around them, whilst also allowing them to respond emotionally and without the need for words. Pupils, however, do find it difficult to express and explain their understanding of the world in spiritual and philosophical terms, mainly as a result of an over-emphasis on fact-based learning in some lessons.
- 3.17 Pupils are very well behaved. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and show clear respect for the rules and systems of the school. Younger pupils understand the need for rules and the consequences of not meeting them. Older pupils feel that the school's sanctions are fair although they say they rarely need to be applied. Pupils are polite, courteous and confident when engaging with adults from outside of the school. Their understanding of moral issues is good, although they find explaining their ideas challenging as a result of a lack of opportunities to engage in more open-ended reflective discussions in some lessons. The pupils show generosity towards one another, and willingly take turns to ensure no one is left out during team or group activities. All parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaires agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour and expected pupils to behave well. Pupils have a good understanding of the judiciary and laws, supported by talks from visiting speakers.
- 3.18 Pupils exhibit strong social awareness. They are nurturing towards one another, particularly when working with those younger than themselves, fulfilling the school's aim to instil the values of care and consideration for others and to develop pupils' self-discipline and self-esteem. During shared learning activities, such as reading or baking biscuits for the Queen's birthday, the older pupils worked well alongside younger pupils, including the EYFS. Older pupils welcome the challenge of being given problems to solve, particularly during mathematics lessons, accepting that this often means cooperating with those with whom they may not normally choose to work. Pupils of all ages demonstrate an ability to cope with change, for example when a normal week was re-scheduled because of end-of-year examinations and an inspection. They work well together during sports activities, supporting each other and their teachers, through self-disciplined and efficient organisation, mutual encouragement and positive feedback to one another.
- 3.19 Pupils make a strong and positive contribution to their own school community offering useful support and help to both peers and staff alike. Pupils of all ages are willing volunteers to fill positions of responsibility, for example, as the elected class representatives for the school council. Members of staff confirm that this recent initiative, which enables the pupils to have a real voice in the school's life, has had a positive impact, and pupils are pleased to report that successful outcomes include the provision of new playground equipment.
- 3.20 Pupils engage well with members of the local community, for example, through visits by younger pupils to a local home for the elderly, where they demonstrate respect and empathy for others at a different stage of life through their engagement with the residents. Pupils engage positively with charitable fundraising, and gave moving examples of when they had initiated their own successful supportive efforts in response to the particular circumstances of members of the school or local community.

- 3.21 Pupils show respect for and appreciation of the predominantly Christian culture of the school and they show an interest in finding out more about those from faiths and traditions different to their own. Their opportunities to do this are limited, however, by the curriculum which does not explore in sufficient detail the breadth of cultures, traditions and faiths within this country and globally. Pupils are very inclusive towards each other. They demonstrate sensitivity and tolerance to one another and are very welcoming to new members of the school community. All parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaires agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people.
- 3.22 Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe, particularly when moving around the older and historically idiosyncratic features of the school's buildings. They have a clear grasp of their responsibilities in the event of a fire or other emergency, supported by the regular fire drills that take account of the complex nature of some of the buildings. All pupils including, those in the EYFS, have an appropriate understanding within the local context of how dangerous busy roads can be, and the need to cross them safely. Pupils understand how to stay safe online, supported by the strong emphasis in the school's curriculum on e-safety. Pupils are aware of the need to keep fit and take part enthusiastically in the wide range of sports activities on offer, recognising that their involvement is important for the communal ethos of the school, and to their personal health. Pupils understand the need for a healthy diet and are able to talk with confidence about what it might contain. They have a good awareness of how to maintain mental health and live a balanced lifestyle. At lunchtimes they make sensible choices from the nutritious food on offer. Nearly all parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaires agreed that the school encourages the pupils to follow a healthy lifestyle.

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 governors including the chairman of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended an assembly. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with 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 Matthew Lovett	Reporting inspector
Mrs Clare Lynas	Compliance team inspector (Headteacher, IAPS school)
Mrs Alison Cordingley	Team inspector (Headteacher, IAPS school)