



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Caversham Preparatory School

January 2023

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School's Details

School	Caversham Preparatory School			
DfE number	870/6009			
Address	Caversham Preparatory School 16 Peppard Road Caversham Reading Berkshire RG4 8JZ			
Telephone number	01189 478684			
Email address	secretary@cavershamschool.com			
Headmaster	Mr Daniel Slape			
Proprietor	Mr Ian Lawson and Mrs Jacqueline Lawson			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	72			
	EYFS	17	Infants	19
	Juniors	36		
Inspection dates	24 to 26 January 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Caversham Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day school. It was founded in 1993 and bought by its present proprietors in 2009. The school comprises three sections: the Early Years Foundation Stage, for children in Nursery and Reception; Infants for pupils in Years 1 and 2; and Juniors for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, an advisory board has been set up to support the proprietors. The current headmaster took up his position in January 2023.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school's aim is to provide a caring family environment which promotes kindness, tolerance and mutual support, in which pupils can be nurtured to achieve their potential both academically and pastorally. It seeks to provide a positive culture where pupils acquire understanding, knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to a fast-changing world.

About the pupils

- 1.4 The majority of pupils come from professional and business families living in the local area. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified three pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), none of whom require additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for eight pupils, all of whom receive additional help for their English. Data used by the school have identified 17 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them.

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. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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

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

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

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the 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' achievement is excellent; pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, make rapid progress over time.
- Pupils throughout the school are excellent mathematicians; they calculate confidently and apply their knowledge effectively when solving problems in all subjects.
- Pupils are highly articulate, have strong communication skills and achieve excellent levels of attainment in all areas of literacy.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and can work confidently on their own; however, their ability to use their own initiative to direct their learning is less well developed.

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

- Pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem are excellent; pupils are very confident to verbalise their thoughts and feelings to each other.
- Pupils demonstrate an acute understanding of right and wrong, showing a mature appreciation of the importance of kindness.
- Pupils actively support each other in a collaborative atmosphere, respecting and recognising individual differences and needs.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to be physically and mentally healthy.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

- Strengthen pupils' ability to use their own initiative and become more independent in their learning.

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 attainment of pupils of all ages and abilities is excellent. The majority of pupils attain results in standardised English and mathematics assessments that are above average for schools taking these tests. Children in the EYFS quickly attain the expected learning goals. Throughout the school, pupils make rapid progress over time as observed in lessons, in the scrutiny of their work and from

discussions. The progress of pupils is tracked effectively through regular assessments so that teaching is tailored to individual needs. Pupils with SEND and EAL achieve well in line with their peers from their individual starting points, helped by careful identification and monitoring and high-quality support in class and small-group sessions. Pupils who are more able benefit from additional challenge to maintain their high level of attainment. All parents who responded to the pre inspection questionnaire agree that teaching enables pupils to make progress. School leaders are highly effective in fulfilling the school's aims, ensuring they provide a family environment where children build confidence and enjoy learning in order to achieve their potential.

- 3.6 Pupils speak confidently conveying their ideas with great clarity. They have highly developed vocabularies for their age, as a result of a language-rich learning environment where they are encouraged to use subject-specific key words, cross-curricular links and synonyms as the norm. For example, a younger class discussing facts for an information text articulated well-constructed sentences, utilising clear steps, connectives and wonderful adverbs. This progresses to high-quality sophisticated writing as seen in work produced by the oldest pupils, of all abilities, when penning a description of a storm using a picture as a stimulus. Core values of respect and kindness permeate the school, which generates an atmosphere which helps pupils develop excellent listening skills and confidence in speaking out whether answering questions in class, making presentations to their peers, or in activities such as public speaking. This was witnessed on numerous occasions during the inspection, such as when Year 6 acted out parts with great dramatic effect from the book *Letters from the Lighthouse* by Emma Carroll.
- 3.7 Pupils develop good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding as they progress through the school. This is a result of excellent planning, high expectations and a thorough knowledge of each pupil, delivered by capable and committed staff. All pupils apply their learning and understanding highly effectively. This was seen by Year 1 pupils making fruit kebabs in design and technology (DT) and demonstrating excellent knowledge and understanding of why fruit is healthy, declaring that it contains lots of vitamins and little fat or sugar, unlike sweets which rot your teeth. Pupils in Year 6 used technical terms, such as syncopated rhythm, to discuss music in the rondo form. Children in the EYFS accurately recited the months of the year and days of the week and applied this understanding to what day was yesterday and what day it would be tomorrow. They are successful for their age in the acquisition of linguistic skills. Pupils in Year 5 accurately and confidently named different dates, days and months in French. Pupils across the age range have excellent performance skills in singing and drama. This was evidenced during assembly as pupils of all ages sang beautifully, played musical instruments competently and recited words with real talent, enjoyment, and empathy.
- 3.8 Pupils of all ages show high levels of numerical competence, successfully utilising their excellent calculation skills both in mathematics and across the curriculum. Rapid progress is facilitated by a well-planned curriculum, with pupils given opportunities to apply strong mathematical knowledge alongside higher-level reasoning skills, as seen by Year 3 pupils being asked to offer proof for their theories, and furthermore what level of testing constituted proof. Mathematics is very popular amongst pupils, who enjoy the scope to challenge themselves during lessons, as well as national and local competitions which are tackled with enthusiasm and ambition. Scrutiny of work demonstrates pupils' confident application of numeracy skills and knowledge in other subjects, for instance data handling work in science and use of coordinates in geography. Pupils in an art lesson applied their mathematical knowledge of number to calculate the number of rooms in their Mosque design, and the youngest pupils in registration used knowledge of shape and space to effortlessly get into a circle.
- 3.9 Pupils achieve success in a range of academic and other achievements throughout their time at school, encouraged by the celebration of their successes through a plethora of different avenues, such as house points, gold coins, and certificates. The vast majority of pupils are successful in achieving a place at the senior school of their choice and a number are awarded academic, sports, drama or music scholarships. There is substantial success in LAMDA assessments, with all entrants achieving distinctions and merits. All parents agree that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular

activities. Pupils described, for example, the immense sense of achievement and satisfaction gained from performing in a recent musical production of *Lion King*. The school has achieved success in a range of national competitions with junior pupils winning ISA art and handwriting competitions.

- 3.10 Pupils' study skills show incremental development as they progress through the school, with highly developed collaborative skills enhancing their progress. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school equips their children with the team-working, collaborative, and research skills they need in later life. Year 1 pupils, classifying animals, successfully analysed the information, synthesising the pertinent points to declare which group the animal belonged to, and Year 3 pupils confidently hypothesised during games, that their heartbeat would beat faster once they started exercising. Pupils, including those with SEND and EAL, draw knowledge effectively from sources to which they have been directed and are extremely attentive in lessons, though in some cases they show more limited initiative beyond that of directed teaching. Where more open-ended tasks are presented to pupils, they develop their thinking and learning to a higher level. Year 2 pupils, for example, displayed considerable skills of synthesis when independently extrapolating key features of an information text.
- 3.11 Children begin to acquire good skills in information and communication technology (ICT) in the EYFS, learning to use different programmes to present and interpret information and to write in code as they move throughout the school. Pupils are able to manipulate data and to present their research to an audience, as evidenced by the oldest pupils using their ICT skills to work out the weekly house point totals to deliver to the whole school during achievement assembly. Others have produced posters, displayed round the school whilst some independently produce presentations on topics of choice such as a much-loved dog. Pupils understand the difference between ICT as a subject and its use to support learning. The oldest pupils produced excellent animations during an ICT lesson to recreate a scene from their English book, *Letters from the Light House*. In some lessons, ICT was fully integrated and greatly enhanced pupils' learning, with technology being used to good effect. For example, research in a geography lesson on facts about different biomes highlighted pupils' ability to gather information using recently acquired tablets, or QR codes employed in a mathematics lesson to share answers with pupils.
- 3.12 Throughout the school, pupils display decidedly positive attitudes and an enthusiasm for learning, as evidenced by their endeavours in all lessons and activities observed during the inspection. They are highly productive when working individually, with a learning partner or in a group. The youngest children explore their aesthetic and creative talents through a balanced curriculum and demonstrate a love of learning and thirst for knowledge which amplifies and matures into scholarship, especially in English and mathematics at the top of the school. Their willingness to take responsibility for their own learning is fostered by their teachers who stimulate discussion by asking thought-provoking questions and thereby creating a positive and supportive atmosphere which instils confidence in pupils. The pupils value their community and gain a sense of personal achievement and satisfaction from contributing to the success of the school. The school's implicit culture and sense of family that is strongly promoted by the leadership team, underpins the pupils' desire to do their best and excellent staff-to-pupil ratios ensure every pupil has the opportunity to shine. In response to the questionnaire, all parents stated that the school was well governed and led.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils of all ages and abilities have particularly high levels of self-knowledge, self-discipline and resilience. In response to the questionnaire, all parents agreed that the school helps their children become confident and independent. Inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils grow in self-esteem as they progress through the school, becoming aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. They demonstrate positive learning habits which are reinforced by the motivational displays around

the school and regular praise and rewards. Less able pupils make excellent progress due to the warm, caring support they are given. Sensitive, focused teaching combined with embedded self-assessment ensures that all pupils know what they are good at and where they need to improve. In the face of difficulty or when challenged intellectually, pupils show strong perseverance, with strategies such as thinking thumbs used during teacher input to supplement traffic lights self-assessment at the end of tasks. In discussion, pupils were confident and self-assured, open in sharing their feelings and attitudes. Pupils are aware of the school's high academic and social expectations of them, yet they felt comfortable in making mistakes in order to learn. Pupils said that they appreciated the strong 'I can' culture that exists in all aspects of school life. This, coupled with the confidence gained through the many leadership roles they undertake, ensures that pupils feel well equipped for the next stage of their education.

- 3.15 Pupils are able to make decisions that will have an impact on their lives. The youngest children showed a mature ability to bounce back after difficulty sharing toys in an outdoor session and went on to seek a new challenge. Pupils quickly learn to make sensible choices, such as which activities to join, following their interests to broaden their learning, or what music to request for Wednesdays wake-up, shake up session. Choice is a feature of some lessons and, by the time they reach the older classes, pupils are able to recognise the implications and difficulties of making important decisions and of having the courage of their convictions in deciding which course to follow. Pupils understand that the decisions they make have a bearing on their own well-being and on that of others. They are diligent in seeking ways in which to minimise upsetting others, taking heed of the school's advice to be tolerant and kind to all.
- 3.16 Pupils show extremely high moral development and can distinguish clearly between right and wrong behaviours. Throughout the whole school, pupils behave with courtesy and consideration for others. Pupils from the very youngest were observed holding doors open for each other without being asked, offering others daily greetings, and showing genuine interest in each other's feelings. Relationships are extremely positive, and a culture of respect and kindness pervades all aspects of school life. Pupils say that they have very little experience of bullying at school as there is no tolerance for unkind behaviour, and immediate interventions are put in place to address any unfavourable actions or resolve friendship issues should they occur. A family ethos, where all pupils display and discuss their inherent values of knowing what is expected and how to be kind and respectful, is a strong feature of the school community.
- 3.17 Pupils show a keen awareness and strong appreciation of non-material aspects of life such as learning, friendship, and family. This is exemplified not only in a high appreciation of the arts throughout the school, but also in displays that emphasise the importance of actions that bring joy and happiness. Starting in the EYFS, children enjoy outdoor learning activities, in which they acquire strong observational skills and a real appreciation for all aspects of life. The pupils' sheer delight in one such session when they heard the crunch of the leaves or snap of the twigs was palpable, as were the awe and wonder experienced by spotting a bird's nest or taking care not to disturb a 'precious worm'. In their religious education (RE) lessons, pupils learn about a broad range of religions including Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism and Islam, but of equal importance is developing an appreciation for all of God's creation irrespective of faith or not. This was evidenced in assembly when all pupils were respectful, irrespective of their own faith and demonstrated real joy when singing together.
- 3.18 The pupils' social awareness is excellent. Their co-operative and supportive responses towards peers and younger children, encouraged through a well-developed buddying system, are instinctive which helps to create a harmonious and engaging community. The school is seen by pupils as a place where everyone is respected and treated as unique individuals, with the excellent pupil-to-staff ratios contributing enormously to the pupils' outstanding social development. Pupils were seen collaborating effectively, engaging in discussion, and enjoying successfully completed shared tasks, such as older pupils debating 'should school uniforms be abolished?'. Pupils build strong relationships and feel respected by teachers and support staff, who clearly want them to do well in all aspects of

school life. These factors help pupils to develop into highly considerate and empathetic young people who demonstrate a strong sense of loyalty to their school and who work together to fulfil common goals.

- 3.19 Pupils flourish in a multi-cultural, diverse community in a relaxed and accepting way. Pupils from different cultures blend in as one, expressing most positively that they respect and value diversity. Pupils form strong friendships and demonstrate mutual respect and kindness to everyone who crosses their path. Pupils engage naturally and without hesitation with those of backgrounds and cultures other than their own, in response to the ethos of kindness and mutual respect which permeates the school. This was evidenced by all pupils listening to a most informative talk on Chinese New Year and responding sensitively and with clear tolerance of different traditions. Pupils have a thoughtful awareness of British society and, in particular, the role of tolerance. Pupils confirmed in discussion that they aim to be the best version of themselves recognising that others may have different views from themselves, but everyone is equally valued, irrespective of ability, opinion or belief. During pupil interviews, it was shared that people choose kindness here and, in response to the questionnaires, all pupils and parents agreed that the school encourages them to respect and tolerate other people.
- 3.20 Pupils delight in making a significant contribution to the school and in activities which benefit others, in the local community and through charitable enterprises. Pupils develop a sense of belonging and healthy competition through the house system, which enables them to make common cause in pursuit of being in the winning house. Their competitiveness also comes from the pride they feel in their school and the way it encourages them always to give of their best, without comparing themselves directly to others. Pupils from Reception are proud to act as a pupil voice when chosen by peers to represent their class on the pupil council. This group is currently deciding what playground equipment to purchase to enhance their break times. All pupils in Year 6 have leadership roles and become outstanding role models and ambassadors for the school. Pupils have a heart for humankind, with a mature capacity to think beyond their own immediate lives. Pupils spoke passionately about making donations to the local foodbank to support those in need and relished the opportunity to raise money for a school in Zambia.
- 3.21 Pupils know how to stay safe, both in the real and virtual world. They appreciate the regular focus on online safety in ICT lessons and speak confidently of the need to maintain anonymity in certain scenarios, protect passwords, and to adopt a mature approach to strangers. They understand the importance of being both physically and mentally healthy. In response to the questionnaire, all parents felt that the school encourages their children to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Pupils greatly appreciate that they are in an environment where this aspect of their lives is taken seriously and is seen as an area for all pupils to nurture; the daily mile, wake-up, shake-up Wednesdays and walk to school pick-up points on a Friday clearly demonstrating the school's commitment to helping pupils develop a healthy lifestyle. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet, reinforced by nutritious lunches and seen by older pupils eloquently talking about what a balanced meal is. Pupils' resilience and understanding are supported and developed through the school's excellent personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, where staff and pupils alike spoke about happy pupils being learning pupils with lively, inquiring minds and healthy bodies. Without exception, they all felt safe and appreciated within the family environment and culture of warmth and security that pervades the school.

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 proprietors, 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. 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 Ruth Loveman	Reporting inspector
Miss Melanie Eaton	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, GSA school)
Mr Matt Donaldson	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)