



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Wetherby Preparatory School

November 2021

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School's Details

School	Wetherby Preparatory School			
DfE number	213/6395			
Address	Wetherby Preparatory School 48 Bryanston Square Marylebone London W1H 2EA			
Telephone number	0207 5353520			
Email address	admin@wetherbyprep.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Nick Baker			
Chair of governors	Sir John Ritblat			
Age range	7 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	384			
	lower	248	upper	136
Inspection dates	16 to 19 November 2021			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Wetherby Preparatory School opened in 2004 and moved to its present location in 2009. It is registered as a single-sex school for male pupils. The school consists of two departments: lower school for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5, and upper school for pupils in Years 6,7 and 8. The school is a member of the Alpha Plus Group, which carries out the corporate governance responsibility for the school. Inspection of Wetherby School, also an Alpha Plus Group school was undertaken concurrently by another inspection team.
- 1.2 During the period March to August 2020, the whole school remained open only for children of key workers. The school opened for Year 6 from June 2020 and for all pupils for the last two weeks of the school year.
- 1.3 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on-site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.4 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement, or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.5 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than vulnerable pupils or the children of key workers received remote learning provision at home.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.6 The school aims to provide an 'education in the round' for all its pupils, developing their intellectual, physical, social, and moral selves. It is intended to prepare them for a wide range of senior schools and provide firm foundations for a successful, balanced and accomplished adult life. The school believes it can achieve this through providing effective and consistent pastoral care, an appropriate academic curriculum which raises pupils' aspirations, and an extensive range of clubs, sporting activities and visits.

About the pupils

- 1.7 Most pupils come from professional families within 10 miles of the school, reflecting the multi-cultural makeup of the area. The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is 31. No pupils have a local authority funded statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Two pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and require support to develop oral and written language skills. The school curriculum is modified for those pupils who have been identified as more able.

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. 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](#).

COVID-19: Inspection judgements do not cover the period March to August 2020 inclusive.

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 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 in the lower school and relationships and sex education in the upper school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. 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 well-being 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.

- The attainment of pupils is excellent and well above average for their age.
- Pupils with SEND and those identified as more able benefit from teaching which is closely tailored to their needs.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent; they take great pride in their work and in the school.
- The pupils' successes in sport and a wide range of other activities are excellent.

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

- Pupils show strong self-confidence, perseverance, and motivation to work hard and improve their learning.
- Pupils from a wide range of different cultures get on extremely well with each other, recognising that each pupil is unique and valuing their differences.
- Pupils' excellent and mature approach to moral issues and their awareness of their social responsibilities is evident in all that they do.
- Pupils have an extremely mature understanding of the importance of making good decisions and make positive contributions to the school and the wider community.

Recommendation

3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following improvement:

- Enable pupils throughout the school to develop their study skills further through an increased awareness of their learning styles.

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 school's own assessment through standardised data indicates that the attainment of pupils of all abilities is excellent, with many exceeding national expectations. This is reflected in the success of many pupils in obtaining places at highly selective senior schools. Evidence from the scrutiny of books, work on display and lessons indicates that pupils of all ages make excellent progress from their starting points, supported by high aspirations and a very motivated staff who know their pupils individually

and well. Pupils with SEND achieve very well due to the high levels of support and timely procedures for intervention. In discussions they spoke warmly of the strong support they receive to enable them to achieve in line with their peers. More able pupils make rapid progress and comment that they relish the challenge in their learning, and attribute this to teaching approaches which extend their thinking and encourage them to work independently. In the pre inspection questionnaires, the overwhelming majority of parents agreed that teaching enables the pupils to make progress.

- 3.6 Pupils demonstrate high levels of knowledge, skill and understanding across the curriculum, fostered by inspiring and stimulating teaching. Teachers know their pupils well and use this knowledge to good effect to ensure pupils achieve as highly as their abilities allow as seen in Year 7 Science when pupils were predicting and discovering reaction to metals oxides. In a Year 4 English lesson, pupils showed an advanced knowledge of personification, alliteration, coordinated conjunctions and similes, describing what they were with confidence and using these techniques to develop a simple sentence into a powerful and interesting one.
- 3.7 Pupils display excellent communication skills and are confident, articulate speakers. They listen well to one another and express themselves clearly and concisely. Pupils willingly answer questions in class and are keen to share their views. The school's family atmosphere and its ethos of valuing what pupils have to say, promotes open communication across the school and provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their excellent speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Pupils' writing displayed throughout the school demonstrates the care they take with the presentation of their work and the high standards achieved. Pupils were bursting with enthusiasm while learning words and actions for their upcoming play at the end of their Year 3 topic on Stone, Bronze, and Iron Age warriors, as their teachers encouraged thought provoking actions and reaction to the words. Pupils in Year 6 were able to speak to their class about a topic of their choice with no notes. In pupil discussions, Year 5 pupils were articulate and keen to share their thoughts and opinions.
- 3.8 Pupils show an excellent understanding of numeracy by their secure grasp of mathematical skills which they apply confidently in problem-solving and other areas of the curriculum. Setting and focused support help to ensure all pupils are able to develop their numeracy and mathematical skills at a rate appropriate for their abilities. This was evidenced in Year 3 where pupils worked together to ask questions, solve problems, and develop their understanding. Pupils of all ages achieve good levels of attainment in numeracy which they apply effectively to other areas of learning. Year 7 pupils talked confidently in discussion about how they use their mathematical skills to pursue their study of science, particularly in graph work and measurements. The same pupils also shared their enjoyment of working on mathematical equations in French to learn the target language vocabulary for number words. Additional challenge is provided for more able mathematicians through the maths extension work and has resulted in many successes in the UK Maths Challenge awards.
- 3.9 Pupils are highly competent in their use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). They apply their skills confidently and enthusiastically when carrying out and recording their independent research. This was seen in a Year 5 Geography lesson when pupils investigated relationships between different employment structures across the less and more economically developed countries in the world. Pupils' learning is supported by their access to a range of technology and programmable devices such as when creating programmed robotic submarines in coding club. Pupils use ICT competently in all stages of the school and do so to enhance their learning in lessons and also for pastoral and social reasons. Year 8 pupils work as peer mentors for Year 3 and 4 pupils on an online platform to engage in tasks together and share their learning. Pupils in Year 4 showed confidence when using coding programmes and developed characters that they could control through programming particular codes. The school is using its forward-thinking approach to technology to achieve its aim to provide firm foundations for a successful, balanced and accomplished adult life, as was seen when Year 8 pupils identified opportunities for the future on a visit to a well-known company. Parents commented on the progress of pupils during the recent pandemic restrictions which

most agree was due to the school benefitting from strong governance, leadership and management and pupils' use of technology.

- 3.10 Pupils have excellent study skills and increasingly demonstrate these as they move through the school. Older pupils think logically and apply their learning skills to tackle new challenges. Pupils are encouraged to express their opinions and discuss, question and debate with confidence while taking every opportunity to be creative and innovative in their independent work. This has been further enhanced with the establishment of independent research projects in both upper and lower schools. Pupils in Year 7 were knowledgeable about their use of a range of mnemonics and acronyms to remember key revision points. In discussion with older pupils, they explained how they develop more sophisticated thinking skills by following up topics and doing further research at home in subjects such as science, history, and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Older pupils and those who attend learning enrichment lessons develop advanced study skills through an understanding of their individual learning styles. However, these are less well developed in younger pupils.
- 3.11 Pupils achieve a prominent level of success at the point of transfer to other schools, with many pupils achieving scholarships. Pupils take full advantage of the extra-curricular programme which provides opportunities for pupils to engage, and enjoy success, in a vast range of activities including art, music, problem-solving and sport. Encouraged by an enthusiastic, dedicated staff, pupils achieve significant success in a range of in-school and national competitions including such areas as fencing, skiing, sailing, golf, chess, rowing, and photography as well as sport, drama, and music. Senior leaders have created a culture whereby pupils are highly motivated by their achievements being celebrated in the weekly assemblies.
- 3.12 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. The tasks and teaching methods employed in class encourage enthusiastic participation and a love of learning. It is evident that pupils take pride in their work and in their school. In class, they listen well, fully engage in the lesson and apply themselves in a conscientious manner. Pupils of all ages enjoy opportunities to work together and respond well when asked to work independently. Older pupils show a willingness to take responsibility for their own learning and respond enthusiastically to open-ended tasks and challenges requiring initiative and independent thought. This was seen in a Year 8 drama lesson where pupils worked with focus, energy, and creativity in small groups to prepare a short performance from a section of Macbeth. In a Year 7 history lesson, individual pupils were inspired to seek out their teacher at the end of the lesson to share additional ideas and opinions on the topic of religion before the Reformation. A demonstration of the strong work ethic and keenness to embrace new challenges placed before them was seen in a Year 7 French lesson in which pupils moved successfully and quickly from one task to another, maintaining focus throughout. Pupils work extremely well collaboratively such as when Year 6 engaged with each other naturally and effectively to work in small groups on a series of tableaux in an anti-bullying workshop.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils across the school show excellent levels of self-confidence and self-discipline and are very well prepared for the next phase of their education. As they progress through the school, pupils grow in self-esteem and are keen to do well. They acknowledge that hard work is the route to success and appreciate the support they receive from their teachers, especially in knowing what they need to do to improve. Pupils with SEND are aware of their own learning styles which give them the confidence to improve in their own learning and performance, and recognise their own strengths and weaknesses. Year 4 pupils explained how they learn from their mistakes, ask for help when they need to and try to solve problems themselves without giving up. Older pupils explained how the peer mentoring scheme works and stated that it gives them great confidence. The close-knit atmosphere, epitomised by the mutual respect and warm relationships evident in the classroom, encourages pupils to be open in

expressing their thoughts and feelings and to risk making mistakes. Many activities and initiatives by pupils are applauded in the Friday assembly, school newsletter and notes of praise sent home by the Head.

- 3.15 Pupils have an extremely mature understanding about the importance of making sensible, good decisions. In discussions, pupils were clear that the decisions they make regarding their learning, behaviour, friendships, and effort are important in determining how well they will do in the future. Opportunities for decision making throughout the school day help pupils develop their self-confidence and independence such as when they were involved in using oracy skills to solve fraction problems with a classmate, or when choosing to be part of the school council and organising charity events. They know that good choices have a significant impact on their success and well-being. This was particularly evident in a Year 6 personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lesson in which pupils showed a deep awareness of how to prevent bullying amongst their peers and how to spread kindness.
- 3.16 Pupils show a strong, well-developed spiritual awareness in their ability to empathise with others and to acknowledge an understanding of their own and other faiths through regular theology, philosophy and religion (TPR) lessons and visits to a variety of places of worship. Pupils have a very keen appreciation of the non-material aspects of life and show excellent cultural awareness, interest in philosophy and creative thinking and an appreciation of the natural world around them. This was seen in a Year 8 music lesson in which pupils described which emotions were evoked in them by certain pieces of music from well-known films. Pupils spoke of their enjoyment of being able to use a designated calm area for reflection and mindfulness sessions. Assemblies in the local church provide pupils with a sense of community which is valued by all.
- 3.17 Pupils are polite and well-mannered and clearly understand the need for boundaries of acceptable behaviour. This has been evidenced in many interactions between the pupils in the corridors and lessons and also in discussion with a group of Year 4 children who explained how they are taught that they can disagree with their peers but must give their own opinion in a respectful way. Pupils in Year 6 showed a thoughtful moral understanding of the need to treat others positively and work together to overcome bullying. They expressed a clear understanding of reasons why bullying should not be kept a secret, and why they should try to stop bullying when they encountered it. Pupils recognise the importance of taking responsibility for their own behaviour and they find the behaviour ladder of sanctions posted around the school helpful. They are clearly motivated by the House Point system, the rewards announced at the weekly assembly such as the kindness cup, and headmaster's awards. School rules and expectations are learned as pupils move through the school from Year 3 upwards, and the PSHE and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum assists them continually in developing their understanding and respect for rules.
- 3.18 Pupils' social development and collaboration are excellent, benefiting from the positive sense of mutual respect between pupils and teachers. They work in groups and in pairs, encouraged by teaching that promotes the sharing of ideas and good practice. Pupils were often seen working together effectively to solve problems, engaging in lively discussions, and enjoying successfully completed tasks. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, the class worked as one group to solve a big maths problem. They discussed their ideas, included each other, and worked with focus to achieve their task. Pupils spoke with pride of their roles on the school council and how they have been able to make a difference on matters such as a school dog, packed lunches before activities and suggestions for new clubs. Older pupils build strong relationships and feel respected by their teachers, who have encouraged them to take part in challenges such as teaching Latin and Greek as well as Roman and Greek civilisation in a local primary school.
- 3.19 Pupils embrace and celebrate their differences, respecting and valuing the cultural diversity of the school. They gain a good understanding of different cultures through assemblies in the local church, the PSHE, RSE and TPR curriculum. For example pupils in Year 4 are preparing to explore the religious and cultural aspects of Diwali through a drama performance. Their respect for each other's differences

is fundamental to the positive relationships seen between pupils of all ages. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the '31 days' book in which pupils have contributed stories about Black History figures, demonstrating both historical skills and respect. An overwhelming majority of parents and pupils in questionnaire responses agreed that the school promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of others and prepares pupils effectively for life in modern society. This is a result of strong leadership and caring staff who ensure that pupils are compassionate and confident individuals.

- 3.20 Pupils say they feel safe in the school environment and know what steps they need to take to keep themselves safe both within and outside school. In discussions, pupils confirmed that they know how to keep themselves safe online and how to respond to any worrying messages they receive, referring to the many posters around school which reinforce this. Pupils have a strong comprehension of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle as a result of the high profile of sport in school life. They develop an extremely good understanding of how to ensure good mental health, sound well-being, and a balanced lifestyle. The importance of being active is particularly encouraged by the PE department with the emphasis on 'sport for all'. Also the benefits are promoted throughout the school of good mental health and social well-being by playing sport outside school at club level.
- 3.21 Pupils are proud of their school and relish their roles of responsibility, enjoying the opportunity to contribute to their school community. Year 8 pupils provide weekly mentoring for younger pupils in Years 3 and 4, who need gentle support to ensure an effective transition into the school. Pupils contribute to the life of the school through representation on the school council and as part of the pupil leadership team. They demonstrate their strong desire to help by frequently taking the initiative in planning events, raising awareness, and organising their support, such as when composing music for a charity performance. Pupils empathise with the plight of others in less developed countries and are proud to tell people about the school's support for Rwanda Aid and a link school, where funds have enabled new classrooms to be built. Pupils view their contributions to the class, school, and wider community as especially important and they enjoy reporting their activities in assemblies. These include singing at events, putting on plays and taking part in bake-off events to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils showed great recognition for the successes of their peers at the weekly assembly, building a great sense of community spirit.

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 the proprietor/chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and a church assembly. Inspectors visited 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

Mrs Daphne Cawthorne	Reporting inspector
Mrs Joanne Coventry King	Compliance team inspector (Deputy Head, IAPS school)
Mr David Sibson	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)