



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

The Belvedere Preparatory School

October 2019



Contents

Contents	2
School's Details	3
1. Background Information	4
About the school	4
What the school seeks to do	4
About the pupils	4
2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection	5
Preface	5
PART 1 – Quality of education provided	6
PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	6
PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils	6
PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors	6
PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools	7
PART 6 – Provision of information	7
PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled	7
PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools	7
3. Educational Quality Inspection	9
Preface	9
Key findings	10
Recommendation	10
The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements	10
The quality of the pupils' personal development	12
4. Inspection Evidence	14

School's Details

School	The Belvedere Preparatory School			
DfE number	341/6039			
Address	The Belvedere Preparatory School 23 Belvidere Road Princes Park Aigburth Liverpool L8 3TF			
Telephone number	0151 471 1137			
Email address	enquiries@belvedereprep.com			
Headteacher	Miss Clare Burnham			
Proprietors	Mr William Currie and Mrs Catherine Currie			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	137			
	EYFS	30	Juniors	107
Inspection dates	8 to 10 October 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 The Belvedere Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between three and eleven. It was founded in 1880 as the junior department of a local school for female pupils. In 2006, it separated from this school, becoming The Hamlets Preparatory School. Ownership transferred to the current proprietors in 2010, when it was renamed The Belvedere Preparatory School. Male pupils were admitted at this time.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school seeks to provide a creative, vibrant and academic education, releasing and enhancing each child's unique skills and talents in an environment of care and respect.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds, the majority coming from white British families living in the Liverpool area. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified seven pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for three pupils, one of whom receives additional help. Data used by the school have identified 14 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for five other pupils because of their special talents in sport.

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 does not meet all of the required 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 should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school measures attainment using National Curriculum tests. In the years 2015 to 2016, the results were above the national average for maintained schools
- 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 in almost all areas; 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. However, the required prohibition from teaching checks and prohibition from management checks have not always been undertaken for members of staff before they were appointed.
- 2.8 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9-16, and the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan), the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met, but the standard in paragraph 7 is not met.**

Action point 1

- **The school must ensure that the required checks on prohibition from management and prohibition to teaching are carried out before staff are appointed [paragraph 7 (a) and (b); EYFS 3.9]**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.9 The school makes most of the appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept. However, the required overseas checks have not always been undertaken for members of staff before they were appointed, and not all checks have been appropriately recorded in the register.
- 2.10 **The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraph 18 and paragraph 21 are not met.**

Action point 2

- the school must ensure that the required overseas checks are carried out before staff are appointed [paragraph 18 (2)(e) and (3); EYFS 3.10] and that all checks are appropriately recorded in the single central registers of appointments [paragraph 21 (3)(a)(iii), (a)(viii) and (b); EYFS 3.9, EYFS 3.12]

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 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 mostly demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that most standards are consistently met and the well-being of the pupils is promoted. However, there is insufficient oversight of staff pre-appointment checks.
- 2.18 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 is not met.

Action point 3

- **the school must ensure that leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities effectively and actively promote the well-being of the pupils by ensuring that appropriate recruitment checks are carried out before the appointment of staff [paragraph 34 (1) (a), (b) and (c)].**

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'.

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 of all abilities, including those with SEND, make strong academic progress and achieve excellent results in Year 6.
 - Pupils demonstrate excellent communication skills, both orally and on paper.
 - Pupils acquire secure study skills.
 - Pupils find fulfilment and develop their talents and aptitudes in a good range of extra-curricular pursuits.
 - Pupils participate enthusiastically in all activities that they undertake.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils have a natural, unaffected self-confidence.
 - Pupils feel safe in their school and enjoy an excellent rapport with their teachers.
 - Proud of their school, pupils conduct themselves courteously.
 - Pupils have a secure understanding of right and wrong, and they treat one another considerately.
 - Pupils flourish harmoniously in a community of diverse backgrounds and faiths.

Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school is recommended to develop its newly-introduced well-being programme systematically across all age groups.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils achieve high levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across a broad academic curriculum, which includes Mandarin for the older pupils and pays due attention to the creative and the performing arts. By the time they leave for their senior schools, pupils are very well equipped to make informed choices, owing to the wide scope of the programme of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE). All of the pupils and parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school offers a good range of subjects.
- 3.6 Recent National Curriculum results for Key Stage 2 have been well above the national average. Year 6 leavers gain places at the secondary schools of their choice, some of which have demanding entrance criteria. Every year a number of pupils win specialist art and music place at their senior school. All of this represents excellent academic achievement in this non-selective school. Pupils with SEND and EAL are able to keep up with their peers, greatly helped by subject teachers' detailed knowledge of their needs, by the attention of teaching assistants and by structured specialist help.
- 3.7 In their questionnaire responses, the very large majority of the parents and all of the pupils who replied wrote favourably of pupils' progress, and inspection evidence from observation of lessons, discussions with pupils, scrutiny of their work and examination of information held by the staff confirmed that pupils make strong academic progress. This owes much to excellent teaching by staff who know their charges' circumstances and aptitudes very well. Pupils' positive progress and high achievement are enabled by work tailored to the relative abilities of individuals. Among the many observed examples of this was a Year 4 lesson on the re-worked version of a traditional fairy tale, in which everyone had work matched to their capabilities and the ablest were given scope to excel in

drafting character descriptions. Again, the ablest pupils in a Year 6 history lesson took the opportunity, in an assignment accessible to all pupils, to produce sophisticated and carefully reasoned analyses.

- 3.8 Pupils respond positively to an established ethos throughout the school of high academic expectations: this is expressed through teachers' uncompromising adherence to demanding standards, coupled with a sympathetic attitude and a lightness of touch. In the EYFS, the very large majority meet or exceed their early learning goals. The children display enquiring minds, for instance responding eagerly to the varied challenges presented on their cross-cultural afternoon. As they move up the school, pupils acquire secure study skills. Visible evidence of this is the exceptional presentation of written work throughout the school, reflecting pride, care and a sense of doing one's best. The oldest pupils have a clear appreciation of the disciplines required to make the most of their ability and they understand the targets set for improvement and achievement. In class pupils make the most of their lessons by applying themselves with determination and a well-sustained focus: they understand the need to persevere with a worthwhile task, even when they find it difficult, not least when tackling the unfamiliar forms and sounds of Mandarin. Pupils' reasoning skills are excellent, partly because lessons in all curriculum areas are structured so as to provide ample opportunities for them to explain their thinking. From their earliest years, pupils respond positively to invitations to think for themselves. In the EYFS, children take the lead in making choices about pictures to work on and numbers of buttons to press on the machines in their cross-curricular afternoon, while Year 1 pupils were observed choosing what to write as well as being directed. Furthermore, as they move up the school, pupils learn to monitor their own academic progress. Consequently, the oldest pupils demonstrate independence of mind and the ability to take decisions and initiatives unprompted.
- 3.9 At all levels, pupils achieve a high standard of written expression in relation to their ability. Encouraged to do so, they are able to explore and experiment with language. In a Year 2 class who understood what synonyms were, one pupil incorporated the word 'astonished' in a description; another wanted to know the meaning of 'humanity'. In the same class, the ablest pupils were achieving a very good cursive script. Pupils responded eagerly to a whole-school writing activity in which they had to complete a story in their own words. Pupils' significant progress in all of their subjects is enabled by regular, detailed marking which encourages and offers pointers to further improvement.
- 3.10 Pupils are highly articulate, expressing themselves fluently and easily, often using sophisticated vocabulary and expression. They gain confidence from the many opportunities to perform in front of an audience, in debating and assemblies, in plays and choirs, and in lively class discussions. They draw on a wide vocabulary, which is a reflection of a school that promotes reading extensively. Pupils' imaginations are fed and their horizons are widened by the many ways in which books are promoted: the school library is distinctively housed in a superannuated bus; authors regularly visit; pupils have designed and created reading corners in their classrooms; and they are frequently read to by their teachers. In lessons, pupils consolidate what they know they are expected to learn because they listen attentively, to the teacher and also to one another.
- 3.11 Pupils achieve a high level of mathematical competence. Thanks to solid foundations laid at an early age, they are adept at mental arithmetic. The older pupils are able cogently to explain their mathematical thinking when calculating answers to word-based problems. Pupils' learning is enriched by their proficiency in the use of information and communication technology (ICT), mastering coding and animation in their dedicated ICT lessons, and using the internet profitably for research and presentations in a variety of subjects. Year 6 pupils proved highly adept at working through the component parts of an animation programme. Pupils have also extended their range in art by the exciting use of digital photography. Teaching and learning have been significantly enhanced by the proprietors' deliberate and significant investment in ICT in recent years.
- 3.12 In their responses to the questionnaire, the very large majority of parents agree that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities. The school has won formal local recognition for its commitment to sport, and this commitment is echoed in the pupils' spirited participation in the various sporting activities provided. Pupils demonstrate the effectiveness with which they develop

their skills and talents, as well as learning the discipline of teamwork, by achieving success in district tournaments, notably in cricket, hockey, football and cross country. In music and drama, pupils not only gain confidence and learn by heart, but they also understand how to participate in a different sort of team – one of the choirs or the cast of a play. Pupils' all-round education is enriched as they learn new skills and techniques in various after-school activities, such as problem-solving and dance. A notable feature of these activities is that they are skilfully planned and purposefully conducted, so that they represent a thoroughly worthwhile and productive use of time.

- 3.13 Pupils display an enthusiastic approach to all that they undertake. In lessons they are keen to contribute, readily offering ideas, possible solutions and answers to questions. Animatedly participating in their extra-curricular pursuits, they work co-operatively in pairs, groups and teams. Pupils respond positively to the curricular and extra-curricular challenges, engaged by attractively presented and stimulating topics and tasks, and spurred on by the warm encouragement of their teachers.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 Pupils develop strongly in terms of self-knowledge, self-esteem and a sense of self-worth. They conduct themselves with a natural, unaffected self-confidence. The mutually respectful affection between staff and pupils and the outstanding level of pastoral care fulfil the school's stated aim that its pupils should be brought up in an environment of care and respect. Pupils feel valued, not least as a result of pastoral care which begins always from a positive place, focusing on their strengths and their best inner qualities.
- 3.16 The school's approach to decision-making is clear and consistent: it is handed over to pupils wherever possible. Year 6 pupils learn how to justify themselves and their aspirations by being required to interview for positions of leadership. Pupils grow in their sense of self-worth by taking part in the making of sensible, responsible decisions because they are happy and willing to make the most of their opportunities to contribute to a wide range of decisions that will influence their academic and general progress. They devise class rules and define their leadership roles in Years 5 and 6; they formulate their own risk assessments ahead of residential trips and they use homework planners to support management of their school lives. They contribute to the promotion of anti-bullying initiatives. The behaviour log maintained by senior management is based on criteria proposed by the pupils.
- 3.17 Pupils develop an increasingly deep appreciation of the spiritual and non-material aspects of life. They are uplifted by choral singing, as members of school and local cathedral choirs. Pupils were in awe of the internationally renowned observatory which they visited at the time of the inspection. Pupils say that they find experiences in the performing and creative arts elevating: taking part in plays, singing choral masterpieces and generating exciting artwork. They say that they derive great benefit from residential visits with adventurous activities where they acquire resilience and learn to be independent.
- 3.18 Throughout the school, pupils have a secure sense of right and wrong. They respect the rules, which they regard as fair, so that discipline is not a significant matter of day-to-day concern. All of the parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour, and pupils' behaviour around the school was observed to be civilised, considerate and courteous. The older pupils set a good example to the younger ones. Pupils know how to behave in all school contexts, to the advantage of their academic well-being. They come into their lessons ready to study, and they settle quickly and quietly to their work. During the inspection, many examples of exemplary classroom conduct were seen: for instance, the self-disciplined approach of a Year 2 English class where the pupils were able to organise themselves quickly for the next stage of the lesson, thus

saving time. The ethos of good manners is reinforced by the example of the staff in their demeanour and dealings with everyone.

- 3.19 Socially mature for their age, pupils co-operate effectively with one another and they understand that good leadership involves service to the community. Year 6 pupils in positions of leadership take their responsibilities seriously and they grow in their awareness of what they can do for the benefit of others. From Year 1 to Year 6, the music and reading ambassadors enthusiastically promote these pursuits. Pupils learn to listen respectfully to others' views: group discussion is part of normal practice not only in PSHEE but across the wider curriculum, and in the school council. A Year 6 pupil demonstrated a thoughtful approach to an aspect of school etiquette with the words, 'It's important to have your say, but equally important to go with the majority decision when one is fairly made.' Younger pupils are reassured by the existence of the 'buddy bench' which helps to ensure that individuals are not socially excluded in break times.
- 3.20 Pupils' awareness of the world around them and of people in difficult circumstances is enhanced by a programme of charitable giving, with recipients chosen by the pupils themselves. Pupils have made donations to food banks and read to residents of a local care home; they are currently supporting a children's hospital and associated accommodation for parents and relatives of the patients. They are also learning something of what it is like to be a pupil in less fortunate circumstances, through a link with a school in Morocco which receives donations of equipment and clothes.
- 3.21 The older pupils can explain what is understood by 'fundamental British values', but pupils throughout the school are living out these values, not least that of harmony between difference cultural traditions. Pupils get on with one another entirely harmoniously in this community where many diverse backgrounds and faiths are represented. They learn about religious difference, their introduction to world faiths in their religious studies lessons being vividly illustrated by visits to mosques, churches, a Buddhist centre and a Sikh temple. Pupils also grow in their understanding of diversity from visits to museum exhibitions devoted to particular cultures. Pupils' appreciation is further enriched by celebrations linked to cultural traditions, such as a Chinese tea party and, most recently and topically, a whole-school study of harvest around the world.
- 3.22 In their questionnaire responses, all of the parents and pupils who replied felt that the school provides pupils with a safe environment, and this was borne out by what the pupils themselves said in interviews. They also say that they learn at appropriate stages in PSHEE and ICT lessons and assemblies how to stay safe on-line, and they understand the dangers of social media, the seriousness of cyberbullying and the importance of adhering to the guidelines which they are given from an early age. Older pupils' appreciation of these issues is reinforced by their being deployed to teach the younger ones about staying safe online. The school participates in international and national internet safety days, and in one case this was extended to a whole week of related activities, which pupils said they found valuable. Pupils learn to adopt a healthy lifestyle. There are suitable choices on the lunchtime menus and snacks are usually fruit. Pupils' appreciation of healthy eating is broadened by their study of the diets of top-performing athletes. Pupils keep physically fit, not only as they participate in the sport and physical education programme, which includes swimming, but also in the well-resourced play areas which offer a variety of physical challenges and recreational activities. The school is also paying attention to mental health: a number of pupils are achieving calm and poise through the newly-introduced well-being programme, which incorporates features such as mindfulness and yoga. This successful initiative is currently available only to a limited number of pupils.

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 proprietors, and observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period. 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 Paul Spillane	Reporting inspector
Mr Neil Smith	Compliance team inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mr Timothy Smith	Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)