



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports  
For Schools with Residential Provision**

**Kitebrook Preparatory School**

**January 2019**



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### School's Details

<b>School</b>	Kitebrook Preparatory School			
<b>DfE number</b>	931/6118			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	309639			
<b>Address</b>	Kitebrook House Moreton-in-Marsh Gloucestershire GL56 0RP			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01608 674350			
<b>Email address</b>	headmistress@kitebrookhouse.com			
<b>Headmistress</b>	Mrs Susan McLean			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Dr Ralph Townend			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 13			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	204			
	<b>Boys</b>	90	<b>Girls</b>	114
	<b>Day pupils</b>	204	<b>Boarders</b>	Flexi
	<b>EYFS</b>	38	<b>Juniors</b>	150
	<b>Seniors</b>	16		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29 to 31 January 2019			

## **1. Background Information**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Kitebrook Preparatory School is an independent day and boarding school, for girls and boys, aged between three and thirteen. The school is a member of the Cothill Trust, a charitable trust that is overseen by a board of trustees.
- 1.2 The school, which is in a country setting, was opened in 1959, in a house which was built in 1820. Pupils can board on either a weekly or flexi basis from Year 2. Since the previous inspection, additional staff have received paediatric first aid training, and the school has become a member of the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS).

### **What the school seeks to do**

- 1.3 The school aims to develop the individual child holistically, in a happy, safe, unique, disciplined and respectful environment. It seeks to provide a balance of childhood opportunities for and high expectations of nurturing children, so that they become well rounded and confident in their next steps.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional, business and farming families. Nationally standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of the school is above average. The school has identified 32 pupils as having special educational needs (SEND), which include speech and language delays, dyslexia and dyscalculia all of whom receive additional specialist support. One pupil has an education, health and care plan (EHC). No pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). The school supports pupils who are more able through a variety of additional provision in curriculum and extracurricular activities.

## 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. 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.

This inspection also contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools ('boarding NMS'). It also comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and it judges the extent to which the school currently meets the boarding NMS. It identifies any standards which the school does not meet and requires action to meet them. Findings are distributed across sections relating to the eight Parts of the standards.

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, including the boarding NMS, 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, including the boarding NMS.** 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, together with the NMS covering the same areas. 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](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#).

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

### **PART 1 – Quality of education provided**

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.5 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.6 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.**

### **PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 2–4, 6–12, 15 and 16 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. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 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. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.

**2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

2.14 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 EHCs or EAL. 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. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.

**2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and statement of boarding principles [NMS 1] are 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, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.

**2.17 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are 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. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.

**2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.**

## **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'.**

## Key findings

2.20 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent.
- Pupils display outstanding communication skills which they apply to all aspects of school life.
- Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well and make particularly good progress when fully challenged in lessons.
- Many pupils achieve highly in the wide range of activities.
- Most pupils have good study skills, but they do not always take responsibility for their own learning across the curriculum.

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

- Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of the ethos of the school from an early age, and fully support the high behavioural expectations and standards set by their teachers.
- Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and make excellent contributions to the lives of others.
- Pupils respect and celebrate their differences, and value being part of the school community.
- Pupils are self-confident, and they are developing good resilience and social awareness.

## Recommendations

2.22 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Increase the pace and the challenge for the more able pupils.
- Offer more consistent opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and take responsibility for their own learning across the whole curriculum.

## The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

2.23 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

2.24 Pupils' skills in communication are a key strength of the school. These skills support their learning very positively. They listen well to one another, and express themselves both clearly and concisely. All pupils willingly answer questions in class and are keen to express their views, adding poignant and entertaining anecdotes to illustrate their reasoning. Pupils make eloquent use of mature vocabulary by, for example, writing prayers, taking part in speaking competitions, or redrafting their work to make greater use of adverbs and make their writing more vivid. Shared ideas are presented thoughtfully when pupils work in groups, and they learn how to improve their writing by following each other's instructions on, for example, how to make a Chinese Dragon. Pupils with SEND develop strong literacy skills as a result of the paired work that they do, as well as the careful explanations that they are given. Pupils' writing shows high standards of presentation. The school's family atmosphere, together with its ethos of valuing what pupils have to say, encourages pupils to express their opinions. They discuss, question and debate with confidence. In interviews, pupils of all ages shared their thoughts confidently and willingly, speaking openly about their experiences.

2.25 Both day and boarding pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They show a sensible and worldly outlook, where they can step back and be reflective. They are generally committed to learning and very keen to develop a positive approach. Pupils take pride in their work and in their school. In class, pupils engage in the lesson and apply themselves in a conscientious manner. They respond well to instruction and enjoy opportunities to work together, whilst responding easily when asked to work independently. Pupils show boundless enthusiasm about extra-curricular activities and

the time that they spend in outdoor learning. In many lessons, pupils had opportunities to cooperate well, such as in the puzzle solving. However, not all lessons showed consistency in developing independent learning.

- 2.26 Results in standardised English, mathematics, and spelling tests have been above average and this was reflected in much of the work observed. These results, together with lesson observations and work scrutiny, show that pupils make good progress overall. In their questionnaire responses, all pupils and most parents said that the teaching enables progress. Pupils are able to achieve their potential when lessons are well planned and take account of the information in the tracking system when, for example, pupils were set different work in a phonics lesson. In other lessons, pupils made slower progress, due to a reduced pace and lack of opportunities to extend their learning through more challenging work. Pupils with SEND have high levels of support, as well as successful procedures for intervention to enable them to make good progress. Many pupils are successful in gaining places at a school of their choice for the next stage of their education, with some gaining scholarships. The pupils enjoy group and individual successes in activities including music, drama, games, clubs and extra-curricular activities. Almost all parents of boarders agreed in the questionnaire responses that the experience of boarding has helped their child's progress. Inspection evidence from the boarders indicates that they make good progress, due to the extra support that they have from the house staff, who liaise with other members of staff about how to help the boarders.
- 2.27 In many subjects, pupils display good knowledge and understanding skills, and apply them effectively. In Reception, children showed high levels of confidence when using subject-specific vocabulary about the solar system. In a history lesson, older pupils used their prior knowledge of medieval kings to decide what qualities are needed to be a king; other pupils showed excellent prior knowledge of conjunctions in French. However, in some lessons, more able pupils were not given opportunities to extend their learning with more challenging work and their progress was hindered.
- 2.28 Pupils have a sound grasp of numeracy. Younger pupils speak with pride of gaining their times table challenge badges and use a variety of resources to make accurate calculations in halving numbers. In lessons where progress was good, resources were used effectively and teaching was carefully adapted to pupils' varying abilities, with support and extension work as required. In other lessons, pupils made less progress, since work was not targeted towards their differing needs, or they were unclear about the objectives and expected outcomes. A recent focus on mathematics teaching by school management has led to an improvement in the quality of pupils' written work.
- 2.29 Pupils are competent in using information and communications technology (ICT) to support their learning when, for example, conducting research for a project. Technology is highly beneficial to pupils with SEND and less able learners, enabling them to access the curriculum and other information in much greater depth. Older pupils enjoy using tablets during homework for information gathering as part of their independent research. Good use of remote-controlled devices was made in Reception, as well as in some extracurricular activities, such as the Kit Car club.
- 2.30 Pupils have good levels of study skills, which are appropriate for their age. They are encouraged to be self-reflective, enthusiastic and to access prior learning, by teachers who provide activities to engage pupils' interest and motivate them to learn. Pupils clearly benefit from group discussion in, for instance, comprehension, where collaborative working enabled excellent analysis of the questions posed. Some older pupils displayed higher order thinking skills when presenting a balance and considered argument for their problem solving of a route to be taken in geography. The school encourages creativity, initiative and independent work, with pupils often expressing their opinions and debating with confidence. Most pupils agreed that the new marking scheme helped them to improve. However, inspection evidence found that while many books had detailed information on how to improve this was not always consistently applied.
- 2.31 Pupils value success in sport and aspire to be members of the top sporting teams. They show a good level of skill and teamwork. They develop self-esteem and pride from initiatives, such as the Kit Car

Club, which gives pupils opportunities to learn engineering skills and win local and national competitions. They also win art and sport scholarships to senior schools, and are successful in young writers' competitions. Pupils, both day and boarding, take full advantage of and enjoy the extra-curricular programme which provides opportunities for pupils to engage, and enjoy success, in a wide range of activities including art, music, problem-solving and sport.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 2.32 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 2.33 Pupils' social awareness is exceptionally strong. At all ages, pupils form positive relationships and get on well together in the classroom, at play and in boarding. They take advantage of the many opportunities to work in pairs, or as a team, which are provided from an early age. They enjoy these interactions. Pupils led unaccompanied hymn singing during the outdoors assembly with confidence and excellent pitch. They participate with much success in a range of challenges and activities, both within and outside the regular curriculum, and this helps them to understand the benefits of collaboration and teamwork. One group of pupils talked enthusiastically about the work of the *save the planet club*, where initiatives are taken by pupils to help endangered species. School values are reinforced through assemblies and through personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) lessons. These lessons contribute to a strong school community where pupils demonstrate consideration for and appreciation of others. Pupils spoke openly and with confidence about the importance of caring both for each other and for the world around them, and they were vocal about the need to support new pupils during settling in activities. Some pupils mentioned two visitors from the sporting world who showed real resilience, and how they can think about them when facing their own challenges. In the parental responses, most parents agreed that the school helps pupils to be confident and independent.
- 2.34 Pupils have many opportunities to make decisions, such as choosing topics for assembly, which fundraising projects they want to work on, what choices to make at snack and lunchtimes, and which of the many extra activities or badges they wish to pursue. Pupils understand that they are responsible for making the right decisions in their work and behaviour, understanding the impact that their decisions can have on their future success and on those around them. In English, there was a robust debate around what the lesson objective should be, and in history they discussed which elements of a history story board were essential. Children in EYFS make choices from a range of activities, both indoors and outdoors, provided by the staff. All pupils, day and boarders, have opportunities for decision making through joining the school council, taking on leadership roles and becoming members of sports' teams. Pupils who board appreciate the need for good timekeeping and the need for sound decision making to keep to the timetable. They also enjoy taking it in turns to decide what to do on 'free choice' evenings.
- 2.35 Pupils appreciate the natural world around them, enjoying the school's countryside location, the walled garden and opportunities for outdoor learning. Pupils' aesthetic awareness of the non-material aspects of life is evident in the high standard of art work displayed throughout the school, the success that they enjoy in art competitions, and their enjoyment of the many opportunities to participate in music and dramatic events. Pupils lead the assemblies each day, providing the whole school with time to reflect and helping to create a sense of spiritual awareness in the community, which is valued by all. The pupils frequently write the prayers, such as the one on Remembrance Day, which thanked all who lost their lives in the wars, as well as praying for peace. Children in early years enjoy weekly yoga and meditation sessions. Some of the older pupils debated one of the faiths that they are studying, expressing their opinions with freedom and confidence.
- 2.36 Pupils display a strong understanding of moral issues from an early age. They understand right from wrong, accepting the need for rules in order to have a safe and comfortable environment. In the questionnaire responses parents, pupils and staff all agreed that excellent behaviour is promoted

throughout the school. Boarders feel that, on the rare occasions when there is poor behaviour, pupils can reflect on their actions and resolve to amend their behaviour. The school's Christian ethos and focus on creating a caring family community, together with its clear procedures for promoting good behaviour, has enhanced pupils' moral development. One group of pupils discussed the merits of having a code of conduct and concluded that it is 'a guide for life' that supports the school through a fair rewards system.

- 2.37 Pupils display high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. The strong family atmosphere in the school is shown by the mutual respect and warm relationships, which are evident in the classroom and boarding house. This helps to enhance pupil's self-understanding and enables them to be open in expressing their thoughts and feelings, and to be happy taking risks. They understand that if taking risks means making mistakes, it does not matter. They are keen to do well, and recognise their own strengths and weaknesses; for example, in English, self-correction enabled mistakes to be spotted and, when corrected, these were praised by the teacher. Pupils with SEND expressed their delight at showing their support teacher the results of their 'having a go' in an English lesson after declaring that they did not think they could write as many sentences in the time available as they did. Parents' responses to the questionnaires agreed that the school helps their child to be independent, confident and well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 2.38 Pupils celebrate and embrace their differences, respecting and valuing all people in the school while accepting and welcoming pupils with a wide range of needs. The PSHEE and religious education (RE) curriculums, together with thoughtful and inclusive assemblies and the inclusive nature of prayers, ensure that pupils develop a broad knowledge of their own and other cultures. Pupils are extremely proud of their school and have a strong awareness of the need to support others. For example, they note who is sitting on the friendship bench and help the new boarders settle into the environment quickly. The boarders organise themed evenings to include food from different parts of the world, such as the Greek evening. By the time they leave the school, many pupils have had the opportunity to visit the trust's property in France, as part of a promotion of cultural understanding. In a problem-solving lesson, the pupils showed great respect for other pupil's ideas. Most pupils and many parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people.
- 2.39 Pupils make an excellent contribution to the lives of others. They empathise with the plight of others, both in their own community and in less developed countries, and they organise support for their sister school in Southern Sudan, through taking the initiative for fundraising schemes. They are also aware of the vulnerability of many species of animals, striving to help through the environmental awareness campaigns of the wildlife club. Pupils are deeply proud of their school. They relish their roles of responsibility, enjoying the opportunity to contribute to the local community by hosting the weekly outdoor education session for local schools, as well as musical performances in local venues. Older pupils are good role models and are keen to support younger pupils in the school. Pupils look forward to these opportunities.
- 2.40 Pupils are taught how to stay safe in and out of school, and online. They understand about eating healthily and willingly chose vegetables and fruit at lunch. Pupils are supported by the provision of well-cooked meals at lunchtime and in the boarding house; healthy options for snack at break sessions are also very popular. Pupils recognise the importance of a healthy lifestyle through the PSHEE programme, form times, the science curriculum and sport. They are aware of the steps that they need to take to ensure their own good health. They could explain the importance of relaxing in the outdoor areas, while also enjoying the synchronised dance for all on the lawn during one cold playtime.
- 2.41 The strong and enthusiastic leaders of the school set the tone for the care and personal development of all the pupils, whatever their age or ability. In their questionnaire responses, most parents agreed that the school promotes an environment that successfully supports their children's personal development. Inspection evidence supports this.

### 3. Inspection Evidence

- 3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with a trustee, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the boarding house, the facilities for the youngest children and 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
Mr Nick Tiley-Nunn	Compliance team inspector (Headteacher, IAPS school)
Mrs Clare Turnbull	Team inspector (Headteacher, IAPS school)
Mr Steve Webb	Team inspector for boarding (Former Head of Boarding, IAPS school)