



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Wimbledon Common Preparatory School

March 2022

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School's Details

School	Wimbledon Common Preparatory School			
DfE number	315/6062			
Registered charity number	310024			
Address	Wimbledon Common Preparatory School 113 Ridgeway Wimbledon London SW19 4TA			
Telephone number	0208 946 1001			
Email address	info@wcps.org.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Forbes			
Chair of governors	Lord Deighton KBE			
Age range	4 to 7			
Number of pupils on roll	164			
	EYFS	57	Juniors	107
Inspection dates	1 to 4 March 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Wimbledon Common Preparatory School is an independent pre-preparatory school for male pupils. It was founded in 1919 as a preparatory school for King's College School and other independent schools. It moved to its present site in Wimbledon Village in 1957. The school was bought by the Corporation of King's College School in 2006, forms part of their foundation, and is run by their board of governors.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has gained approval for an increase in the school roll and appointed two new deputy headteachers. The current headteacher took up his post in January 2022.
- 1.3 During the period March to June 2020, the whole school was closed. It re-opened for children of key workers and Reception children only, from June 2020 to August 2020.
- 1.4 During this period of closure, the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than the children of key workers or vulnerable pupils received remote learning provision at home.
- 1.8 Since 2020, EYFS profiles have not been externally moderated.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.9 The school aims to provide a safe, stimulating environment with a relevant and challenging curriculum that enables all pupils to feel secure, happy, and motivated to reach their potential. Pupils are encouraged to be independent learners and are supported to become respectful and caring individuals. A particular emphasis is placed on close co-operation between home and school.

About the pupils

- 1.10 Pupils live within a 10-mile radius of the school and come predominantly from professional families. Nationally standardised data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is above average compared with those taking the same tests nationally. Eight pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including dyslexia, dyspraxia, speech and language difficulties, and phonological processing difficulties. All of these pupils receive additional support in class or from specialists. No pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 30 pupils who are mainly fluent in English. Ten of these pupils receive extra help when necessary. Data used by the school have identified two pupils as being more able and the curriculum is modified for them.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management.

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

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

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

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

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

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

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are

appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the 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'.

Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are extremely positive. Their desire to achieve and succeed is outstanding.
- Across the age and ability range pupils show excellent development of their knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of the curriculum.
- The standard of pupils' mathematical development is very high overall and, in some cases, extremely high.
- Pupils make rapid progress from their starting points, achieving outstanding results in their tests and assessments.

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

- Pupils display high levels of self-confidence and belief. They are disciplined and resilient learners.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent understanding of how they can help improve the lives of others by their kindness, tolerance and respect.
- Pupils of all ages display excellent levels of courtesy and politeness to each other and to adults. They are highly aware of the needs and feelings of others.
- They display a keen desire to play whatever part they can in improving their school and their environment.

Recommendation

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

- Enable pupils of all abilities to make greater progress by ensuring that feedback tells them what they need to do to improve their work.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.

3.5 Nearly all pupils attain extremely highly, relative to their starting points, as they progress through the school. This is also true for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who make particularly rapid progress following diagnosis and support. The majority of summer-born pupils make higher or much higher levels of progress than expected. Those pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) also make excellent progress, forming nearly half of the highest-performing cohort by the time they leave. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that teaching

enabled their child to make progress. While the majority of pupils' attainment is higher than expected for their age and stage of development, a few pupils work at exceptionally high levels for their age, attaining expected scores commensurate with those two years older. The leadership and governance of the school has been highly successful at promoting these excellent outcomes.

- 3.6 Pupils show evidence of clear and significant growth in their knowledge, skills and understanding as they progress through the school. Year 2 pupils were able to explain in detail, for example, not only the meaning of the term 'deforestation' from both natural and man-made causes, but also the effects of deforestation and the importance of mitigating these by planting new trees to replace those lost. Outcomes such as these are strongly promoted by teachers' skilful use of questioning techniques. This was particularly evident in a Year 2 topic lesson on UK geography, history and institutions, where pupils worked diligently together in response to engaging prompts from teaching, ensuring rapid progress was made. Pupils succeed highly because lessons are carefully planned, well-resourced and taught expertly by enthusiastic teachers. As a consequence, pupils come to love learning.
- 3.7 Pupils are accomplished speakers and attain knowledge of grammar which is well in excess of that expected for their age. They skilfully and succinctly described complex concepts such as metaphor and simile, explaining that the difference between these depended on whether the speaker used the qualifier 'as'. They read fluently and clearly, answer questions articulately, and listen carefully and respectfully to one another. They write imaginatively and always for a purpose, thus developing an excellent understanding of how the English language works. Pupils applied these skills particularly well in a Year 1 computing lesson where they researched civil rights activist Rosa Parks and presented the information they learned clearly and imaginatively. Pupils develop these skills because the curriculum is not only carefully planned, but also inspiring and because teaching maintains high expectations, making use of frequent praise upon which pupils thrive.
- 3.8 The quality of pupils' mathematical development is very high overall and, in some cases, extremely high, although the most able occasionally work below their capabilities when the task set is not appropriately matched to their level. Year 2 pupils confidently worked through complex, multi-stage calculations to determine not only whether it was possible to fill a fruit bowl on a set budget, but also what change they should receive or how much extra would be required if there were insufficient funds. They displayed excellent use of mental arithmetic skills in doing so, including rounding up figures, then reducing proportionately. A focus on developing mastery of understanding and opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to other areas of the curriculum, such as cookery or physical education, supports their excellent development in numeracy.
- 3.9 Pupils make increasingly effective use of ICT as they progress through the school. In a Reception lesson on the sounds that letters make, children engaged seamlessly with the interactive whiteboard to develop their understanding of the 'e-a-r' combination, while others pupils very competently added their own electronic reward points when praised by staff. Year 1 pupils very confidently recorded and presented factual information about key figures in history using a variety of devices. Year 2 pupils explained how they used tablet computers to record their own newscast based on British values, for Reception children, and how the Reception class had video-called them to say thank you and to explain how much they had enjoyed it. They explained that they made ready use of the tablet computers for coding, reading, maths and research in their topic work. These high standards are achieved due to enthusiastic encouragement from carefully planned teaching, along with the provision of exciting, engaging and relevant software resources.
- 3.10 Pupils display growing skills of analysis as they gain in experience and confidence. In lessons across the curriculum, pupils process information, speculate and hypothesise to an excellent degree. This was especially evident in a Year 2 science lesson on plant nutrition, where pupils applied their newly acquired knowledge and skills in a practical investigation, successfully meeting the learning objective. Year 1 pupils hypothesised why various materials would be more effective than others when building a house in a lesson on the *Three Little Pigs*, creating highly intricate designs to resist the huff and puff

of the big bad wolf's bellows. They are supported in these outcomes by teachers' creativity and excellent pedagogical knowledge which provides genuine opportunities for enquiry about real issues.

- 3.11 Pupils are extremely high achievers for their age. They participate actively in a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, with many also achieving merits and distinctions in individual music grade examinations. They have success in both internal and external sporting fixtures, art and writing competitions. The school has been successful in reaching its aim of providing a stimulating environment with a relevant and challenging curriculum, because it has planned and provided the means for pupils to widen both the scope and scale of their achievements. This is acknowledged by almost all parents, who agree that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities.
- 3.12 Pupils' attitudes to their learning are extremely positive. As they progress through the school, they develop highly effective collaborative skills, although their relatively young ages mean that the majority do prefer to work individually while supporting one another. In a Reception art lesson, children showed excellent initiative and independence in choosing quickly and efficiently the activity they wished to do. In discussions, pupils described how they use the 'four Bs' (brain, book, buddy, boss) tactic when they encounter difficulty in their work and explained that this strategy helps them to be more independent and less reliant on teaching. They also described how 'chilli challenges' of increasing complexity allow them to select appropriate degrees of difficulty in some tasks, so that they stretch themselves further than they otherwise might. These standards are reached because teaching is usually differentiated skilfully and delivered to motivate and inspire. Support staff are deployed effectively and efficiently, pupils wish to do well and please their teachers, and all members of the community work together in an atmosphere conducive to learning.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils display high levels of self-confidence and belief, without appearing self-important. They speak confidently and clearly to class and assembly audiences and are not shy to perform for others when asked, as seen in highly accomplished piano-playing during a whole school celebration assembly. In a Year 2 topic lesson, pupils showed excellent levels of self-confidence in choosing to read aloud to the class, offer opinions and politely challenge those of others. They make excellent use of strategies such as the 'purple polishing pen' to edit and improve their work in a different colour. However, when marking and feedback is more descriptive than evaluative, or offers less guidance on extending the most able, pupils are not always able to identify what they need to do to improve. In discussions, pupils explained how they record their self-esteem by choosing and marking an appropriate position on classroom 'mood boards', which help them to gain an increasing understanding of their feelings so that they can take appropriate action to deal with their emotions. They were seen to use these very effectively during the inspection. Pupils want to do well, for themselves and their teachers, but also for their parents, almost all of whom agreed that the school helps their child to be confident and independent.
- 3.15 Despite their relatively young ages, pupils soon become adept decision-makers. They described how the school's 'HEART' values of honesty, excellence, ambition, respect and teamwork guide them to make the best decisions when faced with difficult or challenging situations, such as when a choice of work partner might not result in the most productive combination. Across the school, pupils make excellent decisions. During lessons, in play times and in clubs, pupils were seen choosing to behave well and to treat one another with kindness. This was also evident in discussions with pupils and in the scrutiny of their work, where they expressed and demonstrated their desire to learn, please and succeed. These excellent standards are achieved because leaders have encouraged strong teacher-pupil relationships and a rigorous application of the school's values, thereby promoting pupils' positive attitudes.

- 3.16 Pupils develop a strong understanding of the non-material aspects of life by the time they leave the school. They show genuine enthusiasm for the successes of their peers, describing their feelings of pride and joy when their friends were voted onto the school council or received a certificate in assembly. In discussions, they showed that they are very clear about the importance and value of friendship, and that being able to play, laugh and share is worth far more than money. Year 2 pupils explained that choosing to buy things from a charity shop benefits others who need help, demonstrating a highly developed sense of altruism for their ages. In a reception art lesson, pupils who were studying artists' styles spoke volubly of the benefits that art brings to life. Initiatives such as silent reflective moments during lessons in the woodland learning environment, the school's kindness tree and the embedded values support their excellent understanding and development in this area.
- 3.17 Pupils of all ages display excellent levels of courtesy and politeness to each other and to adults, developing keen senses of personal responsibility from the earliest ages. Teaching is rigorous in promoting confidence and discipline, praising pupils but correcting behaviour where necessary. All pupils and almost every parent agreed that the school addresses poor behaviour and expects pupils to behave well. The very youngest children quietly and efficiently hung their own coats and bags in the correct place on arrival, entirely without prompting, so that not a single item remained on the floor. They spontaneously wished one another and adults good morning and pointedly asked how they were feeling. Older pupils understand the importance of saying sorry, and meaning it, if a mistake is made. Behaviour is consequently excellent across the age range. This was particularly evident in a whole school assembly and again in an author visit on World Book Day, where pupils queued patiently and calmly for their books to be signed, tempering their behaviour despite the obvious excitements of a visitor and a day in fancy dress. These excellent standards are reached because the high expectations from teaching and rigorous attention to the school values lead to a genuine desire from pupils to behave responsibly.
- 3.18 Pupils develop increasing awareness of one another's needs and strategies for working effectively with others so that by the time they leave, they are confident and accomplished team workers. This was particularly evident in a lively and practical Year 2 maths lesson involving money, where pupils worked together respectfully and calmly but with a sense of purpose, and again in discussions with pupils where they explained, clearly, that problems are often best solved through teamwork. Year 2 pupils were observed negotiating, and using persuasive skills very effectively to depict, successfully, a 'continuum of relaxation', from highly stressed at one end, to completely relaxed at the other, during a Personal, Social, Health and Economics Education (PSHEE) lesson. They described how they achieved success in a newspaper tower-building challenge by working together to stabilise their structures. This happens because teachers plan lessons that involve collaborative tasks, circulate amongst pupils effectively in lessons and deploy support staff efficiently, with the result that pupils are keen to work together for the good of all.
- 3.19 Pupils variously undertake roles of increasing responsibility as they progress through the school and show a keen awareness of the needs of others. The youngest children look forward to serving as line-leaders, door-holders and library-tidiers. Pupils also act as representatives on the school council, volunteer as class ambassadors, and take on other responsibilities such as team, sports and house captaincies; they are keen to play whatever part they can in improving their school and their environment. For example, playground monitors were seen assisting willingly at playtimes by giving out equipment, tidying away and making sure that everyone else was safely inside before they left the playground. Others explained how they work together to raise money for agreed charities, such as Jeans for Genes, Comic Relief and the Queen's Canopy. The school places a high importance upon promoting service and responsibility, as well as enabling the pupils to have and express a voice. Pupils understand how they can help improve the lives of others by their kindness, tolerance and respect, as well as through practical actions such as charitable contributions.
- 3.20 Throughout the school, pupils display extremely high degrees of tolerance and understanding for one another, regardless of race, faith or belief, successfully fulfilling the school's aims. This was most

evident in discussions where pupils expressed the importance of kindness and respect, irrespective of a person's appearance, belief or cultural background. In discussions, they described how we are all different whilst also being the same and that difference is to be celebrated, exemplifying this by explaining that we all have fingers but that everyone's fingerprints are different. Pupils excel in this area because of the diversity of the school's population, excellent guidance and examples from teachers and leaders which promote respect, as well as resources supporting diversity and celebrating difference.

- 3.21 Pupils have a keen understanding of the need to keep safe and can explain clearly how this is achieved. All parents and almost all pupils agreed that the school encourages them to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils explained the importance of choosing healthy snacks, taking regular exercise and avoiding known dangers, whether crossing a road or being wary of strange dogs. Pupils participate eagerly in before-school activities and timetabled sports lessons, relishing opportunities to represent the school in sports fixtures. Year 2 pupils readily explained, before a cookery class, why it was important that they had all washed their hands with soap instead of just water, so that their food would remain hygienic and safe to eat. They all displayed a very clear understanding of what to do in case of a fire and the use of strategies such as secure passwords and not giving out personal details in order to stay safe online. The school has been successful at creating an effective culture of safety across all ages.

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 a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. 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 Kerry Lord	Reporting inspector
Mrs Samantha Ransom	Compliance team inspector (Assistant bursar, HMC school)
Mr David Edwards	Team inspector (Director of studies, IAPS school)