



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Oakfields Preparatory School

March 2022

Contents

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
Key findings		6
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		6
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		8
Preface		8
Key findings		8
Recommendation		8
The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements		8
The quality of the pupils' personal development		10
4. Inspection Evidence		13

School's Details

School	Oakfields Preparatory School			
DfE number	311/6061			
Address	Oakfields Preparatory School Harwood Hall Harwood Hall Lane Upminster Essex RM14 2YG			
Telephone number	01708 220117			
Email address	office@oakfieldsschool.co.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Katrina Carroll			
Proprietor	Cognita Schools Ltd			
Age range	2 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	203			
	EYFS	61	Juniors	142
Inspection dates	8 to 11 March 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Oakfields School is an independent preparatory day school for male and female pupils aged from two to eleven years. It was founded in 1988 as a day nursery in Gidea Park. The school moved to Harwood Hall, Upminster in 1993. Oakfields is part of Cognita Schools Ltd, which is responsible for its governance. The school is divided into two sections: the Early Years Foundation Stage, for children in Nursery and Reception, and the preparatory school, for pupils from Years 1 to 6.
- 1.2 The inspection took into account the circumstances faced by schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed by government guidance at various points of the pandemic.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to inspire and empower pupils with a passion for learning; and to seek, develop and encourage everyone's individual abilities and talents, in an environment that fully nurtures the well-being of the child.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a range of backgrounds that reflect the social and cultural local area. The school's own assessment data indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 15 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 12 receive support. Two pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Five pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) but do not require additional support. The curriculum is modified for pupils that the school has identified as being the most able in the school's population.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

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

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

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

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

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

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

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 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 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

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 learning across all ages are exemplary and they work extremely well both collaboratively and independently.
- Pupils have excellent communication skills and achieve high levels of attainment in reading and writing, which they use creatively across all subjects.
- Pupils attain high levels of numeracy and apply their knowledge confidently to other areas of their learning.
- Pupils make excellent progress because of senior leaders' successful planning for their needs and the nurturing and caring approach of their teachers.

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

- Pupils demonstrate extremely high levels of social development and respect for one another throughout the school.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of diversity and wholeheartedly celebrate other cultures, values and traditions, as well as their own.
- Pupils develop high levels of self-esteem, self-confidence and resilience, supported by empathetic teaching and leadership.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, supported by a strong understanding of respect for rules and a clear distinction between right and wrong.

Recommendation

- Give pupils more opportunities for research and analysis in order to develop their critical skills.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.4 Pupils of all ages have exemplary attitudes to learning. They work effectively both independently and collaboratively, increasingly managing their own work as they move through the school. In all lessons pupils engage fully, working in pairs or in groups, supporting and learning from one another. They listen attentively to others and to their teachers. Pupils in the older classes move sensibly and purposefully between lessons and the youngest pupils work diligently and often independently without prompting. Pupils make decisions about their learning, for instance by choosing their own level of challenge in mathematics or deciding how they will approach the writing target. In an EYFS

Spanish lesson, children focused well and repeated new words accurately in response to the teacher, while in Year 2, pupils gained excellent insight into the principles of homophones and were able to identify all those within the passage of text. Scrutiny of pupils' written work demonstrates the care and attention they give to their presentation and the great pride they take in their work across all subjects. In discussions, pupils said that the many opportunities to work together in class help their confidence and contribute to their learning and high levels of achievement. Pupils of all abilities say that they wholeheartedly appreciate their teachers and leaders who support them at all times and help them learn to work independently.

- 3.5 The attainment of pupils of all ages and abilities is excellent. The majority of pupils attain results in standardised English and mathematics assessments that are above average for schools taking these tests. Children in the EYFS rapidly attain the expected learning goals. Throughout the school, pupils make rapid progress over time, as observed in lessons, in the scrutiny of their work and from discussions. The progress of pupils is effectively tracked through regular assessments so that teaching is tailored to individual needs. The vast majority of pupils are successful in achieving a place at the senior school of their choice and a number are awarded academic, sports or all-round scholarships. Pupils with SEND achieve well in line with their peers from their individual starting points through support in class and small group teaching sessions. Pupils who are more able benefit from additional challenge to maintain their high level of attainment. Most parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agree that teaching enables pupils to make progress. School leaders and governors are highly effective in fulfilling the schools' aims ensuring that they provide a happy school where children build confidence and enjoy learning, and where individual talents and strengths are celebrated.
- 3.6 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are excellent and they successfully apply these to different areas of their learning. Nursery children settle quickly into daily routines learning, through organised play and choosing activities that promote their interest and curiosity. EYFS children use their increasing knowledge of letters and sounds to read familiar words and show confidence in starting to read and write. Throughout the school, pupils anticipate challenge through their teachers' clearly explained lesson objectives and an innovative range of activities, ensuring that they make rapid progress. Year 2 pupils developed an excellent understanding of the simple properties of materials using the correct technical terms and chose appropriate materials for a range of products. Year 3 pupils were highly focused on writing about a mythical creature from reading an exotic range of animal stories, while in a Year 4 physical education lesson, pupils gave performances of their four different gymnastic movements and were evaluated by their peers on what they did well and how to improve.
- 3.7 Pupils demonstrate excellent communication skills for their age. They contribute sensibly and thoughtfully in discussion and in response to teachers' focused questioning. Children in the EYFS listen attentively to one another and take turns to share their thoughts. Older pupils demonstrate a high level of spoken communication skills as they work together in pairs to discuss the theme of a text or how to approach a particular writing task. They speak with confidence and clearly enjoy the opportunities to deliver presentations to their class, for example, in the Friday afternoon current affairs sessions. Pupils write using a wide range of literary techniques and vocabulary, seen in their English and other subject books. They read extensively both in class and independently in the library.
- 3.8 The majority of pupils attain excellent levels in numeracy and successfully apply these to other areas of their learning. Reception children recognised the correct shapes to make rockets for their moon project, in preparation for sending a letter to an alien in space, while Year 4 pupils demonstrated excellent problem-solving skills in carrying out calculations with time, and excellent recall of previous work on interpreting data. Year 5 pupils made rapid progress in converting percentages, decimals and fractions. Pupils are ably supported to make rapid progress in mathematics through additional lessons which they say are not only helpful but also lead to their further enjoyment and fascination with mathematics. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils confidently apply a range of different methods to

solve advanced problems. For example, in solving complex linear equations, they took great care to set out their work systematically and logically to arrive at the correct solutions.

- 3.9 Pupils acquire confident information and communication technology skills and apply these with ease to support their learning. They use technology and their electronic devices confidently to research simple facts and to discover new information. For example, in a computer lesson, younger pupils differentiated between input and output, sorting cards by working successfully in pairs, while in a history lesson Year 4 pupils used their analytical skills, making deductions from their online research to create a profile of historical figures. In Year 3 art lessons, pupils enthusiastically created models of mythical creatures to make an animation video, applying the necessary steps such as stop animation to make their characters fly into space.
- 3.10 Pupils show increasing proficiency in their study skills which they effectively apply to all areas of their learning. They concentrate extremely well in lessons and always focus on the tasks set for them. Pupils successfully check and edit their own work using guidelines provided by their teachers. They show clear ability to reason, as in a Year 4 Spanish lesson, where pupils inferred the meaning of new vocabulary from the context of the conversation, and in a Year 6 English lesson, pupils developed a clear understanding of a balanced argument, expressing their ideas succinctly. In a Year 2 religious education (RE) lesson, pupils showed excellent recall of terms related to Sikhism and were fascinated to learn about the naming ceremony for a new baby. Pupils' ability to research and analyse critically is an area that leaders are seeking to develop further.
- 3.11 Pupils achieve a high level of success in a range of competitions, including the Great Britain football squad and the local sports partnership awards in athletics, triathlon, cross country and swimming. Pupils are successful in football, netball and cross-country at both local and national levels, and take part in a range of sports in their extra-curricular activities. They participate in a range of school musical events, in choirs, orchestra and individual music lessons. They are successful in the arts, in poetry and writing competitions, and also in mathematics and science challenges. Pupils enjoy the performing arts and take part annually in the school's end-of-term 'extravaganza'. A few parents in their questionnaire responses said that they would like the school to offer a wider range of extra-curricular activities. The inspectors found that pupils achieve well and develop their skills further in the range of opportunities on offer.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.12 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.13 Pupils of all ages develop high levels of self-awareness, self-confidence and resilience within a close-knit, nurturing, family environment. Pupils are diligent and absorbed in their learning. They work conscientiously and independently to ensure they make the most of each lesson. They are confident to be themselves, effectively supported by teachers who praise and celebrate their achievements. Senior leaders encourage pupils to be independent with a 'have a go attitude'. Pupils understand that making mistakes is part of the learning process which ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 3.14 Pupils' decision-making skills are excellent. They are thoughtful, reflective and mature in their approach. They make sensible and often perceptive decisions and appreciate how these may affect them and others. EYFS children explained their choice in selecting a play activity, along with the need to share their toys, and older pupils reflected and recognised the importance of talking through the next stage of their school life. Choice is a common practice for pupils in most lessons. Pupils think carefully, make decisions with consideration and learn to enjoy the freedom and satisfaction of understanding how they learn to be independent thinkers as they move through the school.
- 3.15 Pupils' spiritual understanding is excellent. They show a strong appreciation of the non-material aspects of life and know what matters to them, such as friendships at school. They reflect on what

they receive from their school community and the benefits of playing sport together and enjoying the wide-open spaces they have for recreation. Pupils' spiritual understanding is further enhanced in their RE lessons. This was seen in Year 4 where pupils were learning about the differences and similarities in the creation stories of world religions. In assemblies and in class pupils celebrate the significance of special festival days and religious ceremonies, which help them to understand what is important to others. They appreciate the beauty around them and music that helps them to be calm. Pupils spoke of their awareness of places of worship, realising that these are very special to believers.

- 3.16 Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. All pupils show a mature level of understanding and responsibility for their own behaviour. Pupils explained that the challenge is to be the best they can be. They are not afraid to take risks in their learning because they are encouraged by teachers and leaders. They feel that mistakes help them to learn if they pay attention to them. Pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong through the nurturing ethos of the school and leaders' high expectations. The rules of each class are agreed by pupils with their teacher which ensures a sense of pride and a pledge to abide by them. Pupils understand that rules are there to keep them safe and that this was particularly pertinent during the pandemic. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that the school always takes bullying or unkindness seriously and sorts out any poor behaviour.
- 3.17 Pupils' social development and collaboration skills are excellent. They readily adopt the core values which are fully part of the school culture, fulfilling leaders' and governors' aims to help pupils to try their best, respect one another and adapt positively to change. Relationships throughout the school are highly positive within year groups and across the school. They are polite and courteous, holding the door open for adults, remembering to say please and thank you when appropriate, thanking their teachers for the lessons and supporting one another when they go out to play. This is all underpinned by senior leaders' consistent setting of high expectations and high standards, and the nurturing and support of staff. EYFS children play happily with and around others, sharing and taking turns. Older pupils helped younger ones with lunch, for example, and ensured that everything was cleared away tidily before they left the dining room. Older pupils develop their team-building skills further through playing fixtures and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to take part. Pupils spoke very positively about the warm and inviting atmosphere of the school and how everyone works together to build this harmonious community.
- 3.18 Pupils' contribution to others, the school and the community is excellent and their social awareness is well developed. They show commitment to helping others in their roles as prefects, sports captains, class monitors supporting younger pupils and leaders in the 'pupil voice' sessions. They are kind to one another, because this is the norm. Pupils are conscious of the needs of others around them in their community and work towards raising money to provide for others in whatever way they can. Most recently, they have contributed to the Ukraine appeal by collecting clothing and blankets. At Christmas and Easter, they take part in singing for senior citizens in the local community and often initiate projects by themselves. These include walking to Madrid, a sponsored walk taking turns round their playing field and a swimming project with their leaders and teachers. They are eager to take on extra responsibilities and volunteer to serve others. Children are expected to be active and responsible campaigners for various initiatives, such as visiting the local nursing home to sing to dementia patients, raising funds for cancer research and a local hospice and sponsoring a pet, Comet the reindeer.
- 3.19 Pupils celebrate diversity and show great respect for everyone in the school regardless of their background or role. They enjoy being part of a culturally diverse community and learning about different cultures and traditions through PSHE, RE and relationships education. School leaders and staff endorse this celebration of all, wholeheartedly promoting and deepening pupils' respect for diversity and cultural understanding. Pupils have a thoughtful and perceptive awareness of British society and the role of the democratic process, public institutions and services. Each Friday, pupils enjoy presenting current affairs including famous people for Black History month and other campaigns that celebrate or highlight the lives of others. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire

agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and acceptance of other people.

- 3.20 Pupils have an excellent awareness of how to stay safe and healthy. They know the risks involved in going online and what to do if they feel concerned. Pupils agree that the school teaches them about safety online and their physical safety, and feel that school is a safe place to be. Pupils are quite clear that a healthy diet means a healthy body, and that exercise and being outdoors support a healthy mind. They challenge the school to ensure that lunches are healthy, using their 'pupil voice in action'. Year 5 pupils articulated the importance of nature in their lives for well-being, while Year 6 pupils said that going to run around during the school day helps them to concentrate in lessons. Pupils celebrate 'Global Be Well Day', joining other young people around the world in reinforcing the message that mental and physical well-being is critical to educational success. Most parents and all pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school encourages pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, and observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period. Inspectors visited the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Flora Bean	Reporting inspector
Mr Alasdair McBay	Accompanying inspector (Director of studies, HMC school)
Mr Richard White	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, IAPS school)
Mr Jonny Timms	Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)