



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

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

Bredon School

September 2018



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School's Details

School	Bredon School			
DfE number	885/6023			
Address	Bredon School Pull Court Bushley Tewkesbury Gloucestershire GL20 6AH			
Telephone number	01684 293156			
Email address	enquiries@bredonschool.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Koen Claeys			
Chair of governors	Mr Aatif Hassan			
Age range	7 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	202			
	Boys	150	Girls	52
	Day pupils	122	Boarders	80
	EYFS	0	Juniors	19
	Seniors	138	Sixth Form	45
Inspection dates	25 to 27 September 2018			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Bredon School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils between the ages of seven and eighteen. It is situated on an 85-acre estate near Tewkesbury. It opened in 1962, and since 2014 has been owned by Cavendish Education Ltd, whose board of directors act as the institution's governing body. The school is registered with a specialist professional association for schools teaching pupils with dyslexia. It accepts pupils from the age of seven, a change since the previous inspection. A new headmaster took up his appointment in April 2017. It offers full and flexi-boarding on site for pupils from the age of nine.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to provide an education that caters for all types of learners, valuing them as individuals and building their self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are expected to participate fully in the academic and extra-curricular life of the school so that they develop into well-rounded, tolerant individuals with a strong work ethic and a commitment to their community.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a wide area around the school and most are of White British origin. Most boarders come from families living throughout the UK, with a smaller number from overseas. Nationally standardised test data indicate that the ability of pupils in the senior school is below average. The school has identified 108 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) including dyslexia, speech and language difficulties, and a wide range of other learning and physical needs. 93 of these receive additional specialist help. 63 pupils have an education, health and care plan and 3 have a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 8 pupils whose needs are supported in the classroom and by specialist teaching. Data used by the school has identified 6 pupils as being the most able in its population; their needs are met through the curriculum and enrichment 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 and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 In the junior school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2015 to 2017, performance has been in line with the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2015 to 2016 have been below and, in 2017, above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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

- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 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

- 2.12 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.
- 2.13 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

- 2.14 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for their 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.
- 2.15 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.16 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.17 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

- 2.18 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.
- 2.19 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

- 2.20 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.
- 2.21 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are 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.

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 institutions 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 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'.

Where necessary, national curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent throughout the school.
 - Pupils' progress and attainment are excellent in relation to their starting points.
 - Pupils with a wide range of specific learning needs develop highly effective communication skills over time.
 - Pupils' study skills reach a high standard as they progress through the school.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils exhibit excellent social development and collaborative skills.
 - Pupils' respect for and acceptance of diversity are hallmarks of the school.
 - The development of pupils' self-confidence is a strong feature of their personal development.

Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of these excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following:
- Implement fully the new initiative to make information, communication and technology (ICT) a central element in the pupils' teaching and learning experience.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils develop decidedly positive attitudes towards their studies as they progress through the school. They are interested in their lessons, co-operate fully with their teachers and each other and, when they meet difficulties, they are not afraid to seek help. Pupils say that their teachers encourage them, removing the fear of failure so that they persevere, confident that they will succeed. They readily work independently and use their own initiative, whether preparing an Eve's pudding in cookery or researching Islamic beliefs for religious studies. Pupils work extremely well together; junior pupils of mixed ability collaborated effectively on a printing project in art, and senior pupils, working on their individual portfolios in photography, took time to discuss each other's work, enabling all to produce portfolios of a high standard. These excellent attitudes to learning fulfil the school's aim to instil a strong work ethic in its pupils.
- 3.6 Pupils join the school with a wide range of abilities and well over half have SEND and/or EAL. The junior school's own measures of progress show that almost all pupils make rapid progress in their numeracy and literacy skills and are performing above expectations when they move into the senior school. National data from 2015 to 2017, the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are available, show that results at GCSE have been in line with the national average. Results in A-Level examinations were below the national average in 2015 and 2016, and above the national average in 2017. A detailed analysis of these results show that pupils are performing above, or well above, expectations for their abilities and that, overall, pupils' attainment has risen steadily over this period in GCSE, A-Level and BTEC examinations. This steady improvement in standards reflects the school leadership's increased emphasis on developing excellence in teaching and learning. Internal measures used by the school show that pupils with SEND or EAL make at least as good progress as their peers. The wide range of courses offered by the school, the individualised study programmes and well-targeted careers education means pupils are well equipped for the next stage of their lives as they move on to paid employment, apprenticeships, college, or university.

- 3.7 Pupils demonstrate high levels of knowledge, skills, and understanding, and they use these effectively across the curriculum. Younger pupils working on the school farm have a thorough knowledge of the care of livestock and understand the needs of individual animals. Sixth form sociology pupils demonstrated their prior knowledge of various social movements such as Marxism and feminism and were able to discuss them with insight and understanding. Senior used their excellent knowledge of market research and segmentation to inform their development of a market questionnaire in a business studies lesson and younger senior pupils showed excellent linguistic and creative skills when discussing their ideas for a Gothic novel. Throughout the school, pupils' skills are at a high level as demonstrated by the excellent quality of their art and photography, their competence in musical performance and their success in sports and other outdoor activities. Pupils are proud of the many new skills they have mastered, from learning how to tie knots in climbing to acquiring independent study skills.
- 3.8 Pupils' communication skills develop rapidly during their time at school, and the most able write fluently and are excellent public speakers. Pupils with limited English or less-developed reading skills gain confidence as they are encouraged to read aloud in class and to take part in assemblies, so that by the time they leave school, they can speak and read confidently in public. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that their writing skills improve rapidly and pupils with EAL move from single words in English to continuous prose within a few months. Specialist lessons and well-targeted support from teachers and teaching assistants enables pupils with EAL and SEND to make significant progress over time and, where appropriate, pupils are encouraged to use technologies to support their reading and writing. All pupils listen well to their teachers and to others often encouraging one another to share their ideas and thoughts in discussions and activities.
- 3.9 Pupils' numeracy skills are strong, the most able demonstrated their excellent understanding whilst finding domains and ranges of functions in preparation for the A-level examination. Younger pupils dividing quantities into certain ratios were highly accurate in their calculations. Pupils apply these strong skills appropriately in other subjects, such as geography, science and business studies, and in practical activities, such as when weighing food on the farm or measuring angles in woodwork. Many pupils make excellent use of ICT for presenting their work and to support their learning in a range of subjects. The most able pupils pursue specialised courses at the on-site ICT academy; these pupils develop high levels of competency and can gain relevant industry standard qualifications. Governors and school leaders have reviewed the role of ICT in pupils' education and the school is in the early stages of an initiative to develop its use as a learning tool for all pupils.
- 3.10 Pupils achieve success in many individual and group activities. They benefit from an excellent choice of individual and team sports and, for a small school, teams achieve considerable success against larger institutions. Pupils are proud of these sporting successes and are keen to improve. The school's clay pigeon shooting teams have been overall winners at the national schools' challenge for the last three years and the kayak team enjoyed success in several classes in an international competition. Pupils have individual successes in animal husbandry at the local agricultural show and a group of junior pupils achieved a 'highly commended' for their garden at the local horticultural show. In most years, the majority of pupils in the upper senior school enrol in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE), the large majority completing the award during their time at school. Around a third to a half of Year 13 enrol on the gold award every year and in 2018 all who enrolled were successful in gaining their gold award. Sixth form pupils achieve a number of qualifications whilst at school, for example training as lifeguards. Pupils' achievements cover a wide range of areas depending on their individual abilities and they often exceed their own expectations and those of their parents and teachers. Some achieve in conventional ways by obtaining a degree or following a successful career, others by obtaining employment despite more advanced learning disabilities or by overcoming mental health problems or physical disabilities to sing in a concert or to give a musical recital in public.

Governors and school leaders have invested time and resources in the curriculum to ensure that it has sufficient breadth to include courses that are appropriate for a wide range of abilities, disabilities and interests. Pupils respond positively because the programmes of study suit their learning styles and interests and they achieve at a high level for their abilities.

- 3.11 The successes of the pupils are a result of their excellent study skills which are developed during their time at school. Many pupils overcome their learning difficulties as they learn and apply a range of study skills that are promoted through specialist teaching, mindfulness techniques and the support and encouragement of staff in the classroom and in the boarding houses. Teachers and pupils are in constant dialogue about the best ways to help individuals learn and this conversation is written into the 'Pupil Passport' which contains strategies to help the pupil learn most efficiently. Pupils' research skills are well-developed and encouraged by staff who offer many opportunities for pupils to work independently from the youngest years. Pupils draw on a wide range of resources and the more able can synthesise and analyse their findings. An example of this was seen in a photography class where pupils worked simultaneously with several software applications and produced detailed, well presented results with excellent analysis. Pupils apply the same analytical skills to their sporting activities, such as when a shooting team evaluated their performance after a recent competition and summed up the lessons learned from their shared experiences.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.12 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.13 Pupils build strong, supportive relationships with each other during their time at school. They collaborate productively in lessons to help each other learn more effectively and they work purposefully together in sports and activities to achieve success whether on the rugby field or in caring for animals on the school farm. Pupils listen to each other and seek to help, for example, older pupils who have particular learning difficulties support younger ones with similar needs, and digital leaders are trained to educate others in the safe use of online resources. The large majority of boarders who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that boarders generally get on well with each other in the house. Pupils forge strong relationships as they work together; younger senior pupils leave their electronic devices behind and focus on friendship and teamwork at overnight camps organised by the outdoor education department. Most older pupils participate successfully in collaborative endeavours such as group cycling, the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) or DofE. The school's outdoor education programme, strongly supported by governors and school leaders, is part of the mainstream curriculum and plays a key role in promoting the social development of pupils.
- 3.14 Pupils not only tolerate but value difference, because they recognise the wide range of personalities, needs and backgrounds within their population, and so they fulfil the school's aim for them to develop into well-rounded tolerant individuals. Sixth form pupils are proud of their 'International Corridor' in the boarding house and enjoy the mix of cultures. Pupils accept their own and each other's strengths and weaknesses; they are open about them and make allowances for them, creating a strong, caring community. This was evident in the democratic election of house leaders. Pupils listened attentively to all the candidates and were supportive of those who were not elected as well as those who were. This showed that pupils fully endorse the school's ethos of inclusion and respect that is modelled strongly by the staff.

- 3.15 Many pupils enter the school having experienced obstacles and discouragement, and they testify to the way their self-confidence and self-esteem have grown as they have responded to the school's individualised approach to learning and sensitive pastoral care. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that the school helps their child to be confident and independent and the large majority of boarders agreed that boarding also helps. As pupils' self-confidence grows they are motivated to work hard and to be resilient in the face of difficulties. This strong work ethic, in line with the school's aims, is evident in lessons and activities; pupils spoke of the necessity of persevering with practices and training for team sports and musical events. In lessons, they are self-disciplined and conscientious and say they benefit from the small class sizes and the strategies and encouragement they receive from their teachers and the special needs staff. The school's individualised approach and extensive curriculum, including practical and academic studies, ensure that every pupil can make progress and develop confidence and skills for the future.
- 3.16 Pupils understand that the decisions they make will affect them in the future. They are encouraged by staff to make their own decisions and to understand the consequences. For example, pupils say they have choices in the boarding house as to how they will manage their electronic devices by making their own plan. Pupils who want to care for the animals on the farm know they must get up early and the youngest pupils make choices about the most appropriate equipment to use in cookery and which roles to adopt in woodland activities. Older pupils take advice from parents, boarding and teaching staff when they choose options for GCSE and make considered choices for their sixth form studies helped by the school's careers and work experience programmes. The weekly day-release work programme for Year 12 ensures that pupils have extensive experience of the world of work enabling them to make more informed choices about their future beyond school.
- 3.17 Pupils appreciate strongly the non-material aspects of life expressing this through their excellent art and music, their appreciation of the quiet spaces around school where they can sit and think, and the high value they place on their friendships. Some pupils with communication difficulties can express themselves eloquently when playing an instrument or singing, others express their feelings and ideas in their high-quality artwork. Pupils take a keen interest in the variety of faiths represented in the school and enjoy exploring the ideas and beliefs of their peers. They have a strong moral understanding reflected in their excellent behaviour around the school, their concern for others and the relaxed, respectful relationships that they have with the staff and other adults. The straightforward school behaviour code is appreciated by pupils and was seen to work most effectively in practice.
- 3.18 Pupils say they are learning how to stay physically and mentally healthy because the curriculum offers them an outdoor lifestyle and the school ethos encourages them to talk to each other and to staff if they have problems. A very large majority of pupils in the questionnaire said they feel safe at school and in the boarding houses. Many learn to manage their own emotions and overcome personal difficulties, benefitting from the care of pastoral staff, the strong family atmosphere in the boarding houses, and school initiatives, such as the mindfulness programme. Pupils say that they learn about keeping safe in small tutor groups where they can discuss things easily; older children who are peer mentors will listen to their problems, and digital leaders help them to keep safe on the internet. Pupils learn about the importance of a healthy diet in cookery classes and the school catering reinforces the message. An emphasis on outdoor education contributes strongly to their physical and mental health.

3.19 Pupils make many excellent contributions to their school and community in line with the institution's aims. They serve as prefects and sports and house captains, and take part in school, boarding and food councils. They organise clubs and charity events and help to run assemblies. Pupils studying engineering service and maintain the school tractor and mowers used in the farm and grounds, and some studying childcare can do work experience in the junior school. Older pupils with qualifications in single pitch climbing or as lifeguards volunteer to assist with these activities and those working towards the service element of DofE help younger pupils with their reading. Pupils in the CCF join the local community for the Remembrance Day parade and pupils from the school traditionally volunteer to help at the local annual agricultural show. Pupils visit residents in a local care home and keep in touch by writing letters and rugby players volunteer to help with the weekly touch rugby sessions for local children. Pupils raise money for charities by singing in the 'Young Voices' choir and, by taking part in a sponsored walk, they raised money to help build a school in Nepal.

4. INSPECTION EVIDENCE

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

Inspectors

Mrs Catherine Williamson	Reporting inspector
Mrs Karenann Hood	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Nicholas Marchant	Team inspector for boarding (Housemaster, HMC school)
Mrs Anne McNeile	Team inspector for boarding (Head of pre-prep, IAPS school)
Mr Stephen Holroyd	Team inspector (Head of department, HMC school)
Mr Andrew Rudkin	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)