



**ISI**

Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report**

**Herries Preparatory School**

**March 2022**

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### School's Details

<b>School</b>	Herries Preparatory School			
<b>DfE number</b>	868/6003			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1085930			
<b>Address</b>	Herries Preparatory School Dean Lane Cookham Dean Maidenhead Berkshire SL6 9BD			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01628 483350			
<b>Email address</b>	admin@herries.org.uk			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Robert Grosse			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Christine Weaving			
<b>Age range</b>	2 to 11			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	107			
	<b>EYFS</b>	23	<b>Juniors</b>	84
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1 to 4 March 2022			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Herries Preparatory School is a co-educational day school for pupils, situated in the Berkshire village of Cookham Dean. The school was founded in 1947, based in an Edwardian house that has been extended over the years to provide extra accommodation. The school consists of a Nursery and one Reception class which form the EYFS, and one class in each of Years 1 to 6. The school is a charitable trust with a board of governors made up with a combination of parent and independent governors.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, there has been a change of headteacher, deputy headteacher, bursar and chair of governors. The school has invested in two banks of electronic tablets, updated their personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum and covered the top playground with an artificial grass surface.
- 1.3 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

- 1.4 The school seeks to provide a nurturing community, where respect, empathy, compassion and kindness are core. It aims to develop pupils' creative, aesthetic, practical, physical, emotional and spiritual qualities and talents. It seeks to help pupils become successful learners and well-balanced individuals, who are ready to become responsible citizens and leaders and able to form strong and enduring relationships with others.

### About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from families with a range of professional backgrounds and cultures, and most live within a two-mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. Two pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified 22 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, twenty of whom receive additional specialist help. English is an additional language (EAL) for eight pupils, and two pupils receive additional specialist help. Data used by the school have identified 14 pupils as the most able in the school's population, 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 (EYFS) 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. 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 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 towards their learning are excellent, and their willingness to work collaboratively is exemplary.
- Pupils are excellent communicators; they speak with ease, confidence and charisma, and their written work is of a high quality.
- Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are well developed, and they confidently make informed decisions on how to use ICT to support their learning.
- Pupils of all abilities make excellent progress from their varied starting points due to the high expectations of staff, self-discipline and active engagement in self-improvement.

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

- Pupils show excellent levels of self-understanding and set their own goals as they appreciate the importance of being resilient if they are to succeed.
- Pupils have a well-established sense of right and wrong, developed as a result of the school's clear framework of values and consistent use of strong pastoral guidelines.
- Pupils form strong relationships; they are caring of and courteous towards each other and are very respectful of their school community and its rules.
- From the earliest age, pupils show a keen awareness of the needs of others; they are extremely willing to help and support their peers both inside and outside the classroom.

#### Recommendation

3.3 The school should make the following improvement:

- Deepen and extend the learning of the more able pupils by ensuring extension activities provide sufficient challenge and enable them to develop higher-order thinking skills.

#### The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Pupils of all ages, needs and abilities demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. They work together sensibly and effectively in lessons. They are disciplined learners who take great pride in their work, are keen to improve and show a willingness to have a go. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) develop positive attitudes through regular praise. They work diligently on tasks whether during free-flow self-chosen or set tasks. Reception children, for example, showed determination when

learning about perspective and identifying that the closer we get to the earth, the more detail we can see. Older pupils demonstrate sustained self-motivation and concentration. For example, in lower juniors, two pupils confidently expressed opinions, answered questions and contributed ideas with excellent descriptions when being introduced to new topics in a science lesson on solids, liquids and gases. The exemplary behaviour and pupils' great desire to give their very best and do as well as they can are significant contributory factors to their positive learning outcomes.

- 3.6 Pupils across the school are effective communicators and develop their language skills exceptionally well. They are articulate and listen extremely attentively. Children in the EYFS are highly articulate and speak confidently and knowledgably for a range of audiences. For example, children in the Nursery and Reception, without prompting or rehearsal, volunteered to stand and speak to the whole school about their favourite author and titles as part of World Book Day. Older pupils are encouraged to express their opinions and participate in public performances such as assemblies and take on leadership roles such as eco and school councils, being the voice for their peers. Younger children successfully develop secure pre-reading and writing skills. This can be attributed to the sequential introduction of letters and sounds, and the development of this foundation in Years 1 and 2, where pupils successfully learn to spell more complex irregular patterns such as 'house' and 'light'. Pupils' creative writing includes effective use of adjectives and suffixes to add greater interest. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use persuasive language successfully to convince the reader of their opinion and encourage them to accept their view. Older pupils' poetry writing includes use of simple structure and language for dramatic effect, including cause and effect to depict what is happening in the environment today and how the future of tomorrow is determined by the people of today. Pupils achieve a high standard of reading, the foundations for which are laid through daily reading sessions in the EYFS. Older pupils speak with great enthusiasm about different genres of reading and how they find them really interesting and like reading the complexity of the stories.
- 3.7 At all ages, pupils' mathematical skills and understanding are at an excellent level. Children in the EYFS demonstrated strong one-to-one correspondence of number and the ability to solve simple addition and subtraction stories. Their understanding is consolidated effectively by teachers who involve them in practical activities and use the children's individual interests to engage and foster interest. For example, children in the Nursery counted the class total with confidence and accuracy, adding one more to the total each time another friend arrived. In Reception, children use resources such as construction bricks and miniature dinosaurs to help them to add on from 10 to make different totals to 20. More able children were able to use their knowledge to understand the relationship between  $3 + 0 = 3$  and  $3 - 3 = 0$ , the introduction to the concept of inverse operations. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 accurately used prior learning effectively and excellent estimation and sensible rationalisation when working on numbers up to 100. Older pupils display excellent problem-solving expertise, used to good effect, for example, when calculating percentages, decimals, and fractions into groups of the same value as part of their mental mathematics sessions. More able pupils, however, do not always make the progress of which they are capable. At times, when they have finished their tasks, they are given more of the same rather than being challenged to deepen and extend their learning.
- 3.8 All pupils demonstrate strong knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum. Their creative and aesthetic skills are extremely well developed. This was seen in music activities where pupils sang and acted with great confidence, with excellent intonation and voice control, and they communicated very well to the audience. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in humanities are outstanding. Pupils in Year 1, for example, used relevant language such as 'herbivores', 'carnivores', 'camouflage' and 'habitat' with confidence and assurance. Older pupils successfully apply their understanding of historical context. They confidently used information from historical sources, for example, to structure questions, to analyse the reliability of facts and to reach a reasoned judgement with a degree of confidence about life as an evacuee during World War Two. More able pupils occasionally mark time rather than deepening and broadening their understanding as the teaching offers little opportunity to expand their learning beyond the set tasks.

- 3.9 Pupils are extremely competent when using ICT and make effective use of it to enhance their learning. Children in the EYFS use ICT confidently, having made significant progress during the period of lockdown in learning how to use it to access their learning. Older pupils use ICT to research and evaluate. They use it as a presentation tool to support both class-based learning and project work, where they display high-level word-processing skills. Pupils use their devices to solve problems by using search engines to find out answers independently. The development of pupils' competency in ICT is supported by leaders' and governors' investment in high-quality resources to develop skills, including the purchase of two banks of devices and a curriculum which encourages the use of ICT across a wide range of learning. For example, pupils in Year 4 used their devices to produce a digital book, *Baxter the Dog*, which they wrote and illustrated collaboratively.
- 3.10 Pupils display excellent study skills, which contribute well to their overall progress and to the quality of their independent research projects. They are extremely attentive in lessons. They draw knowledge from a range of sources, including online research, which they analyse and then use to form their own opinions. Many parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school equips their children with the team-working, collaborative and research skills they need in later life. The inspection found that pupils of all ages concentrate, focus and behave extremely well and this creates an excellent learning environment where pupils can practise and develop their study skills. The school's feedback guidelines effectively empower the pupils to make progress and self-reflect on their work.
- 3.11 Pupils achieve success in a range of non-academic activities and spoke proudly about their success in a variety of sports, including local and national competitions. Considerable success in art, drama, music, mathematics, and poetry competitions, reflects pupils' interests. In a Christmas card competition, for example, copies of the winning design were sent to the Queen, the Prime Minister and the Rotary Young Writers award.
- 3.12 Attainment of the pupils across the school is high and represents successful fulfilment of the school's aim to develop pupils' creative, aesthetic, practical, physical, emotional and spiritual qualities and talents. Children in the EYFS make excellent progress from their starting points, actively encouraged by the sensitive teaching and a nurturing environment, where almost all children reach the expected levels of development, and many start to tackle a level of work normally associated with pupils in Year 1. Throughout the school, all groups of pupils achieve high standards across the curriculum, benefiting from leaders' regular monitoring of attainment and progress, where data are used effectively to identify pupils' needs at an early stage. Pupils with SEND and those who have EAL also make good progress so that their attainment meets their expected levels, where effective tracking with appropriate intervention of teaching and curriculum provision is well-matched to all pupils' needs and abilities. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, most parents agree that their children's individual needs are met effectively.

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

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils have a good understanding of diversity and recognise the many ways people can be different to each other within society. In interviews, pupils reported that everyone feels valued in the school community and everyone just gets along, despite being from different backgrounds and religions. Pupils are respectful, tolerant and welcoming across all age groups, developing a strong understanding of tolerance of all faiths through assemblies, religious education (RE) and PSHE lessons. Pupils agree that, through the 'Herries Values', tolerance and respect are encouraged in the school. Parents are of a similar opinion; in their response to the questionnaire, almost all felt that the school strongly promotes values of respect and tolerance.
- 3.15 Pupils have a strong moral awareness and are deeply caring and respectful of one another and the school community. All pupils demonstrate an exceptionally well-developed sense of what is right or wrong, readily accept responsibility for their own behaviour, and recognise that there are

consequences to making the wrong choice. In the EYFS, children understand how to resolve conflict successfully by being fair and taking turns. The school's ethos is summed up in the 'Herries Values' which pupils proudly identify as happiness, enthusiasm, respect, resilience, independence, excellence and sincerity. These values are underpinned by the school's behaviour framework and the behaviour ladder which the views of the pupils helped to create. Pupils identified the top five things they would not like to miss; these became the consequences for poor behaviour and pupils agree that it is an excellent deterrent. Playground monitors, the Year 6 Badger Buddies, also play an important role by mediating playground disputes and applying restorative justice amongst their peers. Pupils have a mature awareness that some issues are not easy to resolve; they acknowledge that people have different opinions and sometimes people fall out but have a firm belief that such differences can be resolved.

- 3.16 Pupils develop a meaningful appreciation of the spiritual aspects of life, based on a strong understanding of different faiths. This was evident, for example, in an RE lesson where pupils focused on the Sikh practice of 'sewa', doing good to others. From the earliest age, all pupils value opportunities to be quiet and reflective throughout the school day, when moments of contemplation allow them time to come together and think of others. These include assemblies, lessons and activities where they meditate or perform deep breathing. For example, children in the EYFS, were observed taking a spiritual moment of reflection on the earth as part of their topic, listening carefully to the length of the chime and reflecting on how they felt. Older pupils' strong understanding of spirituality was observed during mindfulness yoga where they showed focused engagement and understanding of the 'rules of engagement' and were keen to be involved, participating fully. Pupils' empathy towards others is promoted through their various charitable efforts where they reflect on not taking for granted all that they have in monetary terms but having an appreciation for nature and valuing the love they have for their parents and family.
- 3.17 Pupils display excellent social development and collaborative skills which increase as they go through the school. Teachers ensure that this is possible through providing time for paired and group work activities that promote leadership and teamwork along with a caring and inclusive atmosphere in the classroom. From an early age, pupils learn to work and play collaboratively; staff consistently provide gentle reminders and interventions to promote kind behaviour and to encourage children to share. For example, in a PE lesson with pupils in Year 3, in correcting some minor behavioural slips, the teacher referred to the 'Herries Values' and the behaviour ladder for the children to consider whether their behaviour was in line with those expectations. Older pupils provide excellent role models for the younger children and, through the Badger Buddies system, help others to resolve problems by talking together to find a solution, supported by the strong sense of community, where pupils demonstrate teamwork and close working relationships with each other supported by the positive role modelling of the staff.
- 3.18 Pupils make outstanding contributions to the lives of others within the school and the wider community. They care for each other and provide support and encouragement in abundance. Older pupils take their positions of responsibility seriously, be it as a charity or eco representative, a Badger Buddy or a digital leader. For example, during a celebration assembly, the Year 6 digital leader took charge of the technical side, producing the projected presentation, sourcing and applying appropriate websites to support content; the Year 6 charity representative, with an awareness of the elderly generation losing social contact during the pandemic, organised a recording of the pupils performing a concert, which was then played at the local old people's home. Pupils appreciate the circumstances of those less fortunate than themselves and undertake a wide range of charitable work both at home and further afield, as well as taking part in national fundraising events.
- 3.19 Pupils have a very clear understanding of staying safe, physically, mentally and online and are able to explain how this can be achieved. They understand the need for a healthy lifestyle by adopting healthy practices, such as maintaining a healthy diet, which is facilitated by the provision of healthy meal choices. Pupils also show a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils feel safe at

school and have a well-developed understanding of what they need to do in order to achieve a healthy body and mind. They articulate clearly how they are feeling and make the most of opportunities to develop excellent habits for life where they develop strategies that enhance not only their own well-being, but also that of their peers. Pupils know where to seek help and embrace a resilient approach to challenges which they may face so they have a robust sense of well-being and a positive attitude to life.

- 3.20 From an early age, pupils learn about the importance of making the right decision and display assurance and confidence in their decision-making abilities. Children in the EYFS exhibit strong levels of independence and learn to make informed choices during child-initiated sessions where teachers explain the range of options and provide help and guidance to support the chosen activities. They are enthusiastic learners who make confident decisions using previous knowledge to achieve success in their learning. For example, in Reception, children self-select resources to support their numeracy activities and understanding, linking the symbol with its cardinal number, working at their own level. Older pupils consider options evaluatively and are willing to take risks in their learning. This was reflected in pupil discussions, where they said they valued opportunities to speak with teachers if needed, getting advice and help but also being empowered to solve problems for themselves either independently or collaboratively, rather than relying on adults. Pupils' resilient approach leads to a robust sense of well-being and positive attitudes in accordance with the 'Herries Values' which permeate all aspects of school life.

## 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 a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with 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 Julie Lowe	Reporting inspector
Mr Garry Leeson	Compliance team inspector (Compliance manager, ISA school)
Mr Nicholas Pears	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)