



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Springmead Preparatory School

February 2023

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 Inspection	8
Preface	8
Key findings	8
Recommendations	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	Springmead Preparatory School			
DfE number	933/6204			
Address	Springmead Preparatory School 13 Castle Corner Beckington Frome Somerset BA11 6TA			
Telephone number	01373 831555			
Email address	info@springmead.com			
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Cox			
Proprietor	Mrs Madeleine Taylor			
Age range	2 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	119			
	Nursery	14	Pre-prep	39
			Prep	66
Inspection dates	7 to 9 February 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Springmead Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day school. The school was founded in 2002 by three members of the same family, one of whom remains as the sole proprietor and provides governance. The school is located in the village of Beckington, near Frome. It comprises a nursery, a pre-prep for pupils from Reception to Year 2 and a prep school for pupils from Year 3 to Year 6. The head was appointed in September 2021.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to enable pupils to become effective, resilient, reflective and resourceful independent learners, developing their own particular talents and abilities within a broad and stimulating curriculum. It seeks to do this by recognising each child as an individual with unique needs and potential, within a happy supportive culture rooted within a Christian ethos and strong moral values.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a diverse range of professional families mainly living within a 10-mile radius of the school. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 19 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), such as dyslexia and autistic spectrum disorder, all of whom receive additional specialist support within lessons. No pupil has an education and health care (EHC) plan. Four pupils identified as having English as an additional language (EAL) receive in-class support when necessary. The school modifies and extends the curriculum for pupils it has identified as the most able, and provides opportunities for enrichment beyond the academic environment.

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.

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 wellbeing 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'.

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 make strong overall progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent.
- Pupils are highly articulate and confident communicators.
- Pupils have well-developed information, communication and technology (ICT) skills, and a developing understanding of different applications across the curriculum.

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

- Pupils' social development is excellent and supported by the extremely positive relationships shown between staff and pupils.
- Pupils are highly inclusive and respectful, readily celebrating each other's successes.
- Pupils have a strong spiritual awareness and a deep appreciation for the world around them.
- Pupils make a significant contribution to their school community and are supportive of environmental initiatives.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Enable pupils to broaden their knowledge and understanding of digital applications in their learning across the curriculum.
- Enable pupils to further develop their leadership skills in support of the school's response to environmental issues.

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 are highly successful and make strong progress in relation to their abilities. Data provided by the school confirm that in 2022 nearly all Year 6 pupils achieved at least in line with national expectations compared to those taking the same tests nationally, and over a third of these pupils achieved above national expectations. Data from 2021 and 2019 confirm this overall picture. In the EYFS nearly all pupils show a good level of development in their Early Learning Goals, well above national averages. This excellent achievement is a result of the expert and skilful teaching provided by

leaders. Pupils with SEND make strong progress, often in line with their peers and meeting their potential, as a result of the highly focused and individualised support provided by staff and overseen by the proprietor. In lessons pupils make substantial short-term progress, for example when Year 3 pupils rapidly developed the skills in mathematics to measure and calculate the perimeters of 2D shapes. The school successfully meets its aim to enable pupils to become effective independent learners.

- 3.6 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They arrive at lessons ready to learn and engage with eager enthusiasm and lively interest. They maintain high levels of focus throughout lessons, responding readily to instructions and completing tasks efficiently and accurately. For example, pre-prep children remained focused and applied themselves fully whilst practising backstroke in swimming. Pupils are strongly collaborative in their approach to learning, which makes a significant contribution to their overall success. For example, Year 5 pupils worked skilfully together when discussing in pairs the crimes committed by Macbeth. Pupils are productive in lessons, completing a large volume of work, as seen in scrutiny of Year 4 pupils' English and mathematics books. They are persistent in ensuring tasks are completed and take pride in their presentation. The school is highly successful in its aim to enable pupils to become effective, resilient, reflective and resourceful independent learners.
- 3.7 Pupils' communication skills are excellent. Reception children have well-developed understanding of the sounds different letter combinations make which they readily apply when accurately reading simple sentences. Pupils are articulate and confident, both when declaiming in public and when speaking privately to peers or adults. For example, they hold clear and interesting conversations over lunch, appreciating and responding appropriately to what each other has said. Their precise command of language makes a strong contribution to their overall success in learning. They listen with great care, as demonstrated by their thoughtful and considered responses to questions in lessons and assemblies. For example, pupils' empathetic responses to an assembly talk about the need to give mutual support, demonstrated active listening skills and nuanced comprehension. Pupils' writing is detailed and accurate, showing strong regard for grammar and punctuation, and a clear understanding of purpose. For example, Year 5 pupils wrote highly persuasive letters to Macbeth asking him to stop killing people, reflecting strong comprehension of Shakespeare's story and powerful use of appropriate language. Pupils' creative writing is imaginative, making rich use of adjectives. Year 4 pupils' poems about what they might put in a magic box included effective use of descriptive phrases, for example 'the smell of pink roses on a summer's night'. Pupils are active readers and often read for pleasure making regular use of the school's library. Pupils strong reading skills are enhanced as a result of leaders' successful application of the school's bespoke reading award scheme.
- 3.8 Pupils are highly proficient mathematicians as a result of teaching that is appropriately paced and carefully planned to meet pupils' individual needs. Year 1 pupils demonstrated secure understanding of doubling single-digit numbers, responding rapidly and accurately to quick-fire questions from their teacher. Pupils are fluent in their use of mathematical functions, completing calculations to a high level of accuracy. For example, Year 5 pupils demonstrated secure understanding of how to multiply fractions. They demonstrate strong skills across a range of mathematical topics. Year 6 pupils successfully answered increasingly complex questions in shape work, demonstrating ready application of their secure measuring skills. Pupils' deep understanding is strongly supported by their excellent ability to explore and explain different strategies for solving problems. This forensic understanding provides a secure platform for undertaking investigations. Pupils successfully apply their mathematical skills across other curriculum areas, for example when taking measurements and analysing data in science and creating spreadsheets in ICT.
- 3.9 Pupils are highly motivated learners with a deep thirst for knowledge. They have proficient skills for learning which they successfully apply across all aspects of the curriculum. For example, in science, Year 5 pupils demonstrated through investigation secure understanding of the link between night and day and the earth's rotation on its axis. Year 4 pupils in design technology produced detailed designs for marble runs using carefully drawn diagrams and concise annotations. Pupils have high levels of

physical co-ordination as seen when younger pupils in swimming successfully completed drills to further develop their technique in backstroke. Pupils can successfully apply their detailed understanding and knowledge from one subject area to another, strongly supported by the school's thematic approach to teaching the curriculum. For example, Year 4 pupils successfully applied prior learning in art to accurately deduce the meaning of portrait and landscape when filming presentations about evacuees in ICT.

- 3.10 Pupils have highly developed learning skills, which are rigorously embedded and habituated from an early age. They organise their work well, presenting it clearly and to high standards. They are imaginative, drawing inspiration from across multiple aspects of learning, to synthesise ideas in interesting new ways. For example, in an assembly Year 5 pupils recognised that a model of three elephants in a line could be interpreted as a metaphor for how successful friendship offers mutual support. They readily hypothesise to predict outcomes. Reception children proposed excellent suggestions for what might happen if a snowflake became too warm, recognising it would turn to water and pre-prep pupils in the science club enthusiastically offered sensible ideas for what they thought would happen when vinegar was added to ice.
- 3.11 Pupils are highly successful in activities outside of the formal curriculum. They engage enthusiastically with the extensive range of clubs offered by leaders. They are accomplished performers in the many musical and dramatic events arranged annually by the school. Year 5 pupils gave a lively performance to their peers in Year 6 of *Sweet Caroline*, singing with great exuberance in an assembly whilst also playing a range of percussion instruments. Many pupils demonstrate proficiency in learning musical instruments, achieving notable success in grade examinations at high levels for their age. Pupils' excellent artistic skills have been acknowledged in art competitions, with individuals' pieces displayed in exhibitions alongside pupils from similar schools across the country. Many pupils have been successful in local festivals, particularly in verse and prose speaking. In sport, pupils achieve considerable success in teams, for example as regular finalists in national swimming competitions alongside pupils from similar schools. Individually, pupils have achieved significant results at club level in sports, such as football, hockey and gymnastics.
- 3.12 Pupils are confident and competent users of digital technology, successfully applying these skills across several aspects of the curriculum. For example, Year 4 pupils successfully made short video clips of each other recounting facts they had researched about evacuees, making confident use of tablet computers. Pupils have good coding skills for their age, for example, creating programmes to successfully guide an animated character through a virtual maze. Reception children successfully programmed a floor robot to navigate a route around their classroom. Pupils readily undertake research using online sources, as when Year 5 pupils discovered interesting and varied facts about statues from Asian cultures. Pupils' understanding of where else they could apply digital technology is less well developed because of the limited range of applications used across different curriculum areas.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils demonstrate marked self-awareness for their age. They are self-confident, whilst remaining modest, as reflected in their quiet, self-composed participation in lessons and activities. Pupils are adaptable to changing circumstances. For example, Year 5 pupils, in the absence of Year 6, quietly and efficiently assumed the roles of supporting their peers in the dining hall at lunchtime. They are resilient in their approach to learning, readily exploring different strategies for overcoming blocks in their understanding. Pupils with SEND, for example, actively set their own targets, and persist with repetitive practice to master the aspects of their learning that they find challenging. Pupils show high levels of self-discipline, particularly in lessons, where they respond rapidly to instructions. For example, Year 3 pupils quickly and efficiently tidied up their classroom at the end of a science lesson.

Pupils have an appropriate awareness of their own abilities and consequently take sensible risks when trying new skills.

- 3.15 Pupils' social development is strong. They are highly collaborative in all aspects of school life, readily offering support for one another. For example, Year 4 pupils enthusiastically praised the achievements of peers who offered correct answers in mathematics. Older pupils are highly successful in fulfilling their responsibilities in leadership roles as pupil ambassadors. This was seen when Year 6 pupils showed careful diligence whilst escorting the younger pupils into assembly. Pupils show deep social concern in their responses to local issues such as poverty, through their enthusiastic efforts to participate in fundraising. The relationships between pupils and with staff are extremely strong as a result of the extraordinary culture and modelling of servant leadership by school staff and leaders. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, nearly all parents who responded agreed that the school equips their child with the team working, collaborative and research skills they need in later life. Inspection evidence confirms this to be the case.
- 3.16 Pupils are passionate about ensuring everyone feels included and accepted. They understand many of the ways people can have differences or hold different identities and that this can, in the wider world, on occasion lead to discrimination. Within school, pupils work hard to avoid this. They show ready recognition and acceptance of those with beliefs different to their own, and show interest in understanding and learning more about different cultures to broaden their own perspectives. They have a good understanding that they each have different strengths and weaknesses, and so work hard to ensure everyone is enabled to participate. Pupils with SEND are successfully included, alongside their peers, in sporting activities, such as netball and swimming, as a result of careful planning for their needs by teachers. Pupils show a deep interest in those from backgrounds different and distinct to their own and who have led successful lives, as seen in the exuberant and varied responses to the whole school *Remarkable People Project* on display in classrooms.
- 3.17 Pupils hold themselves to an exceptionally high standard of behaviour, taking responsibility for their own actions. This was confirmed in observations of lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes. Reception children showed excellent self-discipline when listening to a story. Pupils can readily articulate the school's values as stated in the *Springmead Way*, and in discussions with inspectors, referenced this as their guiding principle. Year 6 pupil ambassadors are highly successful at modelling to younger pupils the appropriate way to interact. They have high ethical standards, particularly in relation to their desire to live sustainably. Pupils have a keen sense of justice and will challenge unkindness when they encounter it.
- 3.18 Pupils have a strong awareness of how to stay safe and keep healthy. Nearly all pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that they understand how to stay safe online. Inspection evidence confirms that they are confident and safe users of digital technology, able to give helpful and supportive advice to one another. Pupils make sensible judgements of risk, based on good awareness of their own abilities. They are resilient when faced with challenges but recognise, when necessary, where to turn to for support, for example by using the worry boxes provided by the school. Their readiness to seek support is enabled by the high level of trust they place in staff to listen and deal with issues that arise with sensitivity, tact and skill. Pupils have a strong understanding of the importance of good mental health, and the importance of discussing their concerns with others. They recognise the link between maintaining positive mental health, having an active lifestyle and eating well. Pupils maintain good levels of physical fitness in school, and have a clear understanding of the need to live a balanced life. This is evident in the high participation rates in the sporting clubs offered by the school. They understand what a healthy diet contains. In questionnaire responses, nearly all parents agreed that the school encourages children to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Inspection evidence confirms this.
- 3.19 Pupils spiritual understanding is strongly developed. They have high levels of aesthetic awareness for their age, underpinned by a schoolwide culture that fosters and celebrates creativity. For example, prep pupils in art club demonstrated deep appreciation for Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* whilst recreating their own colourful versions. This appreciation is also evident in the pupils' excellent art work,

displayed throughout the school. They participate in acts of worship with respect and reverence, singing together with feeling and energy. They engage positively with prayer as a collective act, showing consideration for those with faith and acceptance of those without. They have a mature understanding of the non-material aspects of life. For example, in an assembly on the power of friendship, pupils in response likened love 'to an invisible string that runs through everything'. In discussions, Year 5 pupils showed a mature understanding of the importance of living meaningful and fulfilling lives over personal financial gain. They have a deep appreciation for the natural beauty they see around them, and a strong collective desire to find ways to conserve this by living more sustainably.

- 3.20 Pupils make a generous contribution to their school and community. They undertake roles of responsibility with modest dignity. Older pupils successfully model the school's high standards to the younger pupils, building a strong culture of mutual support. They engage fully with fundraising events, for example, when Year 6 pupils enthusiastically baked cakes to be sold at a coffee morning to raise money for a national cancer charity. They support local foodbanks by donating food and raising funds through specially organised events. Pupils readily engage with collecting litter in the local community as part of the *Springmead Awards* scheme. Pupils' ability to develop their understanding and skills of leadership in tackling environmental issues is restricted by the limited opportunities made available to them in this aspect of school life.
- 3.21 Pupils are effective and informed decision makers. For example, Reception children make excellent choices of activities in lessons recognising how best to meet their own needs. Nursery children are thoughtful in what and where to play at breaktimes showing consideration for others. They make sensible food choices at lunchtime, showing understanding that they require a balance of different food types to maintain strong health. In discussions with inspectors, older pupils gave reasoned explanations for their preference of next schools. Pupils make thoughtful decisions about which activity clubs to undertake, taking full advantage of the wide range on offer. They make sensible choices in lessons; for example, prep pupils showed excellent strategic decision-making when practising attacking and defending skills in games.

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 proprietor, 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

Mr Matthew Lovett	Reporting inspector
Mr Miles MacEacharn	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, HMC school)
Mrs Sarah Marsh	Team inspector (Head of prep, GSA school)