



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report  
For Schools with Residential Provision**

**Bede's Preparatory School**

**November 2019**



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### School's Details

<b>School</b>	Bede's Preparatory School		
<b>DfE number</b>	845/6011		
<b>Registered charity number</b>	278950		
<b>Early Years registration number</b>	EY340176		
<b>Address</b>	Bede's Preparatory School Dukes Drive Eastbourne East Sussex BN20 7XL		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01323 734222		
<b>Email address</b>	prep.school@bedes.org		
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Giles Entwisle		
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Geraldine Watkins		
<b>Age range</b>	0 to 13		
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	359		
	<b>Day pupils</b>	336	<b>Boarders</b> 23
	<b>EYFS</b>	95	<b>Years 1 to 6</b> 143
	<b>Years 7 to 8</b>	121	
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6 to 7 November 2019		

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Bede's Preparatory School is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged 3 months to 13 years. Founded as a school for male pupils in 1895, it moved to its current site in 1902. A co-educational nursery and pre-preparatory department were established in 1966 and girls were admitted two years later.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors and head of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) have been appointed, new changing rooms for pupils and a pavilion have been completed.
- 1.3 The school is part of the St Bede's Educational Trust, a registered charity which also includes a senior school, a dance school and an international summer school. All are administered by a single board of governors. The senior school's headmaster is chief executive and the preparatory school has its own headmaster. The single mixed-sex boarding house is on a separate site to the school.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school seeks to guide and inspire pupils to be passionate, curious, independent, happy and ambitious, both for themselves and for others, inside and outside of the classroom. It aims to promote each child's unique talents through personalised, high-quality academic, creative, co-curricular and sporting programmes.

### About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds, mostly from white British families. Day pupils come from a wide radius of the school, and the boarding community includes international pupils. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 85 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include a wide range of difficulties, 43 of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 14 pupils, 13 of whom receive additional support. The curriculum is modified for pupils identified as the more able in the school's population, and for other pupils because of their special talents in sport, drama, dance, art and music.

## 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. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, 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 COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such 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.

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](#), [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, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, the 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 uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 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 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 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

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 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

- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 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**

2.12 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. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.

**2.13 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 are met.**

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

2.14 A range of information is variously 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. This 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. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.

**2.15 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are 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, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.

**2.17 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**

2.18 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. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.

**2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.**

## **The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision**

- 2.20 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 2.21 Leaders have reviewed the curriculum effectively to ensure that children develop communication and language skills and the confidence to be curious, creative and active in their learning.
- 2.22 The setting meets the needs of all the children, including those with SEND, extremely well. Staff work together to provide a very caring, happy environment which is central to the planning of appropriate experiences, which promote engagement, and enjoyment.
- 2.23 All children make at least good progress in their learning and development and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. They show high levels of independence and engagement. The well-planned learning environment ensures that children become confident learners.
- 2.24 Children feel extremely safe and secure in the school environment. They are settled and enjoy their learning. They make excellent progress in their personal and emotional development, supported by the skilled practitioners who have a very good understanding of how babies and young children develop.
- 2.25 The requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare are fully met. All staff have up-to-date safeguarding training and paediatric first aid training. They are fully aware of their responsibilities in ensuring the safety and welfare of children.
- 2.26 The highly supportive leadership team works in close co-operation with staff to ensure that evaluative practice and a commitment to continual improvement has a positive impact on the quality of children's learning and development.

### **Quality of education**

- 2.27 The quality of education is outstanding.
- 2.28 The leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum so that children experience a coherent and stimulating approach to the areas of learning, ensuring a natural progression in their development and the acquisition of skills. A focus on two core books each term develops children's listening skills, language and enjoyment of stories through recognition of story sequences and repetitive fun elements, as well as new vocabulary pertinent to the stories.
- 2.29 High expectations are evident throughout the setting in the appropriately challenging interventions of adults and the specific targets set for children. For example, very young babies investigating if different types of small balls can be squeezed are challenged to find out which ones will light up. They discovered through experimentation and the gentle prompts of adults, that making the balls bounce brings about this effect.
- 2.30 Staff provide a wide range of practical activities using high quality resources which encourage children to investigate materials and be creative in their use of them. Skilful open-ended questioning is tailored to the needs of different groups of children. This promotes new learning and extends children's thinking. There is a highly effective balance between adult led and child-initiated activities, which ensures children are appropriately challenged in their learning. Assessment is used successfully to monitor children's progress and to ensure they are achieving the expected developmental milestones for their age.
- 2.31 Well qualified staff throughout the setting are very well attuned to the needs of the age group. The use of eye contact, gesture and encouraging language promotes children's confidence and engagement so that they make good progress in their learning. The design of the curriculum is underpinned by the characteristics of effective learning. This ensures that all children are enabled to

develop as enthusiastic and independent learners, preparing them well for the next stage in their learning.

### **Behaviour and attitudes**

- 2.32 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.
- 2.33 Children have very positive attitudes to learning which are evident in their sustained concentration and perseverance. When playing with cause and effect toys they keep trying until they succeed in getting the expected reaction and then show obvious delight at their success. They are developing inquisitive minds, which is seen as they respond to the world around them. They run to the doorway to see who has rung the bell and search excitedly to investigate where bubbles they can see floating through the air are coming from.
- 2.34 Children display high levels of confidence and independence. They make choices from a wide range of stimulating resources and activities around them engaging enthusiastically with the adults in the room. The secure stimulating surroundings and excellent relationships with the adults in the setting, develop children's confidence to explore their environment and promotes the development of positive behaviours. Attendance is good and children are very happy to be welcomed into the setting by their key person. If a child is absent it is followed up as necessary.

### **Personal development**

- 2.35 The personal development of children is outstanding.
- 2.36 The exceptional relationships that children have with the adults around them are built on strong, secure attachments. Adults provide excellent role models, encouraging children to listen, engage with and enjoy their learning. A well-designed curriculum and excellent care practices effectively support and promote children's emotional security and the development of their character. Children are confident to express their needs and respond enthusiastically to the adults around them. This was evident when, in response to adult encouragement, many children made a strong effort to say the word 'more' when they had finished eating their first bowl of fruit.
- 2.37 Practitioners have an excellent understanding of how to support the development of children's confidence and well-being. Time is given for children to explore and persevere with their interests. Practitioners often maintain a steady gentle commentary as children engage with the activities and resources giving them experience of language specific to what they are doing. For example, when a baby was creating sounds by hitting metal containers with a wooden spoon, the adult supporting him commented on the pitch and volume of the sounds and the child's ability to hold the spoon tightly.
- 2.38 Children display high levels of independence. All but the youngest babies feed themselves and learn how to wash their hands before eating. There is a strong focus on developing good eating habits and developing healthy lifestyles. Children enjoy a wide range of healthy meals and snacks and have access to water throughout the day. All children have their own drinking beaker. These are distributed by calling out the names of the children. They listen carefully and respond enthusiastically on hearing their name. A number of very young children enjoyed the challenge of drinking from their beaker with the lid removed.
- 2.39 All children spend time outside every day. Very young children show developing confidence when playing in the very well-resourced outdoor area. They manage risk well as they pull themselves up on the equipment or successfully navigate their way around it.
- 2.40 Staff give careful attention to the welfare and safety of children. All members of staff have completed safeguarding training and have a paediatric first aid qualification. They understand their responsibilities including the wider safeguarding duties related to the most up-to-date guidance. Accidents, illness and the administering of medication are all carefully recorded and all staff are aware

of children with special dietary or medical needs. Leaders review risk assessments for activities in school and for outings rigorously and regularly.

- 2.41 Leaders and staff ensure that equality, diversity and British values are embedded into the everyday life of the setting. The very youngest children learn that they are all different and special in their own way. They have each contributed to a booklet of photos of their family, which they can share with one another. Children listen attentively and are able to make decisions in a variety of contexts, such as choosing a book to read and deciding which particular activities to explore. Staff encourage children to develop their own ideas and the setting celebrates a range of different cultural festivals.
- 2.42 The recommendation of the last inspection to strengthen children's awareness of other cultures and diversity through the use of a wide range of resources has been addressed. The setting has invested in books and small world resources that are designed for this purpose.

### **Leadership and management**

- 2.43 Leadership and management are outstanding.
- 2.44 Leaders have a very clear and ambitious vision for the continued development of the provision and have identified areas for future development, such as learning outside and play areas. All staff have been involved in a thorough review of the curriculum, planning and assessment. They work well together and the introduction of weekly planning and progress meetings has provided a forum in which staff can evaluate the effectiveness of the activities and experiences they provide. However, leaders' monitoring of the revised curriculum is in an early stage of development.
- 2.45 Effective systems are in place for both staff supervision and appraisal leading to the identification of professional development training, which benefits both the individual and the setting. Staff are aware that they can seek the support of the leadership team at any time. Recent bespoke school-based training has focused on the review of the curriculum. Staff say that this has led to more reflective practice and stronger evaluation of the impact of provision on the progress and development of each child.
- 2.46 The head of EYFS has oversight of the assessment systems which track children's progress and development. Staff will seek her input if they have concerns about particular children and parents will be contacted to discuss possible interventions and support if required.
- 2.47 Parents are extremely happy with the provision. All EYFS parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their child's particular individual educational needs are met effectively. Parents who left comments commended the excellent care their children receive and the information they are given about their child's learning and development. Parents praised the accessibility of staff, particularly at the end of the session when staff report on their child's day in the setting. The learning environment and resources were felt to be excellent particularly in the outdoor area. Parents spoke of the friendly and approachable staff and the extremely positive feeling throughout the setting.
- 2.48 The governing body are fully aware of the requirements of the EYFS and oversee and support senior leadership well. Leaders fulfil their statutory duties with regard to equality, safeguarding and safer recruitment.

### **Compliance with statutory requirements**

- 2.49 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.**

### **Recommendation for further improvement**

The school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years.

- Strengthen the monitoring of the revised curriculum in order to ensure its continued effectiveness.

### 3. Inspection Evidence

3.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and a group of governors, and attended registrations and chapel. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

#### Inspectors

Julie Lowe	Reporting inspector
Carrie Askew	Compliance team inspector (Head of administration and compliance, IAPS school)
Timothy Cannell	Team inspector for boarding (Principal, IAPS and ISA school)
Kathryn Henry	Co-ordinating inspector (EYFS)