



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report

Brackenfield School

March 2019



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School's Details

School	Brackenfield School		
DfE number	815/6027		
Address	128 Duchy Road Harrogate North Yorkshire HG1 2HE		
Telephone number	01423 508588		
Email address	admin@brackenfieldschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Nicola Matthews		
Proprietor	Harrogate Preparatory School Ltd.		
Age range	2 to 11		
Number of pupils on roll	147		
	Boys	66	Girls 81
	EYFS	34	Pre-prep 34
	Prep	79	
Inspection dates	19 to 21 March 2019		

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Brackenfield School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged between 2 and 11 years. The school was established in 1977 and is situated near the centre of Harrogate. It is owned and governed through a limited company by the principal of the school and his wife.
- 1.2 The previous inspection was by Ofsted in March 2016. The school appointed a new headteacher in September 2018. Since the previous inspection the school has renamed its Nursery provision as Little Brackens. This is the first inspection by ISI.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to inspire a lifelong love of learning and to ensure that every child be happy and confident. It strives to make the most of their individual talents, and expects every child to leave the school as an independent learner with high self-esteem, ready for the next challenge.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils are drawn from business and professional families in Harrogate and the surrounding area. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is overall above average. The school has identified 19 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and autism. No pupil has a statement of special education needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are three pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL); their needs are met by their classroom teachers. The school provides additional challenges for pupils with special talents in music and in the performing arts.

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.

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 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. 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](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school does not meet all of the required 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 should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

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.
- 2.6 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is 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 in many but not all areas; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; and admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 The school has not followed statutory guidance with regard to carrying out pre-appointment checks, including those for prohibition from teaching and separate barred list checks when the criminal record certificate was late or accepted from another institution. Furthermore, staff files do not in all cases include copies of documentation confirming identity as required by statutory guidance. As a result the welfare of pupils has not been promoted effectively. The school has also not followed statutory guidance to ensure that deputy designated safeguarding leaders have up-to-date training at the required level.
- 2.9 Health and safety requirements are met in most, but not all, areas. Suitable measures for fire safety are implemented in many areas, including drills and the maintenance of appropriate equipment. The school has in place a suitable risk assessment policy and risk assessments for many on-site activities and hazards and for off-site trips and visits. However, the risk assessment policy is not implemented effectively. The school had carried out prior to the inspection neither a fire risk assessment conducted by a suitably trained person nor a risk assessment for legionella.
- 2.10 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 9, 10, 13, 14 and 15, 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 but those in paragraphs 7, 11, 12 and 16 [safeguarding, health and safety, fire safety, and risk assessment] are not met.**

Action point 1

- the school must ensure that training for all those with designated safeguarding responsibilities is kept up to date [paragraphs 7 (a) and (b)]

Action point 2

- the school must ensure it follows statutory guidance with regard to pre-appointment checks on staff, including checks against the list of those prohibited from teaching and the barred list, so that the welfare of pupils is promoted [paragraphs 7 (a) and (b)]

Action point 3

- the school must ensure it follows statutory guidance with regard to retaining copies of documents which confirm the identity of staff, so that the welfare of pupils is promoted [paragraphs 7 (a) and (b)]

Action point 4

- the school must carry out and implement the recommendations arising from a risk assessment for legionella [paragraphs 11 and 16 (a) and (b)]

Action point 5

- the school must carry out and implement the recommendations of a fire risk assessment conducted by a suitably trained person [paragraphs 11, 12 and 16 (a) and (b)]

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.11 The school does not make in all cases appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors. A register is kept but not as required: dates are not always provided including for identity checks and for right to work in the UK.
- 2.12 The school has failed to carry out required pre-appointment checks before the starting date for a number of staff, including those against the barred list when accepting a criminal records check from another institution, identity, medical fitness, and right to work in the UK.
- 2.13 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraphs 19 and 20 are met but those in paragraphs 18 and 21 [suitability of staff and the single central register] are not met.

Action point 6

- the school must ensure that all required pre-appointment checks are in place before staff start work, including barred list, identity, medical fitness, and right to work in the UK [paragraph 18 (2)(a), (2)(c)(i,ii,iii) and (3)]

Action point 7

- the school must ensure the single central register is maintained as required, including dates for checks for identity, against the barred list and for right to work in the UK [paragraphs 21 (3)(a)(i,ii,vii)]

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 pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.15 The school had not ensured that taps in the washrooms are not labelled as drinking water, but removed these labels during the inspection. Regular checks for the suitability of the water supply have not been carried out.
- 2.16 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation in paragraphs 23 to 27, and 29 are met but that in paragraph 28 [water quality] is not met.**

Action point 8

- **the school must ensure taps in washrooms are not labelled as drinking water and checks for legionella are carried out regularly [paragraphs 28 (1)(a), (c) and (2)]**

PART 6 – Provision of information

- 2.17 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 pupils 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.
- 2.18 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.19 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.
- 2.20 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.21 The proprietor does not ensure 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.
- 2.22 The leadership and management have failed to ensure that the school meets consistently and effectively the standards relating to safeguarding, health and safety, fire safety, risk assessment, suitability of staff, the single central register, and water.
- 2.23 The standards relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 are not met.**

Action point 9

- **the proprietor must ensure that the leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities, enable the school to meet the standards for independent schools consistently and effectively, and thereby promote the welfare of pupils [paragraphs 34 (a), (b) and (c)]**

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 with the proprietors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended class registrations. Inspectors visited 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

Dr Christopher Ray

Reporting inspector

Ms Suzanna Ward

Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)