



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Newbridge Preparatory School

October 2022

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School's Details

School College	Newbridge Preparatory School			
DfE number	336/6015			
Registered charity number	1019682			
Address	Newbridge Preparatory School 51 Newbridge Crescent Tettenhall Wolverhampton West Midlands WV6 0LH			
Telephone number	01902 751088			
Email address	office@newbridgeprepschool.org.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Sarah Fisher			
Chair of governors	Mrs Helen Hughes			
Age range	2 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	137			
	EYFS	51	Lower School	33
	Upper School	53		
Inspection dates	18 to 20 October 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Newbridge Preparatory School is an independent day school that educates female pupils up to the age of eleven years, and male pupils up to the age of seven years. Founded in Wolverhampton in 1937, it moved to its present location in 1949. The school is a limited company with charitable status, governed by a board of directors.
- 1.2 The school is divided into three sections: the Early Years Foundation Stage, for children aged 2 to 5 years; the lower school, for pupils in Years 1 and 2; and the upper school, for pupils in Years 3 to 6.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide children with strong foundations for learning within a small, family atmosphere so that each child may reach their full academic potential. It strives to nurture confident, happy children with a sense of self-discipline, who are sensitive to the needs of others.

About the pupils

- 1.4 The majority of pupils live within a 5-mile radius of the school and come from families with business or professional backgrounds. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils in the school is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school has identified 29 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, all of whom receive additional specialist help. English is an additional language (EAL) for two pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. The school modifies the curriculum for pupils identified as being the more able in the school's population and for other pupils because of their special talents in sport, drama, music and art.

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 In the prep school, National Curriculum tests in the years 2019 to 2022 confirm 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'.

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 are high achievers who succeed academically because of the effective framework of assessment, successful planning for individual needs and nurturing approach of their teachers.
- From an early stage, pupils demonstrate excellent communication skills, confidently using these to challenge and extend their learning.
- Pupils show excellent attitudes to learning. They apply their well-developed study skills effectively to take initiative in their learning where the opportunity is offered.

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

- Pupils develop excellent self-understanding and self-confidence. They are resilient and work hard to achieve success in all they attempt.
- Pupils have extremely strong social awareness and enjoy very positive and supportive relationships with their peers and staff, reflecting the strong family ethos of the school.
- Pupils demonstrate an overwhelmingly positive understanding of the importance of inclusivity and appreciation of faiths and cultures other than their own.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

- Ensure that the more able lower school pupils strengthen their study skills through increasing opportunities for them to take the initiative in their learning.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 The school successfully achieves its aims of providing children with strong foundations for learning within a small, family atmosphere so that each child may reach their full academic potential in response to the committed, experienced and knowledgeable teaching they receive in school. Pupils from the early years onwards make excellent progress from a wide range of starting points, with all children achieving the expected level of development by the end of Reception. Levels of attainment rise rapidly as pupils move through the school, as observed in lesson observations, scrutiny of books and the results of nationally standardised assessments. This is effectively supported by regular assessments, the results of which are tracked for each pupil and systematically analysed by senior

leaders. Pupils achieve excellent results in entrance examinations to selective senior schools, and a good proportion gain scholarships for academic success. Pupils with SEND achieve well in relation to their abilities, because their individual progress is tracked carefully and they are offered effective individual support. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching enables pupils to make progress and the vast majority agreed that the school meets their child's individual needs effectively.

- 3.6 Throughout the school, an ambitious and well-planned curriculum enables pupils to be extremely competent in confidently applying existing knowledge and skills to new situations and acquiring new information. Younger children rapidly acquire a broad range of skills. For example, nursery children were able to apply knowledge of musical instruments when creating sounds that were louder and quieter. Pupils in Year 2 built on previous learning when measuring their feet in decimetres. Year 3 confidently recalled their previous knowledge of Hindu worship and developed their understanding of the rituals associated with Puja. In English, Year 6 demonstrated excellent retention of vocabulary previously encountered and were able to transfer their knowledge to writing an instructional text on how to kill a vampire. In scientific report writing, older pupils accurately described their written observations of how the size and shapes of shadows were influenced by changes to the light source. The oldest pupils enthusiastically discussed the development of their aesthetic skills through creating a Canopic Jar decorated with hieroglyphics, demonstrating a strong appreciation of pop art and graffiti through the study of Romero Britto, and application to their own 'street art' designs.
- 3.7 Pupils develop their own interests and talents to a high level through a range of extra-curricular opportunities which is extensive for the size of the school. Physical skills develop rapidly from an early stage as children from nursery onwards learn how to play football, tennis and squash. Pupils participate successfully in sporting events provided by the school, including netball, orienteering and running. Some individuals achieve significant success externally for hockey, tennis and ice skating. Skills in the performing arts are developed rapidly from the early years as a result of opportunities to take part in ensembles, clubs, concerts and productions throughout the year. Pupils achieve excellent results in LAMDA drama awards and graded music examinations. Pupils achieve outstanding results in National Dance Awards including national representation. This is because dance is taught as part of the curriculum from the Early Years, alongside additional extra-curricular opportunities. There has also been individual success in a national poetry competition. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their development of a range of skills such as first aid by attending the Brownies and Guides groups run by the school. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the range of subjects is suitable for their children.
- 3.8 Pupils' communication skills develop to particularly high levels supported by the atmosphere of praise and encouragement in their lessons. For example, nursery children willingly described in detail how to make Diwali patterns and wands for Halloween. Reception children showed mature and rich language acquisition in relation to their age, accurately discussing the words 'banished' and 'rejoice' in the context of the story of Rama and Sita. The children were then quick to apply their strong knowledge of letters and sounds to write simple sentences depicting emotions in the story. Year 1 pupils listened carefully to each other when exploring rain gauges, articulately explaining their reasoning of why they could not be used in sheltered or covered places. Pupils develop excellent writing skills as they progress through the school and they are able to apply their highly descriptive vocabulary to a range of genres. Year 6 pupils make excellent use of analysis of characterisation to draw inferences from fiction. For example, they used their insight to plan and write a high-quality dramatic narrative based on their study of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities to perform, including productions and external competitions.
- 3.9 Pupils develop excellent mathematical skills by the time they leave the school. Lessons in the upper school are structured well to support and extend learning for all abilities including a strong focus on ensuring fluency of the core concepts before moving on. This results in high levels of progress throughout the school. A developing process of reflection by senior leaders has contributed positively

to the way that pupils enjoy and engage with mathematics. Older pupils spoke enthusiastically about the 'fun' approaches to mathematics and were confident in explaining how to solve complex calculations by applying their knowledge of underlying rules. Year 2 pupils successfully used mathematical language when measuring their shoes, accurately describing relative size. Year 4 pupils developed their confidence and fluency in being able to tell the time and solve time problems quickly advancing forwards and backward using intervals of 5 minutes, 15 minutes and 30 minutes. Pupils apply their mathematical knowledge and skills effectively to other areas of learning. Examples include interpreting data in geography, creating pie charts to show different food types in a balanced diet when looking at recipes and menus in science, calculating conversions in computing and interrogating the Mayan numbers system in history.

- 3.10 Pupils acquire confident skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and apply these in most subjects. This is because of the commitment from senior leaders and governors to high quality resources that support learning across the whole curriculum. Pupils demonstrate competent coding and programming skills through well-planned computing teaching and opportunities to develop their skills in coding clubs. EYFS children are successful in applying programming skills to manipulate robotic toys, further developing their directional language. Upper school pupils use coding programmes creatively for composition in music and access animations in science to extend their understanding. The oldest pupils use personalised learning technology to practise, develop and reinforce their learning of mathematical and literacy skills. Pupils demonstrate confident research skills using technology when developing their knowledge of influential people of colour through history.
- 3.11 Pupils of all ages demonstrate exemplary attitudes towards their learning. They approach their studies with a sense of purpose and commitment in response to teaching which seeks to instil a love of learning and a desire to succeed where it is offered. Nursery children displayed much determination and persistence in their creation of increasingly intricate outdoor chalked Rangoli designs. Year 4 pupils delighted in the opportunity to create their own 'spooky' music, incorporating ternary structure, successfully tackling the composition with energy and focus.
- 3.12 Pupils develop increasingly sophisticated study skills and are highly motivated to succeed. From the EYFS onwards, pupils delight in taking ownership of their learning to develop a range of skills including thinking and reasoning. They persevere when they find a task challenging, encouraged by their teachers to use strategies in which they can help themselves first, including through selecting appropriate resources from the 'help desks' in each classroom or by asking each other. In the lower school, more able pupils had limited opportunities to show initiative by exploring their own interests in their written work or to develop their own mathematical investigations. Year 3 pupils confidently used technology and non-fiction texts to extend their knowledge about the human skeleton, including deepening their understanding by interrogating images of x-rays to understand what happens when a bone 'breaks'. Year 4 pupils worked successfully in small groups to confirm their understanding of the mathematical challenge that had been presented, identifying possible strategies to solve the problems set. Pupils worked collaboratively presenting research of Egyptian Gods and reasons why they were revered. Older pupils demonstrated excellent problem-solving skills when using coding to solve rebus puzzles. Pupils spoke highly of the opportunities they had for collaboration provided by cross year group residential visits and productions. All parents who responded to questionnaires agreed that the school equips their child with the team working, collaborative and research skills they need in later life.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND, EAL and the more able develop high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence, underpinned by the well-planned opportunities in lessons for self-reflection, such as in the success criteria to indicate their level of understanding. They enthusiastically

push and challenge themselves to succeed. Pupils discussed with inspectors that they value the school culture promoted by leaders and staff which teaches that mistakes can be positive experiences. In discussions with the inspectors, older pupils explained how the structured support to self-help including through the use of 'help desks' gave them self-confidence. In their enthusiastic contributions, children in the EYFS demonstrate a mature level of self-belief and confidence in themselves, through engaging activities, their well-resourced learning environment and encouraging teaching. For example, during mathematics, nursery children were able to use conkers to explain and talk about numbers to their teachers and each other. In an English lesson, reception children thoughtfully considered the feelings of the protagonists in a Hindu story, reflecting on when they had felt similar feelings of sadness. Pupils in Year 6 show perseverance and confidence in developing extended pieces of work in English, independently acting on helpful feedback to make improvements to improve sentence fluency and use of grammar within creative writing. They show pride in their achievements and are motivated by the strong system of rewards including house points and headteacher's awards. All parents who responded to the questionnaire, agreed that the school helps their child to be confident and independent.

- 3.15 Pupils understand the importance of making decisions and taking responsibility for their lives. They demonstrate a mature understanding of how their decisions can affect their well-being and futures. In their science lesson, Year 3 pupils explained that they make food choices because they understand its value to their overall health. In discussions with the inspectors, Year 4 pupils spoke confidently of making the right decisions to resolve friendship issues based on the guidance and support they receive from their teachers. Promoting independence is at the heart of the EYFS, so that the children learn to take responsibility for their learning, making choices about which activities to access during the school day, and leading their learning in areas that excite them. The youngest EYFS children take great delight in choosing activities which excite them, including those outside, and can take steps to keep themselves warm. In discussion, pupils were keen to report that their voice is heard and valued through school council. For example, the pupils choose the charities and causes which they wish to support and decide what activities will both raise money and awareness for the charity or community group. Pupils develop this strong ability to make good decisions through the positive relationships with staff which encourage pupils to understand that positive decisions can result in praise and a sense of satisfaction.
- 3.16 Pupils demonstrate a strong appreciation of the non-material elements of life, including valuing and protecting the natural world, because of the range of opportunities offered for learning outdoors, including residential visits. In assembly, older pupils spoke knowledgeably of the importance of promoting sustainability and were passionate about increasing the understanding of the positive impact young people can have on protecting the planet. Pupils develop their understanding of the need for respect and tolerance in a multi-faith community. They are eager to understand the meaning of spirituality in different cultures and traditions through their participation in their religious education (RE) lessons, enthusiastically sharing their experiences of traditions and rituals from their own culture. They are empathetic and quick to appreciate the feelings of others. Year 3 pupils asked thoughtful questions in order to understand how families individualised the Hindu ritual of puja. Year 2 pupils shared confidently about their own religious practices and reflected with maturity and understanding about the meaning of Diwali. Pupils feel well supported by the strong pastoral provision and learn how to appreciate themselves through 'time to talk' in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) lessons and the mindfulness activities in form time.
- 3.17 Pupils celebrate the richness of diversity in their school. They are sensitive towards each other, understand the value of equity and appreciate how much they can learn from each other. Pupils are proud of the welcoming, inclusive nature of their school and demonstrate a deep awareness of racism and diversity through their explorations of black history and through their SMSC programme. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils reflected sensibly on printed material advertising toys and the lack of both racial and gender representation. They were able to suggest thoughtful ways in which they could try to influence the decision of toy companies in producing and advertising products which

represent the demographic of their community. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. Inspection evidence supports this view.

- 3.18 Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They develop an excellent understanding of right and wrong through the nurturing ethos of the school and are extremely respectful of school rules and each other. Pupils have a strong understanding of the rule of law and are able to talk with confidence about doing the right thing. Children in the EYFS value good manners. For instance, they thanked adults naturally when given a pen to complete a mathematics activity using conkers. In discussions, pupils expressed confidence in resolving issues themselves when they arose but knew they could seek adult help. Pupils develop excellent social skills and value highly what they see as the kind approach of their teachers when dealing with problems. They said that this helps them to display the same attributes to each other. In discussions, pupils spoke of the rights of every individual to education and how their decisions to behave well in the classroom promotes an atmosphere where each person is respected and free to learn. Pupils form positive friendships, professing that everyone is friends with everyone, and that kindness prevails in the school.
- 3.19 Pupils' contribution to others, the school and the community is excellent. Older pupils develop strong leadership skills and contribute positively to the school community through performing the wide range of duties they undertake, including as house captains, school council and prefects. These roles contribute to them feeling extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils are extremely effective at working with others, which is due to the excellent way that they value and respect each other. Children in the EYFS worked effectively in small groups, taking turns and listening to each other when giving coding instructions in ICT. Older pupils supported and helped each other when writing an instructional text. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about opportunities to be part of a team.
- 3.20 Pupils develop an extremely good awareness of the importance of a balanced lifestyle in terms of diet, exercise and mental and emotional health. They demonstrate a strong awareness of the importance of making good food choices in order to stay healthy, and explain that it is important to have a balance of different food groups on the plate. Pupils of all ages enjoy developing physical skills and are keen participants in dance and PE activities. Pupils are very aware of the need to be emotionally healthy and enjoy taking time for reflection, taking part in mindfulness sessions and recognising the importance of quieting their mind when they are busy. All pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that they knew how to stay safe when online. Inspectors found that pupils demonstrate an extremely strong awareness of the need to be safe when using the internet or mobile phones from a very early stage.

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 chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited 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 Tracy Handford	Reporting inspector
Mr Richard Curtis	Compliance team inspector (Housemaster, HMC school)
Mrs Sarah Hollis	Team inspector (Former headteacher, IAPS school)