



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report

Bolton School Girls' Division

February 2019



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School's Details

School	Bolton School Girls' Division			
DfE number	350/6015			
Early Years registration number	EY315995			
Registered charity number	526618			
Address	Bolton School Girls' Division Chorley New Road Bolton Lancashire BL1 4PB			
Telephone number	01204 840201			
Email address	info@boltonschool.co.uk			
Headmistress	Miss Susan Hincks			
Chair of governors	Mr Michael Griffiths			
Age range	0 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	1148			
	Boys	115	Girls	1033
	EYFS	63	Juniors	317
	Seniors	594	Sixth Form	174
Inspection dates	6 to 7 February 2019			

About the school

- 1.1 Bolton School Girls' Division is an independent day school for girls from 0 to 18 years and for boys from 0 to 7 years. It includes nursery, infant, junior and senior provision. The school is a charitable trust, overseen by a board of governors.
- 1.2 Founded in 1877, the school is part of the wider Bolton Foundation and shares a campus with the Boys' Division. In the sixth form, girls and boys share sixth form café and study facilities but are taught separately for most subjects.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new nursery manager.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to provide a stimulating education through academic, extra-curricular and social activities. It seeks to realise the potential of each pupil through challenge, initiative and leadership skills, which will allow pupils to live fulfilled lives and to make a difference in the wider community.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of backgrounds, from families living within a 25-mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicates that the ability of pupils is above average. The school has identified 162 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, a few of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of SEND. English is an additional language (EAL) for 200 pupils, whose needs are supported by classroom teachers or specialist teaching. The school has identified 230 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them, and for five other pupils because of their special talents in sport or 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.

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 meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, 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 In the junior school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2015 to 2017, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools. Results in IGCSE examinations have been higher than worldwide norms.
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2015 to 2017 have been above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

- 2.7 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.
- 2.8 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 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

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.12 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

2.13 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical 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.

2.14 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.15 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 with EHCs or EAL. 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.

2.16 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.17 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.

2.18 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.19 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.

2.20 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.

The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

- 2.21 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 2.22 Leaders set the highest expectations and ambitious targets to sustain high standards and ensure continuous improvement of all aspects of children's learning and development. Self-evaluation is rigorous, reflective and consistent.
- 2.23 The implementation and review of all policies is highly effective, ensuring the safety and well-being of children at all times. All necessary checks on staff are rigorously undertaken. This ensures that all children receive the best possible support and care.
- 2.24 All children, including those with particular needs, progress rapidly from carefully documented starting points. These are informed by initial meetings with parents and accurate and focused observations by key people which ensures individual needs are met.
- 2.25 Robust systems for monitoring progress identify children with additional needs. Early intervention is highly effective and provides the necessary support for children to progress well. This is overseen by experienced and well-qualified leaders who work with staff to monitor the progress of all children.
- 2.26 Carefully planned activities accurately reflect the needs and interests of all children. Staff make very good use of the excellent range of high-quality resources to engage children fully and enhance their learning exceptionally well. They utilise the outdoor area fully for babies and toddlers who enjoy exploring and investigating.
- 2.27 Children's personal and emotional development are excellent, due to the high priority leaders and staff give to their individual development needs and personal safety. Children forge excellent relationships with staff. Children separate quickly from their parents and settle easily with their key person. Each child benefits from high quality individual time with adults who ensure that they are safe, happy and secure.
- 2.28 The requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare are fully met. Members of staff are fully aware of their responsibilities to safeguard children and implement the safeguarding policy and procedures well.
- 2.29 Children increasingly build confidence and develop the appropriate skills for the next stage of their education. This is because key people look after them exceptionally well.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- 2.30 The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.
- 2.31 Highly effective and experienced leadership results in all staff sharing an ambitious vision to provide high quality education and exemplary levels of care.
- 2.32 A cycle of one-to-one meetings between leaders and staff takes place regularly. These ensure that staff are extremely well supported and continuously strive to improve their practice and personal effectiveness. This impacts positively on children's learning and development.
- 2.33 Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and comments from parent interviews during the inspection were overwhelmingly positive. Parents commented on the professional and approachable staff and their nurturing attitude towards all children.
- 2.34 Leaders undertake rigorous self-evaluation to evaluate the quality of the provision and outcomes for children. The views of staff and parents are taken into account as an important part of this process. Leaders continually strive to develop the provision for care and learning to ensure that children consistently receive an excellent education and are well prepared for its next stage.

- 2.35 Learning programmes provide an excellent, well balanced curriculum. Accurate tracking of personal achievements against developmental goals ensures that children are able to achieve well from their starting points and build on prior learning. Planning is informed by assessment data to ensure that learning experiences are matched carefully to individual needs and interests.
- 2.36 Appropriate resources are provided to stimulate children's awareness of other cultures. Equality, diversity and British values of respect and tolerance are woven into everyday experiences and routines. Any poor behaviour is effectively managed. Staff act as excellent role models of the high standards of behaviour expected. In this way, all children, including the very youngest, learn to respect each other.
- 2.37 Procedures for safeguarding are fully adhered to. Staff undertake regular safeguarding training, including training to prevent radicalisation and extremism.
- 2.38 Comprehensive policies and daily risk assessments are effectively implemented to ensure that children are kept safe. Well-established routines from the beginning of each day to departure times ensure a safe environment for all children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- 2.39 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.
- 2.40 Staff set consistently high expectations for the children in their care. They have an excellent understanding of how babies and young children learn and develop, which they support extremely well through the well-planned teaching that they provide.
- 2.41 All children, including those with additional needs and the most able, make good and often excellent progress in relation to their ability and individual starting points.
- 2.42 The staff know the children extremely well. They devise enjoyable, interesting and age-appropriate activities that enthuse and challenge all children who increasingly develop confidence and skills across all areas of their learning and development.
- 2.43 Staff apply their secure knowledge of age-appropriate goals for individual children very well. They assess children's progress in learning through effective observations, which are carefully documented. Key people make excellent use of the assessment information to plan the next steps in children's learning.
- 2.44 Interactions between staff and children are timely and purposeful, and help to extend children's understanding and development. For example, a member of staff sensitively engaged with a baby to extend their thinking when rolling cars down a chute to see which one travelled the fastest.
- 2.45 Opportunities for exploration and investigation using natural resources are less well developed in some areas of the provision. A recently introduced approach to children's learning, aims to develop children's curiosity further by using natural resources and real objects. This is still in its early stages of development.
- 2.46 Practitioners use praise and encouragement effectively, so that children are confident to engage in their learning and strive to engage fully. Staff engage positively with children during routine daily activities, such as at meal times and when attending to personal needs. As a result, children's social and language abilities increasingly develop with confidence and self-assurance.
- 2.47 Excellent relationships with parents enable information about the children to be exchanged seamlessly at handover times. Daily diaries provide parents with food and sleep information. A comprehensive parent handbook provides clear information about the setting. As well as daily information, developmental summaries are shared with parents during two yearly parent evenings.

- 2.48 All staff ensure equality of opportunity. A variety of different faiths and backgrounds are represented within the setting. A clear sense of respect for diversity is apparent in both staff and children. The setting consistently celebrates diversity, reflected in their choice of activities and resources used.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- 2.49 The personal development behaviour and welfare of children are outstanding.
- 2.50 Children develop high levels of confidence and excellent independent learning skills, due to the well-organised and nurturing support of managers and staff. Babies learn well, and respond with smiles and verbalised sounds to staff, who use sign language effectively to communicate with them. Older babies and toddlers use sign language as an early communication skill to express their wants and needs.
- 2.51 Children are confident in taking measured risks and in exploring new challenges. They enjoy a sense of achievement when they succeed, such as when a baby persevered to make a car movement using his feet.
- 2.52 Opportunities for babies to share activities with older children enable them to become familiar with the staff. Children transition smoothly to the next room because detailed handovers ensure that essential information about them is passed on to relevant staff.
- 2.53 Children have extremely well-developed social skills for their age. They demonstrate a sense of emotional security within the setting. They are content to play co-operatively and happily alongside each other. As they develop, they begin to engage increasingly in activities together, such as older babies sharing safe kitchen utensils to stir and mix pasta, or toddlers experimenting together with paint using oversize paint rollers in the outdoor area. Children demonstrate respect for each other, and develop an increasing understanding of sharing and acceptance of others. This is because key people consistently model good behaviour, kindness and good manners.
- 2.54 New children settle smoothly into the setting because of the gradual admission process. Nurturing relationships ensure close bonds with children and their families are quickly established. Well-established routines enable children to feel safe and secure, both emotionally and physically.
- 2.55 Staff effectively promote regular attendance and follow up any absence swiftly.
- 2.56 Nutritious food at lunch time ensures that children have a balanced and healthy diet tailored to their needs. Children develop an understanding of the importance of fresh air and exercise through regular outdoor experience.

Outcomes for children

- 2.57 Outcomes for children are outstanding.
- 2.58 All children progress extremely well from their individual starting points. All children meet or exceed the level of development typical for their age, and are well prepared to move on to the next stage in their education.
- 2.59 Children explore their environment with determination and excitement in response to the personal encouragement and individual care provided. Toddlers develop imagination, independence, social and physical skills while playing in the outdoor kitchen, and sharing this experience with adults, making them cakes with sand and leaves. Children happily select their activities.
- 2.60 Babies enjoy choosing books and sharing them with adults, demonstrating emotional security. They listen to stories and sing along with familiar songs, joining in with actions and repeated refrains. Children explore mark making using chunky crayons, chalks and pens. Babies slowly begin to feed themselves, while toddlers serve their own vegetables and pour their own drinks.

- 2.61 Children's communication and language skills develop extremely well. This is due to staff interacting with the children using effective questioning techniques, repeating phrases and modelling language. Babies verbally request their favourite songs. Toddlers increasingly link words together to make simple sentences and fully understand and respond to instructions.
- 2.62 Children quickly become confident learners because of the consistently challenging learning environment. All children develop the key skills needed for the next stage of their learning extremely well.

Compliance with statutory requirements

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

Recommendation for further improvement

- Develop further opportunities to foster children's curiosity.

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 chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. 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

Mrs Flora Bean	Reporting inspector
Mrs Michelle Hannaford	Compliance team inspector (Junior headmistress, IAPS school)
Mr Stephen Willis	Compliance team inspector (Senior teacher, HMC and GSA school)
Mrs Valerie Holloway	Coordinating inspector for early years (Former nursery manager, IAPS school)