



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Hulme Hall Grammar School

October 2022

Contents

School's Details		3
1. Background Information		4
About the school		4
What the school seeks to do		4
About the pupils		4
2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection		5
Preface		5
Key findings		6
PART 1 – Quality of education provided		6
PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils		6
PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils		6
PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors		6
PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools		6
PART 6 – Provision of information		7
PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled		7
PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools		7
3. Educational Quality Inspection		8
Preface		8
Key findings		8
Recommendation		8
The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements		8
The quality of the pupils' personal development		10
4. Inspection Evidence		13

School's Details

School	Hulme Hall Grammar School			
DfE number	356/6009			
Registered charity number	525931			
Address	Hulme Hall Grammar School Beech Avenue Cheadle Cheshire SK3 8HA			
Telephone number	01614 853524			
Email address	secretary@hulmehallschool.org			
Headteacher	Mr Dean Grierson			
Chair of governors	Mr Tim Lowe			
Age range	2 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	200			
	EYFS	49	Seniors	151
Inspection dates	4 to 6 October 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Hulme Hall Grammar School is a non-selective, co-educational independent day school. The school was founded as a boys' secondary school in 1928, moving to its present site in Davenport on the edge of Stockport in 2017. It has a pre-school for children aged 2 to 4 and a senior school for pupils aged 11 to 16. The school is a charitable trust administered by a board of governors. Since the previous inspection, the junior learning centre closed in July 2022.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.2 The school aims to instil a set of values in its pupils which encourage them to be hard-working, honest, tolerant and respectful of themselves and others. It seeks to place an emphasis on developing the whole person, and on encouraging pupils to become confident individuals with high levels of self-esteem. It aims to provide a holistic education, so that pupils can develop academically, socially, morally and spiritually in a caring, nurturing and supporting environment.

About the pupils

- 1.3 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds, living within a 20-mile radius of the school and reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the locality. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is average when compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 78 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dyspraxia, 66 of whom receive additional specialist help. Fifteen pupils have an educational, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 23 pupils of whom eight receive additional support. Pupils identified as the most able and those with particular talents have their curriculum modified or enhanced.

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. 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 At GCSE in the years 2020 to 2022, performance has confirmed 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 and sex education, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. 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 good.

- Pupils, including those with SEND develop their subject knowledge rapidly, making high rates of progress over time.
- Pupils display strongly positive attitudes to learning, both individually and collaboratively.
- Pupils throughout the school have well developed communication skills which they apply confidently to their learning.

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

- Pupils show a strong appreciation, respect and support for the diverse nature of their community.
- Pupils demonstrate substantial self-confidence, showing a mature awareness of their personal development over time.
- Pupils' moral understanding is highly developed and they readily take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Pupils have excellent social awareness and are highly supportive of each other's needs and achievements.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

- Strengthen senior pupils' study skills, including their ability and confidence to take ownership of their learning.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Pupils make rapid progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding as they move through the school. Analysis of school data, lesson observations and work scrutiny show that almost all pupils achieve higher examination grades than expected for those of their ability, in line with the school's aim to develop their pupils academically. GCSE results in 2019 were broadly aligned with the national average, and this level of attainment was maintained in 2020 and 2021, in the centre- and teacher-assessed grades. Value added results are positive in almost all subjects and highly positive in some. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) also make strong progress, in line with their peers. This is enabled by teaching which demonstrates detailed knowledge of individual pupils

and strong mutually respectful relationships between staff and pupils. All leavers in 2022 engaged in some form of education, employment or training, with the vast majority of pupils gaining places at their first choice of further secondary education.

- 3.6 Pupils achieve well and engage strongly in the learning process, showing substantial pride in their school. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, all parents commented that teaching enabled their child to make progress and a very large majority of pupils commented that their teachers are supportive. This is a consequence of the effective leadership of the schools nurturing academic provision, a view supported by inspection evidence.
- 3.7 Pupils display strongly positive attitudes to learning, being well supported by the strong school-wide culture of respect and nurture. In lessons, pupils are well-behaved, well-motivated, positive and focused on learning. Children in the EYFS demonstrate excellent attitudes to their learning, being attentive, engaged and busy as active participants. This was seen in a challenging task in art, where children used a wide range of tones and proportion in their drawings, in the style of *Paul Cezanne*. In a GCSE mathematics lesson, pupils displayed great resilience in their work on double inequalities, listening carefully to feedback and incorporating it into their work. In a science lesson, pupils with SEND demonstrated great perseverance when returning several times to a piece of work in order to be able to fully explain the results of their experiment. Pupils talk readily of the importance of learning and autonomously seek additional support with their work from staff or dedicated homework clubs.
- 3.8 Pupils throughout the school have well developed communication skills. They listen to each other with empathy, engagement and sensitivity. Pupils of all ages and abilities are articulate and confident communicators, expressing themselves with clarity, accuracy and impact in a range of settings. Pre-school children participated enthusiastically in a phonics lesson creating a 'silly soup'. They displayed excellent listening and speaking skills by recalling the initial sounds of words and naming each mystery object accurately. Younger pupils in a religious education (RE) lesson expressed both ideas and views articulately when discussing the rights and wrongs of the death penalty and the right to life amidst the pandemic. In modern foreign languages (MFL) lessons, GCSE pupils displayed very strong linguistic skills and a natural exuberance and enthusiasm in the challenging exercises observed. Pupils express pleasure in reading and enjoy analysing major works. Some pupils view extended writing as a more challenging area and some have significant issues with writing accurately. Evidence from work scrutiny saw some strong pieces of written English with good prose skills in relation to the pupils' ages and abilities. These pieces show a good understanding of mode of expression, vocabulary and the creative use of language.
- 3.9 Pupils in both schools develop their skills, knowledge and understanding rapidly, and to a good standard for their age and ability. They understand that their learned skills are transferable, and they apply their learning effectively across all curriculum subjects. Pupils with SEND develop their knowledge, skills and understanding particularly rapidly and are well supported by both in-class support and interventions. Pre-school children demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of tempo and volume and applied this confidently to an outdoor activity using percussion instruments. Year 10 mathematicians successfully determined whether to use the sine or cosine rule to tackle problems involving missing angles and lengths, and the most able explained their solutions to the rest of the class with confidence. In a GCSE geography lesson pupils showed strong prior knowledge of ecosystems, tropical rainforests and hazards, being able to define complicated terms such as biotic, pro-biotic and deforestation. However, in some lessons, pupils' progress was hindered as a result of limited challenge and a lack of intellectually stimulating tasks.
- 3.10 In the senior school, good numeracy skills were observed across the age ranges both in mathematics and across the curriculum. Pupils readily apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to other contexts such as geography, the sciences and physical education (PE). Pre-school pupils demonstrate excellent mathematical vocabulary for their age. They used comparative mathematical language confidently and accurately to measure and identify quantities of objects such as the pom poms in the book voting jar. They make excellent progress in numeracy, showing that they can count up to 5 with

confidence and subitise, instantly recognising these numbers as they count. In GCSE science lessons, pupils were able to swiftly extract data from bar charts showing disease numbers using both numerical scales and colour coding. They successfully substituted values into an equation for elastic potential energy and then rearranged these to obtain values for extension. More able pupils explained the relevance of surface area to volume ratios when considering nanoparticles, constructing well developed explanations and illustrating them with numerical data.

- 3.11 Pupils are confident users of information and communication technology (ICT) and consider its use as a natural part of their daily learning. They make good use of the internet as a learning resource and can readily access and use material available on various digital platforms to support learning at home. Pre-school pupils enjoy using ICT and demonstrate excellent ability and skills when making marks on the screen, deleting them and then starting again. This demonstrates their emerging recognition of the efficiency of using ICT for self-correcting their work to form their letters with improved accuracy. In a GCSE photography lesson, pupils were very knowledgeable about the use of the ICT 'photo workshop' tools they were using and were able to confidently demonstrate this to the inspector.
- 3.12 Senior school pupils' study skills are good. They analyse texts and data and draw knowledge from specified sources, and when prompted, demonstrate the ability to hypothesise in simple situations. However, their skills are not fully developed because they have limited opportunities for independent work within the curriculum. Older pupils recognise this, telling inspectors that they would appreciate more extended and self-directed study opportunities. Pupils enjoy and benefit from those opportunities provided, readily citing lessons learned from planning their own coding projects and artwork. Year 11 pupils showed good evaluative skills in history, selecting pertinent quotes from historical sources to illustrate the points they were making without including extraneous matter. Pupils' food and nutrition booklets demonstrate their good use of challenging sensory, self-assessment and self-evaluation questions. Pupils with SEND were readily able to analyse the key issues in a word problem, extracting the important figures and successfully transforming the problem into a mathematical statement.
- 3.13 Senior school pupils take considerable personal and shared pride in their achievements outside the curriculum. Pupils have achieved sporting success in the national athletics and cross-county championships and two talented pupils are national champions in weightlifting and windsurfing. Some pupils play locally for Stockport cricket club. Success is also achieved in music and LAMDA qualifications and in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme at bronze and silver levels. All year 10 pupils are first aid qualified. A younger pupil has been successful in selection for the international scouting Jamboree being held in South Korea.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 Pupils' self-understanding is excellent and a strength of pupils' personal development. Throughout the school, pupils display substantial awareness of what they excel at as well as areas that they find more challenging. In line with the schools aims, pupils understand that they have an important part to play in the school and their wider community. This is particularly true of older pupils who reflect readily on their school journey and how, often from a low base, their confidence and self-esteem has developed. Middle school pupils in an English lesson displayed excellent levels of self-esteem when discussing difficult aspects from their shared text about dystopian landscapes and their impact on the characters within it. Senior pupils, especially those with SEND, demonstrate resilience in the face of academic challenge. They know who they can approach for support and advice and willingly do so, often citing the enrichment centre as the source of this targeted personal support. Pre-school children display excellent levels of self-confidence, self-esteem and self-understanding for their age through their resilience and perseverance to work through problems. They are able to recognise when something is challenging and to persevere to solve problems with adult support, such as when turning

on the tap. In their responses to the questionnaire, a very large majority of parents agreed that the school helps pupils be confident and independent. Older pupils have clear ideas about their future pathways and feel well supported with the information they need to progress. These excellent outcomes in pupils' personal development are due to the strong commitment of senior leaders, school governors and staff to providing high levels of caring and nurturing pastoral support.

- 3.16 Pupils recognise, develop their understanding of, and in many cases, celebrate the difference in others within the school. Their strong appreciation, respect and support for the diverse nature of their multicultural and multi-faith school community are fostered by the values and ethos of the school. Pupils display a lively curiosity about the wider world and understand that they will continue learning throughout their lives. In form time, older pupils showed a mature interest in a news story from Iran regarding protest activity around headscarves. They were keen to learn more and expressed respectful views towards both women and the Islamic faith. Pupil directors' notes on display highlight the sensitive and thoughtful processes behind a production of *Ashputtel*, which reflected the different historical and cultural values displayed by this version and the more familiar *Disney* version. Pre-school children talk about themselves and others with respect, making excellent use of the 'all about me' posters on display. They showed a great appreciation of the work of contemporary African American artist, Mickalene Tomas when creating their own work in a similar style. An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance.
- 3.17 Pupils exhibit a highly developed social awareness both in and out of the classroom. They are respectful of staff and their peers, engaging positive, honest and open interactions with others. Pupils readily make friends with each other, regardless of their point of entry, reflecting the strength of community that exists in the school. In a pupil-led PE lesson, highly co-operative and collaborative group activities enabled excellent development of teamwork, social and organisational skills. In a GCSE physics lesson, pupils worked together to carry out an experiment into Hooke's law, managing the tasks of equipment collection and usage, and the recording of results efficiently and effectively. Younger pupils in a music lesson demonstrated thoughtful awareness of each other's needs. This included offering regular supportive and constructive feedback to their peers when working towards the common goal of playing a collaborative piece of jazz music. Pre-school children show excellent manners and respect for each other, recognising the need to wait their turn for adult support during lunch. This expectation of collaboration helps all pupils to develop into considerate and empathetic young people. In the questionnaire most parents agreed that the school helps pupils develop strong teamwork and social skills.
- 3.18 Pupils throughout the school behave very well towards each other and consistently demonstrate kindness, tolerance and a mature understanding of each other. Pupils have an embedded sense of right and wrong and they readily take responsibility for their own behaviour. They are courteous and welcoming and there is a strong culture of trust and mutual respect. Pupils attending the lunchtime art, craft and games club showed undemonstrative but effective kindness towards a pupil with some social and emotional needs, ensuring that he was able to join them if he wished but not compelled to do so. Younger pupils in a RE lesson held a mature, well-informed, enthusiastic and fully involved discussion on the death penalty and the right to take a life or not. Pre-school children aim to be the 'best version of themselves' and they show an excellent acceptance of responsibility for their own behaviour. Clear and strong leadership from all staff encourages pupils to take responsibility for the culture and behaviour of the school.
- 3.19 Pupils contribute positively and willingly to those within their school community and to society more broadly. Pupils consider the tight knit community that comes from being a small school to be a real strength. The school fully meets its aim to create a sense of community where pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and welcome all, irrespective of background or circumstance. Pupils gain great satisfaction from their effective fulfilment of roles on the school and EYFS councils, as well-being mentors, peer buddies and reading buddies for the pre-school children. Pupils are highly aware of

issues relating to inequality and express this most effectively through whole-school fund-raising charity work. They have raised considerable sums of money for a range of organisations both regional and national and see their mission as being a small school that makes a big difference. Pupils enjoy volunteering through the DofE scheme and see this as part of a well understood social responsibility.

- 3.20 Throughout the school, pupils are resilient and have strong decision-making skills. They enjoy making decisions and become more able to do so as they move through the school. In their personal relationships, they make wise choices to prioritise friendship groups within their small community and discuss the nature of these decisions sensibly and with maturity. Older pupils decide their GCSE programme freely and feel that this is a valuable experience in helping them towards making bigger decisions later in their lives. Pre-school children confidently decide on what they want to explore and play with in their setting. They choose their own ways to do things such as how to find out what is inside a pumpkin, or how to measure the floor mat. The efficacy of the school and EYFS councils is seen in the actions taken by the school in response. These include changes to the school uniform, food provision in the tuck shop and the rewards system.
- 3.21 Pupils show a balanced and mature understanding of the fundamental aspects of staying physically and mentally healthy and are able to relate these readily to their own lives. They are aware of the need for a healthy diet and exercise and make choices that will actively support them to achieve this. Older pupils talk openly and freely of the value of the 'lavender lounge', a quiet space where they can relax and be emotionally reflective with staff and the pupil well-being mentors. During a baking activity pre-school children asked questions about the ingredients and could talk confidently about foods that are good or bad for their teeth. They showed good understanding about keeping healthy by washing their hands so that they don't spread germs. Almost all pupils agreed that they know how to stay safe online, and that they feel safe and secure in school, a consideration supported by all parents who responded to the questionnaire.
- 3.22 Pupils have a good spiritual understanding, strong sense of belonging and an appreciation of non-material aspects of life. Older pupils expressed great appreciation for the freedom found within drama to express and explore their emotions. In a GCSE science lesson, pupils discussed the dimensions of a nanoparticle with awe and wonder, seeing this as beyond comprehension. Pupils of all ages talk knowledgeably about and display much appreciation for the aesthetic joys of art. Pre-school pupils make excellent use of listening skills with classical music and exploring tempo when producing artwork. Sensitivity for living organisms was displayed by pre-school children in their care for the goldfish kept in their setting. During form time, pupils reflected with sensitivity when considering current world issues and discussing the ideas, beliefs and values that shape society today. In RE lessons, time is given to pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and perspectives and their considered responses show well-developed spiritual awareness.

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. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Michael Evans	Reporting inspector
Mrs Caroline Rogerson	Compliance team inspector (Head, HMC school)
Dr Edward Boston	Team inspector (Head of faculty, ISA school)
Mrs Joanna Callaway	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)