



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

DODDERHILL SCHOOL

MARCH 2017



School's details

School	Dodderhill School			
DfE Number	885/6016			
EYFS Number	EY283033			
Registered charity number	527599			
Address	Crutch Lane Droitwich Spa Worcestershire WR9 0BE			
Telephone number	01905 778290			
Email address	info@dodderhill.co.uk			
Headmistress	Mrs Catherine Mawston			
Chairman of governors	Mr Alvin Robinson			
Age range	0 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	247			
	Boys	22	Girls	225
	EYFS	62	Juniors	60
	Seniors	125		
Pupils' ability	Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average.			
Pupils' needs	The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is 34. They require support with dyslexia, dyscalculia, and long and short-term memory difficulties. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. No pupils have English as an additional language (EAL)			
History of the school	Dodderhill School opened in 1973 as the girls' senior school to Whitford Hall Preparatory School in Bromsgrove. The schools amalgamated on the current 100-acre estate in 1999; the original 18th century house and more recent buildings provide modern educational facilities.			

Ownership and governing structure	The school is a charitable company limited by guarantee; the board of governors are also the trustees of the company.
School structure	The school includes an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting, made up of a registered setting for children under the age of two and a non-registered setting for children aged two to five years. The school educates boys up to the age of four. The junior school comprises Years 1 to 6 and the senior school educates pupils from Years 7 to 11.
Inspection dates	21 to 22 March 2017

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. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or 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 following their inspection 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 and any qualitative concerns identified at their previous inspection.

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.

The inspection does not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as:

- (i) the school’s aims;
- (ii) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (iii) compliance with data protection requirements;
- (iv) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (v) contractual arrangements with parents;
- (vi) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups. Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Independent School Standards Regulations](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

SUMMARY EVALUATION

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

In the junior school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.

At GCSE in the years 2013 to 2015, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.

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.

The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

PART 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.

The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

PART 3

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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.

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

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

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

Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their 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.

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

PART 6

Provision of information

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 those 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, and its results in public examinations, 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.

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

PART 7

Manner in which complaints are handled

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.

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

PART 8

Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.

Children make excellent progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points. The well-planned teaching which the setting provides meets the needs of children including those with SEND extremely well and enables them to make rapid progress. Children's personal and emotional development is excellent due to the high standards of care they receive from the dedicated and skilled staff. Children are very happy, and feel very safe and secure in the setting. Safeguarding and welfare requirements are fully met, with a shared understanding of the responsibility for protecting children which staff fulfil very effectively. Strong leadership has a clear vision for the future and ensures that the setting demonstrates a strong commitment to continuous improvement. All staff evaluate and reflect on practice through regular supervision discussions and annual appraisal, thus meeting the recommendations of the previous report.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.

Leaders have a highly ambitious vision to promote a happy and purposeful atmosphere, which is evident throughout the setting. Staff have high expectations of what babies and under twos can achieve, and provide excellent standards of care and educational provision. Dedicated governors monitor the EYFS carefully and work closely with leaders to support improvements to the provision.

The very effective monitoring of the performance of staff supports continuous improvement. Regular individual supervision includes discussion of the needs of children as well as performance management, and leads to appropriate professional development and training. This fully meets the recommendation of the previous report.

Self-evaluation is a strength of the setting. The development plan is reviewed against the agreed targets and the effectiveness of any new initiatives is discussed with staff. Parents were extremely positive about the setting and the progress that their children make. They said that staff know their children extremely well and that they are kept well informed about the progress of their children. Parents expressed that they value the daily contact they have with the very approachable staff and are pleased with the opportunities to be involved in their children's learning and assessment.

Learning programmes focusing on personal, social and emotional development; communication and language; and physical development of each child are meticulously planned and meet the statutory requirements. All members of staff are involved in developing and planning the curriculum carefully so that the interests and abilities of each child are very well met. They are skilled at adapting the activities to take account of the learning situations that arise spontaneously. Regular targeted assessments monitor the progress that the children are making and track their development. Transition to the next stage in their learning is sensitively handled with many opportunities for children to get to know their new surroundings and staff.

Staff actively promote British values through class rules which reflect respect, tolerance and kindness. Displays and resources celebrate cultural diversity, and children respect each other's differences and respond well to the high expectations of behaviour and courtesy expected at all times in the setting. All members of staff have received full training in safeguarding, including the Prevent strategy and health and safety procedures.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.

Staff have an excellent understanding of how children learn. They have high expectations of what each child can achieve in relation to their ages and stages of development, as they know their key children very well. Staff are adept at guiding the children to explore and investigate new activities appropriate to their stage of development.

Assessment information is gathered as soon as a child starts in the setting so that staff know what the children already know, understand and can do. Parents also contribute ideas and comments to help the children settle. This helps staff plan highly focussed activities for each child. Parents are very positive about this process. The regular assessments inform staff about the progress each child makes and this ensures that activities are tailored to suit their individual needs. Staff know what the next steps in a child's learning will be, but these are not consistently recorded in planning documents. Excellent use of assessment information is made so that children who are falling behind are identified. This allows for their needs to be addressed quickly through appropriate interventions that enable them to make rapid progress. Leaders and staff work in partnership with parents and keep them very well informed about their children's progress, and parents are able to view progress records at any time. Parents are also provided detailed information about how to support their child's learning at home and how to access more information about the EYFS curriculum.

Staff know when intervention is necessary to move a child's learning forward and use their considerable knowledge to provide children clear and accurate explanations. They make excellent use of praise and encouragement to motivate and enthuse children. Well-targeted questioning is used to help children develop their knowledge, understanding, and communication and language skills extremely well.

Equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity are supported by the provision of suitable resources. Staff encourage children to understand their individual differences and respect one another through discussions about families, languages, different cultures and traditions.

High expectations in work and behaviour help children to acquire the skills and capacity to develop and learn effectively and to be ready for the next stages in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children is outstanding.

A highly stimulating environment and a strong commitment to learning combined with strong teamwork and a common approach ensure that a positive culture is evident across the setting. Children display a sense of achievement and pride in their achievements and their work, combined with a conscientious commitment to their learning. This was evident when a toddler asked for a 'high five' from staff to celebrate their achievements. Children participate in the school day with great enthusiasm and their enjoyment of school is clearly evident when they laugh, smile and engage with adults and each other. The mixture of indoor and outdoor activities as well as open-ended tasks encourage children to be curious and confident, and to use their imaginations. For example a baby was observed chatting on a play telephone to a friend, and toddlers displayed great confidence when playing on the wheeled vehicles outside. Children are able to express preferences about the toys they would like to play with, and demonstrate growing independence by feeding themselves and choosing what they would like to eat.

The setting fosters children's emotional security, and reassurance is readily sought by children from their key person and other adults. Staff know the children very well, and are highly sensitive and responsive towards their needs. For example, a member of staff was observed calming a very tired child down so that she could go to sleep. Children's well-being is central to day-to-day practice and embedded through the consistent adherence to policies, procedures and practice. Systems for registration and tracking absence ensure high levels of attendance and that children are duly accounted for.

Children's transition within the setting and to the next stage of their education is managed most effectively. Toddlers visit the next room for play times and mix with the older children outside. Babies play regularly with the toddlers so that they become familiar with their next environment. The children display exceptionally high levels of behaviour and co-operation with each other. Staff have very high expectations of behaviour and act as excellent role models for them. A healthy lifestyle is promoted by the provision of freshly prepared lunches and snacks, and by access to the outside areas and sports hall for exercise. Children learn to manage risk, such as when exploring the outdoor areas and when using resources. Staff ensure that children do not have access to social media, and strict guidelines about the use of photography in the setting are in place.

Outcomes for children

The outcomes for children are outstanding.

Children are curious and keen to explore their surroundings. Babies are eager to move around their area and explore different activities on offer, often fetching toys that they wish to play with from the shelves. They display great enjoyment when listening to stories and joining in with songs and rhymes. Babies are learning to say simple words in response to pictures. They relished the chance to make cheese straws and displayed great delight when using cutters to make shapes with dough. Toddlers demonstrate emerging mark-making skills and are able to talk about what they have drawn. They are starting to use appropriate language in their play. Toddlers enjoyed devising their own games in the outside area and display high levels of engagement in tasks and strong independence, often making suggestions about what they would like to do. Number skills are developed as the children count objects such as the number of crayons on the table, and by joining in with counting songs.

All children progress very well from individual starting points, based from their initial assessment on entry. Children at least meet and some exceed the level of development that is typical for their age. They are well prepared for next stage in their education.

Compliance with statutory requirements

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

Recommendations for further improvement

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

- Ensure that all the next steps in a child's learning are consistently recorded so that all staff and parents are aware of them.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with teachers, senior members of staff and with the chairman of governors. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Gwen Caddock	Reporting inspector
Mrs Kate McCarey	Accompanying inspector
Mr Oliver Chambers	Compliance team inspector (Assistant head, HMC school)
Mrs Ros Ford	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former deputy head, IAPS school)
Mrs Anne Oliver	Early years team inspector (Head of pre-prep, IAPS school)