

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports**

**Belmont, Mill Hill Preparatory School**

**January 2020**



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### School's Details

<b>School</b>	Belmont, Mill Hill Preparatory School			
<b>DfE number</b>	302/6000			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1064758			
<b>Address</b>	The Ridgeway Mill Hill London NW7 4ED			
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 906 7270			
<b>Email address</b>	office@belmontschool.com			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Leon Roberts			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Elliot Lipton			
<b>Age range</b>	7 to 13			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	554			
	<b>Juniors</b>	303	<b>Seniors</b>	251
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21 to 23 January 2020			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Belmont, Mill Hill Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between 7 and 13 and is one of four schools of the Mill Hill School Foundation which educates pupils between the ages of 3 to 18 years on four separate sites, within close proximity of each other. A court of governors oversees all four schools.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors and a new chief executive officer have been appointed. New facilities include a teaching block, a computing suite, a design and technology studio and a sports hall.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school's aim is to offer a broad and progressive curriculum and varied co-curricular programme to develop the pupils academically and their crucial skills for the future. The school seeks to provide pastoral care that allows the pupils to thrive and grow in confidence and through instilling in them the core Belmont values of 'be kind, try your best and embrace challenge' so that they grow into empathetic, hardworking and resilient human beings.

### About the pupils

- 1.4 Most of the pupils are from professional and business backgrounds with families who have stated their child's nationality as British. The school's own framework of assessment indicates that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 97 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include a wide range of difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, 68 of whom receive additional specialist help. Two pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 21 pupils, all of whom receive additional support. The curriculum is suitably adapted for pupils identified as the more able in the school's population, and also for other pupils who have special talents in sport, drama, dance, art and 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. 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 FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The 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 regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; 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 full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#).

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

### **PART 1 – Quality of education provided**

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

### **PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; 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.
- 2.8 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**

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 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**

- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

2.13 A range of information is variously 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.

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

## **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

2.15 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.

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

## **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

2.17 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.

**2.18 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.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

**The headline judgements must include 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 show high levels of achievement in relation to their abilities and make excellent progress across all ages.
  - Pupils are articulate and communicate effectively with each other and their teachers, and exhibit excellent listening skills.
  - Pupils' attitudes towards learning, their ability to take initiative and leadership in their learning are excellent.
  - Pupils display exceptional achievements in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils show excellent levels of self-understanding and set their own goals as they appreciate the importance of being resilient if they are to succeed.
  - Pupils are considerate, caring and respectful of each other and all members of the community.
  - Pupils' behaviour is excellent and their great respect for each other is underpinned by the strong values embedded in the school ethos.
  - Pupils' spiritual understanding is a particular strength as they appreciate the non-materialistic aspects of life extremely well.
  - Pupils have a well-developed understanding of what they need to do in order to achieve a healthy body and mind.

## Recommendation

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:
- Strengthen opportunities for the pupils' outdoor learning by exploiting the external facilities to further enhance the curriculum and support the well-being of the pupils.

## The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Across all ages, pupils achieve at a high level. The school's assessment framework using standardised tests shows that pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is above or well-above the national age-related expectations. Throughout the school, pupils achieve high standards and progress rapidly across the curriculum, with no significant difference between defined groups of pupils or areas of learning. This owes much to the regular monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress where the school's management team ensure data is used extremely effectively to identify pupils' needs at an early stage. Pupils with SEND also make significant progress so that their attainment meets their expected levels, as school leaders ensure appropriate intervention, teaching and curriculum provision is well-matched to all pupils' needs and abilities. Parents in the pre-inspection questionnaires agreed that their child's individual needs are met effectively.
- 3.6 Pupils of all ages and abilities demonstrate strong knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum and they are highly effective in applying these skills. For example, younger pupils used their well-developed knowledge of imperative verbs in discussions on appropriate language to use when writing up a science experiment. Older pupils' deep-thinking questioning was demonstrated when they compared with confidence, a dystopian to a utopian society and the hierarchy of job roles within such a society. Pupils' creative and aesthetic abilities are extremely well developed as observed in

musical activities and in art displays around the school. In a string group activity, pupils confidently discussed the key signature, identified the sharps in a piece of music and played a calypso rhythm with conviction whilst identifying and discussing dynamics. Pupils knowledge and understanding in humanities are outstanding. In geography, pupils used photographs to instigate a sophisticated discussion regarding work on management of flooding in Bangladesh. Older pupils successfully apply their understanding of historical context. They confidently used historical sources as information to structure questions, to analyse the reliability of facts and reach a reasoned judgement with a degree of confidence about the death of an Anglo-Saxon king. This achievement is the result of supportive, knowledgeable teaching and excellent use of open-ended questioning which encourages pupils' critical thinking and reasoning. All pupils in the questionnaire agreed that lessons include interesting activities.

- 3.7 Pupils across the school are effective communicators and develop their language skills exceptionally well. Pupils are articulate and often display higher-order vocabulary choices. For example, younger pupils are able to use literary terms such as personification when planning a piece of descriptive writing. Older pupils confidently and coherently discussed their reasons as to why the slave trade would have been difficult to stop, making reasoned judgements as to why landowners would be reluctant to release their workers. Pupils exhibit excellent listening skills with both their peers and teachers. They listen extremely attentively in class and articulate discussions adeptly. Younger pupils achieve highly in French, listening intently to pronunciation and accurately reciting the French names of places in towns. Older pupils' in design technology, when creating a design out of wood, listened intently and asked questions if they were unsure so that they were confident in what they were constructing. Pupils develop their own ideas, supported by secure teacher planning and high-quality resources to extend their language understanding.
- 3.8 At all ages, pupils' mathematical skills and understanding are at an excellent level. Younger pupils demonstrated a strong understanding of telling the time, recognising the quarters of the clock, and more able pupils were able to identify fifteen and five-minute intervals. Older pupils displayed their growing problem-solving expertise when considering angles in shapes. They skilfully combined previous knowledge and applied it to solve challenging activities, calculating all the interior angles in a tessellation of hexagons using their knowledge of angle facts. In interviews, pupils said mathematics involves much problem-solving and questioning and helps them to enjoy mathematics including algebra. All pupils are confident to explore techniques and strategies, understanding that mistakes are an important learning tool. They find the mathematics clinic sessions beneficial. Oversight from governance has supported senior leaders' identification for an improved scheme of work which has a greater emphasis on problem-solving and enquiry-based learning and this has had an extremely positive effect on the pupils' outcomes.
- 3.9 Pupils are extremely confident when using Information Communication Technology (ICT) and make effective use of it to enhance their learning. They have a range of skills, from touch typing to coding. Older pupils confidently use electronic equipment to independently prepare their STEM club 'Apprentice Formula One' presentations. In interviews, pupils commented that they use ICT as a research, evaluation and presentation tool and they are taught a wide range of strategies for online safety. The development of pupils' competency in ICT is supported by good resources and recent improvements have included leadership's investment in high-level equipment.
- 3.10 Pupils exhibit increasingly strong study skills as they progress through the school. Younger pupils begin to develop their independent learning, successfully drawing upon a range of sources when working on their creative learning projects. These include using information found when researching on the internet. Pupils summarise the information and present it in a variety of different ways, including slideshows and mind maps. When carrying out work in science, pupils use their prior learning in order to make a sensible hypothesis before carrying out an investigation. Older pupils demonstrate higher order thinking skills as was seen when pupils identified comparisons between the character in Doherty's *Street Child*, a novel set in Victorian times, and Dicken's *Oliver Twist*. Senior leaders ensure

that throughout the school, teaching provides ample opportunity to challenge pupils' critical thinking skills, enabling them to develop their independent learning. Pupils independently improved their own written work when the teachers' marking gave clear guidance on what to do next. However, such guidance was not consistently provided across all subjects.

- 3.11 Pupils of all abilities achieve extremely well in a wide range of social, cultural, technical, sporting, creative pursuits and in music where pupils in key stage two can work towards grade eight in violin. Pupils are successful in areas such as regional mathematics competitions, local and county sports fixtures and tournaments and talented players have been selected to play at county level. In other performing arts such as drama, pupils achieve high standards with numerous acclaimed challenging productions, and some pupils are selected to take part in West End shows. They are supported in this by the school's comprehensive programme of activities, with many parents acknowledging the breadth and number of activities available.
- 3.12 Pupils of all ages, needs and abilities demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. They are willing and able to work both collaboratively and independently, and show high levels of maturity in their thinking. Pupils are confident to take the lead in their own learning and support one another when working together; for example, in buddy meetings. Pupils know the importance of trying and not giving up; for example, younger pupils gave examples of success when they had been resilient and persisted, giving a real sense of achievement. The exemplary behaviour in the classroom enables pupils to develop teamwork and leadership to enable more progress to be made in their own learning. Pupils' great desire to give their very best and do as well as they can is a significant strength and contributor to their positive learning outcomes.

### **The quality of the pupils' personal development**

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils show excellent levels of self-understanding. They are able to self-evaluate effectively, set their own goals and understand that taking risks and making mistakes is part of everyday learning. This is strongly supported by the leadership's high expectations and the growth mindset philosophy which encourages an aspirational 'can do' approach. Their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence, including an understanding of how to improve their own learning and performance through their own determination is high. The pupils feel a sense of wellbeing when they participate in outdoor learning activities. Across the age group, they understand themselves very well and appreciate the importance of being self-disciplined and resilient if they are to succeed.
- 3.15 Pupils are excellent at taking decisions as the school offers many opportunities for pupils to foster strong levels of independence, developing their success and well-being, and supporting their future learning. They evaluate options efficiently. For example, when younger pupils were keen to investigate how to solve problems they encountered when using code to create an animation. Older pupils, working independently and conscientiously, were enthusiastic to try out six short graphic scores before having to decide in which order to hear them. Older pupils are able to reflect at a high level.
- 3.16 Pupils' spiritual understanding and an appreciation of non-material aspects of life, whether religious, philosophical or other, is strong. Older pupils listened intently as pupils related family stories relating to the holocaust. These stories were told so honestly that the pupils went on to discuss attributes of fate versus predestination in a mature way. Pupils value the opportunities to be quiet and reflective throughout the school day whether in assemblies or chapel, in lessons and in activities, such as yoga; the moment of contemplation allows them time to come together and think of others. For example, as part of their buddy session, pupils across the age range recognised how fortunate they are to learn in a beautiful environment and talked with great understanding about the importance of reflection in their lives. In discussions, older pupils debated, considered and reflected on matters of current affairs such as drugs and smoking, and always in a non-judgemental and mature way.

- 3.17 Pupils' moral understanding is of a high level. Pupils demonstrate an exceptionally well-developed sense of what is right or wrong and understand the difference between good and bad choices. Pupils recognise that there are consequences to making the wrong choice and they respect the school rules. Pupils explained how the school's growth mindset approach and mindfulness sessions, as well as the Belmont values, help them to understand how to make the right choice. They also encourage them to be kind and embrace challenge. Pupils' learning behaviour is excellent. They listen carefully to one another and respect and value the ideas of their peers. Older pupils understand the values of tolerance and show respect to each other and all those in the school community. This was resoundingly reinforced in parental questionnaires in which almost all felt that the school strongly promoted values of respect and tolerance.
- 3.18 Pupils display excellent social skills and an awareness of others. Their social development and collaboration are strong and co-operation between the pupils is excellent. Older pupils in discussions listened to their peers, sometimes with opposing views, and held a meaningful debate about relationships between the sexes where they are subject to behaviour which trivialises human relationships. Pupils collaborate exceptionally well in lessons and relish the opportunity to do so. Teachers ensure that this is possible through allowing time for paired and group work activities that promote leadership and teamwork along with a caring and inclusive atmosphere in the classroom. Older pupils, provide excellent role models for the younger children and regularly support these pupils as a part of the buddy and prefect systems. In questionnaires all the parents and pupils agree that the school, in accordance with their aim, actively promotes the core aims of instilling values and being kind.
- 3.19 Pupils make outstanding contributions to the lives of others within the school. They care for each other and provide support and encouragement in abundance. They take their positions of responsibility seriously be it as a games captain, prefect or break ambassadors. Pupils undertake a highly effective and extensive range of charitable work based on their own research into actual needs in the locality. They are encouraged and enabled in this by good leadership and management who plan carefully and coordinate initiatives such as the community project. This involves older pupils meeting residents in care homes as well as planning, sourcing the ingredients and cooking meals for the homeless. Pupils appreciate the circumstances of those less fortunate than themselves and they are keen to help where they can. Recent endeavours have included holding a cake sale in aid of the Australian bush fires.
- 3.20 Pupils' show enormous respect and value diversity within the school community, strongly supported by the leadership and role modelling of staff, and the religious studies and personal social and health education programmes. Pupils appreciate their own and other cultures and demonstrate sensitivity and tolerance to those from different backgrounds and traditions. All the pupils agree that tolerance and respect is encouraged in the school, and they respect each other and they value all they can learn from each other. Their positive attitudes are supported by the school's ethos where prejudice is absent. Older pupils, in discussion about football readily shared their views, recognising that in view of the unpleasant culture of racism in football, they wouldn't want to be a footballer today.
- 3.21 Pupils exhibit a strong understanding of their personal safety and wellbeing. They understand the need for a healthy lifestyle and make active choices in their daily life by choosing a sensible balanced lunch and making the most of the opportunities to take regular exercise in the extra-curricular activities. However, pupils have limited opportunities to use the excellent outdoor learning facilities. Pupils feel safe at school and have a well-developed understanding of what they need to do in order to achieve a healthy body and mind. They are able to articulate clearly how they are feeling and make the most of opportunities to develop excellent habits for life, such as in buddy time when they focused on developing strategies that would enhance their mental well-being. Pupils discuss sensibly the dangers of being online. Pupils know when and where to seek help, and embrace a resilient approach to challenges which they may face so that they have a robust sense of well-being and a positive attitude to life.

## 4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 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 and a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended house, form meetings and chapel. Inspectors visited 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 Julie Lowe	Reporting inspector
Mr David Williams	Compliance team inspector (Assistant Head, IAPS school)
Miss Claire Corkran	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Chris Jones	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Kathy Uttley	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)