



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Gateway School

November 2022

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School's Details

School	Gateway School			
DfE number	825/6000			
Address	Gateway School 1 High Street Great Missenden Buckinghamshire HP16 9AA			
Telephone number	01494 862407			
Email address	communications@gatewaysch.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Cath Bufton-Green			
Proprietor	Bellevue Education Group Ltd			
Age range	2 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	259			
	EYFS	58	Juniors	201
Inspection dates	29 November to 1 December 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Gateway School is a co-educational day school located in the Buckinghamshire village of Great Missenden. It is part of a group of schools owned by Bellevue Education Group Ltd, which oversees the management of the school. Its governance is the responsibility of the group's education committee, chaired by its schools' director. The school comprises three sections: the Early Years Foundation Stage, for children aged 2 to 5 years, lower prep for pupils in Years 1 to 3 and upper prep for pupils in Years 4 and 6.
- 1.2 The head teacher has been in post since January 2021. Since the previous inspection the senior leadership team has been restructured. The curriculum has been extended by the inclusion of Spanish, current affairs and farm school sessions.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school aims to provide an environment within which pupils can grow into curious, ambitious and confident learners. It sets out to generate in its pupils respect and courtesy along with resilience and problem-solving skills so that pupils are well prepared for the challenges of the real world.

About the pupils

- 1.4 The pupils come mainly from the local area and nearby towns. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the majority of pupils is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. There are 29 pupils identified as having a special educational need or disability (SEND), including difficulties with working memory and processing skills, and they receive additional classroom support. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Nine pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL), one of whom requires additional help for their English.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are

appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

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

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Pre-school	Nursery

Key findings

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

- Pupils' attitude to learning is excellent; they are ambitious and curious learners.
- Pupils' progress in all areas of learning is often excellent.
- Pupils consistently reach high levels of attainment, particularly at the point of transition to senior school.
- Pupils' speaking, reading and writing skills are outstanding.
- Pupils' progress and ability to be independent is sometimes limited by lessons in which teaching focuses on exposition and does not allow sufficient time for pupils to think for themselves.

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

- Pupils are self-confident, self-assured and well-prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils believe strongly in the importance of respect for all, regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability.
- Pupils' moral development is excellent; they understand well the impact of their actions on others.
- Pupils reflect with maturity on the importance of making wise choices, understanding that decisions made now will help shape their adult lives and characters.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.

- Improve the progress of pupils, especially the most able, by ensuring consistent challenge and opportunities to develop their independent thinking skills and control of their learning.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Across the school the pupils' attainment is strong. All children in the EYFS reach the early learning goals before they move into Year 1. By the time they reach Year 6, many pupils have reached levels beyond those expected for their age. Pupils' attainment is underpinned by the school leadership's close understanding of the pupils and its effective analysis and use of data to track their progress. Any issues identified are managed effectively by the teaching support staff in class or in individual sessions as necessary. There is no significant difference in the attainment levels of female and male pupils. Most pupils, including those with EAL and SEND are well supported by work which often provides them with challenge appropriate to their needs, so that they attain levels at least commensurate with their ability. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of pupils expressed satisfaction with their progress, saying that their teachers are supportive and know how to help them learn. The school is highly successful in preparing the pupils well for transition to the senior schools of their choice.
- 3.6 The pupils make strong and often rapid progress across the range of the curriculum, especially in literacy and numeracy. In questionnaire responses parents were unanimous in their approval of the school's curriculum. Pupils' progress is supported by senior leaders' commitment to ensuring that feedback to pupils identifies with precision what has gone well and where improvements can be made. Pupils make especially rapid progress in lessons when the purpose of the task is made clear and the lesson planned to ensure they are actively engaged throughout. However, on occasion the progress of pupils is slowed by excessive teacher exposition and by insufficient challenge, which results in the pupils, particularly the most able, losing interest and focus. Pupils are excellent at reviewing and editing their work and are eager to improve. Pupils build up a broad base of knowledge and skills and can talk knowledgeably about their understanding. Children in the EYFS showed their developing dexterity in manipulating small objects while naming their shapes correctly. Pupils in Year 3 were excited and proud of having identified the patterns in times tables; in a music lesson, those in Year 5 sang a Christmas song with a verse in five different languages. Artwork on display shows pupils' sensitive use of colour and design. The pupils' physical skills develop well, from the enthusiastic jumping and skipping of the youngest to the older pupils' adept ball control in physical education (PE) sessions.
- 3.7 The pupils' understanding of the power of language is excellent and they display excellent communication skills. They are fluent and confident speakers, clearly explaining their views on a topic. Pupils listen carefully to each other and to their teacher, challenging others' ideas respectfully while defending their own. They have a wide vocabulary and use subject specific terminology with confidence. Their reading skills are excellent, supported in earlier years by daily sessions reading to an adult, and their reading tastes show considerable maturity. Pupils are ambitious writers, using language with confidence and flair for a variety of purposes. They adopt tone and vocabulary skilfully according to whether the task is to entertain, persuade or present facts. Their communication skills are supported by many opportunities to speak in public and by teaching that sets high expectations of grammatical accuracy and imaginative language use.
- 3.8 Pupils' mathematical skills and understanding develop to a high standard, especially when they are challenged to think for themselves and to reflect on the range of methods that can be used to undertake a task. Children in the EYFS were seen absorbed in trying to make a scale balance by adding or taking away pieces of modelling clay. Others were excited to go to find mathematical shapes in the outdoors areas, helped by differently shaped magnifying glasses. Older pupils were confident in explaining their methodology in approaching mathematical operations such as long multiplication. They develop their confidence in mathematical reasoning lessons which give them the opportunity to model, explain and learn from each other. Pupils are highly skilled in applying their knowledge beyond the mathematics lessons, for example in working out the practical catering requirements for their

birthday party guests, or how to scale up the image of a flag seen in a painting to create a full-sized version.

- 3.9 The pupils' skills in computing and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) are well developed, and they are highly competent users of a variety of applications. They understand the usefulness of technology for their futures and for their learning across the curriculum. In discussion, pupils told inspectors how they had used tablet devices for research, online quizzes and to create videos explaining the process of digestion. They use technology to analyse their performance in sports and to create presentations in an entrepreneurial challenge. They are also alert to the need to use the internet wisely and almost all of them said in questionnaires that they know how to be safe online.
- 3.10 The pupils' ability to think critically and analytically is excellent. This was seen in a lesson for Year 6 pupils in which they were required to determine which website addresses were real and how they could verify information. In science, pupils skilfully and accurately worked on animal classification. In a religious education lesson which presented them with two Biblical accounts of the Nativity, pupils in Year 5 were highly successful in analysing the similarities and differences between them. They were intrigued to discover also that some elements of the story they had taken for granted do not appear in either account. In a Year 4 lesson considering an account of the destruction of Pompeii, pupils were confidently able to analyse the literary devices used. The pupils' success in tasks which require them to draw together and analyse a range of sources is encouraged by clear instructions and skilful questioning by teachers, so that they are challenged to consider, reflect and evaluate.
- 3.11 The pupils have achieved high levels of success in a number of areas, including in music, drama and sport. Their football and netball teams achieve well for the size of the school and there have been successes in several inter-school competitions including triathlon, cross country, rugby and athletics. There have been several individual successes in football, cricket, and swimming. The school's choir has participated successfully in the National Choral competition and artwork produced for a national competition has been chosen by the gallery for exhibition. Pupils were winners in a national competition to read and review a novel, with the prize of a virtual meeting and discussion with the author. There have been many successes in the primary phase of the UK Maths Challenge, with some pupils winning gold awards. Pupils are particularly successful at the point of transfer to senior school. The pupils are happy and busy in their school lives, taking to heart leaders' encouragement to participate.
- 3.12 The pupils have excellent attitudes to learning which reflect the school's aims. They are eager, curious and enthusiastic in lessons, working together extremely well. Pupils show outstanding levels of concentration and application in lessons. Children in Reception were full of enthusiasm in a dance lesson. Pupils in Year 1 were keen to find ways to make their story about a visiting space alien more entertaining, gleefully proposing that he would breakfast on moondust or starlight. In English and mathematics classes for older pupils, some were heard politely refusing the teacher's offer of help, saying they wanted to see first if they could complete the task for themselves. However, on some occasions, the opportunities for pupils to take such ownership of their learning and to develop their independence were hampered because the lesson was dominated by teacher exposition. Older pupils, including some of the most able, told inspectors that they found such lessons frustrating because they limited their ability to learn for themselves. Across the school, pupils' approach to learning is positive even when facing challenges. Far from being afraid to make mistakes, they realise that these can be a step to furthering their understanding. This was seen in lessons by the way that pupils quickly and confidently identified their own errors and worked out ways to improve their work. The school meets its aim to enable pupils to grow into curious, ambitious and confident learners.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 The pupils show considerable self-confidence. This is because they are encouraged from a young age to express their ideas, knowing that these will be respected by those around them. In an assembly, children in the EYFS were eager to share with the whole school their excitement at opening the first window on their Advent calendars. During a music lesson, Year 6 pupils volunteered to sing solos and confidently held their musical line while singing in harmony with the rest of the class. Pupils know themselves well and have devised their own strategies for coping when facing something they find challenging. They are resilient, understanding that as they master a task they will be given new, more demanding work which will present new challenges. In conversation, they referred to the 'strive' element of the school's 'Aspire' values, saying that they can tackle demanding work because their teachers believe in them and their ability to succeed. Pupils are skilled at reflecting on their work and identifying means to improve for themselves. For example, pupils in a Year 2 English lesson edited their own work and others' before checking it with their teacher. Those in Year 5 reflected critically on their leaflets advertising a game reserve to assess their effectiveness and see how they could be improved. Pupils have the resilience and determination to deal with new challenges as they move to senior school.
- 3.15 The pupils are excellent at making decisions for themselves and are used to doing so as they identify ways to improve their work. They respond well to being given autonomy, as seen when pupils in Year 3 chose for themselves which method to use to solve a mathematical problem. Pupils understand the importance of making wise choices, extending this to decisions about how to use their pocket money or which school committee to join. They are proud of choosing to be involved in decision making through the school parliament and know that such decisions are important because they can have a direct impact on school life. Some of the older pupils spoke with considerable maturity of the importance of making personal choices thoughtfully, saying that the decisions made while still children will affect their development into responsible adults.
- 3.16 The pupils reflect thoughtfully on the values that underpin their lives, often showing a maturity beyond their years. Pupils in Year 6 engaged in a reflective and articulate philosophical debate on whether the purpose for which a text is written affects its credibility. The pupils express strong personal values and in discussions with inspectors were critical of those who promote themselves on social media on the basis of their wealth or possessions. They see the pursuit of fame for its own sake as pointless, saying that education and good relationships are far more important. Pupils respond sensitively to beauty, as seen when Year 6 pupils commented with awe on the detailed work in painted miniatures. Their awareness and appreciation of the beauty and wonder of nature is strongly supported by the school leadership's inclusion in the curriculum of sessions spent on a working farm. In these, pupils also encounter the realities of birth and death, leading them to ponder on what might happen after death.
- 3.17 The pupils have strongly developed moral attitudes and understand the importance of respecting rules which are there for the good of all. They show a subtle, mature understanding of the concept of fairness. For example, pupils said that individual needs may be different, so that one person being allowed something not allowed to others may seem unfair but in fact may be necessary. They make intuitive links across their learning, such as between what they have learnt about online bullying with the dehumanisation of others implicit in slavery. Pupils know the importance of owning up if they have done something wrong, especially if the misdeed has caused problems for others. They speak of having a conscience which makes them feel uncomfortable if they are in the wrong and will prick them until they set matters right. Their behaviour in school and in the playground is excellent. They know they are trusted by the school to behave sensibly and to make decisions which respect the needs and rights of others.

- 3.18 The pupils are highly skilled in collaborating with each other. Children in the EYFS cheerfully share toys and take turns. In a games lesson for Year 2, the pupils were able to organise roles between themselves and to work as a team. Pupils in Year 3 worked together to decide on appropriate methods to use to solve a mathematics problem. Older pupils know the importance of teamwork, of cooperation and of compromise. Pupils in Year 5 worked together efficiently in a task requiring each group to draw conclusions from a range of scenarios about bullying. They moved around the room sensibly and checked that they had completed the task properly. Pupils said that it's important to respect everyone's opinion even when there is disagreement and that it's better to come to a joint decision that suits everyone.
- 3.19 Their excellent ability to discuss respectfully is deployed effectively in their involvement in the school parliament and its sub-committees. The pupils are passionate about issues of sustainability and the environment. They have been involved in discussions about changes to the school uniform. Pupils have also made suggestions which have been implemented by the school to reduce food waste; they designed a simple visual system for pupils to indicate what size portion they would like. Pupils see themselves as part of a wider world for which they have responsibilities and take pride in supporting their three chosen charities, one national, one local and one global.
- 3.20 The pupils have strongly positive attitudes to issues of equality and diversity, stating firmly that everyone deserves respect, regardless of any differences of gender, belief, ethnicity or ability. In lessons, they were keen to ensure that tasks were shared equally between male and female pupils saying it's important to make sure that the views of both genders are given the same consideration. In discussions, pupils said that it is wrong to expect other people to change to be like you because we are all different and that's what makes us special. Pupils have a well-founded understanding of and respect for different belief systems, encouraged by visits to different places of worship, and in school celebrations of special days of different faiths. Pupils in Year 6 said they enjoyed learning of others' cultures, expressing that these add to the richness of the school community.
- 3.21 The pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe in practical terms, for example when using glue guns in design technology or equipment in PE lessons. Almost all pupils and their parents describe the school as a safe place to be. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and eating sensibly. They engage energetically in playtime games as well as in sports lessons. Pupils were particularly astute when talking to the inspectors about maintaining good mental health. They spoke of the importance of getting enough sleep and talking over concerns with an adult. They said it is important not to spend too much time watching television or playing computer games but to get outside into the fresh air to let their bodies 'recharge'. Pupils are also alert to the need to use the internet wisely and almost all of them said in questionnaires that they know how to be safe online and protect themselves. They told inspectors that they know to be careful to avoid clicking on links which may contain viruses or take the user to sites they do not wish to visit. The school fully meets its aim to generate in its pupils respect and courtesy along with resilience and problem-solving skills so that pupils are well prepared for the challenges of the world.

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

Inspectors

Mrs Colette Culligan	Reporting inspector
Mr Graham Gorton	Compliance team inspector (Former head, ISA school)
Mr Graeme Smith	Team inspector (Deputy head, ISA school)