



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Spring Grove School

February 2023

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School's Details

School	Spring Grove School			
DfE number	886/6045			
Registered charity number	1099823			
Address	Spring Grove School Harville Road Wye Ashford Kent TN25 5EZ			
Telephone number	01233 812337			
Email address	office@springgroveschool.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Therésa Jaggard			
Chair of governors	Mrs Dawne Sweetland			
Proprietor	Spring Grove School 2003 Ltd			
Age range	2 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	229			
	EYFS	91	Juniors (Years 1 to 6)	138
Inspection dates	8 to 10 February 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Spring Grove School was founded in 1967 as an independent co-educational day school. It is set in fourteen acres of land close to the village of Wye in Kent. The school is a charitable trust with its own board of governors. The school is housed in a Georgian mansion and comprises three sections: the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection the school has built a purpose-built pre-prep premises with an outdoor play area. It has also refurbished the facilities for the early years, and has provided external all-weather surfaces and the outdoor learning site.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school's aim is to provide a caring family environment which cultivates an appetite for adventure and a tolerance for error, creating can-do people who are able to act independently. Instilling the school motto of "Always do your best". The school seeks to develop pupils into confident, adaptive, responsive and caring people.

About the pupils

- 1.4 The majority of pupils come from professional and business families living within a 30-minute drive of the school. Data from tests indicate that the ability profile of the school is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 27 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include ASD, ADHD, dyslexia and cerebral palsy, all of whom receive additional support. One pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language for 30 pupils, two of whom receive additional in-class support. Data used by the school have identified 17 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the teaching and curriculum opportunities enable and enhance their strengths and abilities in a range of subjects.

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 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 excellent.

- Pupils show high levels of achievement in relation to their abilities and make strong progress across all ages.
- Pupils' attitudes towards learning are excellent throughout the school.
- Pupils listen and respond to their peers; they are articulate and self-assured when expressing their views and ideas from a young age.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding in their learning.

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

- Pupils display strong self-awareness, self-confidence and resilience from an early age.
- Pupils are extremely well-mannered and show a high degree of respect for their school rules as they take responsibility for their behaviour.
- Pupils show very well-developed social skills including the ability to collaborate effectively with their peers.
- Pupils are considerate, caring and courteous of each other and all members of the school community.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Strengthen pupils' application of their higher-order thinking skills through greater emphasis of independent 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 The overall attainment and progress of pupils are excellent. Assessment data provided by the school show that in standardised tests and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile attainment is mostly above average compared to those sitting the same tests nationally. This represents successful fulfilment of the school's aims to develop can-do, resourceful and curious children who live out the school motto to "Always Do Your Best". Pupils with SEND and EAL also make significant progress so that their attainment meets their expected levels with thorough intervention to support them

extremely effectively during their time at the school. This can be attributed to the school leaders regular monitoring of attainment using a rigorous individual tracking process which highlights areas of strength and weakness and identifies next steps in learning for all pupils. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching enables their child to make progress.

- 3.6 Pupils of all ages exhibit a wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum. Children in the EYFS are curious, creative learners and are able to apply their skills extremely effectively whether they are role playing as a character with special skills or using their understanding of the world to support their art and design. Year 6 pupils used prior geographical knowledge to create a map of an island based upon Kensuke's Kingdom to support their writing in English. In a Year 3 science lesson, pupils were able to explain and distinguish the different properties of transparency, translucence and opaqueness. Pupils creative and aesthetic abilities are highly developed; pupils perform in drama productions and superb creative work is evidenced around the school. In discussions, pupils feel that support and encouragement from their teachers helps them to become better learners. Planning provides opportunities for pupils to work both collaboratively and independently, although this is not consistent across all areas.
- 3.7 Pupils demonstrate excellent communication skills. From an early age, children listen attentively to both their peers and adults. They are confident and articulate speakers who communicate with enthusiasm, clarity and expression and display great enjoyment in class discussion. In interviews pupils reasoned their views and opinions with maturity. Pupils write and speak with increasing fluency and sophistication. Early literacy skills develop quickly in the EYFS due to the well-structured phonics programme, enabling children to develop secure pre-reading and writing skills. Children in Reception build on this strong foundation with creative writing using key words consistently. Older pupils' writing showed excellent progression using a variety of genres ranging from poetry to persuasive devices. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson, pupils collaborated to develop an article regarding deforestation in the Amazon basin, displaying an established understanding of emotive language and using it to good effect. Pupils are respectful of their peers and adults in the school and heed the ideas and opinions of others, without imposing their views on others.
- 3.8 Pupils demonstrate good progress and have well-developed numeracy skills with a secure knowledge of using numbers to count from an early age. Reception workbooks identified children's ability to accurately identify 1-1 correspondence, counting and simple addition and subtraction problem-solving activities. In Year 1 pupils were able to use their secure shape knowledge to successfully produce simple repeating patterns, with more able pupils using more complex patterns of between 7 and 9 shapes. Pupils of all abilities respond well to the varied curriculum but would benefit from greater differentiation when consolidating with recording to enable all pupils to make progress according to their ability. In discussion, pupils indicated that they are secure mathematicians and could confidently give examples of the use of numeracy across the curriculum, such as measuring and timing in sport, using pi as a formula when making parachutes in science and calculating the relative costs of producing electricity. In a Y6 Maths lesson, pupils discussed their thinking in algebra 'If there are brackets you need to do these first so the answer would be different'.
- 3.9 Pupils have a confident grasp of ICT and its application. From an early age they use educational games to supplement their learning and develop the necessary skills to use and manipulate equipment. For example, in Reception work, the children reinforced their understanding of capacity using the theme of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Older pupils independently use ICT as a research tool across other subjects in the curriculum and display an understanding of the need for internet safety awareness. Pupils make effective use of available electronic devices to enhance their learning. For example, Year 4 pupils, in their geography lesson, used their own self-directed questioning to research facts about India as part of their topic. In discussion, pupils reported that they felt confident in their use of ICT and that they enjoyed the opportunities given to select technology as a tool for independent work where possible. The development of pupils' competency in ICT is supported by school leaders and governors' investment in high-quality digital resources for every pupil to develop their skills.

- 3.10 Pupils of all ages behave well, and this creates an excellent learning environment where pupils can practise and develop their study skills in a positive manner and nurturing environment. In the EYFS, child-initiated activities support and develop independent learning skills from an early age. Specific study skills were seen during lessons and in children's work, such as prediction, analysis, hypothesis, comparison and justification. For example, children in Reception were able to analyse tricky words and identify words with alternative meanings such as 'park' *could be a park where you play or a place to park your car*. In Year 1 pupils hypothesised about dinosaurs when researching facts: 'that means it must be bigger than a car!' 'Which would be the longest? I think it's mine because mine is longer than a bus'; whilst, in a Year 3 science lesson, pupils could confidently make predictions about the best material to use for curtains based upon transparency. Learning was strengthened most where pupils were given opportunities to form hypotheses, test these in practice and reflect upon their learning although there are some missed opportunities to extend higher-order thinking skills where a growth mindset approach is not fully embedded.
- 3.11 Pupils' creative and sporting endeavours demonstrate success both individually and collaboratively. Breadth of opportunities outside of the classroom have included taking part in a variety of sporting, drama and cookery competition. Success is evident in the performing arts where, as well as exam achievements in dance and ballet, pupils perform confidently in a range of school productions and concerts, where a variety of musical instruments are played. A particular strength of the school is pupils' exuberance and naturally appreciative approach to both curricular and co-curricular activities. In discussions, pupils spoke with pride of improving their abilities in sport, music and drama and having the opportunity to represent the school at matches or, for example, singing in the cathedral at Christmas. Pupils felt that the range of opportunities to 'have a go' gave them confidence and spoke of the progress they had made since beginning to learn musical instruments and were proud of the standards they had achieved.
- 3.12 Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. The great desire for pupils to give of their best, to succeed and maximise their ability was noted throughout the school. This is very much underpinned by the school values where curiosity and confidence are actively promoted. Pupils particularly relish opportunities to work together. Pupils in Year 4 worked in a group to perform a short poem with enthusiasm and confidence, whilst pupils in Year 5 collaborated with great enthusiasm, confidence and a sense of real achievement when preparing a dance routine. Throughout the school pupils concentrate with focus in lessons, displaying respect for each other in the classroom, whether working by themselves or when co-operating with others. Pupils are eager to express their thoughts and opinions whilst listening to those of others in the class and are proud of their independent achievements in the classroom. Pupils show excellent initiative in their learning as well as a strong sense of togetherness with awareness that success comes through collaboration and supporting one another, very much reflecting the school's objective to cultivate an appetite for adventure and a tolerance for error, creating can-do people.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils' self-understanding is excellent. Without a hint of self-importance, pupils develop confidence in their own abilities and appreciate that, whilst their teachers will support and challenge them as they develop and grow, so too will their peers for whom they have a healthy respect, no matter what their background or age. Children in the EYFS are confident in their environment, working together and discussing ideas. Pupils work with a high level of self-discipline and are confident in their approach to making improvements to their understanding. From an early age pupils display a strong awareness of the need for self-discipline in their approach to work and speak positively about how a diligent approach will help them to succeed. This was observed in Nursery where children were resourceful and resilient in their determination to succeed, which they did with a great sense of self-esteem and pride. Self-esteem is built and reinforced at all ages by the frequent use of praise and rewards given

by all staff. In discussion, staff spoke of the excellent development of self-confidence through the school up to Year 6, when pupils encourage each other and take responsibility for the production and direction of a 'House Jamboree'. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their children to be confident and independent.

- 3.15 Pupils of all ages make sensible decisions in their behaviour and learning and are aware that the decisions they make can affect their future success and well-being. Pupils in Year 6 identified that their choice of senior school was a significant decision. Pupils understand that decisions are an opportunity to cause change and value the chance to influence school provision through the school and eco councils. Children in the EYFS exhibit strong levels of independence and learn to make informed decisions during child-initiated and outdoor sessions. Older pupils learn to make clear, sound decisions. For example, pupils in Year 4 worked highly effectively together to decide how to prepare a group poetry performance, choosing the delivery style, expression and timeframe needed to complete the task. Pupils confidently make decisions about other areas such as organising their own ideas for charity events, planning and delivering the entire event themselves, fulfilling the school's aim to nurture community minded, public spirited global citizens.
- 3.16 There is a strong feeling of spiritual awareness throughout the school. Classrooms and corridors display collections of pupils' artworks with pride, whilst school enrichment provision includes mindfulness and yoga. Pupils approach assemblies with both reverence and enthusiasm, responding to music and singing with outstanding commitment. Through RE and PHSE programmes, pupils develop an understanding of the world's major religions and have the opportunity to debate 'big' questions; whilst, in discussion, staff described the sense of awe experienced by pupils performing a carol arrangement at Canterbury Cathedral as a 'beautiful experience' for the pupils involved. The pupils respect the ethos of the school that challenges them to be the best they can be and to appreciate the good in those around them, treating each other with empathy and kindness. This sense of appreciation begins in the EYFS and develops across the school through their focus on relationships education (PSHE) and is part of the whole school culture. In a discussion with pupils, Forest School was seen as another place to reflect and spend time with nature, identifying 'when you are in the forest everything is calm, and you hardly ever argue as there is space and a sense of peace'. The school's value of consideration and care, permeates all areas of the community.
- 3.17 Pupils show a highly developed sense of moral responsibility and all those who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school expects pupils to behave well. From the youngest children, pupils are easily able to distinguish between right and wrong. Expectations for behaviour, as set by all teaching and support staff, are high and pupils are very keen to maintain these standards of behaviour throughout the school. In discussions, pupils admitted that everyone has a slip up now and again; 'everyone has a point of time when you bend the rules a bit, but you have to consider whether it is right or wrong; you have to own up to it and admit your mistake and take whatever consequence is given'. Pupils understand and respect the rules and ethos of the school and could describe with clarity the school's 'values' and also the value of sanctions based upon fairness for all if these were not followed. For example, staff, in discussion, cited the example of a working party of the oldest pupils in school working effectively with teachers to agree rules for the playing of football at break, resulting in pupils' positive response through 'ownership' of the new rules and role-modelling these for younger pupils.
- 3.18 Pupils display excellent social awareness and compassion; they support and encourage each other, and celebrate everyone's successes. In pupils' questionnaires, some felt the school did not teach them how to build positive relationships and friendships. However, discussions with both pupils and staff and observations at various times of the day during the inspection, did not reflect or support this. Across all ages, there is a strong sense of togetherness and awareness that success comes through collaboration and supporting each other. Throughout the school, pupils work calmly and with confidence in the classroom when tidying away at the end of a lesson or, in EYFS, when choosing to collaborate on a lego boat building activity. Pupils understand the importance of maintaining positive

relationships with one another. They enjoy friendly, open-hearted relationships and are always keen to demonstrate that they wish to do their best and relish opportunities to work across the age range in activities in order to achieve common goals such as the planning of charity events or the 'House Jamboree' which is approached with great enjoyment. Almost all parents in the questionnaire agreed that the school helps the children to develop strong teamwork and social skills.

- 3.19 Pupils enjoy making a positive and meaningful contribution to the school community, through roles such as school or eco-councillor. They look out for each other and provide support and encouragement and take their roles of responsibility seriously in their school community. Older pupils provide excellent role models for the younger children. For example, Year 6 prefects identified that younger pupils lacked the same level of exposure to music as older children and organised an assembly with fellow peers performing, showcasing the learning of instruments and the fun that can be had with music. Pupils understand the circumstances of those less fortunate than themselves and they are keen to help where they can and there is extensive pupil charitable fundraising through school and pupil led initiatives.
- 3.20 From a very young age, pupils have an excellent understanding of the differences between people of contrasting faiths and cultures and see this is something to celebrate. In the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils felt that pupils are not kind or respectful to each other. Through observation and discussion, it was confirmed that pupils share their personal experiences openly and respectfully, which further develops their understanding and empathy for differences. In Year 6 discussions, they identified that generally the respect is high just for being you and that everyone is different. 'You might look the same on the outside, but your personality traits show who and what you are'. Through thematic work, PSHE and RE programmes, assemblies and special days, such as celebrating different religious festivals, pupils grow in the understanding of living in one world and reinforce messages of collaboration, by 'making connections' and 'togetherness'. Leadership has been very successful at embedding core values such as care and kindness throughout all aspects of school life.
- 3.21 Pupils display a clear understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and stay safe. In an assembly for Safer Internet Day, pupils were keen to demonstrate an excellent understanding of staying safe online. The availability of fruit, salad and vegetables in the dining hall helps pupils to make healthy eating choices. A strength is the pupils' awareness of the need for healthy bodies and minds. Pupils feel good about staying healthy and, in discussion, staff reported pupils' confident enjoyment of both sports and mindful activities and how they use strategies for positive mental health. The Maple Room and SENCo support is a real strength and pupils readily share how they value and appreciate the opportunity to have a quiet place to just stop and think. Both staff and pupils nurture and care for each other and show kindness and friendship in abundance: the ethos that underpins the very nature of this school.

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 a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. 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 Julie Lowe	Reporting inspector
Miss Kaye Lovejoy	Compliance team inspector (Former head, ISA school)
Mrs Rebecca Robertson	Team inspector (Former deputy head, IAPS school)