



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Yarrells School

September 2022

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School's Details

School	Yarrells School			
DfE number	838/6000			
Address	Yarrells School Upton Poole Dorset BH16 5EU			
Telephone number	01202 622229			
Email address	office@yarrells.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Moulton			
Proprietor	Mrs Natalie Covell			
Age range	2 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	256			
	EYFS	78		
	Pre-Prep	58	Prep	120
Inspection dates	13 to 15 September 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Yarrells School is an independent co-educational day school. Originally founded in Kent in 1927 and relocated to Poole in 1940, it is mainly accommodated in an Edwardian mansion surrounded by gardens, parkland and woods. The proprietors, supported by a small number of advisory governors, provide governance. The school consists of a pre-prep department which includes the Early Years and Years 1 and 2, and a prep for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has restructured so that all pupils now leave at the end of Year 6 and may no longer continue up to Year 8. The head was appointed in September 2018.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school seeks to provide a warm and stimulating environment in which every child develops the confidence to learn through a broad curriculum. The school aims for pupils to become confident, resilient, to learn from their mistakes and so develop their own individual talents in readiness for senior school life and beyond.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Pupils come from a diverse range of professional families living mainly within a 15-mile radius of the school. Standardised assessment data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is average compared to those taking the same tests nationally.
- 1.5 The school has identified 22 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), such as dyslexia and autistic spectrum disorders, four of whom receive additional specialist support within lessons. There are no pupils who have education and health care (EHC) plans and there are six pupils identified as having English as an additional language (EAL), one of whom receives additional specialist support.
- 1.6 The school modifies and extends the curriculum for pupils it has identified as the most able, providing differentiated learning opportunities within the curriculum as well as opportunities for enrichment beyond the academic environment.

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.

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.

Key findings

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

- Pupils make excellent overall progress in successful fulfilment of the school's aim to develop each pupil's own individual talents.
- Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are highly articulate and effective communicators.
- Pupils are deeply knowledgeable across all areas of learning.

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

- Pupils are highly collaborative and effective when working to solve problems.
- Pupils maintain excellent standards of behaviour and willingly take responsibility for their actions.
- Pupils show deep self-awareness.
- Pupils have a strong appreciation for the importance of nature to sustaining a rich spiritual life.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Enable pupils to increase their understanding of how information and communication technology (ICT) can enhance their learning across more areas of the curriculum.
- Enable pupils to further develop their decision-making skills by enabling them to show greater leadership in directing their own 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 achievement of pupils is excellent and represents successful fulfilment of the school's aim to develop each pupil's own individual talents. Assessment data provided by the school, lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work confirm that pupils' attainment is well above national expectations with the most able achieving well above that. A high rate of progress is maintained throughout the school, including for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), who are enabled to achieve to at least national expectations, and often at least in line with their peers as a result of the skilful support provided by school staff. The most able pupils make rapid progress as a result of the school's carefully structured enrichment programme. Most pupils are successful in

gaining places against strong competition to academically selective maintained and independent schools, with some gaining scholarships each year for academic achievement, the arts and sport.

- 3.6 Pupils demonstrate outstanding communication skills, and are highly articulate. They speak with assured confidence both in conversations and when speaking in front of an audience. They have excellent questioning skills and sufficient confidence to clarify their meaning when talking to adults to avoid misunderstandings. They have highly developed listening skills as seen in their rapid responses to instructions and their readiness to start lessons promptly. For example, all pupils in the early years listened attentively to a clapped rhythm in a music activity and most were able to then accurately clap the rhythm back in unison. The pupils' excellent listening skills have been helped by senior leader's focus on listening through the school's agreed learning attitudes emphasising the importance of not talking over others. Pupils write fluently and with accuracy across a range of genres in all subjects, supported by an appropriate focus on content from staff in helpful and specific feedback. The pupils' reading is well developed, fluent and well above the expectations for their age, supported by a school-wide culture of reading for pleasure.
- 3.7 Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning. Their highly enthusiastic participation in lessons is characterised by their prompt arrival and preparedness to listen and learn. When undertaking tasks and activities, they are attentive to instructions, orderly in their approach, and productive. All pupils, including those with SEND, engage actively in lessons, maintaining high levels of concentration. They willingly offer answers to questions, observations and ideas. Those with SEND are enabled to engage in lessons successfully as a result of the school's focused provision of appropriate support. Pupils are successful when working in collaboration with others, showing respect and listening effectively to one-another's ideas. Pupils understand the need to persist when something is challenging. Many are determined to achieve their full academic potential and deepen their understanding by undertaking independent research and reading on their own initiative. For example, older pupils, when studying life during the Second World War, showed notable initiative by seeking in their homes for recipes from the 1940s and then cooking these with peers at school. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school equips their children with the team-working, collaborative and research skills they need in later life. This is confirmed by inspection evidence.
- 3.8 Pupils are deeply knowledgeable across the breadth of the curriculum. Members of the environmental committee, for example, with pupils drawn from across the age groups, used their extensive knowledge to collate sensible ideas for how the school could save energy. Pupils have excellent subject-specific vocabulary across all subjects, for example in relationships education, where pupils' knowledge of terminology in Year 2 is suitably detailed whilst also age-appropriate. They have clear subject understanding; in geography, for example, pupils in Year 5 demonstrated excellent understanding of land erosion by giving clear and accurate answers using the correct names of different land features. They are physically coordinated well above the expectations for their ages, with pupils in Year 1 readily able to match their actions accurately and in time to the music and words of a song. They understand the process of completing scientific experiments fairly. Pupils in Year 5 clearly identified which aspects in an experiment needed to be kept the same to make the results meaningful. Pupils demonstrate excellent artistic skills across a broad range of media and have well-developed linguistic skills for their age in French and Spanish.
- 3.9 Pupils' numerical skills are highly developed. They have a secure knowledge of number, well ahead of expectations for their age at all levels. For example, older children in the early years already have a secure knowledge of numbers to ten, being able to recognise, write and count on with confidence. Across the ability range, pupils in Year 3 showed excellent knowledge and understanding of three-digit numbers and were able to recognise numbers greater than and less than a selected number. Pupils also have a secure understanding of space and shape. Pupils in Year 2 were highly successful at finding right angles around their classroom. Pupils are creative and enthusiastic problem-solvers and enjoy the challenge of mathematics. Year 6 pupils were successful in writing algebraic equations for solving the perimeter and area of shapes and showed excellent knowledge of how to calculate the internal

angles of a polygon. The most able pupils were also highly successful at solving complex word problems through their skilled application of a school-wide approach to undertaking calculations by breaking them down into manageable stages.

- 3.10 Pupils are highly organised in their learning, reflecting strong study skills. Their written work is well-organised, busy, and reflective of their curiosity. Pupils have well-developed research skills, finding information to support their learning from a variety of sources, such as online, and can apply this to learning across the curriculum. Year 6 pupils in geography showed excellent skills of finding and representing in graphic form information from online research about climate change. They show strong reasoning skills; for example, pupils in Year 5 successfully identified the independent variables in a science experiment. The most able pupils' nuanced and interesting answers to complex issues demonstrate analytical thinking well in advance for their age. Pupils understand how to improve through practice and repetition and respond well to feedback, understanding the positive benefits of learning from mistakes. This is strongly reinforced by staff through the school's clearly identified learning attributes.
- 3.11 Pupils achieve highly in a broad range of extra-curricular activities, with high levels of enthusiastic participation, particularly in tennis. Sports teams in football, rugby, tag rugby, netball and cross-country are regularly successful in local and regional competitions. Many pupils in the school learn and play musical instruments, with many of those achieving notable success in grade examinations. They demonstrate excellent performance skills in the regular opportunities to perform to their peers in concerts and assemblies. Many pupils participate in speech and drama with nearly all of those achieving high levels of success in grade examinations. They are highly confident when speaking in public, and the most able have been regularly successful in regional debating competitions.
- 3.12 Pupils have strong ICT skills well supported by the proprietor's recent investment in new computers. They have well-developed coding skills, with pupils in the early years successfully using simple instructions to control the movements of programmable toys. Older pupils apply their coding skills successfully to create simple animations or sequences of actions. Pupils successfully apply their skills across a range of subjects, including in art to create and modify self-portraits and, on occasions, pupils have used digital video recordings of music, drama and sport performances to review and improve their work. Pupils' breadth of knowledge, skills and understanding of how ICT may be used to enhance their learning is constrained by the limited opportunities to make more frequent use of it across the full breadth of the curriculum.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils are highly self-aware for their age. Their secure self-esteem enables them to engage confidently with learning using discussions and interactions to challenge, clarify and extend their understanding. They have excellent levels of self-control, arriving promptly at lessons ready to learn. Pupils in Year 2 quickly and quietly change their outdoor footwear prior to entering the classroom without the need for additional guidance from staff and are ready for the punctual start of the lesson. Pupils also show high levels of resilience. They understand the need to persevere and practice in order to make progress when challenged. For example, Year 6 pupils, when creating digital presentations on climate change, were highly successful in their learning by sharing with each other the knowledge and skills required to insert both text and images into their work, persisting until they could do it independently. They are notably empathetic towards one another, having a high level of awareness of their own emotional state as well as that of others. Pupils in Year 1 showed excellent awareness of their own emotional states, by drawing clear pictures of their faces to show how they were feeling. Pupils are able to link their enjoyment of a subject to their consequent motivation to learn. They adapt quickly when required, for example pupils in Year 5 quickly adjusted their approach to a science experiment

when it was clear it was taking longer to complete than planned. They are self-reflective, realistically understanding their own strengths and weakness.

- 3.15 Pupils of all ages maintain an excellent standard of behaviour enabled by the school's open, safe and respectful culture. They take responsibility for their own actions, arriving promptly to lessons and ready to learn. Their behaviour at lunchtimes, as observed by inspectors, was exemplary both of younger pupils whilst eating and older pupils whilst waiting in line to enter the dining hall. They have strong values, strengthened and encouraged by the school's own charter, defined by leaders as part of the school-wide baccalaureate programme. They understand the rules and show respect through their willing adherence. Pupils are passionate about fairness, for example with pre-prep pupils taking turns on the climbing frames when playing in the paddock. In discussions with inspectors, older pupils were clear that, on the rare occasions when pupils make mistakes, they are often able to take personal responsibility to put things right. They challenge bullying, when it happens, holding each other up to the school's high expectations. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school responds effectively when pupils use unkind or prejudiced language to each other, and inspection evidence confirms this.
- 3.16 Pupils have deep spiritual understanding. They have a profound sense of respect for the natural world, and the importance it has for their own health and well-being. They celebrate the beauty and inspiration to be found in nature, for example in photos taken by pupils in Year 6 of mushrooms, leaves and flowers, and talk with passion about the intricacies and wonders of even the smallest creatures, such as spiders. They have well-developed skills of aesthetic appreciation, responding with mature sensitivity to paintings by famous artists. They respond to artistic symbolism, for example recognising the use of gold to signify wealth in Egyptian hieroglyphics. They understand that having close friends brings happiness, whilst material wealth may not. They feel secure, when exploring complex ideas, such as whether non-believers could go to heaven. They recognise the value of stillness and reflection, finding a variety of personal ways to practise this in their own lives, such as reading quietly, controlling their breathing or even lying on the grass to contemplate the sky.
- 3.17 Pupils are highly collaborative and maintain strong social relationships across all aspects of school life. Their cooperation with each other in lessons is outstanding, as a result of the strong focus from staff and leaders on the school's clearly defined and articulated values. For example, pupils in Year 4 worked highly effectively in groups to accurately replicate scenes showing rich and poor Tudors, helping each other to choose appropriate costumes and then positioning one another correctly in the tableaux. Older pupils sensitively support younger pupils through the buddy mentoring scheme, showing understanding for their individual needs. They recognise and actively support the particular needs of those with defined characteristics, showing a willingness to be active citizens.
- 3.18 Pupils are highly inclusive of all within the school, regardless of background and visible or invisible differences. For example, older pupils sensitively supported younger pupils with SEND, by getting down on the floor to be level and accessible to them. They have a thoughtful understanding of other faiths and religions as a result of teachers' skilled delivery of religious education. They are comfortable sharing their own beliefs, languages and cultures and are open to learning about those of their peers. For example, following a multi-cultural day when pupils tried different national foods, some pupils were inspired to undertake their own independent research on how to cook other national cuisines. Pupils are thoughtful about the values shared within our nation and recognise how these underpin many of the freedoms we enjoy. They are proactive in advocating for the rights of those who feel marginalised by the cultural norms of our society and are determined to ensure equal treatment for all. For example, prep pupils successfully campaigned for the introduction of a gender-neutral uniform. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. Inspection evidence from lesson observations and discussions with pupils confirm this.
- 3.19 Pupils make a significant contribution to others, their school and the wider community. They show understanding and empathy for those who suffer hardship in the world by initiating and organising

fundraising events, for example for those affected by natural disasters. They are socially engaged and actively support charitable events organised at the school. They are highly focused on environmental issues and the need to make positive changes. For example, members of the recently established environmental committee, show leadership and a willingness to challenge others to change their behaviours through simple school-wide initiatives. They often set impressive personal examples, for example, by choosing to have cold showers at home to save energy. Pupils in Year 3 showed concern for wildlife by setting up bee hotels in the school grounds, whilst others planted trees. Nearly all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that pupils are well-prepared on leaving for their senior school education. Inspection evidence supports this view.

- 3.20 Pupils have an excellent awareness of how to live healthy, productive and safe lives. They understand the need to maintain good physical health and the consequent need to take regular exercise, with many participating actively in the variety of sporting activities provided by the school. They understand what a balanced life-style means including what a healthy diet should contain. In this they are well supported by the school's provision of varied and interesting healthy food choices. They work hard to achieve balance in their own lives. Year 6 pupils, in discussion with inspectors, stressed the importance of having an open mind to avoid becoming stressed, reflecting a strong awareness of the importance of maintaining good mental health. Older pupils demonstrate strong leadership through their participation on the mental health committee. Younger pupils make excellent use of simple charts to record and explore their emotions. They are resilient and willing to persevere when they find things hard, but will also seek advice and support when it is needed, for example, by voluntarily asking to join an intervention group. All pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that they understand how to stay safe when online. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils have an excellent understanding of online safety, and are able to make sensible judgements about the risks they face in the wider world.
- 3.21 Pupils are adept and positive decision-makers. They make sensible personal decisions, for example when choosing school clubs that are best aligned to their interests. They make good decisions when offered choices in their learning, for example when pupils in Year 2 contributed excellent ideas for the design of a car to be used in a digital application. Pupils' opportunities to direct their own learning within lessons are limited. Pupils understand the importance of making positive decisions to improve the world; for example, members of the environmental committee agreed a strategy to turn lights off in empty rooms. When working in collaboration, they can make decisions together to enable the group to achieve success. They are considered in their thoughts about their future education through thorough and specific preparation. For example, Year 6 pupils often choose to undertake additional preparation to help secure entry to their preferred next schools or to participate in extra training in preparation for sports scholarship applications.

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, the proprietor and advisory governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and 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

Mr Matthew Lovett	Reporting inspector
Mr Simon Worthy	Compliance team inspector (Director of finance and operations, HMC school)
Mrs Janet Watts	Team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)