



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports**

**Yarm Preparatory School**

**February 2022**

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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	Yarm Preparatory School			
<b>DfE number</b>	808/6003			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	507290			
<b>Address</b>	Yarm Preparatory School Grammar School Lane Yarm North Yorkshire TS15 9ES			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 781447			
<b>Email address</b>	prepschool@yarmschool.org			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr William Sawyer			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Mark Thompson			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	389			
	<b>EYFS</b>	83	<b>Pre-prep</b>	76
	<b>Prep</b>	230		
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8 to 11 February 2022			

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Yarm Preparatory School is an independent day school situated in North Yorkshire. It was founded in 1991, became co-educational in 2000 and opened a nursery in 2003. It is now one of the two schools of the Yarm Foundation alongside the senior school, which was inspected at the same time. Both schools are overseen by a single governing body.
- 1.2 The school is divided into a prep and pre-prep department. Since the previous inspection the school has extended the performing arts centre, added new and refurbished classrooms, an open-air amphitheatre, and a large car park.
- 1.3 During the period March to August 2020, the prep school remained open only for children of key workers. During this period of closure the school provided remote learning materials for all pupils.
- 1.4 In the interests of infection control during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, inspection evidence was gathered partly remotely and partly on site to reduce contact within the school setting.
- 1.5 In line with the direction given by the Department for Education (DfE) at the time, no evaluation has been made of the nature or effectiveness of any provision made during the period March to August 2020, including its impact on pupils' learning, achievement, or personal development. Any concerns relating to pupils' welfare during this period which directly relate to measures implemented by the school have been considered.
- 1.6 During the lockdown period of January to March 2021, all pupils other than the children of key workers or vulnerable pupils received remote learning provision at home.
- 1.7 Since 2020, EYFS profiles have not been externally moderated.

### What the school seeks to do

- 1.8 The school aims to bring out the best in every pupil in their care and give them the best possible all-round education. It seeks to build and sustain a friendly, tolerant, and supportive community in which all its members are valued equally. The school endeavours for pupils to pursue high personal academic and social standards and take full advantage of the opportunities on offer to them. It aims to ensure that pupils show a sense of responsibility towards the local and wider community and prepares them for life beyond school.

### About the pupils

- 1.9 Pupils come from a wide catchment area. Nationally standardised tests indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 18 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 13 receive additional specialist help. No pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 9 pupils, of whom 3 receive additional support for their English. The school has identified 14 pupils as the more able in the school's population, modifying the curriculum for them and for 28 other pupils due to their special talents in sport, music, and drama.

## 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. 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](#).

**COVID-19: Inspection judgements do not cover the period March to August 2020 inclusive.**

## 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.

- The school's own assessment indicates that the attainment of all pupils is excellent.
- Pupils of all ages and abilities make outstanding progress, especially in mathematics and English.
- Pupils demonstrate extremely good attitudes to learning and all pupils take great pride in their work and in the school.
- Pupils display outstanding communication skills.

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

- Pupils display high levels of confidence and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils are polite, well-mannered, and clearly understand the need for boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
- Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and make an excellent contribution to the lives of others.
- Pupils demonstrate outstanding appreciation of diversity, including that represented within the school.
- Pupils work well together particularly effectively when solving problems and completing tasks across all subjects and age groups.

#### Recommendation

3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following improvement:

- Strengthen pupils' ability to apply their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to design and technology (DT) work.

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

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

3.5 Pupils make excellent progress throughout their time at the school, with no discernible difference between ability groups or genders. In line with the school's aim of bringing out the best in each pupil, the school makes effective use of nationally standardised data in all year groups to monitor progress.



As a result of this analysis very good progress is maintained for all pupils, including ones with SEND and EAL, and more able pupils receive extended work. Almost all pupils transfer to Yarm school. EYFS children make excellent progress from their starting points. An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that teaching, including the online provision, enabled their child to make progress. This was corroborated by the inspection evidence.

- 3.6 All groups of pupils demonstrate excellent knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum as they move through the school. Fostered by inspiring and stimulating teaching, appropriate curriculum and resources, pupils achieve highly and make excellent progress, especially in mathematics and English. This is aided by a consistent lesson structure that is common throughout the entire school. Learning activities that are very well-planned to meet the needs of each pupil and effective use of assistants are apparent in the classroom as seen during a Year 2 French lesson when learning colours in the story of *La Loup*. Older pupils explained they know that they are making progress because they often mark and correct their work together with the teacher and talk about the work. In mathematics, pupils' rapid progress, is supported by a strong focus on mental maths and reasoning skills in the pre-prep.
- 3.7 Pupils have outstanding communication skills. They choose appropriate language and articulate concepts successfully as seen when a class used persuasive writing to convince their chairs to return from strike action to their classroom. Pupils display maturity when writing in a variety of genres such as a piece of writing on the *Iron Man*, which included exciting adjectives that brought the story to life with great effect. Reciprocal reading is practised from the very youngest pupil in pre-prep through to Year 6. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to practise summarising, clarifying, predicting, and questioning skills. The confidence to speak in public is nurtured through opportunities in the classroom, speaking competitions and participation in assemblies.
- 3.8 Pupils of all ages achieve extremely high levels of attainment in numeracy which they effectively apply to other areas of learning. One such instance was seen in music where they competently applied their knowledge of fractions to rhythmic notation. Pupils in Year 5 talked confidently about how they use their mathematical skills to pursue their study of science, particularly in graph work and measurements. In Year 2 pupils quickly grasped the concepts of vertices on a variety of shapes. Pupils work with enthusiasm and enjoy the lessons. For example Year 6 pupils competed eagerly for ways in which values provided could be combined to produce the number 24. They immediately produced a range of quadrilateral shapes, including kites and isosceles trapeziums. Science topics in Year 4 enable pupils to apply numeracy skills well, using tables and producing graphs on the melting points of various substances.
- 3.9 Pupils' understanding and development in ICT is extremely strong within most curriculum subjects. According to the parental comments in the questionnaires, the school managed the recent online learning during the lockdown very successfully and pupil ICT skills improved greatly. Devices were seen used efficiently as in a Year 5 science lesson when pupils made short films explaining how the rotation of the earth produces night and day. Work using a map platform assisted pupils to use prior knowledge to generate questions on Machu Picchu for the teacher. A class set of virtual reality headsets served a similar purpose when pupils in Year 3 were able to virtually visit the Arctic as part of their learning topic. Pupils' digital literacy is strengthened not only through timetabled lessons in computing, but also through most academic lessons, clubs, coding from Year 1 and many homework tasks. However, pupils do not demonstrate sophisticated application of their ICT skills to DT as opportunities to do so are sometimes not fully explored.
- 3.10 Pupils show much proficiency in their study skills. They are able to self-correct work, express their opinions and debate with confidence so that when they leave, they are effective independent learners. This was seen in Year 6 work where pupils were able to hypothesise about the effects of temperature on the growth of mould on bread in a science practical. Younger children and pupils are very inquisitive learners. This was observed in the woods when Reception children analysed different natural materials to create warm dens for their woodland toy animals.

- 3.11 Pupils achieve excellent outcomes across the curriculum and the wide extra-curricular programme which fully meets the school's aims. Pupils achieve personal and team success while benefitting from occasions to showcase their talents outside the formal curriculum in sports fixtures, chess competitions, the UK Maths challenge, music examinations and speaking awards. These successes, which are highly valued and warmly celebrated, are empowered by the culture of the celebration of achievements set up by senior leaders.
- 3.12 Pupils of all ages exemplify excellent attitudes to learning. They take great pride in their work and in the school. In class, they listen well, fully engaged in the lessons and applied themselves in a conscientious manner whether it is working together or independently. In discussion, Year 4 pupils explained how they learned from their mistakes, asked for help when they needed but tried to solve problems themselves without giving up. Staff encourage a positive learning attitude. Pupils work hard and take responsibility for their learning are motivated by the praise and encouragement that they receive. Collaborative and groupwork is deeply embedded within the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

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

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils develop high levels of confidence. They are happy and self-aware knowing their own strengths and weaknesses. In discussions pupils said they appreciate the honest and clear feedback provided by the staff as they know it will show where improvements can be made. This was evidenced in a French lesson where pupils were able to respond to written feedback on sentences using the names of common pets and complete their reflections in purple pen. Pupils thrive on the positive reinforcement provided through house points; awarded individually but contributing towards a collegiate effort. Pupils chatted confidently expressing their positive views about the school. They are excited about the next stage of their education and feel well prepared for their move to senior school.
- 3.15 Pupils of all ages are able to make clear distinctions between right and wrong, respecting the school rules and taking responsibility for their own behaviour as seen during break times and in lessons. Motivation is from the house point system, the rewards announced at the weekly assembly, school values and teachers' expectations. In the questionnaire responses and interviews all pupils agree that any issues are dealt with swiftly and there is no tolerance of bullying. Pupils are courteous and considerate to others. This was witnessed during break time when Year 6 peer mentors circulated the playground offering support and advice to younger children when required.
- 3.16 Pupils celebrate, respect and embrace their differences, and value the cultural diversity of the school. During discussions, pupils explained how one of their peers had enjoyed explaining their beliefs as a Sikh and others the cultural traditions of their Chinese community to friends in recent assemblies. The respect for each other's differences, shown by pupils, is fundamental to the positive relationships seen between pupils of all ages. In history lessons pupils studied underrepresented authors and scientists including those from a diverse range of ethnicities, nationalities, and backgrounds. Pupils in Year 2 asked to learn about kanji characters from a fellow classmate ahead of the Japanese themed science, technology, engineering, art, and maths (STEAM) week in place for later in the term.
- 3.17 Pupils show substantial decision-making skills, understanding the significance of their decisions to their own learning. Pupils take many opportunities to make decisions at an individual level and do this with a mature and sensible approach. Such choices range from the choice of food at lunchtime, selection of after school clubs, the level of difficulty in mathematics extension work or whether they choose a piece of creative or persuasive writing in English. At a group level, pupils are involved in making significant choices that affect the school community and the level of involvement for these groups is excellent. The school council, eco council, food council, form captains and house captains are all active and have been central to meaningful change in the school operation. For example,

portion control has been introduced at lunchtimes as a response to the school council's concern over food waste.

- 3.18 Pupils contribute to the lives of others by supporting the local community and fundraising for local and national charities, and a school in Kenya. They demonstrate their strong desire to help by frequently taking the initiative in planning and organising their support. These events are displayed on boards around the school and applauded in the celebration assemblies. Year 6 pupils explained to inspectors how peer mentors support other children during break times when they are feeling low and how pupils in Year 3 designed a garden for a person with a specific disability. The Eco Group is an excellent forum to raise awareness of environmental issues and resulted in gaining the Eco Schools Green Flag and the Plastic Free School Accreditation for the school. It took the initiative to apply for a grant in order to develop their own allotment and have been involved in local projects to reduce plastic waste and litter allotment. Recent initiatives to make positive contributions to the lives of those less fortunate have included after school clubs for pupils to read over video conferencing their own or favourite stories to elderly residents of a care home; the donation of items to a local food bank; and even the choice to sleep outside under nothing but their own cardboard box structures to raise awareness and funds for a homeless charity.
- 3.19 Pupils show a well-developed spiritual awareness in their ability to empathise with others and to acknowledge an understanding of their own and other faiths through regular PSHE and religious education lessons. On a Thinking Thursday as well as in Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT) all learners have time and space to reflect on what they are doing. Pupils' aesthetic awareness of the non-material aspects of life is evident in the high standard of artwork displayed throughout the school and seen in freedom of expression during a pre-prep ukulele lesson. The provision of a termly art competition by year groups as well as multiple opportunities to either perform or appreciate music and drama contribute to the pupils' keen appreciation of non-material aspects of life.
- 3.20 Pupils demonstrate superb collaborative skills and work positively with each other to solve problems and achieve common goals. This was witnessed in a Year 5 science lesson when pupils worked in small groups to produce a short film explaining the difference between night and day. Children readily agreed on the different roles and worked efficiently and with enthusiasm to produce their films. Pupils' social awareness is extremely strong. They form positive relationships and get on well together in the classroom and on the games fields. The pupils value the opportunities to work together on school council making a positive difference to the school. Pupils were often seen working together effectively, engaging in lively discussion, and enjoying successfully completing the task such as children in EYFS happily finding worms in the mud bath. Pupils are quick to recognise each other's successes and offer help and encouragement where needed. The senior pupils described with confidence how the baccalaureate awards and peer mentoring schemes work.
- 3.21 One of the school's core values is that of being safe and in discussions with pupils it is clear that pupils feel very safe and supported. They know how to keep themselves safe online and how to respond to any worrying messages they might receive through the pupils' many posters around school. Pupils appreciate the need to be healthy. Year 4 pupils described how they knew it was important to exercise and eat healthily as well as take time out to relax, find hobbies they love and spend time with their friends. Their understanding is developed through the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme and being able to participate in a large range of extracurricular activities and of sports. Pupils know and appreciate the healthy options that they are provided at lunch and are secure in the knowledge that their best interest and well-being are looked after. Pupils explained that on arrival at school each day they place their named stick into a cup according to their current mood. If this changes during the day they move their stick and their form teacher will seek them out, reassure and help solve whatever problem they may be facing. An overwhelming number of parents and pupil responses in the questionnaire agreed that the school encourages a healthy lifestyle, and it is governed, led, and managed to an excellent level.

## 4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, 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 and the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mrs Daphne Cawthorne	Reporting inspector
Mr Will Newman	Compliance team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr William Austen	Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school )