



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Huddersfield Grammar School

March 2022

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School's Details

School	Huddersfield Grammar School			
DfE number	382/6005			
Address	Huddersfield Grammar School Royds Mount Luck Lane County March Huddersfield HD1 4QX			
Telephone number	01484 424549			
Email address	admin@huddersfield-grammar.co.uk			
Headteacher	Mrs Donna Holmes			
Proprietor	Cognita Schools Group			
Age range	3 to 16			
Number of pupils on roll	561			
	EYFS	39	Juniors	186
	Seniors	336		
Inspection dates	15 to 18 March 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Huddersfield Grammar School is a non-selective, co-educational independent day school. The school was founded as St David's College in the 1930s. It became Huddersfield Grammar School in 1985 and in 2007 was bought by Cognita Schools Group, who administer the school. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) comprises the kindergarten and reception classes. The pre-preparatory department caters for pupils in Years 1 and 2, while the preparatory department caters for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Years 7 to 11 make up the senior school.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has developed the pedestrian access to the school site and to the main school and pre-preparatory recreation areas.
- 1.3 The inspection took into account the circumstances faced by schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed by government guidance at various points of the pandemic.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to encourage its pupils to be inspired by and adopt a resilient approach to, everything they do at school both within and beyond the classroom, to be self-aware, through learning to recognise their strengths and adapt to their weaknesses. It seeks to develop genuine self-belief and to be inclusive, so that its pupils can make a difference, both locally and globally.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds, reflecting the ethnic diversity of the locality. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of all pupils in the school is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 68 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include difficulties with cognition and learning, communication and interaction and social, emotional and mental health, of whom 46 receive additional specialist help. Five pupils have an educational, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for one pupil. Pupils identified as the most able and those with particular talents have the curriculum modified for them.

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. 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 In the prep school, National Curriculum tests in the years 2018 to 2019 confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2019 to 2021, performance has confirmed that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 Pupils receive relationships education in the junior school and relationships and sex education in the senior school, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 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

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.12 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

2.13 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.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.15 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.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.17 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.19 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.

2.20 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 good.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and they demonstrate good initiative and independence, both individually and collaboratively.
- Pupils are confident and articulate communicators throughout the school.
- Pupils make a high rate of progress in changes to their attainment levels over time.
- All groups of pupils demonstrate good subject knowledge across the curriculum.
- Prep school pupils demonstrate good study skills. These are less well developed in the senior school.

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

- Pupils have a good sense of community and responsibility towards others.
- Pupils have a strong moral compass and a clear awareness of right and wrong which underpin the way they behave in school.
- Pupils demonstrate good and appropriate levels of self-understanding and self-discipline.
- Pupils show strong awareness of their personal growth over time.
- Pupils understanding of healthy and safe relationships is good.

Recommendations

3.3 The school should make the following improvements.

- Strengthen senior pupils' study skills, including their ability to take ownership of their learning.
- Increase pupils' understanding of what makes relationships safe and healthy.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Analysis of value-added data, lesson observations and work scrutiny show that pupils of all ages and abilities make a high rate of progress across all areas of learning, in line with the school's aims. Effective identification of individual targets ensures that pupils focus upon key areas. Provision for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and English as an additional language (EAL) is good, ensuring that these pupils also make good progress in line with their peers. Academic

data for both EYFS children and junior school pupils, as reflected in the most recent nationally validated attainment results in 2019, show attainment levels are above those usually expected for their age. In the years 2018 and 2019, results in external examinations at GCSE were good, being above national averages. Academic outcomes across most subjects are good. In 2021, just over one-half of results at GCSE were at grades 7 to 9, and in 2020, just under one-half were at grades 7 to 9. This is enabled by dedicated staff, detailed knowledge of individual pupils and strong, mutually respectful relationships.

- 3.6 All leavers in 2021 gained places at their first choice of further secondary education. Pupils achieve well and show substantial pride in their school because of the effective leadership of academic provision. Pupils engage strongly in the learning process and in the pre-inspection questionnaire a very large majority of pupils and parents commented on the help and encouragement pupils receive from supportive, dedicated and experienced staff when they encounter problems with their work. This view is supported by inspection evidence.
- 3.7 Pupils, throughout the school, including children in the EYFS, show good collaborative working skills, enthusiastically taking opportunities to co-operate with each other, share their learning and be respectful of each other's ideas. A strong classroom culture of respect and safety helps pupils to feel they can contribute to tasks, although a small number of pupils appeared unwilling to do so. Younger pupils in a music lesson persevered with the formation of new chords and displayed a great sense of joy and engagement throughout as they worked on their ensemble pieces. EYFS children were observed supporting each other's learning to a good degree in their phonics lesson. Older pupils in a mathematics lesson, worked instinctively and successfully together to solve a challenging measurement activity involving curved shapes. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive, and they are productive in individual work and in collaboration with others.
- 3.8 Pupils are confident and articulate communicators across all age ranges. They speak readily and fluently with their peers, teachers and other adults. They listen respectfully to each other in lessons and can hold sustained conversations on a range of topics. Younger pupils are willing to express their views in class where conversation was free flowing. They could articulate their feelings and understanding of school life in a mature and considered manner. Reception children were observed developing past tense language in a language development activity and older prep pupils in a physical education (PE) lesson could clearly explain the muscle groups being exercised. In an English lesson, older pupils including those with SEND, make sophisticated vocabulary choices in describing masks in their preparation for a piece of creative writing. Pupils' written work is of a good standard with clear modes of expression and appropriate vocabulary for the purpose and audience in evidence. Teacher feedback in lessons helps pupils to develop their answers verbally but longer written pieces in some subjects did not benefit from this, as evidenced in the work scrutiny.
- 3.9 Throughout the school, pupils of all ages and abilities demonstrate good knowledge, understanding and skills across all curriculum subjects. They understand that their learned skills are transferable, and they can apply their learning across the curriculum. In a science lesson, older pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to categorise and control the variables in an investigation involving pond weed and light intensity. In a geography lesson, pupils made very good progress with their understanding when discussing their ideas surrounding sustainability. Pupils in the prep school display the confidence to edit and improve their work through responding to feedback in their books. They drive forward their progress in the acquisition of language. Reception children quickly made the progression from concrete to abstract representation of their number bonds to ten, moving successfully from simple to complex number patterns. However, in some lessons, pupils' progress was hindered as a result of limited challenge and a lack of intellectually stimulating tasks.
- 3.10 Good numeracy skills were observed in a variety of lessons across the age ranges with all pupils readily applying their mathematical knowledge and skills to other contexts such as business studies, the sciences, art and geography. Younger pupils showed much enjoyment for mathematics and were comfortable with their mental arithmetic abilities. They were able to problem solve using complex

number calculations and perform mentally, two and three step number operations and consequent reverse operations with great accuracy and confidence. Older pupils in a mathematics lesson, attempting to measure a challenging shape using circles and rectangles, were able to use a wide range of techniques to produce sensible estimates of the perimeter within a good timeframe. Pupils recognised mathematics as an important subject for study and were keen to succeed. However, a few less able mathematicians having considerable difficulty with their work which was only partially remediated by the support they received.

- 3.11 Online learning has had a significant impact on how well pupils apply their well-developed information and communication technology (ICT) skills across a wide selection of subjects. It has strongly increased pupils' independence in learning. The use of ICT is well embedded into lessons. Pupils turn to their devices confidently when instructed. They demonstrate a willingness to discover how various digital platforms can be used to organise their notes, check on daily routines and retrieve feedback about their work. Older pupils in a curriculum enrichment lesson readily accessed an online revision package to create individual revision timetables. They explained confidently the benefits of being able to update the timetable frequently and share it with others. Younger pupils in an art lesson used their ICT skills effectively to independently research an artist that they have not studied before, confidently gathering evidence from a range of online sources.
- 3.12 Prep school pupils demonstrate good study habits and organisational and thinking skills. These are less well developed in the senior school. They enjoy carrying out their own research and produce good work when these opportunities are provided. Older pupils commented in their discussion that they would appreciate more extended and self-directed study opportunities. Some older pupils, including those with SEND, were able to analyse with sophistication and insight a range of literary techniques. This was seen when they explored a short English text studied as preparation for their own creative writing. However, other pupils, including some of the most able, sometimes displayed a more simplistic approach to higher order thinking skills, for example, being unable to differentiate between having a hypothesis and making a prediction. Work on metacognition is having an impact on younger year groups where pupils are becoming more used to talking about their thinking. In a problem-solving activity regarding different scenarios around friendships and personal problems, younger pupils were able to devise appropriate resolutions by considering the impact of different actions. As the problems become more complex, they used mature and expressive language and effective thinking strategies to both resolve and empathise.
- 3.13 Many pupils achieve notable success in sporting, musical, artistic and cultural arenas, both individually and in teams. Academic achievements outside of the curriculum include success in competitions at regional and national levels. Pupils are successful in UK Maths Challenges with many gold, silver and bronze medals achieved. Success is also achieved in music and drama examinations, essay writing, handwriting, art, drawing and photography competitions. Talented sporting pupils train and compete at a national level in cycling, triathlon and skiing while studying because of supportive scheduling and guidance provided by the school. Pupils are successful regionally in netball, swimming, cricket and football.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.
- 3.15 Pupils show a keen understanding of the areas they excel in, the areas that they find more challenging and those they need to work on to improve their academic performance. This is particularly true of older pupils who see themselves collaborating with their teachers to achieve success. They show a clear understanding and self-awareness of their next steps in further education or otherwise and what is required of them to access these. Praise and encouragement are used throughout the school to great effect and have a clear impact on pupils' self-esteem. Younger pupils in a thinking skills lesson were asked to reflect upon the scenario of no school and were confident in hypothesising distinct

phases of joy, isolation and lack of personal growth. Their poignant comments regarding COVID isolation displayed mature self-awareness. In their response to the questionnaire, a very large majority of parents agreed that the school helps pupils be confident and independent. The size of the school and the small number in each class enables strong and cohesive relationships to develop between the pupils and their peers and between pupils and staff. These good outcomes in pupils' personal development are due to the strong commitment of senior leaders, school governors and staff to providing effective pastoral support.

- 3.16 Pupils display an innate understanding of fairness and a well embedded sense of right and wrong. In discussion with inspectors, they referred to the school's six 'Characteristics of Learning' that frame the way pupils behave towards each other. They feel that it is important that all members of the school community are on good terms with each other and seek to make this so. Pupils are equipped with the skills and maturity to deal with situations in which they perceive their peers are not treated well. Younger pupils accept responsibility for their actions and enjoy the rewards and praise they receive for good behaviour. Pupils display an effective understanding of how their behaviour can positively impact on the lives of others at school. For example, in a relationships education (RE) lesson, pupils were able to articulate strategies to support each other when conflicts arise. Anti-bullying ambassadors spoke with pride of their roles in ensuring that everyone is happy and felt empowered by their training, showing a mature and thoughtful attitude towards their roles. Clear and strong leadership from all staff encourages pupils to take responsibility for the culture and behaviour of their school.
- 3.17 All pupils throughout the school exhibit a good level of social awareness within the school community, regardless of their point of entry. Their interaction with each other and the teaching staff is honest and open. Pupils are very supportive of each other's efforts and use praise and encouragement genuinely and generously when celebrating their achievements. They collaborate very well in lessons and around the school and are respectful of each other's views, even when disagreeing with them. Reception children in a language development activity build upon modelled language and quickly engage in discussion using expressive language. They are confident to take the lead in the conversations. Older pupils in a religious studies (RS) lesson work co-operatively and collaboratively in pairs well during discussing about the Bible and the . This expectation of collaboration coupled with the character days built into the school curriculum helps pupils to develop into considerate and empathetic young people. In the questionnaire, most parents agreed that the school helps pupils develop strong teamwork and social skills. In their response to the questionnaire a very small minority of pupils felt the school does not teach them to build positive relationships and friendships. This response was supported by the pupils in their discussions with the inspectors.
- 3.18 Pupils have a good awareness of the importance of contributing to others and the wider world. They contribute effectively and willingly to the school community and their peers' school experiences. Pupils spoke positively about their role on the prep school council, middle and senior school forums and as anti-bullying and well-being ambassadors. There are many clubs and activities that have been initiated and led by pupils such as the diversity club, the kindness club and a STEM club run by younger pupils in the senior school for prep school pupils. Pupils are highly aware of issues relating to inequality and express this most effectively through whole-school charity work. Charities that have benefitted from this recently are local foodbanks and street kitchens, hospices, residential care homes and most recent the local Ukraine charity project. Pupils also spoke enthusiastically of their self-motivated community-based volunteer work and the difference they felt they were making. They are proud of their efforts and enjoy working collaboratively for the benefit of others.
- 3.19 Pupils are confident and resilient and have good decision-making skills. They appreciate that decisions they make about academic work, relationships and their own feelings will impact upon their success, development and well-being. Pupils show a strong interest in their future pathways choosing to attend voluntary careers. Good decision-making skills were evidenced in an academic context also. For example, older pupils in a GCSE art lesson made confident and well-informed decisions about the best

artistic techniques to use. Younger pupils in a physical education (PE) lesson, made good collaborative decisions about the design of an exercise programme.

- 3.20 Throughout the school, pupils of all ages display a good awareness, appreciation and understanding of diversity and different cultures. Pupils of different backgrounds feel able to mix with each other with ease, and in lessons were seen working in multi-ethnic groups happily and comfortably. They have the maturity to accept that there will be disputes and recognise the importance of how they are dealt with. In the pupil discussion, pupils commented excitedly about the creation of their heritage projects which celebrated the culture, religion and family traditions of their creators. An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance.
- 3.21 Pupils have a good understanding of faith, of the importance of respect and friendship, and an appreciation of non-material aspects of life. The tolerance for those of other faiths is evident and adds to the visible healthy culture of care and respect throughout the school. In a religious studies (RS) lesson, prep school pupils enthusiastically discussed Christianity and miracles to build on their friendship focus. They used their interpretation of awe and wonder to further enhance their understanding and value of friendship and love as an essential human need. The most able mathematicians in Year 8 were delighted by the use of Pi to calculate aspects of circles. They explained how they saw it as beautiful and that it was intellectually satisfying that this number recurred so frequently in nature. Pupils of all ages expressed much appreciation for the aesthetic joys of art. Younger pupils express confidently their feelings and responses to works of art by pointillist artists. Older pupils in a GCSE art lesson, confidently verbalised the emotions that lay behind their individual pieces of work.
- 3.22 Pupils of all ages know how to stay safe and understand how to be physically and mentally healthy, particularly in terms of diet, exercise, online safety and a balanced lifestyle. All pupils throughout the school take part in regular physical exercise. Almost all pupils agreed that they know how to stay safe online, and that they feel safe and secure in school, a consideration supported by an overwhelming percentage of parents who responded to the questionnaire. Pupils' understanding about healthy and safe relationships is sometimes limited because PSHE and relationships education are not taught in a consistent manner.

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 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 Michael Evans	Reporting inspector
Mr David Tickner	Compliance team inspector (Head, SofH school)
Mr Christopher Emmott	Team inspector (Former head, ISA school)
Mr Steven Pearce	Team inspector (Former head of faculty, HMC school)
Mrs Caroline Rogerson	Team inspector (Head, SofH school)
Mr William Sawyer	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)