

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Gosfield School

December 2022

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School's Details

School	Gosfield Scho	ool			
DfE number	881/6010	881/6010			
Registered charity number	310871				
Address	Gosfield Scho				
	Halstead Roa	d			
		Gosfield			
		Halstead			
		Essex			
	CO9 1PF				
Telephone number	01787 47404	01787 474040			
Email address	enquiries@go	enquiries@gosfieldschool.org.uk			
Headteacher	Mr Rod Jacks	Mr Rod Jackson			
Chair of governors	Mr Peter Sak	Mr Peter Sakal			
Age range	2 to 18	2 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	328				
	EYFS	20	Juniors	85	
	Seniors	192	Sixth Form	31	
Inspection dates	29 November	29 November to 1 December 2022			

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1. Background Information

About the school

1.1 Gosfield School, founded in 1929, is an independent co-educational day school. It is a charitable trust with a board of governors who also act as trustees of the charity. The current principal took up his post in September 2021.

What the school seeks to do

1.2 The school seeks to provide a caring environment in which individuals are provided with the foundations on which to grow and develop in all aspects of their educational and personal lives. It aims to encourage pupils to achieve beyond expectations within a friendly and supportive ethos, valuing every individual's contribution, with pupils and staff inspiring one another, and in turn inspiring others. Knowing each child as an individual and nurturing potential is at the centre of the school's ethos.

About the pupils

1.3 Pupils come from families with a range of professional and business backgrounds, mostly from those living within a 40-mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised tests indicate that the ability profile of both the prep and senior schools are above average for those taking similar tests. The number of pupils in the sixth form is not large enough for their ability data to be of statistical value. Two pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan. The school has identified 67 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, 22 of whom receive one-to-one support. English is an additional language for seven pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school identify 12 pupils as gifted and a further 51 pupils as being the more able in its population. The curriculum is modified for them and for 94 other pupils due to special talents in art, drama, music, and sport.

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 <u>met</u> or as <u>not met</u>. 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: <u>The Education (Independent School Standards)</u> <u>Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.</u>

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, 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 In the senior school, the school's GCSE and A-level results in the years 2019 to 2022 confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.4 Pupils take A-level examinations in their final year at the school. The small numbers involved prevent reliable comparison with national averages, but inspection evidence confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 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.

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
 - Pupils' attainment at GCSE is good; in some subjects, progress and value-added measures indicate excellent levels of attainment.
 - Pupils' progress in the prep school is excellent.
 - Very positive attitudes to learning are fostered by strong and warm relationships between pupils and most of their teachers.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils have an excellent understanding of themselves as learners; they know their strengths and weaknesses.
 - The behaviour of pupils is generally of a high standard.
 - Pupils have a strong understanding of their responsibilities to each other and the local community.

Recommendations

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.
 - Enable all pupils, and particularly the more able in the senior school, to challenge and extend their own learning ambitions.
 - Ensure that pupils in the senior school are fully prepared to make effective decisions for their next steps by strengthening careers education in the school.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.5 Pupils' attainment at GCSE has been good in relation to national averages. Nearly all awarded grades were at grades 9 to 4 in 2022, and a quarter were at grades 9 to 7. Attainment in centre-assessed grades in 2020 and teacher-assessed grades in 2021 show a similar pattern. Data provided by the school indicate that pupils of all abilities make good progress from entry to A level. Pupils with SEND made better progress at GCSE in 2022 than their peers in the senior school. No pupil took an A-level examination in 2022, but teacher-assessed and centre-assessed grades in the previous two years indicate that pupils make good progress. Children in the EYFS and pupils in the prep school make excellent progress. Pupils in the prep school achieve scores in the top range of average standardised scores, with many scoring into the above and well-above bracket. Nearly all prep school children made good or better progress in 2021 when compared to national data. Almost all pupils go on to higher

- education, with all of them securing places at their first-choice university in 2021. Most parents agree that teaching enables their children to make progress.
- 3.6 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are good in the prep and senior schools and are often excellent in Years 12 and 13. Pupils show a highly developed range of skills in experimental work in sciences, creative skills in art and display good factual knowledge in almost all of the subjects they study. Pupils across subjects and age ranges observed were enthusiastic in wanting to share their knowledge and previous learning with each other and with their teachers. In a Year 11 physics lesson, pupils successfully set up series circuits with ammeters and voltmeters to measure the resistance of differing lengths of wire. In English lessons, Year 9 pupils differentiated between pathos, ethos and logos, drawing on examples from current Christmas advertising campaigns, while pupils in Year 5 employed a wide range of literary techniques and a good range of vocabulary to suggest mood and atmosphere in describing the setting for a piece of animation they were going to script. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in many subjects are supported and developed by skilful questioning from teachers and excellent subject knowledge. However, the scrutiny of work showed inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work and it was not always clear whether pupils were expected to respond to teacher comments. A very large majority of pupils agree that their skills and knowledge improve in most lessons.
- 3.7 Pupils of all ages demonstrate excellent communication skills in lessons, in conversations and formal discussions with inspectors. They are respectful and considerate when interacting with one another and with adults, listening carefully to the views and opinions of others. Pupils use excellent levels of subject-specific vocabulary and are enthusiastic to share their knowledge and understanding. The youngest children in the EYFS achieve expected levels in communication, language and literacy. They can confidently ask for resources or explain their choice of activities, seeking clarification when necessary. In the prep school, most pupils make good or better progress in writing and reading, and their oral communication is strong. For example, Year 3 pupils used a broad range of vocabulary and colourfully described the emotions they felt in response to the moment in the story of Beowulf when he is dragged to the underwater cave by Grendel's mother. Pupils in Year 10 history showed strong extended writing skills in a study of superpower rivalry. They explained the economic benefits to both USA and Europe and the political implications of the Marshal plan in very well-structured paragraphs. GCSE spoken language results in the last three years have been consistently strong, with all pupils achieving pass grades. In a Year 13 physical education lesson, pupils distinguished between aerobic and anaerobic exercise using the correct terminology, and in extended project presentations frequently demonstrate sophisticated mastery of language. Pupils' written and oral communication is strengthened by their participation in house spelling bees, public speaking competitions, including the Model United Nations, work experience applications and ISA competitions.
- 3.8 In the prep school, pupils demonstrate excellent numeracy skills and a very large majority make good or better progress in mathematics. Similar strengths are shown by children in the EYFS. Pupils demonstrated competent use of numeracy in the senior school lessons observed. In a Year 7 mathematics lesson pupils confidently applied their learning to problems of increasing complexity with decimals and negative numbers and, in a Year 8 science lesson, pupils expertly used mathematical skills to solve acceleration problems. In a Year 13 chemistry lesson, pupils used calculators to investigate natural logs and related them to the equation for a straight line, but were not able to plot more complex graphs involving positive and negative values. Senior school pupils regularly achieve bronze and silver certificates in UK Maths Challenges. Small class sizes and highly positive relationships between pupils and teachers support pupils to develop confidence in number work across the school.
- 3.9 Pupils demonstrate good information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They use their devices in the prep school and their own laptops in the senior school to research and carry out tasks independently. Pupils have clearly established routines for logging on and working with technology, ensuring that they make the best use of the available instructional time. Pupils in all year groups demonstrate good ICT skills to take notes across all subjects; they move between books, tablets and

- other devices to organise their studies and exhibit a determined independence. Pupils in subjects as diverse as history, computer science, design and technology, modern foreign languages and mathematics were able to use ICT to solve problems, record and organise information, and submit work to be marked.
- 3.10 Pupils demonstrate good study skills and apply themselves well in lessons. Pupils in a Year 2 science lesson made accurate use of scientific terminology when categorising living things by diet. In a Year 7 Spanish lesson, pupils were happy to work independently through cover work set, using dictionaries to complete an exercise relating to items found in their school bags. They achieved this while supporting their peers and seeking advice when needed. Pupils are encouraged to develop their study skills by the use of pro-formas provided by teachers to reflect on and evaluate their performance in completed assignments. When teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently, such as in a Year 13 geography lesson in which pupils successfully researched different approaches to drainage, pupils work with confidence. However, on occasions, lessons that provided structure to support the less able pupil missed out on opportunities to extend higher-order study skills or provide sufficient challenge for the more able.
- 3.11 Pupils' academic and other achievements are excellent, in confirmation of the school's aspiration to help pupils grow and develop in all aspects of their educational and personal lives. Sporting success is not seen as important in its own right but, rather, pupils are encouraged to be the best version of themselves. Pupils do, however, attain at high levels in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, benefiting from the school's strong promotion of extra-curricular opportunities in areas such as sport, art, music and drama, and more unusual offerings such as clubs in beekeeping, virtual games and 'magic the gathering'. The ambitious strategic vision of the governing body in establishing a cricket academy has resulted in significant sporting success for cricket scholars. Pupils in the prep school regularly enter ISA competitions in story writing, handwriting and art, and they compete in national and regional sporting competitions in ice-skating, horse riding, sailing, football, swimming and cricket. During the inspection, teams from both the prep and senior schools successfully competed in an interschool cross country championship hosted by the school. An overwhelming majority of parents agree that the school provides a suitable range of extra-curricular activities.
- 3.12 Pupils' overwhelmingly strong attitudes towards their learning are a key factor in assuring their success. Their positive attitudes are central to the values of the school, which are well understood and practised by pupils, and which the school succeeds in meeting. In a Year 10 registration lesson, pupils talked in an open and relaxed way with the teacher; they clearly value the time spent discussing themes from assembly and PSHE. In the EYFS, teachers nurture these positive attitudes through enthusiastic and warm praise. Teachers know their pupils well and this encourages the growth of confidence and furthers positive attitudes to learning. In a small number of lessons observed, pupils did not focus on their set work but, in the main, pupils worked well. In a Year 10 English lesson, pupils entered the classroom in an orderly fashion and immediately settled to the starter activity which the teacher had ready for them. This positive start to lessons was almost universally observed by inspectors. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning, appreciative of their teachers and mostly apply themselves with commitment to tasks. Pupils are keen to do their best and are happy to support and guide their peers.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils have a highly developed sense of self-understanding. This is because the school's culture of strong pastoral care, through which pupils' progress and well-being are carefully monitored, means that pupils are well-known by their teachers and are given time to develop and express themselves. Responses to the pupils' questionnaire showed that a small minority of pupils do not agree that the school always listens to them, although inspectors observed many positive interactions between

- pupils and teachers who readily made themselves available, and a new anonymous online mechanism to report concerns is beginning to open up additional channels of communication. A minority of pupils in response to the questionnaire did not agree that they receive helpful advice about careers or subject choices and inspectors agree with school leaders who have already identified areas in which careers education can be improved. Pupils know enough about themselves, know what their weaknesses might be and how to go about trying to improve. They are often well supported and directed by feedback and marking and are encouraged to reflect about what went well.
- 3.15 Pupils understand that the decisions they make are the determinants for their own success and relish the opportunities to direct their own learning when the lesson structure allows. In a Year 8 history lesson in which pupils were asked to decide which of the Tudor monarchs was the worst, pupils made convincing arguments for their decision and clearly understood that the criteria for how to make judgements were significant to the choices made. Decision making by pupils is strengthened by a relationships and sex education programme which helps them to reflect on outcomes when making life choices, and by opportunities to decide which extra-curricular activities to follow or the freedoms to explore offered by the woodland learning environment. In discussions with inspectors, Year 5 pupils had an excellent understanding of the ways in which the school provides them with opportunities to make their own decisions about the level of challenge they choose in lessons. They were clear that they would be supported to make the right choice to ensure progress and appropriate challenge. Pupils in a Year 7 art class researching Mexican folk and day of the dead art, made good decisions about the choices of materials and textures to design and create beautiful alebrijes based on animals. In a Year 7 politics lesson, pupils were encouraged to think about the process of becoming a member of parliament and clearly understood that decisions made at the ballot box are important. The school's pupil parliament further promotes an understanding of the importance of good decision making.
- 3.16 Pupils have a highly developed spiritual understanding and a deep sense of, and appreciation for, the importance of the non-material aspects of life. They can give convincing reasons for the values they espouse and which the school promotes. A display in the Year 4 classroom showed the pupils' reflections on the death of the Queen. They expressed gratitude in writing for her long service and the ways in which she demonstrated kindness as well as reflecting on their feelings of sadness and appreciation for her service. In a Year 2 science lesson on food chains, the pupils showed concern for the school chickens, Kevin and Nigel, who they felt might be hungry and in need of some attention. Year 7 and 8 pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about the excitement of lessons in the woodland learning environment and how this helped them appreciate their own place in the world, as well as supporting their own sense of well-being. The school develops this understanding by providing a range of trips locally, nationally and internationally, which serve to give pupils an appreciation of life beyond the school gates. A well-structured personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and challenging questioning in religion, ethics and philosophy lessons stimulate pupils to think about what really matters to them.
- 3.17 Nearly all pupils have high standards of behaviour in class and around the school; they can clearly distinguish between right and wrong and show respect for school rules. However, in response to the questionnaire, a small minority of pupils did not agree that pupils are kind or show respect to each other. An overwhelming majority of pupils agreed that the school expects pupils to behave well and most of them agree that the school sorts out poor behaviour, but in discussions with inspectors, pupils commented on the misbehaviour of some senior school pupils. Nonetheless, inspectors observed pupils who understand the importance of rules and laws, accept responsibility for their own behaviour and show a keen sense of fair play in sports. Parents visiting from other schools for a cross country event commented positively about the excellent manners shown by pupils. Teachers know their children well and are quick to help and support them. In most lessons observed, well-planned teaching enabled pupils to make progress appropriate to their ability, and this promoted pupils' excellent behaviour in class.

- 3.18 Pupils form productive relationships with each other and collaborate well. A strong sense of a proud community allows the pupils to feel secure to discuss moral, social and political issues. The pupil parliament fostered the creation of a school environmental group, 'the green team', through which socially aware pupils work collaboratively to run surveys. They have helped to achieve common goals such as reducing the use of electricity and halting the use of single-use plastics. This strong sense of social awareness was also observed in lessons. In a Year 9 English lesson, pupils worked in pairs and independently to develop persuasive arguments to release captive orcas from aquaria. In a Year 13 economics lesson, pupils eloquently described the current cost of living crisis and its link to the strikes taking place in both the private and public sectors. Opportunities to take on school leadership roles, such as school, house and sports captains, and roles such as sport ambassadors help to cement collaborations between pupils and with their teachers.
- 3.19 Pupils have a strong understanding of their responsibilities to each other and the local community. They understand that they enjoy the opportunities to use their ability, skills and energy to contribute to the local community and national charities. They do this through a variety of fund-raising events such as baking cakes, donating canned food to the local foodbank, planting trees or selling honey and other bees wax products made from the school's own bees. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 attend an after school Spanish club run by a Year 11 pupil, and a pupil-led hot chocolate club provides opportunities for younger pupils to chat with older peers. During the inspection, pupils supported an inter-school cross-country event, with senior pupils acting as guides, hares, sweepers, and course marshals, and by recording finishing places and times. Senior pupils spoke enthusiastically about their planned expedition to Cambodia to help mangrove conservation.
- 3.20 Pupils show great respect to their peers and value diversity within their school. Inspectors witnessed a tolerant learning community whose pupils demonstrate sensitivity, acceptance and a willingness to listen to the views of others. In Year 8 registration time, the opening discussion topic on human rights and LGBTQ+ issues prompted animated and sensitive views from the pupils on the staging of the world cup in Qatar. Similarly, in a Year 8 religion, ethics and philosophy lesson, pupils reflected on some of the principles that underpin respect and tolerance for others as they explored the links between Jewish and Christian moral codes, before constructing their own empathetic modern versions of the ten commandments. Younger children in the EYFS are encouraged to understand and celebrate diverse cultures and are encouraged to be themselves and to accept others. In both the prep and senior schools, a whole-school commitment to thinking about others, emphasised in assemblies and in PSHE, promotes reflective consideration.
- 3.21 Pupils have a well-developed appreciation of how to stay safe and healthy and are supported in this through lessons in science and physical education. They make good decisions about their diet and exercise and know how to stay safe online. Pupils show a high level of resilience to be able to cope with the complexities of modern society which is supported by the relationships and sex education programme. The vast majority of parents agree that the school encourages their children to adopt a healthy lifestyle and most pupils agree that the school encourages them to be healthy.

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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 form meetings. 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 Goodwin Reporting inspector

Mrs Christine Rees Compliance team inspector (Former head of boarding, HMC school)

Mr Garry Binks Team inspector (Former housemaster, HMC school)

Ms Shona Colaco Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)