



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION  
FOR SCHOOLS WITH RESIDENTIAL PROVISION  
GEMS SHERFIELD SCHOOL**

**JANUARY 2017**



## School's details

<b>School</b>	GEMS Sherfield			
<b>DfE Number</b>	850/6084			
<b>EYFS Number</b>	EY 293642			
<b>Address</b>	Reading Road Sherfield-on-Loddon Hook Hampshire RG27 0HU			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01256 884800			
<b>Email address</b>	info@sherfieldschool.co.uk			
<b>Headmaster</b>	Mr Richard Jaine			
<b>Chairman of governors</b>	Mr Tony Little			
<b>Age range</b>	3 months to 18 years			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	455			
	<b>Boys</b>	258	<b>Girls</b>	197
	<b>Day pupils</b>	408	<b>Boarders</b>	47
	<b>EYFS</b>	102	<b>Prep</b>	185
	<b>Seniors</b>	128	<b>Sixth Form</b>	40
<b>Pupils' ability</b>	Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. That of the sixth form is broadly average.			
<b>Pupils' needs</b>	The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is seventy. They require support with a variety of needs. One pupil has an education, health and care plan (EHC) and receives support. Fifty-two pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and they receive support within teaching.			

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<b>History of the school</b>	GEMS Sherfield was founded in 2004 and has been co-educational since its inception. Boarding is available for pupils aged ten years and above. The school relaunched its sixth form in 2013, reintroducing A levels.
<b>Ownership and governing structure</b>	The school is under the ownership of the GEMS organisation, which provides central oversight as well as support for all its schools, and local governance representation.
<b>School structure</b>	The school is in four parts: Sherfield Nursery cares for children from 3 months to 3 years; the pre-prep educates those from 'pre-reception' to Year 2; the prep school houses Years 3 to 8; and the senior school pupils are in Years 9 to 13.
<b>Other useful information</b>	The entire school including playing fields and other facilities is located on a landscaped, country estate of 75 acres which includes gardens, park and woodland. A new Nursery building was opened in September 2015.
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17 to 18 January 2017

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## PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards (“the standards”) in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports 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. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school’s most recent statutory inspection.

This inspection also contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (‘boarding NMS’). It also comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and it judges the extent to which the school currently meets the boarding NMS. It identifies any standards which the school does not meet and requires action to meet them. Findings are distributed across sections relating to the eight Parts of the standards.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards, including the boarding NMS, following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards and any qualitative concerns identified at their previous inspection.

**This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school’s compliance with the standards, including the boarding NMS.** 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 regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils’ health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents’ complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management, together with the NMS covering the same areas. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

The inspection does not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as:

- (i) the school's aims;
- (ii) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (iii) compliance with data protection requirements;
- (iv) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (v) contractual arrangements with parents;
- (vi) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups. Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Independent School Standards Regulations](#), [National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

## SUMMARY EVALUATION

**The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015, the 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

The prep school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.

At GCSE in the years 2012 to 2015, pupils' performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.

Sixth form pupil numbers in the two years during which A-level examinations have been taken are insufficient to enable comparison with national averages.

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.

**The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1 - 4] are met.**

### PART 2

#### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.

**The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.**

### **PART 3**

#### **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

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.

An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.

**The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6 - 16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 2 - 4, 6 - 12, 15 and 16 are met.**

### **PART 4**

#### **Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.

**The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17 - 21] and NMS 14 are met.**

### **PART 5**

#### **Premises of and accommodation at schools**

Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their 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. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.

**The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22 - 31] and NMS 5 are met.**

## **PART 6**

### **Provision of information**

A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include 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 those with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, and its results in public examinations, 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. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.

**The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and statement of boarding principles [NMS 1] are met.**

## **PART 7**

### **Manner in which complaints are handled**

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, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.

**The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.**

## **PART 8**

### **Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

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. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.

**The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are met.**

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision**

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.

All children including those identified as having SEND or EAL make excellent progress relative to their individual starting points and abilities, as a result of the particularly broad and stimulating curriculum and the outstanding care provided. All children are effectively supported in their learning and development. They are prepared and managed extremely well for transitions such as between year groups. Children's personal and emotional development is outstanding throughout the setting; they are extremely happy, and feel safe and secure in this nurturing environment. All staff demonstrate a thorough understanding of the safeguarding and welfare arrangements for children, and great importance is placed on the well-being of their charges. Leadership and management are rigorous in evaluating practice across the setting as a whole, and demonstrate a strong commitment to continuous improvement. The recommendations from the previous inspection have been met; policies across the setting are now consistent in content and terminology, and many opportunities are now provided for older Nursery children to celebrate achievements and successes together.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding. The small leadership team and governance share an ambitious vision for the entire setting. An example of this can be seen in the manner that the new Nursery building has been planned and resourced. Middle managers' current involvement in strategic organisational issues is in its infancy and this limits their participation in oversight of pupils' care. Senior leaders have high expectations for what all children including those with particular needs can achieve, and a strong desire to provide all children with extremely high quality provision and care. A regular cycle of one-to-one supervision meetings for staff, and an established performance management programme are both effective. Together these identify future training needs for staff, and these are addressed quickly where possible. Regular and realistic self-evaluation ensures a continuous review of all practice and enables staff to set appropriately challenging targets for the children's future development. The setting's 'open door' policy provides parents the opportunity to express their views informally, and these along with the children's views receive careful consideration. The parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and informal parental interviews demonstrated that the overwhelming majority of parents are extremely happy with almost all aspects of the setting. Senior leaders are highly effective in overseeing the educational programmes, staff practice and children's records, ensuring that the curriculum is suitably covered and offers exciting experiences both indoors and out. Children's needs and interests are the central consideration during planning. The excellent curriculum is effectively planned to cater for the needs of all age groups. An example of this is the use of the 'Stretch and Learn' programme for the youngest children and the early introduction of a world languages programme for slightly older pupils, ensuring an extremely positive start to their educational career and strong preparation for the next stage. The setting's inclusiveness successfully promotes equality and diversity together with expectations of good behaviour. British values are actively promoted both through the curriculum and in everyday routines. In daily practice, leaders and managers pay due regard to the promotion of children's welfare and safeguarding. Policies and rigorous procedures are updated regularly and well understood by staff, including recent arrangements to prevent radicalisation and extremism.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. All staff have consistently high expectations of what all children including those with particular needs and the most able can achieve. They have a thorough knowledge of the EYFS framework and how young children learn best, and thereby foster a positive culture and a thorough commitment to learning. Teaching enthuses and excites children, for example puppets were used to excellent effect during the world languages programme. Staff regularly observe children to evaluate what they know, understand and can do. Regular assessments and highly pertinent observations track progress effectively and these are used to plan the next steps of learning for individual children. Staff evaluate their planning daily and make adjustments to ensure that children are stimulated, have their interests considered and know how to improve. For example, staff reflect on the success, relevance and purposefulness of the activities and whether or not more adult intervention is required. All children make excellent progress and achieve highly across all areas of learning due to the excellent support provided to all aspects of their learning and development. Regular encouragement and generous praise ensure children's success. Parents are well informed about their children's progress in the comprehensive reports that they receive. Information for parents is extensive and ensures a full understanding of the EYFS framework, allowing them to support learning effectively. Teaching and learning across the setting promotes equality of opportunity and the recognition of diversity, creating a most inclusive environment. Staff ensure that children from the earliest age are equipped with excellent learning skills. For example the youngest children dressing and feed themselves, giving them confidence and a love of learning in all curriculum areas. Children are inquisitive and enthusiastic learners who are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children are outstanding. Children are keen to learn and are proud of their achievements. They benefit from the positive culture which is strongly nurtured by staff throughout the setting. Children from a young age demonstrate high levels of independence and self-confidence; they are aware of their abilities and increasingly know how to learn. Independently and confidently, children explore the wide range of stimulating and interesting activities provided indoors and outside. They are highly imaginative; they rapidly developed their imaginative and linguistic skills when exploring 'under the sea' in role play. Children have well-developed social skills for their ages and continually demonstrate that they feel emotionally secure within the setting. All transitions are managed extremely well. Each child has an assigned key person who undertakes responsibility for their learning, emotional and care needs. Key staff know the children within their group well and quickly form close bonds with their families. Prompt and regular attendance is continually and successfully promoted. Effective strategies are in place that teach children successfully about expected behaviour and how to manage their feelings. Children are keen to meet the expectations of adults. They demonstrate kindness for others in their play and interactions. From a young age, children develop a secure knowledge about the importance of self-care and how to manage risks. Children understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle, such as through making healthy choices at mealtimes and knowing how to wash their hands effectively before meals and after visiting the lavatory. Children from the youngest age upwards engage happily in their play, take turns and begin to co-operate. By the end of Reception, children are confident individuals who demonstrate respect and tolerance of others. These qualities provide them with an excellent start to life in Britain and the wider world.

## **Outcomes for children**

The outcomes for children are outstanding. All children including those with particular needs make excellent progress in relation to their individual starting points and abilities. Consistently high standards are achieved due to the broad and interesting curriculum and the outstanding level of care provided. By the end of the EYFS the overwhelming majority of children meet the expected levels of development for their age across all areas of learning, with many exceeding these expectations. Children of all ages are enthusiastic about their learning and are most inquisitive. They are attentive listeners and express themselves increasingly effectively. Babies and toddlers play happily and with high levels of independence, very much encouraged by staff. They enjoy stories and rhymes, and they begin to join in the actions. They experiment with percussion instruments with great enjoyment. Staff model language most effectively. Nursery children purposefully mark-make in all their play. They have an increasing knowledge of initial sounds and apply this effectively when they are self-registering their attendance or joining in self-selected activities. They enjoy books and eagerly share stories. Nursery children can count to ten and beyond, and understand the concepts of more and less. All children are developing extremely well and are ready for the next stage of their education as a result of the strong foundation that they have for future learning.

## **Compliance with statutory requirements**

**The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.**

## **Recommendation for further improvement**

The school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years.

- Develop the role of the EYFS middle managers so that responsibility for compliance and pupils' care is more widely shared.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The inspectors conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teachers, senior members of staff and with a representative governor. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Robin Lewis	Reporting inspector
Mr Neil Cufley	Compliance team inspector (Operations director, HMC school)
Miss Patricia Griffin	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former head of pre-prep, IAPS school)
Mr Jim Turner	Early years team inspector (Head of prep school, HMC and IAPS school)
Mr Paul Johnstone	Boarding team inspector (Former head of religious studies & chaplain, HMC and IAPS school)