



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

**FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION
FOR SCHOOLS WITH RESIDENTIAL PROVISION
MOIRA HOUSE SCHOOL**

MARCH 2017



School's details

School	Moira House School			
DfE Number	845/6015			
EYFS Number	EY306028			
Registered charity number	307072			
Address	Upper Carlisle Road Eastbourne East Sussex BN20 7TE			
Telephone number	01323 644 144			
Email address	schooloffice@moirahouse.co.uk			
Acting Principal	Mrs Elodie Vallantine			
Chair of governors	Mrs Jill Jackson-Hill			
Age range	0 to 18 years			
Number of pupils on roll	312			
	Boys	10	Girls	302
	Day pupils	240	Boarders	72
	EYFS	52	Pre-prep	21
	Prep	90	Seniors	94
	Sixth Form	55		
Pupils' ability	Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average, and the ability profile of the sixth form is broadly average.			
Pupils' needs	The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is seventeen. One pupil has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. These pupils require support with a range of difficulties including dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia. Seventy-seven pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) of which forty-three receive additional support for their English.			

History of the school	The school was founded in 1875 by Mr Charles Ingham, a pioneer in female education in Victorian England. It was originally based in Surrey before moving to Eastbourne in 1887.
Ownership and governing structure	The school is owned by the governing body known as the School Council. The members of the School Council represent a variety of experience and expertise, and are almost all either former pupils or parents of current pupils of the school.
School structure	Moira House School is an independent girls' day and boarding school with a co-educational mixed Nursery, located on a single site. Since the previous inspection, the school has been reorganised into Nursery, pre-prep, Lower Prep, Upper Prep, Seniors and sixth form sections.
Other useful information	The school opened a new equestrian centre in September 2016. The Acting Principal was appointed in January 2017.
Inspection dates	14 to 15 March 2017

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 does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

PART 1

Quality of education provided

In the junior school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.

At GCSE in the years 2013 to 2015, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.

In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2013 to 2015 have been well above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.

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

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 in paragraphs 6, 9–16, 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, 6-10, 12, and 15 and 16 are met but those in paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b), and NMS 11.1, [safeguarding] are not met.

Recruitment checks on staff required as part of having regard to *Keeping Children Safe in Education* are not carried out or recorded consistently.

Action point 1

- **the school must ensure that all recruitment checks including checks against the lists of those barred from working with children, prohibited from teaching and prohibited from management, and references, are completed before staff commence employment at the school [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b), and NMS 11.1].**

Action point 2

- **where an individual is allowed to start work in regulated activity before a DBS certificate has been seen, appropriate supervision must be arranged and all other checks including a separate barred list check must have been completed [paragraphs 7(a) and (b), 8(a) and (b), and NMS 11.1].**

PART 4

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised. The school does not make arrangements for guardianship.

The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraphs 17, 18(2)(a), (b), (c)(iii) and (d), 20 and 21(2), (3)(a)(i)-(vii), (3)(b) and (4)-(7) are met but those in paragraphs 18(2)(c)(i), (ii) and (iv), 18(2)(e) and (f), 18(3), 21(3)(a)(viii) and NMS 14.1 are not met.

The required recruitment checks on staff, including those who train boarders, have not been undertaken on all staff prior to the start of employment; in particular checks of identity, medical fitness and qualifications, and appropriate checks on those who have lived outside the United Kingdom, including boarding staff.

Action point 3

- **ensure that all the required recruitment checks on staff are carried out and correctly recorded where relevant before each person starts working at the school, including identity of staff, medical fitness, qualifications and appropriate checks on those who have lived outside the United Kingdom, including boarding staff [paragraphs 18.2)(c)(i)(ii) and (iv), (e) and (f) 18(3), 21(3)(a)(viii) and NMS 14.1].**

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 standards relating to leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 and NMS 13.1, 13.3, 13.4 and 13.5 are not met.

The proprietors have not discharged their responsibilities over time to ensure that the regulatory standards are consistently met for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of the pupils by ensuring that all recruitment checks are completed before staff commence employment at the school, although much progress has been made in the last three months to rectify previous shortcomings.

Action point 4

- **the school must ensure that the leadership and management of the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are met consistently and the well-being of pupils is actively promoted [paragraphs 34(1)(a), (b) and (c) and NMS 13.1, 13.3, 13.4 and 13.5].**

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 make strong progress in relation to their starting points. They are extremely well prepared for their next stage of education with excellent development of communication and social skills, which help them to interact confidently with other adults and children they meet.

Staff make excellent provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. High-quality teaching, planning and assessment take individual interests into account when planning learning programmes. This includes the provision for children with particular needs.

Staff provide excellent support for the children's personal and emotional development through a nurturing environment in which children clearly thrive and feel secure.

Robust safeguarding policies and procedures are followed. Regular meetings as part of staff supervision allow all staff to have frequent opportunities to raise concerns. Rigorous training programmes ensure that adults are fully up to date in safeguarding and are aware about how to report concerns.

Since the previous inspection, managers within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) have enhanced their qualifications. The target for all staff in the team to be involved in development planning has been met. Highly effective systems are in place for reviewing practice and keeping up to date with new ideas and initiatives, which promote an ethos of growth and development.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.

A clear and aspiring shared vision for the setting to provide a safe and nurturing environment in which children thrive is evident throughout. Managers monitor staff performance highly effectively and offer regular peer observations to ensure that high standards of care and learning are consistently provided.

Combined with the regular comprehensive appraisals to review practice and set targets for the future, staff appreciate the well-embedded supervision system. Staff frequently attend training courses and keep up to date with current practice, sharing new knowledge to contribute to their teaching and consequently the children's learning and development.

Self-evaluation underpins the setting's excellent practice. The management and staff conscientiously evaluate and review their work. They have reflected successfully how to increase the ways they gather the views of parents and children. This information is used extremely well to plan for and inform changes. Inspection findings support the results of the parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire which widely expressed full satisfaction in the input parents have to their children's learning, with high levels of care taken to create happy, confident and successful children.

A shared approach to planning incorporates relevant, everyday experiences and includes suitable depth and breadth. It fully meets statutory requirements and provides varied learning activities and styles to match the needs and interests of each child. Thorough and individualised planning is in place for both the babies and older children from the moment they start at the setting, and this ensures that all are ready for the next stage of their learning. Careful consideration is made to each child's settling in time to ensure that appropriate planning is in place.

Staff highly value the home languages and cultural backgrounds of all children, and children readily learn to respect each other's differences through sharing of 'special people' photographs and multicultural celebrations. Clear guidance to staff, children and parents ensures a cohesive approach towards managing behaviour. From a young age children are taught the importance of tolerance, taking turns, kindness and sharing as well as recognising the difference between right and wrong. Staff effectively model key values through interaction with one another as well as the children.

Thorough arrangements for safeguarding are implemented. Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to report concerns about children's welfare. They complete appropriate training in order to keep up to date with current requirements and changes, including training to increase awareness in preventing radicalisation and extremism. Children's safety is considered at all times through close supervision and daily risk assessments of key areas.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.

The staff work well as an enthusiastic team to motivate and inspire children, with high expectations for what each child can achieve. The individual needs of pupils with SEND or EAL and those who are more able are clearly identified and carefully planned programmes to provide necessary support have been established.

Children's learning is skilfully supported and extended by the staff who know the needs of the children exceptionally well. They have a firm understanding of the relevant stages of children's development. The adults' full engagement with the children enables them to expand on each child's individual learning and helps them to solve problems and overcome challenges. They successfully provide additional challenges for older children; building on strong number knowledge, identifying colours and shapes accurately, and increasing their vocabulary through their questioning and interactions. Highly creative use of the nappy changing station enables the stimulation of the younger children's interest, who talk excitedly with staff and respond to observations about the stimulating resources above the changing area. Children are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

The systematic assessment procedures ensure that a detailed and clear picture of each child's learning and progress is established, with the help of parents and building on information from previous settings. This is used to identify next steps to children's learning. Assessment is informed by meticulous observations by staff, who track children's achievements regularly alongside their ages online. Early intervention is afforded high priority so that all children are able to make good progress and achieve well.

Staff ensure that they are readily available to offer support and guidance when children need help. They praise and encourage the children, and model appropriate language and behaviours which the children then apply independently. Children currently have limited opportunity to develop their gross motor skills both indoors and outdoors. Staff endeavour to make good use of the limited immediate outdoor space to enable older children opportunities to go outside freely.

Highly comprehensive information made available to parents through a variety of approaches allows them to be fully involved with the progress and development of their child, and includes information in relation to their age and what needs to happen next to enable progress. Parents contribute to their children's learning profile as well as contributing observations of their children's achievements at home.

Children engage fully and enthusiastically with the staff. They have equal access to a well-planned curriculum with plenty of opportunities for celebrating languages spoken in the setting as well as sharing cultural traditions and activities, for example singing in Italian and tasting Spanish cuisine.

Staff are committed to helping children develop their own hygiene routines through many creative strategies. As a result, babies have excellent skills for the future in feeding themselves and the older children in cleaning their teeth, toileting and hand washing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The personal development, behaviour and welfare of the children is outstanding.

Within a nurturing and positive environment, older children are proud of their individual sticker charts and stamps for rewards in toilet training. Appropriate photographs of children in action and achievements in different areas of learning are clearly displayed.

Babies confidently make independent choices, promoted by a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated tasks. They show such delight when sharing an experience that both they and the adults around them laugh. The genuine, caring, friendly and reassuring manner of all the staff provides a positive ethos throughout the setting. They clearly take pride in enabling the children to achieve their best.

Through consistent use of praise and reinforcement, older children naturally determine their own next steps. They are confident to make their own choices, for example selecting dessert or fruit to eat with self-awareness of how to stay clean.

Children enjoy activities that help them to develop an understanding of the world. For example, babies use their senses and take obvious delight in exploring the sand tray and looking for birds out of the window during snack time. Older children benefit from the encouragement to be independent during every-day routines such as putting on their indoor shoes.

Children quickly build excellent relationships with their key person and other adults. The children are fully prepared for moving from group to group and beyond the setting. Preparing children socially and emotionally for this transitional journey is a significant strength of the setting. Carefully planned opportunities for children to spend time in the new group, with full handover discussions between staff, guarantee a positive transition for each child.

Staff provide a very secure and happy environment in which all children are highly valued and well supported. Positive relationships between adults and children are paramount. Children of all ages are able to form exceptionally strong emotional attachment to the practitioners who deliver outstanding care, and are fully informed in mental health and children's well-being. Prompt and regular attendance is strongly promoted.

Adults in the setting speak to children sensitively to encourage consistently good behaviour. They take their needs into account throughout the day, communicating clearly with parents at drop off and collection to ensure that children are comfortable, settled and happy. The children are polite and kind, and regularly display good manners. Highly effective strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour ensure that children learn how to manage their own feelings, understanding the impact that their actions can have on others.

High levels of ratios and close staff supervision ensure that children are safe and well guided as to how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Babies understand that tall towers of blocks can topple and hurt them. Older children understand how to carry a chair safely, that their lunch table must be clean and which foods keep them healthy.

Staff place a high priority on providing a clean and hygienic environment for the children. They support an awareness for healthy living with well-established sleep routines and a nutritious, balanced diet about which parents are informed. Children enjoy activities such as swimming and going to visit the horses.

Through the use of golden rules, circle times, singing and role play, children are taught to respect each other and learn skills to prepare them for life beyond the setting.

Outcomes for children

The outcomes for children are outstanding.

All children including those with SEND or EAL make strong progress in relation to their starting points, which are identified through careful observation. Individual next steps are well planned for. Almost all children meet the expected level of development, with a number exceeding that typical for their age.

Encouragement from staff to develop early language skills in babies is a strength of the setting and evident in their modelled use of descriptive vocabulary in the sand. Number knowledge is developed very well through the use of song for these younger children, who confidently repeat the number names used. Through the rich opportunities for exploration, children are inquisitive and can become highly absorbed in their play.

Toddlers demonstrate excellent listening skills, an ability to wait their turn and to follow a series of instructions. They display a sense of curiosity when choosing to read a book after sleeping, and are extended with their early number recognition through building and block play. Toddlers were proud to share their creative cards and invitations for a Mother's Day breakfast.

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.

- Increase opportunities for children to further develop their gross motor skills through indoor and outdoor physical activity.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The inspectors conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teachers, senior members of staff and with the chairman of trustees. 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

Mrs Serena Alexander	Reporting inspector
Mr Shaun Barrington Wilson	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, HMC school)
Mrs Deborah Leek-Bailey	Boarding team inspector (Former Head, ISA school)
Ms Philippa Gent	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Head of pre-prep, IAPS school)
Mrs Karen Rogers	Early years team inspector (Head of pre-prep, IAPS school)