



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports**

**Bancroft's Preparatory School**

**March 2022**

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### School's Details

<b>School</b>	Bancroft's Preparatory School
<b>DfE number</b>	317/6071
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1068532
<b>Address</b>	Bancroft's Preparatory School 611–627 High Road Woodford Green Essex IG8 0RF
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8506 6751
<b>Email address</b>	prep.office@bancrofts.org
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Joe Layburn
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Edward Sautter
<b>Age range</b>	7 to 11
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	261
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1 to 4 March 2022

## 1. Background Information

### About the school

- 1.1 Bancroft's Preparatory School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between 7 and 11 years. It is the junior section of Bancroft's School. The preparatory school opened in 1990 in a separate building but shares many of the facilities of the senior school.
- 1.2 The school is a charitable trust, administered by a governing body which oversees both the senior and preparatory schools, with a designated governor for the preparatory school. The governing body retains representation from the Worshipful Company of Drapers, who founded the school in east London in the 18th century. Since the previous inspection a new Chair of Governors has been appointed.
- 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 provide pupils with the best possible academic education and to help them reach their full potential. It seeks to offer pupils a rich and diverse range of experiences, helping them find areas where they can excel or simply have fun, to encourage natural curiosity, and ensure that they enjoy their school life.

### About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils who attend the school come from a wide range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Nationally standardised test data indicate that the ability of pupils is well above average. The school has identified 19 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) such as dyslexia; none are supported by statements of special educational needs or education, health and care (EHC) plans. No pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). Pupils who have been identified as gifted and talented have additional curricular and co-curricular opportunities to provide appropriate stimulation and challenge.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

**This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards.** The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management.

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](#).

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

### **PART 1 – Quality of education provided**

- 2.2 The school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

### **PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

### **PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors**

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

### **PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 2.12 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are

appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

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

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

2.14 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

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

## **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

2.16 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

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

## **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

2.18 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

**2.19 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.**

### 3. Educational Quality Inspection

#### Preface

The **EDUCATIONAL QUALITY** inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

**The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.**

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
Alpha	Year 3
Beta	Year 4
Prep 1	Year 5
Prep 2	Year 6

#### Key findings

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

- Pupils display excellent attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils are extremely articulate communicators, both inside and outside the classroom.
- Pupils, including those with SEND, develop excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning.
- Pupils achieve highly in a wide variety of academic and other areas such as the performing arts and sport.
- Pupils display a high level of competence in their use of information and communication technology (ICT) and can apply their skills across the curriculum.

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

- Pupils show resilience, perseverance and a determination to succeed; they have high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Pupils enjoy working collaboratively, displaying excellent commitment to each other and a strong desire to achieve common goals.
- Pupils uphold the values of the school and have an excellent sense of right and wrong.
- Pupils in all year groups have a mature understanding of, and respect for, cultural diversity and tolerance of individual differences.

#### Recommendation:

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement.



- Ensure that the school's enrichment programme enables all pupils to develop an understanding that education goes beyond traditional academic outcomes.

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

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Bancroft's pupils demonstrate a markedly high level of attainment in accordance with the school's aim to provide pupils with the best possible academic education, and to help them make the most of their abilities, whilst also ensuring that they are happy and well-rounded individuals. Pupils gain excellent levels of understanding and knowledge in all subject areas. In a computer lesson, pupils were very proficient at applying their computing skills to create presentations. They independently applied skills such as inserting text and pictures, changing slide background and design, and using slide transitions. Pupils show a very high level of understanding in grammar for their age when developing confidence and understanding of nouns and verbs in the study of Kennings poetry. They were able to identify parts of speech with accuracy and show highly creative use of vocabulary. Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of performance and creativity in extra-curricular activities and performing arts.
- 3.6 Pupils generally develop excellent skills in literacy and numeracy. This successful development is maintained throughout the school, with pupils benefiting greatly from a well-established assessment and tracking programme, enabling them to make informed decisions to improve their attainment. Pupils are highly successful in 11+ entrance examinations, enabling an overwhelming majority to succeed in gaining admission to their first choice of school, with a significant number gaining scholarships for academic, music and sporting achievements. Pupils make rapid progress as a result of high teacher expectations, the provision of challenge and independent learning and the utilisation and application of technology resources in lessons. There has been a gender imbalance in the makeup of some mathematics higher sets for a number of years in favour of boys. The school has systems in place which seek to ensure that girls retain their confidence in mathematics and achieve as well as they can. Pupils with SEND make very good progress and are enabled to achieve standards that are in line with those of their peers, benefiting from enriched support from specialist staff through one-to-one and small group support sessions when preparing for examinations. More-able pupils make excellent progress and successfully respond to challenging work, such as in an English lesson where Year 5 pupils showed mature grasp of reading skills when approaching a skimming and scanning task in relation to the book they are studying. They were highly successful in extracting vocabulary banks which would then be used for the character description. Pupils interviewed said they enjoyed remote learning immensely and continued to make very good progress throughout lockdown due to the school's provision of academic, pastoral and physical activities.
- 3.7 Pupils use sophisticated language confidently, as observed in Year 3, when pupils were challenged to use scientific vocabulary learnt in previous lessons to describe how magnets, attract and repel and understood the meaning of the magnetic poles. Pupils were exceptionally confident and articulate during a geography lesson about rivers and mountains. They worked in pairs, listening and speaking well when doing so and confidently presenting their researched facts to the rest of the class. Older pupils used excellent imaginative language to confidently self-assess and peer-assess their use of synonyms and alliteration in poetry, resulting in significant improvement during the course of an observed lesson. Pupils interviewed expressed enthusiasm for being able to discuss and debate ideas freely in and out of class on a wide range of subjects such as how to be eco-friendly and Black Lives Matter. Pupils are avid readers, fully utilising the excellent library provision which is well stocked with a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils express appreciation for opportunities for quiet reading and independent research and they enjoy participating in assemblies and drama rehearsals which enable them to learn to speak confidently and act in public, working collaboratively with their peers.

- 3.8 Pupils have very good numeracy skills and apply them successfully in a wide range of subjects, such as in design technology (DT), where Year 5 pupils explained very clearly how they had measured angles and lengths to get the correct shaped pieces of wood and how they constructed pencil boxes. During a mathematics lesson, one class of Year 3 pupils displayed very impressive skills in column addition and subtraction, and could eloquently explain their reasoning. Pupils make effective use of tablet computers such as when using a 3D modelling programme in DT and making music videos as a house activity. They use software to record and loop their own compositions in music to analyse their performances in sport, and to make movies of investigations in science. Pupils have competent skills in coding and programming, well above those expected for their age.
- 3.9 Pupils of all ages are enthusiastic and determined learners, willingly prepared to take risks. They enjoy the different styles of teaching they experience and opportunities to rise to challenges when these are offered. Pupils have excellent study skills and are particularly good at taking ownership of their learning. Pupils are competent at conducting their own research in subjects such as history, geography and science, and are capable of solving problems and using higher order thinking skills in subjects such as maths and sport. Pupils demonstrate a resolute sense of purpose, moving calmly to their lessons. They quickly settle in class and display an eagerness to learn and to be involved in discussion and questioning. Pupils respond willingly to guidance in lessons and are further empowered to make progress and self-reflect on their work through meaningful and engaging marking throughout the school and their own reflective feedback to the teacher. This is supported by a very large majority of pupil questionnaire responses and views expressed in interviews, where pupils felt that marking helps them to improve and make progress. Pupils express their enjoyment of independent research projects and willingly respond to open-ended questioning in class, such as in a science discussion on separating sand, rice and pasta. Pupils demonstrate high order language, analysis and critical thinking, as seen in the engagement of Year 4 pupils when being asked to construct a character profile of Prospero using the abridged text, knowledge from a short video and vocabulary written on the board.
- 3.10 Pupils become very confident public performers through their participation and avid engagement in the performing arts. They effectively demonstrate their musical talents through active involvement in the orchestra, choirs, and other musical ensembles and in their performances in informal lunchtime concerts. A significant proportion of pupils have recently gained awards in national examinations in music and performing arts, and they also gain positive experiences and achieve success backstage, in stage lighting, costume design and making props for productions. Many pupils find pleasure and achieve personal and academic success in creative work through the school's encouragement to develop their interest and talent in drawing, painting and pottery. Pupils enjoy the challenge of competitive sport and show support for each other in team and individual events. All pupils participate in competitive sports against other schools, participating actively and skilfully in rugby, netball, hockey, football and cricket. Success is also achieved by individuals in athletics, swimming and gymnastics. Pupils enthusiastically explained some of their class and extra-curricular achievements, which are celebrated on poster boards throughout the school and in the extensive collection of trophies and certificates on display. These include high quality work in scratch coding, eco concerns, world religions, creative writing and the performing arts. Pupils' enjoyment and achievement in both lessons and additional activities is greatly enhanced by the wide range of activities on offer, a view confirmed by pupils in interview and the views of parents in the questionnaire.

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

- 3.11 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.12 Pupils demonstrate extremely high levels of self-confidence and an excellent understanding of how to progress. They take personal pride in the quality of their work and their ability to enjoy and experience tasks inside and outside the classroom. This is exemplified in the newly launched programme of outdoor learning where pupils acquire bush craft and first aid skills, study the life cycles of insects and grow vegetables for school consumption. Throughout the school, pupils are not afraid of being wrong

and consider a failure as a learning opportunity. They react positively to challenges and occasional setbacks, and thus develop strong resilience and self-confidence which enables them to respond successfully to choices appropriate to their age and stage of development. Pupils new to the school in Year 3 report that the welcoming and supportive community atmosphere has enabled them to make a very confident start to their school life. Pupils interviewed and an overwhelming majority of parents who answered the questionnaire, agreed that the school helps pupils to develop self-confidence. Pupils display a strong appreciation of community service and togetherness, reflecting the commitment of the leadership to creating the aspirational and supportive ethos, to which they readily respond.

- 3.13 Pupils are well prepared to face the challenges of living in modern Britain due to the strong provision of Personal Development (PD) and provision for SEND and well-being. Pupils demonstrate genuine understanding of the consequences of making their own decisions for individual success and well-being and to further benefit others. They feel fully confident that they are encouraged to make decisions and take risks. Pupils display high levels of awareness of the school rules, which include the expectation that they will use their common sense and ask for help when they are in doubt. Across the school pupils employ active and sensible use of their free time, with the support of their teachers, making informed decisions regarding extra-curricular activities. Pupils in Year 6 confidently stated that they greatly value the help they are given to make informed choices regarding their future senior schools, and are responsive to guidance from their teachers and senior staff. They appreciate and respond positively to the individual examination support they receive, understanding that participating in supportive study empowers them to progress and achieve success in their examinations and scholarships.
- 3.14 Pupils have a very strong appreciation of the non-material aspects of life as reflected in their strong and enthusiastic participation in art, music, sport and drama. They show excellent and genuine appreciation of how kindness makes for a better family-based community through the PD curriculum which includes relationships and sex Education, which offers pupils the opportunity for reflection and discussion. Pupils express great appreciation of the celebration of their successes in the weekly Friday assemblies that celebrate community family spirit through awards for academic, performing arts, social responsibility and sporting achievements.
- 3.15 Pupils exhibit very high levels of respect for the school ethos and the class rules that they have discussed and written, and they understand that individuals carry the responsibility for their own actions. They actively support each other and help to monitor behaviour. Pupils show an excellent awareness of school rules and the importance of good behaviour at school. They know to try and resolve issues themselves if any inappropriate behaviour occurs but understand that they should also seek adult help if required. Pupils interviewed praised their teachers highly for being kind and gentle when dealing with problems, saying that this helps them to display the same attributes to each other. They are highly confident in articulating their acceptance of responsibility for their own behaviour and understanding the importance of treating others how you would wish to be treated yourself. Pupils display great kindness and empathy, showing thoughtful consideration for one another and an eagerness to help and support their peers.
- 3.16 Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding that individual success is not the only factor in their development and that co-operation can result in better outcomes, adopting strong skills in working together as members of the school community. This was clearly demonstrated in rehearsals for the forthcoming drama production of *Matilda*. Pupils were extremely proud of their achievements during a residential trip and the outdoor programme, and spoke animatedly about supporting one another and working together successfully as a team. Pupils demonstrated high levels of empathy for members of the group who had struggled being away from home and spoke warmly about how they had helped those who had felt unsure. An overwhelming majority of pupils, parents and staff indicated in the questionnaire that the school helps to develop strong teamwork and social skills. Throughout the school, pupils eagerly and successfully participate in carefully planned group task activities in their

lessons. In the majority of lessons and in their sports pupils engage actively and work together to successfully develop their understanding and skills. They understand the democratic process and can explain the role of their forms and the school council in creating codes of conduct and increasing the provision of activities in school. They value the opportunity to select charities and choose how funds are raised through the charity committee and are proud of the significant amounts raised. Pupils value the opportunities they are given to vote, including for school council representatives in their classes. Pupils value the role of the school council and the green club who worked as a team to investigate how to recycle, improve the local environment through litter picking, reduce waste and planting trees for a rewilding project near Hainault Forest.

- 3.17 Pupils throughout the school relish the opportunities afforded for leadership as monitors and take lead roles such as librarians and sports leaders, form monitors and representatives on committees and councils. Pupils fulfil their roles as school monitors and heads of house with maturity and reliability, and sporting team captains are also further opportunity to demonstrate leadership. Older pupils further show responsibility when acting as peer mentors and buddies for younger pupils in the school. Pupils enthusiastically participate in and raise money for many local, national and international charities through service as charity ambassadors and charity sponsorship. A recent fund-raising activity involved pupils making 'snack packs' which contained snacks and a pupil-made key ring, the money raised going to an environmental charity. Pupils have supported their local community through visits to a care home for the elderly, playing their musical instruments and singing to the residents.
- 3.18 Pupils demonstrate excellent levels of empathy and tolerance towards others, respecting and valuing diversity. Pupils have an excellent appreciation of the wide range of cultures within the school. They celebrate festivals such as Hanukkah, Eid and Diwali, and experience enrichment through class PD discussions, sharing their own cultures and traditions. The pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the key values that characterise modern Britain. Throughout the school pupils exhibit spirit and unity, rather than difference, and believe this is the key to tolerance. They successfully acquire greater understanding of these characteristics in lessons and through active participation in assemblies and educational visits. Pupils understanding and knowledge of different cultures and diversity is greatly strengthened through being encouraged to read books written by authors from different cultural backgrounds. Further enhancement of the tolerance and inclusion pupils have towards others within their community is represented by the Diversity Tree near the library. The roots labelled with the nationalities of the diverse community that provides the strength of the trunk, representing the school community and leaves covering the canopy with the individual hopes and aspirations of the pupils.
- 3.19 Pupils articulate a strong understanding regarding their physical and mental well-being. They appreciate a balanced approach to life, demonstrated in their willing participation in physical education and sports. In discussion, pupils stated that their well-being is supported by form teachers, pastoral staff and SEND teachers, enabling them to stay safe and physically and mentally healthy. Sport and physical challenges motivate pupils to proactively manage their health and well-being. Recognising and understanding that they need physical exercise, pupils actively and enthusiastically participate in the wide range of individual and team sports and physical extra-curricular activities that include the 'Daily Mile'. They further confirmed that they understand how to keep safe on-line. Pupils fully understand the benefit of a good diet and suitable levels of exercise. In discussion, pupils agreed that they are able to make informed choices from the school lunch menu, enjoying the selection of hot main meals or salad options that are freshly prepared and served to their great satisfaction. An overwhelmingly number of parents and pupils in the questionnaire agreed that the school encourages a healthy lifestyle.

## 4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors and the safeguarding governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Alistair Telfer	Reporting inspector
Mrs Diane Durrant	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, SofH school)
Dr Karen McNerney	Team inspector (Headmistress, IAPS school)