



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports**

**Stockport Grammar Junior School**

**October 2019**



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### School's Details

<b>School</b>	Stockport Grammar Junior School			
<b>DfE number</b>	356/6018			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	1120199			
<b>Address</b>	Stockport Grammar Junior School Buxton Road Stockport Cheshire SK2 7AF			
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 4192405			
<b>Email address</b>	sgjs@stockportgrammar.co.uk			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Tim Wheeler			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Christopher Dunn			
<b>Age range</b>	3 to 11			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	362			
	<b>EYFS</b>	53	<b>Juniors</b>	309
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8 to 10 October 2019			

## **1. Background Information**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Stockport Grammar School is a selective independent day school, which was established in 1487 as a school for boys. It moved to its current site to the south of Stockport in 1916, and became co-educational in 1980. The junior school of 362 pupils provides just under half of the intake into the senior school, with almost all members of Year 6 moving into Year 7. The school is a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors.

### **What the school seeks to do**

- 1.2 The school aims to provide a caring and friendly community where pupils will be equipped with high moral values, personal qualities and a thirst for knowledge which will help them to achieve academic excellence and to become worthwhile and responsible members of society, able to think for themselves and respect other people.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.3 The school draws the majority of its pupils from a wide range of backgrounds from the southern and eastern suburbs of Greater Manchester and North Cheshire. The school community is socially and culturally diverse with many of the major world religions represented in the school population. Twenty pupils require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). None of these pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. They require support with specific individual learning difficulties such as dyslexia, autism spectrum disorder, visual and hearing impairments and processing skills. Forty-eight pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), twelve of whom receive support.

## 2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

### 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.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection 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 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 identified at their previous inspection.

The inspection was 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 report of which appears later in this document. The 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 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. 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 full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

## Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

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

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 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 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

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

- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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**

- 2.9 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.10 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**

- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

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

2.13 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 any 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, 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.

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

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

2.15 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.

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

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

2.17 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.

**2.18 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.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

**The headline judgements must include 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 except in one case outlined in the table below.

School name	National Curriculum name
Pre-Reception	Nursery

## Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Across the age range of the school, pupils develop extremely positive attitudes to learning.
  - Pupils build excellent skills and knowledge; they are confident and curious learners and these attitudes result in very good outcomes across all areas of the curriculum.
  - Communication skills for writing, reading and speaking are extremely well developed.
  - Pupils excel in a very broad range of disciplines both inside and outside the classroom.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils flourish in a community exemplified by exceptionally warm and supportive relationships and a genuine sense of mutual care.
  - Pupils of all backgrounds and faiths feel welcome and settle quickly into the school in a strong culture of mutual respect.
  - Pupils develop very high levels of self-knowledge and self-esteem, mature self-confidence, and resilience.

## Recommendations

- 3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:
- extending opportunities for pupils to undertake independent research projects incorporating use of technology to enhance their learning.
  - building on the good work recently established to develop enrichment opportunities for the most able pupils.

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

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 The school's aim to provide a caring and friendly community where pupils will be equipped with a thirst for knowledge that will help them achieve academic excellence is successfully met. Pupils from Pre-Reception onwards make good progress from a range of starting points. The school does not take part in National Curriculum tests, but the data available, including the results of standardised tests in English and mathematics, scrutiny of books and lesson observations, show attainment to be good in relation to national age-related expectations. Most pupils achieve excellent results in the entrance examination to the senior school.
- 3.6 From a broad range of starting points, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) make a high rate of progress. A personal programme of activities ensures that their particular interests and aptitudes are identified and developed over time. Gaps in children's learning and understanding are addressed successfully through use of a comprehensive tracking process which identifies children who require extra support so that appropriate interventions can be employed. Children enjoy their learning and are active and independent learners from the earliest stage in Pre-Reception where they demonstrated well developed fine motor skills by confidently using remote controls to move toy animals around the floor. A high level of independent learning was evident as a group of pupils, making their own playdough using flour, carefully controlled the amount of water to be added to achieve the perfect consistency and colour. Almost all parents and pupils responding in the questionnaires thought that teaching helped pupils make progress. Pupils' progress is enhanced because the teaching understands and plans for their individual needs, as well as guiding and challenging pupils to tackle

tasks independently. Pupils work collaboratively following the strong example of staff whose regular communication about individuals results in strong outcomes for all pupils.

- 3.7 Pupils with additional needs make similar progress to other pupils because their skills are quickly developed through the excellent quality of support provided by a range of specialist and teaching staff. Pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress in using English; their needs are assessed on entry and individual programmes of support put in place so that they can quickly begin to understand the technical language used in all subjects. The most able pupils extend their own learning in lessons through choosing to tackle the most difficult levels of work planned and successfully take part in opportunities for debate and analysis of challenging texts. Opportunities for the most able pupils to complete extended research projects or take part in other enrichment activities are less well developed. Subject staff skilfully plan a choice of challenge so that from a very early stage all pupils make their own decisions about the level of work to tackle, depending on how confident they feel with a particular area of study.
- 3.8 Pupils gradually develop the critical skills needed to review their work in order to improve their own learning. Pupils of all abilities are consistently willing to try out new ideas, contribute their own thoughts and evaluate what they have achieved. They are not afraid to take intellectual risks with their learning reassured that they will be supported and praised for their efforts. In English, older pupils constantly assess their writing styles to make their work more appealing to a reader and in that context display a variety of mature approaches. Their progress is further sustained by consistent marking, which gives a sensitive balance between praise and points for improvement, thus meeting a recommendation from the previous inspection.
- 3.9 Pupils of all ages express their ideas articulately, both orally and in writing. Younger children confidently wrote autumn acrostic poems. They apply their knowledge of the sounds letters make to write sentences using capital letters and full stops and explore a range of adjectives in order to make their work more interesting. Pupils' ability to write at length develops rapidly as they move through the school, resulting in the older pupils using complex language and sentence structures. They composed an emotive speech which might have been given by Boudicca to rouse her troops; or a discourse on whether they have ever felt like an outsider. Pupils speak confidently and enjoy sharing ideas in the classroom, in assemblies and when participating in school council or eco-council. The extensive drama programme and high levels of participation in speech and drama lessons support the development of excellent speaking and listening skills.
- 3.10 Pupils of all abilities demonstrate good progress in mathematics over their time at school. Pupils enjoy mathematics and develop very good skills which they apply enthusiastically to a range of subjects including science, geography and computing. Younger pupils confidently develop number sentences for addition and subtraction using signs and symbols, independently explore the relative size of towers they have made and identify colour and shape using a programme on the computer. Older pupils demonstrated excellent understanding of place value up to 10,000 in a number generation game in which they had to create the largest number possible from computer generated numbers. The most able mathematicians demonstrated effective problem-solving skills, working well above expectations for their age and ability.
- 3.11 The skills pupils develop for the use of technology are at a good level by the time they leave the school. Using a range of devices, pupils learn how to code, use the internet for research, use presentation software with confidence, and are beginning to record their work in interesting ways. Younger children developed their skills for coding to follow a set of instructions to programme two characters to go in different directions; they identified the correct coding tab and built their own set of instructions. Older pupils demonstrated excellent software skills as they produced a slide show about themselves, incorporating photographs, text and a variety of design and fonts. The investment the school has made in tablet technology, a range of different hardware and software and training for staff is beginning to have a positive impact upon the way that information and communication technology (ICT) is used but is not yet fully embedded across all areas of the curriculum.

- 3.12 The skills needed to excel in the performing arts develop rapidly from an early stage as pupils benefit from specialist teaching: all pupils take part in concerts throughout the year. The wide range of opportunities the pupils have to perform results in exceptionally confident and capable performances at all levels. Young pupils develop an informed love of music through singing together or exploring the sound of different instruments. A high proportion of older pupils play instruments and are successful in achieving merits and distinctions at the highest grades in external music examinations. Pupils are highly successful in a number of local music festivals and delight in the opportunity to sing and play together. Examination success in external speech and drama examinations mirrors that in music. Pupils have strong powers of expression and make a significant contribution when taking active roles in lessons and assemblies. Skills for artistic endeavour are well developed. Pupils work with a wide range of materials and styles, and are encouraged through seeing their work displayed prominently around the site.
- 3.13 Pupils actively enjoy the wide range of sports available to them. Sporting ability at a high level is evident as the pupils move up the school, resulting in an excellent range of success in local, regional and national competitions. Pupils of all ages develop their physical fitness and skills for particular sports due to high-quality teaching and coaching. In recent times, school teams have been winners in their age groups in a range of male and female summer and winter sports. Individual pupils have represented the county in swimming, tennis, lacrosse, climbing and athletics.
- 3.14 Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire said that the range of extra-curricular opportunities was suitable. Pupils develop their own interests to a high level and build strong skills across a wide range of disciplines through the broad range of clubs available which include various music groups, yoga, individual and team sports, chess, fencing, street dance, Mandarin and STEM club.
- 3.15 Pupils' attitudes to learning are exceptionally positive. They are enthusiastic, curious, very supportive of each other and understand how to make positive decisions about their learning or future success. They actively enjoy working together to achieve common goals, demonstrated as the school council took the lead in developing a pupil "buddy" system which supports the younger pupils and play an integral role in developing the school values. Other groups have developed the new eco-council which has been successful in raising awareness of the need for clean air. Their posters are now used to advise parents to switch off their engines in the car park. They demonstrate mature levels of independence from an early age supported by a broad range of increasingly challenging residential trips for the older pupils.

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

- 3.16 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.17 The school's aim to provide a caring and friendly community where pupils will be equipped with high moral values and personal qualities is successfully met. A very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire were supportive of the way that the school develops their children as people who leave school with excellent team work and social skills, and a strong respect for those with different faiths or beliefs.
- 3.18 Pupils have an extremely well-developed level of maturity by the time they move on to their senior schools. They feel safe, secure, valued and happy within the supportive environment of the school community. The well-structured assembly programme, daily opportunities to spend time with their class teachers and a new modern personal social and health education (PSHE) curriculum provide them with an excellent framework in which to develop their knowledge of themselves and their place in the school and the wider world. Pupils develop confidence, flexibility and resilience through the wide range of opportunities for them to take on meaningful responsibilities within the school. They know that their efforts will be appreciated and that they will be well supported even when they get things wrong. As pupils leave the school they are very well prepared for the next stage of their

education or lives and ready to take on their future challenges as capable, resilient and confident young people.

- 3.19 From the EYFS onwards, pupils develop an easy and supportive approach to both their peers and adults. They are comfortable with themselves, are self-confident and develop high levels of self-esteem. The inclusive atmosphere of the school and regular opportunities for discussion on a wide range of issues such as Mental Health day help them to identify their own emotions and feelings, hence allowing them to understand the impact of their decisions on themselves and others. Pupils learn to make positive decisions for themselves about their daily routines, their friendships and their work and, as a result, they demonstrate great resilience as they tackle challenging new projects. At each transition, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- 3.20 Pupils are happy to articulate openly their thoughts on spirituality in its broadest sense. Pupils appreciate the quiet times they have to reflect and think about their day. Their awareness of spirituality was particularly evident in the way that they sang together in assemblies and described how music can lift people's spirits. It was also demonstrated in the natural way that they show genuine concern and care for the feelings of others. Their strong awareness of the need to preserve the planet is developed through the school's commitment to outdoor learning and ecological awareness.
- 3.21 From an early age, pupils show a strong sense of right and wrong. Through working together to develop the school values, pupils have an excellent understanding and respect for the school's rules and values. They understand why communities need rules to keep themselves safe and are able to adapt these to the wider community, thus recognising the need to respect the country's laws. As a result, behaviour in the school is exemplary. They work with staff to ensure a happy and safe school environment in the knowledge that their views will be listened to and acted upon.
- 3.22 The pupils' social skills are exceptionally strong. At all levels they show genuine care and concern for each other, as seen when the oldest pupils support those in younger year groups, making sure they are happy at playtimes and ensuring they have someone to talk to if they have concerns. Rehearsing together on the preparation of a whole-school concert, working collaboratively in class when solving problems or helping to organise charity events are all ways in which pupils demonstrate high levels of social awareness.
- 3.23 Pupils enjoy taking on a wide range of responsibilities within the school. They enjoy collecting ideas to discuss at the school council. Here, they make an active contribution and decisions are taken which will benefit their school and the wider community. A positive outcome of this group has been to introduce an eco-committee which has started to make a difference to the school environment in terms of raising awareness of re-cycling, reducing waste and re-using rather than discarding objects. Contribution to the wider community is an integral part of school life. Pupils are actively involved in a wide variety of activities to raise money for local charities. They present their ideas for charities to support, vote to decide which should be chosen and take the lead in organising events themselves to raise funds. During the inspection a large volume of groceries had been collected to distribute to local care homes and a group of younger pupils went with staff to hand over the produce and talk to the residents. The pupils have a very strong awareness of the need to support those with particular needs or who have less than they do.
- 3.24 Pupils show high levels of curiosity about, respect for, tolerance and acceptance of different faiths. The school seamlessly integrates pupils from many different religions and cultural traditions. Pupils develop an increasing awareness of world faiths as they mature, and regularly visit different buildings of faith and share festivals with their peers from other faiths and backgrounds. Pupils warmly welcome new children to the school and are quick to offer them support and help to ensure that they settle in quickly and are happy in their new community.
- 3.25 Pupils of all ages have a strong understanding of what it means to stay safe physically, emotionally and when using technology to access the internet. Younger pupils demonstrate that they know how to make healthy choices in their diet as they play in the home corner and remind each other to include

plenty of vegetables and fruit in their meal. Older pupils deepen their knowledge of how exercise changes our bodies, how it affects the heart and helps to keep us healthy. Teachers have created a safe learning environment where it is acceptable to express concern or anxiety as demonstrated in a PSHE session where pupils discussed what cheered them up when they were feeling sad. Through this approach the pupils feel that it is safe to be open about how they feel and what it means to be healthy inside and out. Pupils' understanding of how to access the internet or use different technologies safely is secure. From the Pre-Reception onwards, awareness is built upon in an age-appropriate way supported by the recent investment in facilities for hardware and software which allows pupils to develop confidence in the use of different technologies.

## 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, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. 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

Mrs Diane Gardiner	Reporting inspector
Mr Dominic Crehan	Compliance team inspector (Former head, IAPS school)
Mr James Mundell	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)