



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

The Old Vicarage School

June 2019



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School's Details

School	The Old Vicarage School			
DfE number	318/6005			
Registered charity number	312671			
Address	The Old Vicarage School 48 Richmond Hill Richmond Surrey TW10 6QX			
Telephone number	0208 9400922			
Email address	office@oldvicarageschool.com			
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Linthwaite			
Chair of governors	Mr Greg Caplan			
Age range	4 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	203			
	Girls	203	Boys	0
	EYFS	32	Juniors	171
Inspection dates	25 to 27 June 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 The Old Vicarage School is an independent day school for girls aged 4 to 11 years. It was founded in 1930 and moved to its current location, formerly Ellerker College, in 1931. The school is a charitable trust, administered by a board of governors.
- 1.2 The school comprises two sections: lower school, for pupils aged 4 to 7 years, and upper school, for pupils aged 7 to 11 years.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new chair of governors.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to enable every pupil to be the best she can, whether academically or in the arts, drama or sports. It seeks to give pupils an excellent grounding in academic essentials so that creativity can flourish. The school endeavours to ensure that leavers move on to the senior schools that are right for them.

About the pupils

- 1.5 National standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 19 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include cognition and learning difficulties, all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupils in the school have an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 19 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified 11 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for seven other pupils because of their special talents in swimming, gymnastics, tennis, athletics, cricket and drama.

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. 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.

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- Pupils across the school achieve very highly and make excellent progress.
 - Pupils demonstrate outstanding skills, knowledge and understanding across the range of subjects.
 - Pupils' communication and numeracy skills are of very high quality.
 - Pupils demonstrate exemplary attitudes to learning and achievement and take substantial care over the quality of their work.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils exhibit substantial self-confidence and self-awareness.
 - Pupils' excellent behaviour reflects their highly developed moral sensibilities.
 - Pupils demonstrate a deep sensitivity towards spiritual matters and ideas.
 - Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and maintain their physical and mental health.

Recommendation

- 3.3 In the light of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider the following:
- Reduce the amount of time pupils spend on incidentals, such as colouring in, to ensure that progress and learning are always as strong as possible.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 The school does not take part in National Curriculum tests, but the available evidence from scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations and the school's own assessment data shows attainment to be well above in relation to national age-related expectations. All pupils and most parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires agreed teaching enables pupils to make progress. This view is supported by inspection evidence. All groups of pupils, including those with SEND or EAL attain highly and make progress that is often rapid. Children in the EYFS make swift progress and most attain beyond expectations at the end of the Reception year. The quality of pupils' work across the school is typically well beyond age-related expectations. Leavers are highly successful in achieving scholarships and places at the selective senior schools of their choice. This is because leaders and staff have expectations of pupils' achievement which are consistently high across the school. The school fully meets its aim to give pupils an excellent grounding in academic essentials and ensure that leavers move on to the senior schools that are right for them. However, some lessons observations and examples of work across the range of age groups indicate that pupils spend some time on incidentals, such as colouring in pictures, which occasionally limits the potential learning and progress available to them in their lessons.

- 3.6 Pupils demonstrate outstanding skills, knowledge and understanding across the range of subjects. Pupils' books exhibit considerable depth of thought across the range of subjects, as well as accurate and well-developed subject knowledge. For example, this was seen in Year 5 work about Vikings in Year 5, work on banana production in Year 4, scientific investigation into microbes in Year 3, and common entrance papers in mathematics in Year 6. Pupils think about their subjects in depth, as seen in a geography lesson in Year 5 when they explained the process of precipitation and evaporation clearly and with confidence, while the more able pupils asked incisive questions, such as about how the pipes in some machinery sucked up water. Pupils observed during physical education (PE) lessons displayed considerable co-ordination and control. Pupils' depth of thought relates to the stimulating and open-ended questions that staff frequently pose which invite and encourage careful and detailed reflection. In addition, staff consistently expect pupils to explain the reasons behind their suggestions and ideas.
- 3.7 Pupils' communication skills are highly advanced for their age. Children in the EYFS display confidence in identifying particular sounds such as 'ow' in different words, and understand terms such as 'sound buttons' and 'digraphs'. Pupils in Year 1 produced writing of very high quality during a comprehension exercise, featuring well-constructed sentences and well-formed cursive handwriting. They read their work fluently, confidently and with much expression, exhibiting reading skills well above age-related expectations. Pupils' English books in Year 6 demonstrate sophisticated understanding and explanations of the impact of different writing techniques on the reader, such as effective alliteration and the building up of suspense. Comprehension work in all years demonstrates careful and accurate reading and the ability to identify key features and the meaning of the text at hand. Independent writing, including that of pupils with SEND, is expressive, very well presented, and displays confident usage of different writing techniques, such as those seen in the creation of diary entries by the character Persephone produced by pupils in Year 5. Pupils' accomplished communication skills are enhanced by the very helpful and accurate feedback that staff give pupils about the features of their writing, and by the time that leaders ensure is given to the development of pupils' communication skills in English and drama.
- 3.8 Pupils' mathematical work is typically sophisticated and accurate and demonstrates an excellent ability to apply mathematical skills to problem solving. This was seen, for instance, in work in Year 3 on which routes frogs could take to travel to and from different locations, and work in Year 5 on reflection, which included well-reasoned explanations of the pupils' conclusions. Children's mathematics books in Reception demonstrate knowledge of number and shape beyond age-related expectations. In a lesson in Year 2, pupils were able to very quickly identify and sort flat and curved surfaces on objects in the classroom. They voiced definitions of what flat surfaces were, using terminology such as 'rounded' and 'sphere'. Similarly, older pupils confidently and accurately explained to each other how to complete challenging algebraic equations. Pupils' very strong and articulate mathematical understanding for their age is supported by practical and problem-solving activities that enable pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge very well. Staff also expect pupils to give reasons for their methodology and conclusions, so that pupils have to think carefully and articulate their ideas.

- 3.9 Pupils demonstrate accomplished information and communication technology (ICT) skills and produce work of high quality, as seen in presentations created to advertise pupils' self-designed products. Older pupils act as digital leaders who help inform younger ones how to use key programmes. Pupils apply their ICT skills to different areas of the curriculum very well. For example, pupils in Year 3 demonstrated a very confident and secure understanding of how to overlay sounds while using tablet computers to create animations, taking considerable care over their storyboards and the stop-start positioning and photography of figurines. Pupils manipulated their tablets with good understanding of their functions. Pupils sharpen their ICT skills as a result of precise questioning by teachers that checks and ensures their understanding, and the very clear guidance from staff about how to use their tablets to create certain outcomes. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors recognised the investment that leaders and governors had made into increasing the availability of tablets to them and said how this had developed their ICT skills.
- 3.10 Pupils' study skills are excellent. For example, pupils in Year 1 were seen to correct their work independently and carefully during an English lesson. Science books demonstrate a very strong ability to develop hypotheses, plan investigations, check the veracity of ideas and draw conclusions, such as pupils' work in Year 5 on testing out some of Leonardo da Vinci's claims about human proportions. Children's mathematics books in Reception contain sensible predictions of what would happen in investigations using 100-squares. Pupils' work on display about how to keep organised demonstrates very good understanding of effective work habits, while pupils' work exhibited in the science laboratory shows their very good grasp of how to ensure that a test, such as of air resistance, is fair. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors talked proudly and confidently of the investigations that they carry out.
- 3.11 Pupils' academic and non-academic achievements are outstanding, with a high number achieving scholarships. Pupils achieve local and national success in diverse areas, such as sporting events, the UK Maths challenge, debating, swimming, and writing competitions. Most pupils who enter for external speech, music and drama examinations attain distinctions, with others achieving merits. Artwork displayed across the school is of a very high standard, as was singing observed during the inspection. Pupils' achievements in these areas stem from leaders' and governors' commitment to the provision of a very wide range of clubs and activities and highly effective use of specialist teachers and local PE and sports facilities. The school fully meets its aim to enable every pupil to be the best she can, whether academically or in the arts, drama or sports.
- 3.12 Pupils display exemplary attitudes to learning. For example, during a lesson about letters and sounds, children in the EYFS spontaneously chose to try to write the more complex words containing 'ow' (such as 'frown' rather than 'cow') and challenged themselves to achieve as much as possible. Pupils were extremely eager to engage in all lessons seen. Books from all year groups demonstrate substantial care taken over the completion, thoughtfulness and presentation of work. . Pupils who spoke to the inspectors explained that pupils always try to do their best and feel disappointed in themselves if their work is not all it could be. Pupils' entirely positive attitudes stem from the extremely high expectations shared and promoted by leaders, staff and governors.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils across the school exhibit substantial self-confidence and self-awareness. Most parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaires stated that the school helps pupils to be confident and independent. This view is supported by inspection evidence. Pupils were confident to share ideas with their class in every lesson seen, and those who wanted additional support were confident about asking for this. Pupils' books contain very thoughtful self-reflection, such as books in Year 6 which contain articulate personal reflection on their individual development of skills. Children's and pupils' confidence arises, in the first instance, from the very positive and warm manner of staff and their maintenance of a very calm atmosphere in the classrooms. Staff across the school were seen to be attentive, accepting and observant, which encouraged the pupils to relax and enjoy their learning.
- 3.15 Pupils are capable of making well-thought out and sensible decisions. They demonstrate strong understanding of the impact that some types of decision can have on themselves. For example, pupils' 'personal care planners' in Year 6 and reflections on food journals in Year 3 show their ability to make decisions that have a positive impact on their physical and mental well-being. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said they had much confidence in their ability to make decisions based on their own thoughts but with consideration of other people's opinions.
- 3.16 Pupils demonstrate a deep sensitivity towards spiritual matters and ideas. For example, pupils' religious studies books show their sophisticated consideration of deep spiritual ideas for their age. For example, pupils in Year 6 produced thoughtful reflections and ideas on what might be the best way for Muslims to show commitment to God and pupils in Year 4 showed consideration of whether it is possible for everyone to be happy. Questions posed to pupils (such as 'How significant was it that Mary was Jesus' mother?' and 'Is anything ever eternal?') promote and stimulate such thought and depth of reflection.
- 3.17 Pupils' aesthetic and cultural awareness is extremely strong. For instance, in an art lesson in Year 4, pupils were highly observant of features of black and white images of nature, and took great care in trying to replicate effects such as texture and highlighting in their own work. The care and consideration shown by pupils demonstrated very strong aesthetic appreciation of the images and techniques used. Similarly, in a music lesson in Year 2, all pupils demonstrated very strong appreciation and enjoyment of singing and took great care over producing the effect that they wanted.
- 3.18 Pupils exhibit substantial moral sensibilities. For example, pupils in Year 1 were able to identify the 'look-before-you-leap' moral of a fox-and-goat fable and discuss this with understanding. Some pupils created their own original stories which contained the same moral. *Mr Men* stories created by pupils in Year 4 also demonstrate their ability to create thoughtful stories with morals. Books on the topic of *Les Misérables* demonstrate the strong empathy pupils in Year 6 have with characters suffering poverty and their appreciation of the importance of fairness and equality. Poetry on display related to Remembrance shows deep empathy with those affected by war and appreciation of sacrifice. Teachers' questioning draws pupils to explore the moral dimensions of the subject matter at hand. Pupils' behaviour was observed to be entirely supportive and positive throughout the inspection, supporting the view of the overwhelming majority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire stating that school expects them to behave well. This is because leaders, governors and staff have successfully embedded the school's values and a strong ethos of high expectations.

- 3.19 Pupils' social development and skills are excellent. Children in the EYFS were very attentive and supportive of each other in discussions in a lesson about letters and sounds. They enjoyed seeing how well other children wrote their words and digraphs. In other lessons seen, such as a mathematics lesson in Year 2, pupils exhibited very high levels of courtesy and support for each other during discussions and practical activities, with the teacher praising the pupils for such behaviour and communicating high expectations very clearly and positively.
- 3.20 Pupils demonstrate very strong contribution to others. Older pupils act as prefects and 'buddies' to younger ones, helping to supervise movement around the school, lead playground games, and organise sports fixtures. Pupils help select the local and international charities that the school supports. Most pupils and parents who responded to the questionnaires said that the school helps pupils to develop strong teamwork and social skills. Inspectors found that pupils understand why they should help and support others. For example, the work of pupils in Year 4 on what they would do were they prime minister demonstrates a very strong moral imperative to act in the best interests of others and take care of the environment.
- 3.21 Pupils exhibit deep respect for those of different faiths and backgrounds to themselves. Pupils' religious studies books show an eagerness to explore different faiths and world views. Pupils' work on a wide range of different religions is entirely respectful and appreciative in tone, with pupils exploring ideas emanating from different faiths in depth and with clear appreciation, as seen in very thoughtful work in Year 6 on the portrayal of love in the New Testament and in Year 5 on Sikhism. Work in Year 4 on International Day demonstrates pupils' deep interest in each other's backgrounds and cultural heritage from around the world. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors conveyed a strong understanding that they were entitled to their own opinions, but so was everybody else, and other's opinions needed to be listened to respectfully. Almost all parents and most pupils who responded to the questionnaires said that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. This is borne out by pupils' inclusive attitudes, which stem from the respectful ethos that leaders and governors have successfully embedded in the school and modelling of respectful behaviour by leaders and staff.
- 3.22 Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and maintain their physical and mental health. For instance, the youngest children demonstrated much care for the well-being of others by spontaneously pushing chairs in under the table to keep gangways free for others. In a PE lesson in the EYFS, children jumped over obstacles with care and control, all taking care to not rush and land safely. The 'personal care planners' of pupils in Year 6 show that they have a very strong understanding of the need to exercise and keep a good hygiene regime. The reflections of pupils in Year 3 on their food journals show their clear understanding of how what they eat affects their health and well-being. The topic books of children in Reception demonstrate their sensible understanding of who they can trust to talk to if they have any worries. Work on display on 'What makes a good friend?' shows pupils' understanding of the importance of trust and caring behaviours. Pupils' work in Year 5 on the dangers of smoking shows considerable knowledge of these and appreciation of the impact that smoking can have on others. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that at lunchtime they used nutrition charts to make healthy choices about what food to eat. An overwhelming majority of pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that they knew how to keep safe when online, and those who spoke to the inspectors said that their online behaviour had changed as a result of the school's e-safety advice.

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 safeguarding governor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. 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

Mr Steven Popper	Reporting inspector
Mrs Julie Lerbech	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, IAPS and HMC school)
Mrs Gillian Cross	Team inspector (Head of pre-prep, IAPS school)