



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Norwich Lower School

September 2019



Contents

School's Details		3
1. Background Information		4
About the school		4
What the school seeks to do		4
About the pupils		4
2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection		5
Preface		5
Key findings		6
PART 1 – Quality of education provided		6
PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils		6
PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils		6
PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors		6
PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools		6
PART 6 – Provision of information		7
PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled		7
PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools		7
3. Educational Quality Inspection		8
Preface		8
Key findings		9
Recommendation		9
The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements		10
The quality of the pupils' personal development		12
4. Inspection Evidence		14

School's Details

School	Norwich Lower School			
DfE number	926/6124			
Address	Norwich Lower School Bishopgate Norwich Norfolk NR1 4AA			
Telephone number	01603 728439			
Email address	enquiries@norwich-school.org.uk			
Headteacher	Mr John Ingham			
Chair of governors	Mr Patrick Smith			
Age range	4 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	254			
	EYFS	11	Juniors	243
Inspection dates	17 to 19 September 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Norwich Lower School is part of Norwich School. It is an independent, co-educational day school for pupils between the ages of four and eleven. Established in 1874, Norwich School itself had its inception in the eleventh century, when it was founded as an Episcopal grammar school attached to a Benedictine priory.
- 1.2 The school is organised into two sections: Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for children aged from four to five years; and the Junior School, for pupils aged five to eleven years. The Council of Management has overall responsibility for oversight and governance of both the Lower and Senior Schools.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has opened refurbished facilities for the EYFS and Key Stage 1 pupils.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to produce scholarly, reflective young people who are capable of handling difficult concepts and profound thoughts. It seeks to provide a broad education which equips pupils for leadership and service through an ethos of learning, scholarship and Christian values.

About the pupils

- 1.5 Pupils come from a range of professional and business backgrounds, mostly from white British families living within a 15-mile radius of the school. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is above average. The school has identified ten pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, all of whom receive additional specialist help. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language for 29 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified 81 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for two other pupils because of their special talents in languages.

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. 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>
Early Year Foundation Stage - Reception	Reception
Lower 1 (Pre-prep)	Year 1
Upper 1 (Pre-prep)	Year 2
Lower 2	Year 3
Upper 2	Year 4
Lower 3	Year 5
Upper 3	Year 6

Key findings

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

- Pupils attitudes to learning are excellent. As a result, they achieve well with a positive and enthusiastic engagement.
- Pupils develop a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum, including in information and communication technology (ICT).
- Pupils' mathematical achievement and the quality of their writing are excellent.
- Pupils are extremely diligent and committed to achieving success in physical education, sport and music which results in high group and personal achievement.
- Pupils awareness of their progress and how they can meet their targets is undeveloped.

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

- Pupils demonstrate a high level of self-understanding. They are resilient learners who have a tangible respect for others.
- Pupils care about each other and work very well together in lessons, extra-curricular activities, school clubs and projects.
- Older pupils develop strong leadership skills through the many opportunities they are given.
- Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe, both physically and mentally.

Recommendation

3.3 In the context of the excellent outcomes, the school might wish to consider:

- Enable all pupils to understand and take responsibility for their progress by providing consistently effective feedback on their learning.

The quality of the 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 shows attainment to be above in relation to national age-related expectations. Throughout the school, high-quality displays reveal the excellent standard of pupils' work across all ages and abilities. Scrutiny of pupils' books and the school's own assessment data shows attainment to be above average in relation to age-related expectations. Children in the Reception class make at least expected progress, with the majority exceeding age-related expectations as a result of enthusiastic teaching that employs a wide range of methods, activities and resources. They are confident learners by the time they begin Year 1. The most able pupils make strong progress because teachers use assessment information to plan activities that provide stretch and challenge in lessons. Pupils demonstrate deep understanding, and constantly aim to improve their work and attain higher standards. This is exemplified by the way that younger pupils effectively control buggies and older pupils show excellent capability when programming for robotics.
- 3.6 The successful implementation of curriculum partnership work by senior leadership and governance across the lower and senior school has had a significant impact on standards in mathematics. It is beginning to show impact on the quality of pupils' work in literacy as well as their understanding of the structure and function of language. This is evident from pupils' written work, oral contributions and practical activities. For example, pupils have gained excellent knowledge about a wide range of modern foreign languages as a result of cross-school cooperation. Specialist teachers of physical education, science and modern foreign languages bring an added dimension to the curriculum, using their excellent subject knowledge to challenge pupils to excel well beyond standards expected for their age. As a result, pupils are articulate and use subject-specific terminology very effectively. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive well-targeted, high-quality care and support to meet their needs, through effective individual education plans or targeted intervention. As a result, they make excellent progress. The vast majority of parents and pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that teaching enables pupils to learn and make progress. This viewpoint is confirmed by inspection evidence.
- 3.7 Spoken English is well developed within classes. Children in the EYFS demonstrated excellent vocabulary in the lower school outdoor classroom and wildlife area. They enthusiastically followed the text of *What the Ladybird Heard* and explored the spring and autumn meadow areas to hunt for paper and stone ladybirds, collecting and counting them. Pupils are keen to ask questions when they do not understand and teachers provide detailed responses with support from other members of the class. Year 1 and 2 pupils confidently use a range of strategies, including phonic skills to read unfamiliar or difficult words because teachers encourage them to use new words and explain their meanings. As a result, pupils develop an extensive range of vocabulary. Pupils in years 3 to 6 are effectively challenged by the school's rapid reading programme, and well-stocked library. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 deepen their knowledge about language and work out the meaning of the text from the challenge offered by the school's rapid reading programme and their use of the well-stocked library. The oldest pupils are very capable readers, with reading-comprehension skills well in advance of those typical for their age. Many had already established clear reading preferences and could explain these to the inspectors.
- 3.8 The quality of writing is very strong across the curriculum and covers a range of writing genres. Many Year 1 and 2 pupils are able to incorporate sophisticated literary features into their writing and adapt their style to suit different audiences, whilst maintaining accurate spelling and cursive handwriting. Older pupils show confidence in their use of vocabulary and in their ability to use a range of sentence structures for effect. They write well and at length for a wide variety of purposes which in turn ensures that pupils effectively practise and improve more complex spelling, punctuation and grammar. For example, Year 6 pupils enthusiastically improved the quality of their character descriptions through the effective use of subordinate conjunctions and relative pronouns. They commented that they were inspired to do so by Charles Dickens' use of multiple clauses. Consequently, they enriched the

vividness and power of their writing. More able pupils enhance their extended writing with features such as alliteration and personification.

- 3.9 Pupils' achievements in mathematics are a strength across the school. Most groups of pupils make excellent progress in mathematics lessons and exhibit high levels of motivation and engagement with the subject. They successfully develop problem-solving and reasoning skills. Reception pupils become adept with mathematical operations, well above age related expectations. They confidently manipulate small cubes and dinosaurs to explore mathematical sentences about addition and subtraction of units. The more able pupils in reception successfully used mathematical equipment to solve larger number problems involving 'tens and hundreds plates'. Pupils across the rest of the school effectively develop their numeracy skills and demonstrate these through a variety of maths challenges in various subjects. More able pupils in Years 3 to 6 deepen their understanding of calculation methods and mathematical ideas. Older pupils master a range of calculation skills during mental mathematics lessons and are able to apply them to solve challenging problems which they are then confident to solve.
- 3.10 Pupils in years 1 and 2, acquire information and communication technology (ICT) skills quickly, using code sequences to control the movement of each other around the classroom. For example, they applied these skills very effectively in the coding room where they controlled buggies around a predetermined route on a road track carpet. Older pupils demonstrate high levels of competence in the use of digital literacy and computer science skills. For instance, they use well-practised ICT capabilities and coding skills to develop and display understanding about programming for making webpages and controlling robotics. Pupils were also observed enthusiastically using virtual learning devices to explore volcanoes in geography and how cubes could be interpreted as the human eye in science.
- 3.11 Pupils strongly develop a variety of study skills which they use across all areas of the curriculum, including the ability to analyse text, confidently hypothesise and to apply these skills to new situations. For example, older pupils' researched highly effectively into business enterprise activities during micro society projects. This enabled them to calculate profit and loss from the products that they have produced during the term of the project. In their responses to the questionnaire, a very small minority of pupils felt that marking does not help them to improve their work. Scrutiny of pupils' books demonstrated that work is consistently marked effectively, often including comments on how a pupil could extend and improve their work. However, pupils understanding and application of their achievement over time and the progress they have made in their learning is not as well understood. Recently introduced termly self-assessment processes have not had time to produce the impact that senior leaders desire.
- 3.12 Sporting successes are many. For example, male and female pupils successfully achieve competitive achievements in local schools' sport competitions for cricket, hockey, tennis and swimming. Individual pupils are members of county level teams in cricket and tennis. Pupils are also particularly successful in music and speech and drama, where a significant majority of entrants pass examinations with merit and distinction.
- 3.13 The excellence of pupils' achievements is largely due to their wholly positive attitude to learning. They approach learning with an eagerness, enthusiasm and engagement. This enables all pupils to be highly productive. Pupils consistently display initiative and a profound intellectual curiosity. They listen attentively to each other's viewpoints and show genuine interest and enjoyment in each other's successes. Their presentation and organisational skills are outstanding. Pupils thrive where there is challenge and high expectations, approaching their lessons with enthusiasm and a willingness to work.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous, and they show great respect for staff and each other. They take personal responsibility for and tackle very effectively a busy work-schedule that includes, homework and independence to prepare them for the next stage of their learning. Pupils' confidence is extremely well-developed by a school culture of encouraging each other to embrace challenge, which develops resilience and strong perseverance. Almost all parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that the school helps pupils to be confident and independent. This is confirmed by inspection evidence.
- 3.16 Pupils demonstrate excellent decision making through a variety of initiatives such as the head of class and various councils. These demonstrate a deep understanding about how personal and work related decision making impacts on their own future success and well-being. For example, the school council and Eco-council involve pupils in making decisions about how to develop the school, such as limiting the purchase of one snack a day, from the tuck shop, and deciding all items will cost 40p as well as canvassing classmates about charities to support. Democratically elected class representatives have a significant impact on what new extra-curricular activities they would like to introduce.
- 3.17 The school is highly successful in the ethos that combines learning and scholarship with Christian values. The aim to nurture scholarly, reflective young people who are capable of handling difficult concepts and expressing profound thoughts is exemplified by the passion that pupils have for physical education, music, art and ICT. Almost all commented with enthusiasm that PE and sport were their favourite subject and activities. Some commented that being a chorister was a significant milestone in their school life. Pupils demonstrate very effectively a mindful and reflective approach when articulating experiences and aspects of life which are hard to perceive or measure in everyday life. They talked fondly about being able to use their imagination creatively in art, particularly after studying art deco or disfigured art in the style of Picasso.
- 3.18 Pupils are very committed to meeting personal development expectations in all aspects of school life and do so successfully. Pupils treat one another kindly and share resources during playtimes and lunch breaks. They form excellent relationships with each other and abhor bullying in any form. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors commented that the school was a safe place to speak up against bullying. All parents and pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that the school actively promotes good behaviour. Pupils display high levels of moral conscience, and a strong sense of right and wrong from an early age. For example, pupils politely cleared tables of cutlery and plates during lunch in a calm and organised manner. Older pupils actively showed high levels of 'Buddy' support for younger pupils during house competitions and project work. This is supported by a variety of school codes of conduct which set high expectations of their behaviour and are published within the school planner, pupil handbook and displayed around the school. As a result, pupils' conduct around the school is excellent and their classroom behaviour is exemplary, giving them every opportunity to achieve academically.
- 3.19 The pupils demonstrate considerable enjoyment and engagement during class discussions and paired talk partners. Pupils form excellent, positive and productive relationships with each other through council forums, a variety of extra-curricular clubs and the buddy system. The pupils collaborate well and support each other in communal enterprises, achieving common goals in activities such as house challenge days. This prepares them extremely well to be responsible citizens of the future. Pupils demonstrate reflective capabilities when participating in 'Talk scaffolds' which help them express their own thoughts, respond to classmates and reflect on their learning by challenging the thoughts of others.
- 3.20 Pupils make a significant contribution to school in a variety of ways. They undertake a wide range of responsibilities very sensibly and with great pride, such as class leaders, digital leaders, and librarians. Pupils carry out their duties diligently and develop excellent leadership skills, particularly in roles, such as class captains where they take on responsibilities to manage their classmates in termly projects or

challenge day problem solving activities. All pupils actively involve themselves in supporting local and global charities and understand the importance in doing so. They show empathy when articulating the circumstances of those less fortunate than themselves. They are also active in their support. This is exemplified by the way pupils decided to organise and help plan an overnight 'school lock-in' event to raise funds. This contributed to the construction of a classroom in Sierra Leone for children to attend school for the first time. The older pupils are excellent role models to the younger pupils in the school.

- 3.21 Pupils have a highly developed appreciation of diversity within the school. They develop a strong understanding of other faiths, beliefs and cultures. For example, they shared with enthusiasm greater understanding about the cultural traditions when their classmates celebrated different countries through presentations in assemblies and other events. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors about their experience of singing in choir offered the perspective that they were not praying to God, but singing to God and that people from all faiths can do that. Opportunities for pupils to learn about the way others live their lives are plentiful and this has a significant impact on their appreciation that others are less fortunate than themselves. Pupils are respectful of the opinions of others and understand that people have the right to make choices or hold beliefs that are different from their own. The pupils confidently use their hand (fingers and thumb) to recite the five fundamental British values. All pupils and the vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people.
- 3.22 Pupils have a high awareness about how to stay healthy through sensible diet and physical activity. They visibly enjoy participating in physical education and in a wide range of sporting activities that the school offers. Pupils understand the importance of having a balance to their lives outside school as a key part of being mentally healthy. Pupils understand the school's expectations for behaving safely around the lower school and when using the senior school's resources and facilities. Older pupils exemplified their understanding about personal safety particularly when talking about the roads and pathways they use to walk to the senior school for lunch. They say that they could safely do it blindfolded. Pupils demonstrate a well-honed ability to identify potentially unsafe situations and what they might do to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils understand how to guard themselves from cyber bullying and how to use the internet safely. Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that they know how to stay safe online. Pupils confidently articulate how to use social media sensibly. Year 6 pupils talked enthusiastically about their visit to the local fire and rescue service where they practised cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and how to use a defibrillator.

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 and vice chair of Council of Management, 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

Mr Desmond Dunne	Reporting inspector
Ms Lisa Maynard	Compliance team inspector (Director of operations, ISA schools group)
Mrs Harriet Connor-Earl	Team inspector (Headmistress, CISC school)