



ISI

Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

THETFORD GRAMMAR SCHOOL

MARCH 2017



School's details

School	Thetford Grammar School			
DfE Number	926/6128			
Registered charity number	311263			
Address	Thetford Grammar School Bridge Street Thetford Norfolk IP24 3AF			
Telephone number	01842 752840			
Email address	hmsec@thetgram.norfolk.sch.uk			
Head	Mr Mark Bedford			
Chair of governors	Mrs Maureen Eade			
Age range	3 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	221			
	Boys	125	Girls	96
	EYFS	13	Prep	38
	Seniors	137	Sixth Form	43
Pupils' ability	<p>Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils in the senior school is above average.</p> <p>The prep school does not use standardised tests. However, its own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is above average.</p>			
Pupils' needs	<p>The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is fifty-five. Two have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. They require support with dyslexia, dyspraxia, mild attention deficit and autism spectrum disorder, speech and language, and auditory processing. No pupils have English as an additional language (EAL).</p>			

History of the school	Thetford Grammar School is an independent co-educational day school, founded in the 10th century. It was a grammar school for much of the 20th century and became independent in 1981.
Ownership and governing structure	The school is a charitable trust with its own governing body.
School structure	The school is organised into three age groups: the Early Years Foundation Stage, the prep school, and the senior school which includes a sixth form.
Inspection dates	15 to 16 March 2017

PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards (“the standards”) in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school’s accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school’s most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards and any qualitative concerns identified at their previous inspection.

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school’s compliance with the standards. 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.

The inspection does not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as:

- (i) the school’s aims;
- (ii) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (iii) compliance with data protection requirements;
- (iv) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (v) contractual arrangements with parents;
- (vi) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups. Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Independent School Standards Regulations](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

SUMMARY EVALUATION

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

PART 1

Quality of education provided

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

At GCSE in the years 2012 to 2015, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.

In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2012 to 2015 have been above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.

The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.

The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

PART 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.

The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.

PART 3

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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; fire safety requirements are met; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised, and admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required.

In most regards the health and safety requirements are met, however the school does not have a risk assessment policy tailored to its needs. It has no accessibility plan providing dates for action over a three-year period, and the required recruitment checks are not always undertaken before staff are appointed.

The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 6 and 8-15 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met, but those in paragraphs 7 [safeguarding] and 16 [risk assessment], and the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 are not met.

Action point 1

- **the school must ensure that all of the required recruitment checks, especially the barred list check when the DBS check is delayed, are undertaken before staff take up their appointment and recorded in the single central register [paragraph 7(a) and (b)].**

Action point 2

- **the school must put in place and implement a risk assessment policy that is tailored to its needs [paragraph 16(a) and (b)].**

Action point 3

- **the school must put in place an accessibility plan that is tailored to its needs [Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010].**

PART 4

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school makes all the appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of proprietors.

It does not make all the appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, and it does not maintain a single central register as required.

The standards relating to the suitability of proprietors in paragraph 20 are met, but the standards relating to those in contact with pupils at the school in paragraphs 18 [the checking of members of staff] and 21 [the single central register of appointments] are not met.

Action point 4

- the school must ensure that all of the required checks when staff are appointed, especially the barred list check when DBS is delayed, are undertaken before staff commence work [paragraph 18(2)(d) and 18(3)].

Action point 5

- the school must ensure that all of the required checks are recorded in the single central register of appointments [paragraph 21].

PART 5

Premises of and accommodation at schools

Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

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

PART 6

Provision of information

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

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

PART 7

Manner in which complaints are handled

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

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

PART 8

Quality of leadership in and management of schools

The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

The proprietor does not ensure that leadership and management have the skills and knowledge to ensure that Independent School Standards are met consistently.

The standard relating to leadership and management of the school in sub-paragraph 34(c) is met but those in sub-paragraphs 34(a) and (b) [having the skills and knowledge to consistently meet the Independent School Standards] are not met.

Action point 6

- **the school must ensure that leadership and management have the skills and knowledge to ensure that the school fulfils its duty to meet the Independent School Standards consistently [paragraph 34(a) and (b)].**

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with teachers, senior members of staff and with the chairman of trustees. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended registration sessions. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Miss Katherine Haynes

Reporting inspector

Mrs Julie Lerbech

Compliance team inspector (Bursar, HMC school)