



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Coworth-Flexlands School

February to March 2023

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School's Details

School	Coworth-Flexlands School			
DfE number	936/6543			
Registered charity number	1016538			
Address	Coworth-Flexlands School Chertsey Road Woking Surrey GU24 8TE			
Telephone number	01276 855707			
Email address	secretary@coworthflexlands.co.uk			
Headteacher	Miss Nicola Cowell			
Chair of governors	Mr Matthew Close			
Proprietor	United Church Schools Trust			
Age range	2 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	119			
	Nursery	29	Pre-prep	35
	Prep	55		
Inspection dates	28 February to 2 March 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Coworth-Flexlands School is an independent preparatory school for male pupils aged 2 to 7 years, and female pupils aged 2 to 11 years. The school plans to be fully co-educational from September 2023. Coworth Park School, founded in 1962, moved to the present site in 1993 and merged with Flexlands School in 2004. In 2018 the school joined United Learning and is governed by United Church Schools Trust (UCST). The school has its own local governing body which has delegated responsibilities from the UCST board. The school comprises three sections: nursery, for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for children aged 2 to 4 years; pre-prep, for pupils aged 4 to 7 years; and prep, for pupils aged 7 to 11 years.
- 1.2 The current headteacher took up her position in September 2018 and the current chair of governors took up his post in December 2021.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school's aim is to promote a family feeling where every individual is valued and celebrated, to inspire minds so that pupils question the world around them, and to bring out the best in everyone so they thrive and grow their potential.

About the pupils

- 1.4 The school's own assessment data indicate that the ability of pupils is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. Six pupils speak English as an additional language (EAL) all of whom are supported by their teachers. The school has identified 34 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include dyslexia, dyspraxia and processing difficulties, of whom 21 receive additional specialist help. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school modifies the curriculum for those pupils it identifies as being the most able in the school's population.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

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

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. 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 standards 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 the 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's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 Pupils receive relationships education. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 2.5 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

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

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

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

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

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

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

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

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

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

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

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

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

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

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

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

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

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

- Pupils of all ages have highly effective communication skills.
- Pupils are successful at gaining entry to the senior school of their choice, achieving a range of scholarships each year.
- Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) skilfully and confidently across the curriculum.
- Pupils are eager to learn, and they make strong progress across all areas of the curriculum.

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

- Pupils mix with ease across all age groups and are highly supportive of each other, as a result of the strong family ethos throughout the school community.
- Pupils support and value each other and respect their differences.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their lives, demonstrating self-confidence and self-awareness.
- Pupils take on responsibilities within the school with enthusiasm and maturity and they work together well.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Strengthen pupils' understanding of how to improve their own learning and performance.
- Strengthen pupils' progress by enhancing their ability to use their own initiative and learn independently.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Achievement of pupils across the curriculum is high. A large majority of children achieve a good level of development by the time they leave the early years setting. Pupils' attainment maintains this excellent start, with standardised scores in English and mathematics above national age-related norms. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching enables their child to make good progress. Evidence from a scrutiny of pupils' work and observation

of lessons confirms this picture. Pupils' strong progress is supported by the school's effective monitoring of their performance using data to guide teaching. Pupils who are less able and those with SEND or with English as an additional language (EAL) achieve very well in relation to their abilities. Effective support and helpful targeted teaching strategies enable them to make high levels of progress alongside their peers. All the pupils who completed the questionnaire agreed that their teachers know how to help them learn.

- 3.6 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are strong, successfully developed through the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum, and the successful pursuit of the school's aim to encourage pupils to reach and grow their potential. Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their knowledge and skills improve in most lessons. Pupils develop advanced skills in the core subjects, as seen in Reception, where children demonstrated excellent execution of the sounds that letters make, which they used to create their own books for book week. By Year 5, pupils have a well-developed knowledge of properties of shapes and how to accurately measure angles. The broad curriculum and specialist teaching ensure that pupils are able to develop their skills to a high level in sport and the creative arts. Pupils in a Year 4 music lesson displayed an advanced knowledge and appreciation of different orchestral instruments and musical terms, as heard in *Fanfare for the Common Man*. Year 6 pupils used well-developed skills and knowledge of Andy Warhol's style of pop art to recreate their own versions. At times, however, pupils make less progress when they are presented with fewer opportunities to expand their learning beyond set tasks.
- 3.7 Pupils are skilled communicators, articulate and confident. They listen extremely well to one another and eagerly volunteer their views during class discussions, showing clear expression and an ability to articulate different viewpoints. Year 1 pupils displayed very good listening skills and made good responses to a story, listening carefully to each other's ideas. Pupils with SEND and EAL contribute well to class discussions because they feel confident in their small classes and the safe and nurturing environment of the school. Pupils spoke confidently to the inspectors whilst at lunch and in interviews about their many positive experiences at school. Pupils' reading and writing skills are of an excellent standard. Children in the EYFS demonstrate good knowledge of letter sounds and produce emerging writing of a high quality. Pupils' writing demonstrates creativity and empathy. They write fluently using increasingly sophisticated language and content. Year 3 pupils demonstrated excellent journalistic writing skills in a lesson focused on writing a newspaper report based on *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Older pupils write effectively for a range of different purposes, producing interesting pieces of writing which they are keen to share with their peers and teachers. Through effective support for differing abilities, all pupils are helped to make excellent progress with their writing. Pupils' advanced reading skills are fostered by regular visits to the well-stocked library, appropriate texts chosen by staff to extend their comprehension and many opportunities to read and be read to in school.
- 3.8 Pupils' mathematical competency develops steadily as they move up through the school, supported by a curriculum that is well-planned and assessed. Mathematical skills are well developed from the EYFS, where creative teaching embeds opportunities to accurately explore and master mathematical vocabulary. For example, Reception children manipulate numbers to 10 by relating it to the number of children in the class. Older pupils use their well-developed numerical skills in a competent way to solve ever more challenging problem-solving activities. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson where pupils worked together to justify and relate triangle properties to types of angles. All pupils were appropriately challenged, and the teachers questioning consolidated their understanding. As pupils move through the school, they are able to apply their mathematical skills with confidence in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils use their skills in science, design and technology (DT) and art, where they are required to accurately measure and calculate for practical activities. Older pupils confidently use spreadsheets to calculate their budgets for a party and can accurately use and explain basic finance terms, such as interest rates and overdrafts, as part of projects on personal finance.
- 3.9 Pupils achieve high levels of competence in computing through a broad curriculum which enables them to develop a comprehensive set of competencies from an early age. Pupils were seen using their

transferrable skills with ease and enjoyment across the curriculum. Children begin to acquire confidence in ICT (Information Communication Technology) in the nursery, learning to use different programmes to present information, and to control electronic devices. In Reception children were seen confidently using mobile devices to take pictures of 3-D shapes. Older pupils use technology to good effect for research, presentations and for work tasks. They can manipulate data and present their research effectively to an audience. For instance, the Year 4 used their ICT skills to produce podcasts in humanities, competently inserting music to their presentations. Pupils of all ages effectively use computer programmes and online resources to reinforce their understanding across the curriculum. Older pupils were seen in registration time challenging themselves using a mathematics programme to improve their recall of multiplication tables.

- 3.10 Pupils' study skills show incremental development as they progress through the school. Pupils of all ages concentrate, focus, and behave extremely well and this creates a good learning atmosphere where pupils can practice and develop their study skills in a nurturing environment. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school equips their children with the team-working, collaborative, and research skill they need in later life. Pupils draw knowledge effectively from sources to which they have been directed. They develop their thinking and learning to a higher level when they are challenged by more problem-based tasks. For example, during a DT lesson, Year 4 pupils displayed considerable analytical skills to reach sophisticated conclusions regarding the appropriate design brief for a game to be played by a child in a hospital bed. Year 5 pupils planned, designed and reviewed their own experiments to test the effectiveness of thermal insulating cups. However, in lessons which are more dependent on teacher-led learning, pupils demonstrate limited initiative.
- 3.11 Pupils achieve success in a range of academic and other achievements throughout their time at school. Pupils regularly gain places at their first choices of senior school, being well prepared for the selection procedures. Recently, pupils have successfully attained academic, music, drama and sports scholarships. The school's leadership has been successful at ensuring that a wide range of opportunities for success is available to all pupils, from sporting, performing arts and musical competitions. They are highly supportive of pupils' endeavours and celebrate their wide range of talents and interests in assemblies and through a plethora of different avenues, such as house points, certificates, and the Head Teacher's Award. Sport teams succeed in regular local fixtures, particularly in female pupils' football matches, in inter-school competitions and in IAPS regional competitions in football. Pupils achieve very well in local drama and singing competitions and have achieved considerable success in external drama examinations. The older pupils interviewed stated that they enjoy the extra-curricular clubs available at the school and were seen enthusiastically partaking in the musical theatre and street funky dance clubs after school.
- 3.12 Pupils of all ages are highly engaged, enthusiastic and committed learners. They are attentive and focused in lessons, actively listening to each other and their teacher. Pupils are productive when working individually, with a partner or in a group. This was seen in a Year 1 phonics lesson, where young pupils confidently took the leadership in their learning, working very effectively in pairs and small groups. Older pupils apply themselves during their lessons with enthusiasm and maturity. For example, during a Year 5 French lesson, pupils were totally engaged and maturely made decisions about whether they worked alone or in pairs, and then decided how best to test their knowledge of the topic. Pupils' enthusiasm is encouraged by committed staff reinforcing a productive work ethic and positive 'can-do' approach. Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning are acknowledged through the rewarding of positive behaviour. The school's implicit culture and sense of family, strongly promoted by the leadership team, underpins the pupils' desire to do their best.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils are adaptable, resilient and confident that they can take risks in their learning and activity. The pupils' enjoyment of school life is evident in every aspect of their activities in and out of the classroom. This is a result of the high quality of pastoral care, led by the school leadership team. The school fully meets its aims, which focus on ensuring every individual is valued and celebrated so that all may thrive. Pupils of all ages display excellent self-esteem and self-confidence. They approach adults confidently and with ease and speak of their achievements with pride. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors explained that their self-confidence grows through participating in assemblies, drama productions, music performances and through presenting their work to others. Their self-confidence is strengthened through careful planning by teachers to ensure all pupils regularly enjoy success in some area. Pupils are less able to express their understanding of how to improve their learning and cannot confidently articulate the next steps in their learning or their individual areas for development. Work scrutiny did not reveal any systematic approach to target setting or highlight next steps in learning.
- 3.15 Pupils' abilities to make decisions are well developed as many opportunities to do so are provided both in and out of the classroom. Choice is a feature in many of the most effective lessons, and this enables pupils to make decisions about their learning from a young age. Children in the EYFS often choose which activities to engage in. They are encouraged to pursue their own interests and access their chosen resources in the classroom. Pre-prep pupils are able to select the most appropriate morning registration activities and older pupils are able to decide how to present their research findings in ways that best suits their learning style. For example, this was seen in Year 5, where pupils have been encouraged to represent their understanding of the solar system in the most appropriate way. Pupils understand that the decisions they make can have an impact on their own and others' wellbeing. This is shown through their ability to make decisions on behalf of others while in responsible positions, for instance, such as when representing the class as a school ambassador. Pupils chose the charities that the school supports and been actively involved in deciding what play equipment should be included in their new playground. Through discussion, pupils also demonstrate a good awareness that the decisions they make about their academic work and revision can have an impact on their future school success.
- 3.16 As they move through the school, pupils develop an appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. For example, they relish the time they spend in nature through their regular outdoor learning sessions, enjoying the physicality of the activities in the local environment of the school, as well as their musical and artistic pursuits and wellbeing activities. In discussion, pupils mentioned that they had particularly enjoyed the activities during the 'Nurturing Spirit' week, which is an example of the school's successful work to develop the pupils' spirituality. Pupils develop and display a respectful appreciation of the wider world through the opportunities they have to learn about and compare many different religions and their beliefs. Year 3 pupils were able to appreciate and reflect on the importance of the peaceful nature of the Sikh faith which focuses on giving and felt these important qualities were similar to the Christian faith.
- 3.17 Pupils show extremely strong moral development and distinguish clearly between right and wrong behaviours, being quick to identify the right choices when faced with a dilemma. Year 4 pupils applied their own clear understanding of morals when they applied them to their own fable writing dilemmas. In all year groups, they behave with much courtesy and consideration for others. Pupils were observed holding doors open for each other without being asked, offering others daily greetings and showing genuine interest in each other's feelings. Pupils accept responsibility for their own actions, understanding that rules benefit everyone. Pupils explained that they want the school to be a nice place for everyone and the rules help with this. The school ambassadors have been actively involved in designing the new class charter and agreeing the sanctions pathway before it was introduced across the school. Good and kind behaviours are celebrated in assemblies when pupils who have been anonymously nominated by their peers have a chance to be rewarded by being selected to take weekly

care of a soft bear. They explained that the school values and expects excellent behaviour, as celebrated in assemblies, through Star of the Week and the headteachers award. The success of these expectations is characterised by there being very few behavioural incidents amongst pupils. Relationships are extremely positive, and a palpable culture of respect and tolerance pervades all aspects of school life. In their questionnaire responses, almost all parents agreed that the school actively promotes good behaviour and all pupils agreed that the school sorts out poor behaviour.

- 3.18 The pupils' social awareness is excellent. Their cooperative and supportive responses towards peers and younger children are instinctive. Younger pupils were often seen collaborating effectively, engaging in discussion, and enjoying successfully completed shared tasks, such as working together in their woodland area to collect appropriate materials for a fire. Older pupils build strong relationships with peers and staff and feel respected by their warm, friendly teachers, who clearly want them to do well in all aspects of school life. Pupils readily assist their peer, without prompting, in lessons and around school. For example, during a Year 2 football lesson, pupils kindly helped their peers if their ball went out of the area. The teachers are excellent role models, leading by example with consistent kindness and patience at all times. These factors help pupils to develop into highly considerate and empathetic young people who demonstrate a strong sense of loyalty to their school and who enjoy working together to fulfil common goals. As seen in a Year 2 forest school lesson when the pupils worked effectively together, being aware of each other's strengths to successfully complete their group task.
- 3.19 Pupils take an active role in the life of the school. Their contributions to the wellbeing of all within the school are obvious, positive, and highly effective. They are extremely willing to help and support their peers both inside and outside the classroom. The oldest pupils described with huge pride their roles as leaders, such as captains, ambassadors and house leaders as well as their fulfilment when acting as mentors for younger pupils. Pupils spoke clearly about the value of having responsibility and discussed thoughtfully the opportunities they have to be involved in the democratic process of elections for some positions, such as the roles of ambassadors. Through discussions it was clear that pupils understand the importance of global responsibility, as they explained why they organised events to support their chosen challenge of 'Poverty – No Hunger'. Year 6 house teams worked collaboratively to design and implement a charity treasure hunt for other pupils as a house activity.
- 3.20 Pupils engage naturally and without hesitation with those of backgrounds and cultures different to their own, in response to the ethos of kindness and mutual respect which permeates the school. Pupils have a thoughtful awareness of British society, as seen in the activities and discussions in Year 6 exploring different families and relationships. Pupils were aware and readily accepted different family structures and reflected that a loving home was the most important quality to children. An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. In discussion, pupils confirmed that they are well informed about other religions and cultures through the comprehensive religious education curriculum, and celebration of different cultural days and festivals at the school.
- 3.21 Pupils know how to stay safe, in both the real and virtual world. All pupils in their questionnaire responded that they know how to stay safe online. E-safety is an important and regular part of the curriculum, together with opportunities to embed pupils' understanding through assemblies and tutor time discussions. Pupils speak confidently of the need to maintain anonymity in certain scenarios and to protect passwords. They understand the importance of being physically healthy, and value the opportunities they have in school to participate in team and individual sports and activities. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire said that the school encourages a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are aware that they should look after their mental health, and appreciate plenty of exercise and time outdoors is beneficial. They stated they enjoy pastoral drop-in sessions, wellbeing walks and mindfulness activities, as they provide informal opportunities to discuss how they are feeling and if they have any worries. Without exception, pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they felt safe

and appreciated within the family environment, and culture of warmth and security that pervade the school.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with two governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended an assembly. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Sue La Farge	Reporting inspector
Mr Timothy Kirk	Compliance team inspector (Former deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Rebecca Smith	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)