

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE AND EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION REPORTS

EWELL CASTLE SCHOOL

MAY 2018



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Ewell Castle S	chool			
DfE number	936/6203				
Registered charity number	312079				
Address	Ewell Castle S Church Street				
	Ewell				
	Epsom				
	Surrey				
	KT17 2AW				
Telephone number 020 8393 1413					
Email address	principal@ew	ellcastle.co.	uk		
Principal	Mr Peter Harris				
Chair of governors	Mr David Tuc	ker			
Age range	2 to 18	2 to 18			
Number of pupils on roll	568	568			
	Boys	417	Girls	151	
	EYFS	51	Prep	168	
	Seniors	263	Sixth Form	86	
Inspection dates	1 to 3 May 20	1 to 3 May 2018			

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

1.1 Ewell Castle School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils aged between 2 and 18 years. Founded in 1926, it occupies 3 sites close to each other in Ewell. The pre-prep is located at Chessington Lodge and the prep school at Glyn House. The senior school is situated in a mansion, the Castle, in large grounds. The school is a registered charity, overseen by a board of governors.

1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has opened a music pavilion and acquired an additional playing field.

What the school seeks to do

1.3 The school's aim is to inspire and nurture its pupils to achieve success within a happy, family-friendly atmosphere. It seeks to empower everyone in the school through embracing the values of integrity, trust, respect, responsibility and determination. The school aspires to identify the individual skills and talents of every pupil, including recognising the most able, and aims to create opportunities for them all to develop their particular strengths to the full, within and beyond the curriculum, in whatever field they might excel.

About the pupils

1.4 Pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, living within a convenient travelling distance of the school, and are representative of the cultural diversity of the local area. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils ranges from average to above average. The school has identified 163 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) which include dyslexia and a wide range of other learning difficulties, all of whom require additional specialist help. Ten pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 60 pupils, 12 of whom receive additional support through specialist tuition.

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 REGULATORY 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 <u>met</u> or as <u>not met</u>. 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.

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: <u>The Education (Independent School Standards)</u> Regulations 2014, <u>Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.</u>

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 In the prep school, the school measures attainment using national curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds. In 2015, the results were well above the national average for maintained schools.
- 2.3 Results in GCSE examinations were above the national average for maintained schools in the years 2014 to 2016.
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2014 to 2016 were in line with the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 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

- 2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.
- 2.12 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

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.19 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.
- 2.20 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 good.
 - Pupils show good knowledge, skills and understanding across the range of subjects and are skilful communicators.
 - Pupils possess entirely positive attitudes to learning, enjoy working collaboratively, and support and celebrate each other's achievements.
 - Pupils' non-academic achievements are good, including in sports, art, music, dance and drama, with a high level of participation.
 - All groups of pupils make good progress in relation to their abilities, but the academic outcomes for older pupils are sometimes limited by inconsistent teaching emphasis on their higher order thinking skills
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils display excellent self-confidence, resilience and a commitment to improve their learning and performance in readiness for the next stage of their lives.
 - Pupils' respect for others and for different cultures is excellent.
 - Pupils demonstrate high moral standards and behave very well.
 - Pupils know how to keep safe and stay healthy.

Recommendations

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:
 - Ensure that teaching consistently enables older pupils to develop and use their higher order thinking skills, in order to make as much progress as possible and to achieve even more academically.
 - Ensure that pupils` valuable views and opinions on school improvement are not only listened to but are more often and effectively acted upon.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.5 All pupils, including the more able and those with SEND or EAL, make good academic progress in all sections of the school. Lesson observations and work seen during the inspection support this judgement, with many examples of pupils making considerable strides in their learning. For those pupils with SEND or EAL, good progress is facilitated by effective individual and small group support in addition to regular classroom teaching which is sensitive to their learning requirements. Pupils of all abilities described how the school has helped them to feel more confident in their learning compared with their experience in previous school placements, and how teachers' support and feedback on their progress enables them to know how well they are doing and to improve further. Parent questionnaire responses indicated very strong confidence in the school's approach to helping their children make progress. Sometimes, the progress made by pupils in the senior school is restricted by teaching that does not sufficiently emphasise the development and use of their higher order thinking skills, particularly in relation to the more able pupils.
- 3.6 The youngest children in the Nursery and Reception achieve at least in line with the national average and are helped to do so by stimulating learning experiences whereby they can explore their environment with considerable independence and develop a keen sense of enquiry and curiosity. Pupils build on these strengths in the prep school, learning to reflect on and to keep improving their performance. They are consistently encouraged by the engaging teaching in small classes which challenges and supports them at every step in their learning. Senior pupils and sixth formers continue to make good progress in their learning, benefiting from mostly interesting teaching which matches their own lively commitment to achieving their very best. Pupils demonstrate a genuine involvement in monitoring their own progress, always seeking to extend it further, helped in this by the school's very good progress and attainment tracking procedures.
- 3.7 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2014 to 2016, which are the most recent years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Pupils' performance is well above the national average by the end of Year 6. Outcomes at GCSE are above the national average for maintained schools. Results in IGCSE English as a second language are higher than worldwide norms. Results at A level are in line with the national average.
- 3.8 Pupils across all age groups demonstrate good development in their knowledge, skills and understanding. For example, Reception children successfully investigated the conditions for successful plant growth using an experiment to test out their predictions. Prep pupils used their prior knowledge of French vocabulary to talk about animals, refining their pronunciation skills as they did so. Throughout the prep phase, pupils demonstrated their increasing ability to consider abstract ideas such as life after death, and to apply their understanding of concepts such as climate change to specific geographical contexts, such as the weather conditions in Thailand and its implications for tourism. Pupils in revision lessons in the senior school, about to take examinations, showed that they could systematically focus on applying their knowledge, skills and understanding in rehearsing responses to potential examination questions. Sixth form pupils earnestly further develop their approach to learning across all subjects.

- 3.9 Pupils' academic achievements are underpinned by the continual emphasis provided by the governing body on improving standards and expectations, and by senior leadership's commitment to secure further improvements in academic standards as detailed in its suitably focused school action plan. The very large majority of parents were strongly appreciative in their questionnaire responses regarding the school's leadership and management. Pupils and parents were similarly positive in their questionnaire responses about the quality of academic education provided by the school and the choice of subjects available. When interviewed, pupils of all abilities were enthusiastic about the teaching they receive, and described lessons as being interesting almost all of the time, and this was evident during the lessons which were observed. Pupils with SEND or EAL are particularly appreciative of the individualised teaching they receive and were seen responding conscientiously during focused activities. This approval by pupils and parents alike demonstrates that the school has acted with considerable success on the recommendation of the previous full inspection to enable pupils of different abilities to fulfil their potential, and to grow as independent learners.
- 3.10 Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and prep pupils develop a strong confidence that anything is possible and within your reach if you set your mind on it, in response to the school's "growth mindset" programme. This positive attitude continues to prevail in the senior school and is further enhanced because pupils have scope to select GCSE and A-level subjects which match their strengths and interests, with opportunities for extension work, which means they can apply and further develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- 3.11 Pupils' communication skills are particularly well developed throughout their time in school and are integral to their success in their academic learning. The younger pupils are absorbed in a richly colourful and stimulating environment, rapidly learning new vocabulary, using it in conversations and applying it as they confront new situations and solve problems. Older pupils are very articulate, responding well to the skilled, challenging questioning they receive in many lessons, and extending their expressive expertise through public speaking competitions. In some lessons for senior pupils, opportunities are missed to build further on their strengths in communication in the higher development of thinking skills.
- 3.12 Pupils demonstrate good numeracy knowledge and skills as a result of effective mathematics teaching. They can readily apply these strengths in other subjects because teachers ensure that opportunities to do so are carefully planned. Pupils are confident in their use of mathematical vocabulary and solving problems because questioning and support from staff is suitably focused. Pupils with SEND or EAL, or who are experiencing a temporary difficulty in understanding a mathematical concept, receive the additional help they require and so do not fall behind in their learning.
- 3.13 The use of information and communication technology (ICT) by pupils is good across the school. There are examples of its innovative use, such as in music and in photography. Sixth form pupils were observed using sophisticated technology in the new music pavilion when directing a musical arrangement session, and in the graphic enhancement of images from a creative photo shoot. Pupils often use ICT for research, skill levels are very good generally, and the school is continually extending opportunities to broaden the application of ICT skills.
- Pupils' books show good application of study skills, which is a result of the well-constructed questions and tasks set by teachers. Pupils' application of their skills of analysis, selection, inference and deduction, and of putting forward and justifying hypotheses are not consistently or sufficiently developed in the senior school. Senior pupils are ready and able to respond more fully to intellectual risk-taking and independent thinking when given the opportunity to do so. Pupils know how well they are doing because teachers' verbal feedback is constructive and analytical, and the small class sizes allow good levels of individual attention. A large majority of pupils responding to the questionnaire, and during interviews, stated that marking is helpful. Marking seen was sometimes lacking in detail and advice, but when combined with effective verbal feedback it supports pupils to make progress. Pupils in the sixth form show that they take more responsibility for their learning, engage independently with their coursework and use self-evaluation effectively. Those pupils who are recent

- arrivals from overseas are earnest in their application to their studies, tackling any issues with the English language with commitment, and engaging fully with the additional support that is available when necessary.
- 3.15 Pupils' academic and other achievements are good, as demonstrated through pupils' successes in areas such as sports and the expressive and performing arts, scholarships and leavers' destinations. Pupils demonstrate their readiness to achieve in a wide range of personal endeavours, including gaining awards in music, dance, drama, public speaking, mathematics challenge, computing challenge, national general knowledge and science quizzes, and The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. They also participate competitively and often successfully in a broad range of sporting events. The pupils achieve well because the school is proactive in creating opportunities for them to do so, and because of the pupils' entirely positive attitudes to learning. They display a very strong willingness to work together and also on their own initiative. Pupils are committed to achieving the best they can. This was observed in lessons when pupils rose to the expectations of their teachers in pursuing tasks based on their own decisions alongside their peers, and in persevering to complete what was required. Effective examples of this were seen with pupils of all ages. Pupils have a buoyant and good-humoured approach to their learning but are always diligent and determined.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.16 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- Pupils demonstrate an unpretentious self-assurance and confidence in themselves. They have a very 3.17 strong awareness of their strengths and what they need to do to improve their performance. Pupils display impressive perseverance, commitment and a personal desire to achieve. This is due to consistent and positive relationships between pupils and staff, excellent staff role-modelling, high expectations for pupils' personal and academic outcomes, and adherence to the school's core values and ethos which aim to nurture and inspire. Pupils are very well prepared for the transition to the next stages of their lives and they confirmed that the school takes every care in helping them to do so. In the EYFS, children learn to be happy in themselves and in their learning because staff let them follow their own lines of investigation but are always there to answer questions, pose new ones, reassure and value their individual explorations. As pupils move up through the school, they continue to find things out for themselves. Pupils' well-being and personal development continue to flourish because the highly effective pastoral system keeps each pupil clearly in view and accurately addresses their needs, importantly linking this support to the monitoring of their academic progress. A very large majority of parents and pupils responding to questionnaires agreed that the school successfully supports pupils' personal development and meets their pastoral and welfare needs effectively.
- 3.18 Pupils of all ages demonstrate that they can make sensible decisions that affect their lives, taking others into consideration. They learn to be confident in making their own decisions because they are given opportunities to do so from an early age and are encouraged to think for themselves and make choices about preferred activities to share with their classmates. From these small but constructive beginnings, pupils exercise corporate decision-making within the house system and school council, for example, successfully influencing the improved provision of healthy food options at lunchtime. Pupils value these opportunities to consider ways of enhancing school life, but explained with impressive diplomacy that their ideas are not always followed up by staff. Pupils take full advantage of the very good careers advice on offer, and said that it is a bespoke service which listens carefully to their preferences and aspirations, plays to their strengths and skilfully guides and supports them towards their selected post-school destinations. They particularly value the assistance they receive in making applications to universities and to specialist placements, such as highly competitive music colleges. Just as importantly, pupils make small but significant everyday decisions about minor courses of action, as demonstrated when prefects and house, music and sports captains described the detailed care they take in handling the minutiae of everyday events concerning the other pupils they are responsible for.
- 3.19 Pupils' spiritual understanding is excellent. They demonstrate sincere thoughtfulness and can reflect on the non-material aspects of life. This is due to the strong school values that are reflected in assemblies and opportunities for quiet reflection during collective worship. Pupils also showed spiritual understanding in their sensitive engagement with world faiths. Their ability to reflect philosophically and express themselves musically and artistically also indicates a strong spiritual dimension in their personal development. Those pupils who seek opportunities for prayer during the school day do so with due reverence because the school has provided a dedicated room for the observance of faith expectations. Pupils benefit from the school's explicit commitment to Christianity and spirituality but are able to respond in whatever manner they prefer and do not experience any pressure to conform to a particular faith model. Their spiritual development is also strengthened through their contact with the recently appointed school chaplain who facilitates further opportunities for personal reflection.

- 3.20 The large majority of pupils and parents in their questionnaire responses agreed that the school helps the pupils behave well. Pupils demonstrate an excellent moral understanding and take full responsibility for their own behaviour and mistakes. They appreciate selflessness and kindness. Pupils have a strong understanding of rules and laws and know why these are important. They engage maturely with challenging ethical issues. Pupils actively express their moral responsibility in their support for charitable causes, and in small acts such as not jumping a dinner queue. They play a major part in making the school an enjoyable place to be, where a strong regard for one another prevails.
- 3.21 Pupils show a sensitive consideration of others in all aspects of school life. They enjoy interacting with others, as when they welcomed inspectors to chat with them over lunch. Children in the EYFS eagerly share and play with each other very happily. Camaraderie is present everywhere, and older and younger pupils socialise very well, with a caring attitude clearly displayed by the senior pupils towards their prep peers. Pupils demonstrate substantial awareness and appreciation of diversity, and respect for individuals from all backgrounds.
- 3.22 Pupils engage enthusiastically in activities that contribute positively to the enhancement of the lives of others in the school community and beyond. They initiate projects to help others, for instance through fund-raising, and these projects are fully encouraged, supported and celebrated by the school. Pupils enthusiastically respond to the very well-developed community action programme which enables them to become involved in a range of activities that serve others beyond the school, such as involvement with elderly people and children within a special school, on a regular and supportive basis. A discussion with pupil leaders from all sections of the school demonstrated how much pupils value their school community and respect one another regardless of age. Older pupils sensitively mentor younger peers in taking on increased responsibilities.
- 3.23 A very large majority of pupils responding to questionnaires indicated they know how to keep safe, including online. They look after each other's safety as a matter of course. This is because of the very effective life skills programme, guidance about online safety, advice from external speakers and the school's positive engagement with families. A small minority of pupils responding to questionnaires felt that the school does not always act promptly or effectively enough to resolve occasional conflict between pupils, but all those spoken to confirmed that relationships are generally very positive and that any differences are resolved quickly and amicably. Pupils also demonstrate good awareness of healthy eating, valuing the balanced menu which they have helped to influence. They understand the importance of regular physical exercise and enthusiastically engage in the wide range of sports which is provided by the school, for personal well-being reasons as well as for competitive activities or personal satisfaction. Pupils' very settled and happy behaviour in school reflects the safety and security they feel. Almost all parents surveyed were clear that they have high regard for the way in which the school's leaders and governors ensure that the arrangements for pupils' welfare and safety are continually monitored and assured.

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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, the chair of governors and with the governor with responsibility for safeguarding, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Andrew Farren Reporting inspector

Dr Alison Primrose Accompanying inspector

Mr James Slocombe Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)

Mr David Bown Team inspector (Head, ISA school)

Miss Margaret Connell Team inspector (Former principal, GSA school

Miss Claire Corkran Team inspector (Deputy head, IAPS school)

Mrs Elizabeth Thomas Team inspector (Head, GSA school)