

FOCUSED COMPLIANCE AND EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION REPORTS FOR SCHOOLS WITH RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

YARLET SCHOOL

APRIL 2018



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SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	Yarlet School			
DfE number	860/6000			
Registered charity number	528618			
Address	Yarlet School Yarlet Staffordshire ST18 9SU			
Telephone number	01785 286568			
Email address	info@yarletsch	ool.org		
Headteacher	Mr Ian Raybould			
Chair of governors	Mrs Sarah Ten	Mrs Sarah Tennent		
Age range	2 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	157			
	Boys	81	Girls	76
	Day pupils	83	Boarders	74
	EYFS	42	Juniors	90
	Seniors	25		
Inspection dates 17 to 19 April 2018				

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

1.1 Yarlet School is a non-selective, independent, day and boarding school for boys and girls aged between 2 and 13 years. The school operates a 'flexi-boarding' system and pupils may board from the age of 7. Founded in the late 19th century as a boys' school, it became a charitable educational trust with a board of governors in 1970. It has been co-educational since 1994.

1.2 The Nursery and pre-prep, for pupils between the ages of two and seven years, opened in 1993. These departments are accommodated in modern, purpose-built buildings separate from the main school. The majority of senior school classrooms are accommodated in additional buildings on the same campus whilst Years 3 and 4 and the English classroom are located in the main building, which is also the base for boarding. Since the previous full inspection in 2012, the school no longer has a registered Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

What the school seeks to do

1.3 The school aims to provide pupils with the best possible academic education, and to help them reach their full potential. Its aspiration is that when pupils leave, they will go on to become confident, responsible young adults who have learned the importance of excellent behaviour, good manners and respect for others.

About the pupils

1.4 Pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Most live close to the school. The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is above average. The school has identified 35 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most of the pupils receiving support have mild learning, concentration or processing difficulties and a few have more complex needs, one of whom has an education, health and care plan. Also, two pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and receive additional support, when required. Data used by the school has identified 22 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified accordingly for them.

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.

This inspection also contains specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools ('boarding NMS'). It also comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspection and it judges the extent to which the school currently meets the boarding NMS. It identifies any standards which the school does not meet and requires action to meet them. Findings are distributed across sections relating to the eight Parts of the standards.

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, including the boarding NMS, 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, including the boarding NMS. 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, together with the NMS covering the same areas. 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: <u>The Education (Independent School Standards)</u> Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

Key findings

2.1 The school does not meet all of the required standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and associated requirements, and should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment.
- 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. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.
- 2.6 The standards relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 17 and 19 are met.

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 2.7 Arrangements are made to safeguard pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; 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 health and safety requirements are not met, including those relating to fire safety. The school has not ensured the suitable management of asbestos and the safe storage of hazardous materials; classrooms containing potentially dangerous equipment are not always kept locked when no adults are present; shortcomings identified by external fire assessment checks are not remedied in a timely fashion, and monitoring and management of health and safety matters is not timely or effective.
- 2.9 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family and access to a programme of activities. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.
- 2.10 Arrangements for boarders' health and safety do not have sufficient regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.
- 2.11 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 7, 9, 10, 13-16, the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 2–4, 8–12, 15 and 16 are met, but those in paragraphs 11 [health and safety], 12 [fire safety], and NMS 6 [boarders' health and safety] and NMS 7 [fire precautions] and, for the same reason, paragraph 8(b) are not met.

Action point 1

• the school must ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of a written health and safety policy, in particular ensuring that appropriate and timely action is taken to address issues relating to asbestos management, storage of hazardous materials, and ensuring classrooms containing dangerous equipment are kept locked when adults are not present, so that the school premises provide a consistently safe environment for pupils, staff and visitors [paragraph 11, and for the same reason NMS 6.1 and 6.2 and paragraph 8(b)].

Action point 2

• the school must ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, in particular by ensuring that appropriate and timely action is taken to remedy shortcomings identified by external fire assessments [paragraph 12, and for the same reason NMS 7.1 and paragraph 8(b)].

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

- 2.12 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.
- 2.13 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 14 are met.

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.14 Suitable toilet, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided.; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.
- 2.15 Accommodation and facilities provided are not maintained to a standard such that, so far is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils is ensured.
- 2.16 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22-24 and 26-31 and NMS 5] are met, but that relating to maintenance [paragraph 25] is not met.

Action point 3

• the school must ensure that the premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured [paragraph 25].

PART 6 - Provision of information

- 2.17 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. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.
- 2.18 The standards relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and statement of boarding principles [NMS 1] are met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

- 2.19 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, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.
- 2.20 The standards relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 2.21 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensures that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.
- 2.22 The standards relating to leadership and management of the school in sub-paragraphs 34(a) and 34(c), and NMS 13.3 and 13.5 are met but those in sub-paragraphs 34(b) and NMS 13.4 [fulfilment of responsibilities] are not met.

Action point 4

• the school must ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities at the school fulfil their responsibilities relating to health and safety and fire safety effectively so that the other standards are consistently met [paragraph 34(b) and NMS 13.4].

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 attain well across a range of subjects and typically make good progress.
 - Pupils' communication skills are highly developed throughout the curriculum.
 - Pupils are enthusiastic and committed learners in most lessons.
 - Pupils' progress is occasionally limited through a lack of suitable challenge.
 - Pupils' progress is sometimes restricted because feedback about their learning is not consistently effective.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils of all ages display high levels of self-confidence.
 - All pupils are very respectful to everyone, reflecting the school's ethos.
 - Pupils have highly purposeful and supportive relationships with each other and across the whole school community.
 - Pupils are very knowledgeable and confident in keeping themselves safe and healthy.

Recommendations

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:
 - Increase the achievement of all groups of pupils by ensuring consistently high levels of challenge across the school.
 - Accelerate pupils' progress by providing more effective feedback about their learning.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.5 Pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects. All groups of pupils, including those with SEND or EAL, make good progress in relation to their different starting points.
- 3.6 Children in the EYFS get off to a strong start and attain above national average outcomes by the end of Reception. They establish strong basic skills in reading, writing and number, along with other key skills, helped by the school's effective partnership with parents from the outset. Well-implemented transition arrangements between the end of pre-prep in Year 2, and the start of prep school in Year 3, have contributed to ensuring that pupils can maintain good progress when they move up.
- 3.7 Pupils achieve well academically because they receive good support from staff and because progress towards their targets is closely monitored. Pupils reported that teachers and other staff are always prepared to go the extra mile in helping them, by giving additional time after school as well as in lessons. Pupils achieve well in a broad range of subjects, including additional modern foreign languages, because the school is ready to respond to their interests.
- 3.8 Pupils' achievement is good because teachers possess secure subject knowledge and employ a range of suitable methods in their planning to cater for pupils of all abilities. For example, pupils in a preprep lesson made good progress in their use of diagrams and were highly engaged in their work. Effective planning enabled pupils to take individual responsibility for how they went about the task. In some lessons, pupils were not given enough challenge, or opportunities to extend their learning and therefore their progress slowed.
- 3.9 Pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are well developed in most lessons because of mostly effective teaching. The quality of pupils' learning reflects effective leadership because leaders ensure that assessment data is used to track each pupil's progress as they move through the school. Where learning is most rapid, good-quality feedback, including thorough marking, is a clear contributory factor. This is not always consistent, with some marking not providing clear enough guidance to pupils about how they should improve their work.
- 3.10 Pupils' communication skills are highly developed. Typically, pupils are confident speakers and are adept at listening. These skills are nurtured effectively, including participation in speaking and debating clubs, as well as through their work in personal, social and health education. Pupils use their communication skills effectively in a range of subjects and activities, as was evident when they skilfully compered a design technology and science event, the Great Egg Challenge.
- 3.11 Pupils are confident and increasingly effective writers over time. They adapt their writing to suit the needs of different purposes and audiences. Several pupils described how their writing skills had improved since they joined the school. This reflects the school's leadership's recent focus on improving the quality and consistency of writing across the curriculum. Pupils' evident enjoyment of, and ability in, reading is supported by the school's strong commitment to developing literacy skills in all subjects and by ensuring a plentiful supply of suitable books, including in the well-resourced and attractively appointed school library.
- 3.12 Pupils' display strong skills in information and communication technology (ICT), and these have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils in pre-prep become aware of the significance of concepts such as algorithms, through the discrete teaching of computing. Pupils gain valuable experience of applications such as data-logging. Children in the Nursery develop their counting skills through using simple ICT applications.

- 3.13 Pupils exhibit positive attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic about working collaboratively in groups and can maintain good concentration in class. They co-operate well and are keen to engage in lessons. Pupils are also proficient in, and positive about, undertaking research projects in which they demonstrate their ability to work well independently. They confidently evaluate how well they are doing. Pupils affirmed that they are given clear and useful guidance by teachers on how to revise effectively for common entrance and other examinations.
- 3.14 Pupils achieve notably well in both academic and non-academic pursuits. The majority of those leaving the school gain at least one academic award or scholarship. Pupils excel in music with several having joined national youth choirs, a national symphony orchestra and a major city symphony orchestra children's chorus. In sport, a number of pupils have represented the school at county and district levels for cricket and swimming. Almost all pupils affirmed that the school gives them the opportunity to learn and make good progress, academically and otherwise.
- 3.15 Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed the view that the school enables pupils to make good progress and develop skills for the future. As a result, the school clearly lives up to its aim of wanting pupils to achieve well in all areas of school life and to be thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.16 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.17 Pupils go on to the next stage of their lives as both academically successful and as well-rounded young people because the school's aims and ethos place equally strong emphasis on both aspects of their development.
- 3.18 A strong feature of pupils' personal development is their willingness and ability to take risks in their learning, reflecting the school's commitment that being wrong is not an indication of failure. Pupils quickly grow in confidence as they move through the school. They learn to react positively to challenges and develop considerable resilience. Pupils commented on how the wide range of extracurricular opportunities offered by the school enables them to explore their potential and to build their self-esteem, as well as their proficiency in finding their own solutions to difficult problems.
- 3.19 Pupils relish the extensive opportunities they are given to take on responsibilities within the school. They develop excellent self-confidence and self-esteem in response to the wide range of leadership roles available to them, such as becoming house captains and prefects. Self-discipline and resilience are firmly embedded through involvement in sports teams or in organising concerts. The youngest pupils exercise responsibility through lunchtime routines whereby they serve one another and set and clear tables. As pupils move up through the school, they develop increasing levels of independence and behave responsibly, for example at break times.
- 3.20 Most pupils take advantage of the flexi-boarding arrangements at some point in their time at the school, resulting in clear gains in their personal development. Supported through a well-designed induction programme, boarders quickly gain self-confidence and self-reliance and exercise increasing levels of independence as they progress through the school, such as taking the lead in activities. Boarders gain a strong appreciation of the need to balance their needs and wishes against those of others, and so achieve a sharp awareness of how a community grows and develops for the greater good. Boarders affirmed, along with other pupils, that the school's strict rules banning mobile devices brings positive benefits in terms of community cohesion because they are not distracted from their work and other activities. Several pupils remarked upon how well supported by older pupils they were when they first began boarding, enabling them to settle quickly.
- 3.21 Pupils contribute positively to the local community and to wider society through supporting local charities. They are also actively involved in ecological and recycling projects within school. Pupils demonstrate their commitment to the wider community through singing at a local church at main public events, such as the Christmas carol service and Armed Forces Day service, and also through performing publicly, such as the Remembrance celebration at a local theatre.
- 3.22 Pupils gain useful insights into the needs of others, for example, through strong links with a nearby special school, including raising funds to improve its resources. They develop understanding of, and empathy for others, through undertaking practical work to support local people who use nearby public gardens as a place of respite, rest and sanctuary. Pupils also gain social awareness by assisting the work of a local hospice, where they undertake gardening projects and give musical concerts for patients.
- 3.23 Pupils are very respectful to one another, to staff and to visitors. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and are strongly committed to the rules. Pupils believe that the rewards and sanctions system, based on consequences, is fair and makes a positive contribution to the orderly operation of the school. They confirmed, too, that the excellent behaviour seen by inspectors around the school is entirely typical of a normal school day, and that the basis for this mature and sensible conduct is mutual respect. The school is a well-regulated learning community, and the consistent application of the code of conduct by all staff is an important factor in supporting pupils` appropriate behaviour and staff are excellent role models.

- 3.24 Pupils have well-developed spiritual understanding. Pupils' commitment to Christian values is strengthened through regular assemblies and acts of worship in the school's chapel. Pupils understand and appreciate the school's philosophy to enjoy life in all ways, including those that are non-material. Pre-prep pupils spoke with considerable maturity about the impact which music has on their emotions, reflecting the school's commitment to a vibrant musical education. Pupils were clearly inspired by nature in their artwork in an after-school club, displaying a reverence for the subject of their work.
- 3.25 Pupils strongly respect and value diversity within society and understand that people have more in common than separates them. They show a high level of understanding and tolerance of others, including a well-informed knowledge of the key values that characterise modern Britain. This is developed through assemblies and visits into the community. Pupils reported how their understanding of the Sikh faith had been transformed by a visit to a temple as part of religious education. Pupils' cultural understanding and appreciation is wide-ranging and is deepened through the school's links with other countries, such as Spain.
- 3.26 Pupils have a comprehensive awareness of how to stay safe and be healthy. They appreciate the physical and mental benefits to the individual and to society of a healthy, balanced diet. They benefit physically and intellectually from the many and varied opportunities to take regular exercise in team and individual sports, including through the extensive extra-curricular programme. Pupils report that the school is a very safe environment and that they are proud that they belong to a school where bullying is rare. They understand that keeping themselves safe is about taking a considered and careful approach to risk, responding responsibly to the guidance given by staff to all pupils in the school from pre-prep wards. Pupils reported with confidence that they are aware, and make use, of the guidance they are given from staff in ICT lessons and assemblies, about the potential dangers posed by the internet.

Inspection evidence 17

4. INSPECTION EVIDENCE

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended chapel. Inspectors visited the boarding accommodation and 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 Ken Bush Reporting inspector

Mrs Tanya Hill Compliance team inspector (Deputy headteacher, IAPS school)

Mr Matthew King Team inspector for boarding (Headmaster, IAPS school)

Mrs Clare Turnbull Team inspector (Headmistress, IAPS school)