



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Wellow House School

June 2019



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School's Details

School	Wellow House School			
DfE number	891/6013			
Registered charity number	528234			
Address	Wellow House School Newark Nottinghamshire NG22 0EA			
Telephone number	01623 836665			
Email address	office@wellowhouseschool.co.uk			
Headteacher	Ms Kirsty Lamb			
Chair of governors	Mr Ali Khan			
Age range	3 to 13			
Number of pupils on roll	93			
	Boys	53	Girls	40
	Pre-Prep	52	Juniors	41
Inspection dates	25 to 27 June 2019			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Wellow House School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged between three and thirteen years. The school was established in 1971 as a boarding preparatory school for boys aged seven to thirteen. It became co-educational in 1985 and a pre-preparatory department opened in 1987.
- 1.2 It is owned and governed by the Alpha Schools Ltd which took over in April 2019. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2018.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the school has ceased to have boarding. The school comprises four sections: Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for Nursery and Reception, pre-prep for Years 1 and 2, prep from Year 3 to Year 6 and seniors in Years 7 and 8.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school aims to make the most of each pupil's academic potential, to develop the talents of each individual, and to educate pupils in good citizenship. It seeks to achieve these aims through a close and supportive rapport between teachers and pupils, a family atmosphere of care and welfare and an extensive programme of after-school activities.

About the pupils

- 1.5 The majority of pupils live within a radius of twenty miles of the school and many have business or farming backgrounds. Pupils move on to a variety of senior schools, some boarding and some day, and all leavers achieve entry to their first choices.
- 1.6 The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils is above average. The school has identified 10 pupils as having special educational needs (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, all of whom receive additional specialist help. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Data used by the school has identified a small number of pupils as being the most able in the school's population and the curriculum is modified for their special talents in music, art and sport.

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. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

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

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and relevant requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

- 2.2 The school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.4 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

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

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

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 2.11 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.12 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

PART 6 – Provision of information

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

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

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

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

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

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

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

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

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

All independent schools are required to meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

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

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

Key findings

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

- Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well and make good and sometimes rapid progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive and they can work collaboratively and independently.
- The achievement of pupils with SEND is strong.
- Pupils are articulate and have excellent communication skills.
- Pupils value opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and the best teaching facilitates this.

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

- Pupils' self-confidence, self-esteem and self-knowledge are highly developed.
- Pupils of all ages are fully supportive of the ethos of the school and successfully meet the high behavioural expectations and standards set by their teachers.
- Senior pupils take their responsibilities seriously.
- Respect and tolerance typify all pupil interactions. Pupils celebrate and embrace their differences and respect and value the cultural diversity within the school.

Recommendation

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvement:

- Improve the attainment and progress of pupils by ensuring that systems to track and monitor pupils' performance are applied consistently, and that best practice in teaching is shared more widely so that all pupils know how to improve.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Evidence from lesson observations, the pupils' work, leavers' destinations and the school's own data shows attainment to be above average in relation to national age-related expectations. Pupils of all ages and abilities, including those requiring support, achieve well and make good and sometimes rapid progress due to small class sizes, early intervention, teachers knowing their pupils well and, more recently, greater progress monitoring. In a very few instances, expectations of pupils were less clear, and guidance given through marking and feedback to pupils was insufficient to ensure that they knew how to improve their work. Pupils use their knowledge to good effect such as in the EYFS where most children reach or exceed national expectations. All pupils gain entry to their first choice of senior school with some being awarded prestigious scholarships. All parents responding through the questionnaire consider that pupils are enabled to make at least good progress and agree that the school effectively meets their children's educational needs.

- 3.6 Pupils demonstrate secure levels of knowledge, skill and understanding across the curriculum. English and literacy skills are well-developed, and pupils demonstrate their ability to write well in a range of genres from poetry, reporting, descriptive and creative writing, to playscripts. An example was seen when younger pupils were able to hypothesise on the legacy of the Ancient Greeks starting with deciding what a legacy is. Numerical skills develop well as pupils move through the school supported by imaginative approaches to ensure pupils have a secure grasp of the basics. In the EYFS, for example, children used a pirate theme to strengthen their grasp of number with the use of treasure coins they had made for addition and subtraction. Pupils develop passion and enthusiasm for specific areas of interest and there is a culture of learning. Pupils demonstrated an excellent ability to articulate to the teacher and peer group the impact of hurricanes on people using primary news accounts.
- 3.7 Pupils demonstrate confident and comfortable communication skills in class and beyond, such as when leading tours on open days, and they are often complimented on their assurance and competence in presentations. All pupils participate in every play and concert and were all eager, during discussions, to explain their thoughts and opinions. Pupils are respectful of one another and support each other well. The school's family atmosphere and its ethos of valuing what pupils have to say, promotes open communication across the school and provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their communication skills, to speak up and be heard. Pupils' writing displayed throughout the school demonstrates creativity and empathy, and care is usually taken in the presentation of their work for display. Pupils' reading and comprehension are good as they are encouraged to read widely for pleasure and information.
- 3.8 Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of numeracy and have good mathematical skills which they apply confidently in problem-solving, in learning programmes used at home, and in many other areas of the curriculum. In science, for example, pupils accurately measured how breathing rate increases with exercise. Progression in mathematical skills and understanding is evident in workbooks and lessons. These showed clear and detailed recording of calculations, and good use of terminology such as vertices and spheres in 3D shapes, and complex graphs and diagrams recording findings from a residential trip to the Peak District. Pupils build mathematical skills year on year. They enjoy mastering and approaching new concepts and topics and readily accept new and extra challenges involving problem solving and independent learning. This was seen in Year 6 where pupils were measuring the grid lines on the tennis court to calculate how much paint will be needed for work over the summer.
- 3.9 Pupils are competent in their use of information, communication technology (ICT). They confidently and enthusiastically apply their skills when carrying out and recording independent research. Pupils were seen to have successfully used programmes to create posters for e-safety, for research, coding, and a presentation in a French video. Pupils use technology and devices safely. Their knowledge of how to protect themselves and their well-being is enhanced by the use of specialist staff and a central helpdesk.
- 3.10 From the earliest ages, pupils are encouraged through stimulating and thought-provoking tasks, to think logically, creatively and innovatively and to make independent choices. In the EYFS, children made nature paint brushes to write secret messages to pirates in mud to try to get the treasure back, demonstrating creativity and innovation. Pupils show willingness to apply their learning skills when faced with new challenges such as in science research when comparing their own human speed and pace of movement with that of a chosen animal. Pupils enjoy challenges, learn to research and reference, use their own ideas and complete projects. This was seen in lessons, digital evidence and investigations, and in reports from trips and in the whole school art project on making masks. Pupils risk making mistakes, learn from their own and others' mistakes and have another go. They are actively encouraged to do this in groups and as individuals. All parents agree through the questionnaire that the school helps pupils to be confident and independent.

- 3.11 Pupils take full advantage of the wide range of activities in the extra-curricular programme from art and music to problem solving and outdoor pursuits. These support the aims of the school well and make an important contribution to pupils' achievements. Pupils enjoyed taking part and achieving successes in the billion-dollar challenge competition and the buzzer challenges at nearby senior schools. Results in national music and speech and drama examinations are good aided by pupils performing successfully in public in school plays and concerts. In sport, most teams learn to bring out their best and respond positively to the support of the coaching. The most able respond well to the challenges set for them and have been able to go on to county representation in cross-country, archery and national skiing championships.
- 3.12 Pupils' attitudes to learning are exceptional. It is evident that pupils take pride in their work and in their school. In class, they listen well, fully engage in the lesson and apply themselves in a conscientious manner. They enjoy opportunities to work together but also respond well when asked to, or deciding to, work independently. During the science week, groups of pupils showed creativity and innovation when finding ways to land their own egg, unbroken. They enjoy teamwork and a mixed year group team, competing with other schools, created an *octobot* which was a robot that scooted around the ocean collecting plastic. Many examples of independent work were seen in books and on tablet computers. Older pupils show a willingness to take responsibility for their own learning and respond enthusiastically to open-ended tasks and challenges requiring initiative, creativity and independent thought.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils' self-confidence, self-esteem and self-knowledge are highly developed. Pupils display eminent levels of self-confidence and feel happy that their contribution is recognised and valued. This leads to a sense of self-worth and a desire to persevere and take on more challenges and this stands them in good stead as they transfer to the next phase of their education; they are proud of their achievements and the selves that they have become. Pupils are keen to do well and recognise their own strengths and weaknesses. They show a maturity as they acknowledge their hard work and appreciate the support they receive from their teachers. Pupils can reflect clearly on what they now know and how they got there and are clear that, when they receive individual support and challenge in their learning feedback, they can improve and make their best progress. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what seeking to give of their best looks like. They are prepared to have a go, learn from mistakes and keep trying in order to develop resilience and determination. Pupils are confident and demonstrate strong organisational skills and commitment to their learning and everyday routines. The family atmosphere, which pupils enthused about, epitomised by the mutual respect and warm relationships evident in the classroom, encourages pupils to be open in expressing their thoughts and feelings.
- 3.15 Pupils understand that they are responsible for making the right decisions in relation to their work and behaviour. They make sensible choices and understand the impact their decisions can have on their future success and on those around them. They recognise the importance of a healthy lifestyle and are aware of the steps they need to take to ensure their own good health as seen in a discussion during a worship assembly on staying healthy and not spreading germs. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and make their own choices. They are given options about how to proceed and find their own pathway to learning, and, as a consequence, pupils are confident to make decisions about which steps to take and make sensible choices whether this is choosing what to have for lunch, what to read, or which activity to do. They successfully balance the demands of a busy academic life with a range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils volunteer proudly but modestly for positions of responsibility which impact positively on others within the school community, through representation on the school council, house or sports captaincy. Pupils demonstrated their understanding of decision making during a Physical Education lesson devising a suitable circuit training session for the rest of the class.

- 3.16 Pupils show a well-developed spiritual awareness in their ability to empathise with others and to acknowledge and recognise events in the world that can make them feel both happy and sad. Pupils appreciate the natural world around them, especially the rich learning environment of the school grounds and make efforts to support the environment. Pupils aesthetic awareness of the non-material aspects of life is evident in the high standard of artwork displayed throughout the school, the success they enjoy in art lessons and their enjoyment of the many opportunities to participate in music and dramatic events. Through these opportunities, pupils discover their own creativity and enjoy the wonder of discovery at what comes from within such as when children in the EYFS found different insects and pirate treasure in the woodland learning environment. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of empathy and tolerance, and they know what is important in life. In assembly, there was a recognition that family is a source of happiness rather than belongings. Pupils value the skills they learned during a meditation and declared that they value love, kindness, generosity and friendship.
- 3.17 Pupils demonstrate a strong awareness of right and wrong, both within and outside school, from the youngest years. They understand the need for rules, are committed to following the code of conduct and the high expectations about behaviour in order to have a safe and comfortable environment for all. As a result, behaviour throughout the school is excellent. Pupils are highly supportive of the school's system of rewards and sanctions, displaying maturity as they discussed being treated fairly and the impact of the merit system. Senior pupils take their responsibilities seriously aiming to be excellent role models and respected by younger pupils as they take on roles and organise events.
- 3.18 Pupils' social awareness is strong. They form positive relationships and get on well together in the classroom and at play. Pupils understand the benefits of collaboration and teamwork, are quick to recognise each other's successes and offer support and encouragement where needed. Pupils ability to work together effectively leads to success in a range of challenges and activities. Pupils spoke about their support for others and enjoyment of the cross-school friendship and support system. In the questionnaire an overwhelming majority of parents agreed that the school helps their child to develop strong teamwork and social skills. Pupils recognise the importance of being a good friend. Their care of others was evident in discussion and around the school as expressed in stories about the school's buddy system and use of the buddy bench.
- 3.19 Pupils enjoy the opportunity to contribute to their school community by performing musically at several local events and in care homes, particularly around Christmas. They are encouraged to appreciate the circumstances of those less fortunate than themselves and actively support them by fundraising throughout the school year. Pupils consider world-wide issues and understand the value of protecting the environment and contributing to its well-being by coming up with potential solutions such as the beach clean to find and remove plastic waste.
- 3.20 Pupils celebrate and respect their differences with pupils saying they do not notice any differences as they are all accepted for who and what they are and are treated fairly. They develop a mature approach through experience and exploration of their own and other cultures. This is promoted through presentations from some pupils on their cultural and religious festivals, through PSHEE lessons and assemblies. All parent and pupil questionnaire responses agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. Positive relationships are evident across all year groups and stages and respect and tolerance typify all pupil interactions.

- 3.21 Pupils feel safe in the school environment and know the steps they need to take to keep themselves safe both within and outside school, and they know how to protect themselves online and how to respond to any worrying messages they might receive. Pupils appreciate the need to eat sensibly and to exercise in order to be healthy. This is enhanced by the provision of well-cooked, healthy meals at lunchtime and snack times. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their opportunities for physical exercise, the availability of a healthy diet in school and demonstrated a positive mental attitude to health and relationships, risk taking and showing persistence.
- 3.22 The values promoted by the school within a highly supportive and respectful community and the dedication and care shown by school leaders and staff have played a significant part in the outstanding personal development of the pupils.

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 proprietor, 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, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Daphne Cawthorne	Reporting inspector
Mrs Jennifer Burrett	Compliance team inspector (Former Head, IAPS school)
Ms Julia Langford	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)