Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports
For Schools with Residential Provision

Wychwood School

November 2018

Contents

School's Details

School	Wychwood School
DfE number	931/6068
Address	74 Banbury Road Oxford Oxfordshire OX2 6JR
Telephone number	01865 557976
Email address	admissions@wychwoodschool.org
Headmistress	Mrs Andrea Johnson
Chair of governors	Mrs Deborah Pluck
Age range	11 to 18
Number of pupils on roll	115

Girls	115	**Boys**	0
Day pupils	84	**Boarders**	31
Seniors	90	**Sixth form**	25

Inspection dates	6 to 8 November 2018

1. Background Information

About the school

1.1   Wychwood School is an independent day and boarding school for girls aged 11 to 18 years, situated near the centre of Oxford. The school was founded in 1897 and is a Christian, non-denominational foundation which welcomes pupils of all faiths. In 1952, the school became an educational trust which is administered by trustees and a governing body. Since the previous inspection in 2012, the school has appointed a new headmistress. The school offers full and flexi boarding on site for pupils from the age of 11.

What the school seeks to do

1.2   The school's aim is to provide education of the highest quality in a well-rounded and happy environment. The school is deeply committed to producing young people with integrity, a strong sense of self-worth, independence of thought and the confidence to build careers and personal lives that will do them great credit.

About the pupils

1.3   Pupils come from local areas around Oxford and boarders are mostly from other parts of the UK with the remainder from a range of other countries. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils in the senior school is above average and below average in the sixth form. The school has identified 37 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, with 23 receiving additional specialist help. Two pupils in the school have an education, health and care plan and one pupil has a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 20 pupils, whose needs are supported by an EAL teacher and classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified senior and sixth form pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and other pupils because of their special talents in academic studies 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. 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) Regulations 2014</u>, <u>National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.</u>

Key findings

2.1   The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2015 and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

2.2   At GCSE in the years 2015 to 2017, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools.

2.3   In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2015 to 2017 have been above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.

2.4   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.

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

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

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

2.7   The standard 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

2.8   Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.

2.9   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   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, and NMS 2–4, 6–12, 15 and 16 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. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.

2.12 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

2.13 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, 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. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.

2.14 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 5 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 any 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. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.

2.16 The standard 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

2.17 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, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.

2.18 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 18 are 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. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.

2.20   The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 13 are 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. Where the school's own names differ from those used nationally, the details are given in the table below:

Wychwood School	National Curriculum name
Remove	Year 7
Inters	Year 8
Lower Transits	Year 9
Upper Transits	Year 10
Shell	Year 11
Study I	Year 12
Study II	Year 13

Key findings

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

- The pupils make good progress due to the strong working relationship with their teachers.

- The pupils have good quality speaking and listening skills.

- The pupils collaborate well to support one another's learning.

- The pupils' individual learning needs are not always met because the quality of teachers' planning is inconsistent.

- The pupils' knowledge of how to improve is reduced as some teachers do not always provide sufficient written feedback.

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

- The pupils' self-confidence is high due to the excellent caring, nurturing environment, which pervades the whole school.

- The boarding pupils have great respect for and tolerance of one another's cultures.

- The pupils' have a highly developed moral and spiritual understanding which leads to the great support given to those in need.

Recommendations

3.3   The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Use assessment data and marking more systematically across the school to ensure all pupils receive detailed written and verbal feedback on how to improve their work;

- Review the quality of teaching to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils through the careful planning of challenging learning activities.

The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5   Pupils' attitudes to their work throughout the school are positive and they demonstrate strong collaborative skills which positively support one another's learning. For example, older pupils in psychology worked together effectively to thoroughly analyse a research paper on crime. In biology, younger pupils were extremely focused on the design of a mind map to capture facts and key words relating to antibiotics and vaccines. All pupils are engaged in their lessons and make good quality contributions with confidence. If they have a problem in understanding their work, they readily seek help from their peers or teachers. Pupils say that their teachers encourage them to take risks and in doing so challenge them to reach higher standards. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the vast majority of parents felt that teaching enabled their child to make progress.

3.6   Pupils' academic achievement is good particularly at GCSE level where their attainment is above the national average. About a third of the examination results in 2017 were graded A*/A. This represents good progress from the wide ability range of pupils' starting points in Year 7. Almost all pupils, including those with SEND and EAL achieve at least a good level of attainment based on their expected outcomes. Pupils' attainment in the IGCSE in mathematics is similar to the world-wide average. Over the past three years, most GCSE results have been at least in line with or above the national average. Analysis of results confirms that most subjects have improved their value-added scores year on year. The pupils' attainment at A-level is above the national average. The school leadership have effectively reviewed the curriculum and ensured that any changes made, reflect the learning needs of all pupils. For example, senior pupils now benefit from a broader choice of examinations including BTEC, to better suit their individual aspirational and academic needs. Pupils progress at a good rate because teachers know their individual needs well and in better lessons plan learning activities with appropriate levels of support and challenge. However, this practice is not always consistent across the school. The increasing range of courses offered along with the effective support available for all pupils to achieve their best, leads to most pupils progressing on to a university or college of their choice.

3.7   Pupils demonstrate good levels of knowledge, skills and understanding which they are able to confidently apply across the curriculum. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school helped their child develop skills for their future. In history, a few senior pupils were able to apply their good knowledge of the German language to interpret and successfully evaluate propaganda images used by Hitler. This sharing of specialist knowledge enabled all pupils in the lesson to contribute to an insightful, focused discussion. In art, pupils' creative skills were extended through a well-planned umbrella project, which inspired them to develop a variety of individual interpretations of the image.

3.8   Pupils' communication skills develop rapidly from their varying starting points. All pupils are able to articulate their views with determined confidence but show respect for the opposing opinions of others. In form time, pupils displayed effective speaking and listening skills during a discussion on whether it was right or wrong to celebrate Halloween. Pupils with limited English rapidly develop literacy skills by being encouraged to read or perform in school assemblies. In English, older pupils produced a high quality individual piece of discursive writing to compare historical punishments in schools to the present day. However, younger pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities across the curriculum to produce more sustained pieces of writing to extend and challenge them.

3.9   All pupils demonstrate at least good levels of competency in their use and application of numeracy skills across the curriculum. Pupils develop higher order thinking skills such as problem solving in many subjects. Younger pupils were able to successfully apply their knowledge of binary code in a quick-fire game of binary bingo. More able mathematicians develop advanced computational thinking through effective participation in online competitions. In chemistry, senior pupils were able to demonstrate a good level of numerical skill to accurately balance equations. All pupils are able to apply numerical skills in real life situations such as raising money for charities or costing enterprise projects. Older pupils developed their breadth of knowledge by listening to specialist guest speakers, such as a lecture on the relevance of numeracy in the design of autonomous vehicle software.

3.10   Younger pupils develop a strong foundation of Information Communication Technology (ICT) skills in dedicated lessons and can rapidly apply these to support other areas of learning across the curriculum. For example, in science they use electronic tablets to produce 3D images to support their own understanding of atoms. However, pupils' access to using ICT is limited in some subjects which reduces their opportunity to apply technological skills. Pupils have strong collaborative skills and use these successfully to record performances for school assemblies using specialist software. In geography, older pupils extend their research skills by completing individual projects on social deprivation in the UK through the interrogation of data available on the internet.

3.11   Younger pupils have developed good organisational skills through the bespoke programme of study skills. Most pupils successfully demonstrate the application of valuable study techniques across their learning including; mind mapping and maintaining a glossary for recording technical terminology. More able pupils develop their knowledge, skill and understanding through participation in extra - curricular clubs which purposely provide stretch and challenge through specially planned learning activities. All sixth form pupils develop effective research methods to support their future learning and most progress on to study the extended project qualification. In history of art, pupils produce an independent study of a work of art of their choice and present their findings to others.

3.12   Pupils achieve good levels of success in a variety of activities. Pupils are proud of their efforts and display a positive commitment to represent their school in sport, whether they win or lose. They enjoy being part of a team with their peers, competing with local schools in netball and hockey fixtures. Pupils have been particularly successful in a number of competitions including; Youth Speaks, where they were regional finalists and also winners in the Young Art Oxford. Throughout the school, pupils have achieved significant success in musical theatre and external music examinations, with some pupils achieving up to grade VIII. Pupils are able to develop their unique sporting talents in competitions because of the strong support given to them by school leaders and governors. The pupils achieve at a high level when competing in a wide range of events including; the Great British Rowing Junior Championship regional competition and the British Central Region Dressage and Pony Club Team. Senior pupils have displayed resilience and a strong determination to succeed in a number of high stamina events such as the London L'Etape long route 186kms cycle ride.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

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

3.14   Pupils are able to respond positively to constructive criticism from others due to their increasing confidence and resilience as learners. Pupils have a strong social awareness of the need to positively contribute to their wider community. For example, they show initiative and determination to respond to requests from others for a pupil led school magazine called 'The Branch'. This covers topical items of interest and enables other pupils to contribute their ideas. Older pupils have excellent problem-solving skills which they applied to great effect in an enterprise project producing shelter boxes for the homeless. Boarding pupils display effective organisational skills by arranging popular events such as the 'Golden Ticket Evening' to promote their integration with day pupils.

3.15   Throughout the school, pupils engage effectively with peers from different backgrounds, this is clearly evident in the boarding house where they participate successfully in collaborative endeavours which promote the understanding of different cultures. For example, in a whole school event 'Wychwood Remembers', a few pupils showed highly competent linguistic skills presenting war poems in different languages. A further selection of pupils chose to demonstrate their excellent creative and aesthetic skills in high quality musical performances inspired from other countries, such as the Chinese bamboo dance. All pupils show an in-depth understanding of the different backgrounds and cultures that are part of the school's unique global community. Pupils apply this knowledge successfully in the annual celebration of food and traditions from other countries. For example, the 'Menus from Kitchen' event which celebrates cuisines from around the world.

3.16   Older pupils develop strong evaluative skills through focused academic discussions with their tutors which supports their improvement. All pupils have developed skills in self-reflection and can use these to contribute positively to the improvement of others in form time discussions. The pupils' self-esteem is carefully nurtured and strengthened through the 'A Word of Praise' scheme which celebrates their individual achievements with parents. In the questionnaire, all boarders agreed that boarding helps them to be more confident and independent. As pupils progress through the school they readily take risks in their work in order to challenge themselves and improve. Almost all pupils demonstrate initiative to improve, whether from independent research in the well-stocked library or seeking additional help from teachers.

3.17   Pupils have a strong understanding of the importance of the decisions they make and how these will impact on their lives. All pupils elected as members of the school council, use their strong vocal skills to make an excellent contribution to the workings of this group and take full opportunity to inform school leaders of their views. Following strong debate, more healthy options and a few traditional treats are now being served at boarders' breakfast time. All pupils have a secure understanding of right and wrong and can explain how this links to good behaviour in the school. Pupils can explain how their actions can affect the lives of others, positively and negatively.

3.18   Pupils demonstrate their strong spiritual understanding in form time discussions and are able to listen to the views of others through the well planned themed approach to weekly assemblies. Pupils' thinking skills are developed through a focused whole school approach to problem solving, such as taking responsible risks and applying this to their learning. As part of the World War One commemorations, pupils planted a memorial garden in the school grounds to provide a focus for the school community to reflect on the great service of others. All pupils develop a strong appreciation of the spiritual values of others and the need to be respectful of these. All pupils understand the need to recognise and show gratitude for the good deeds of others in the school community, for example by a formal vote of thanks in school council. In the boarding house, older pupils demonstrate excellent understanding and empathy for the feelings of others when they welcome their younger peers into their new home environment. All pupils have a secure moral understanding of the current and past workings of democracy, for example, in a cross curricular project they explored the reasons and merits of the suffragette cause.

3.19   Pupils show a strong understanding of the need to exercise and its positive contribution to health. Throughout the school, pupils have enrolled on the whole school challenge of achieving a 1000 hours of exercise in a year. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe online and are well aware of the actions needed to keep safe. This view was confirmed in the questionnaire, with all pupils stating they know how to safe online. The pupils' secure knowledge of how to stay healthy; physically and mentally is strengthened by their positive engagement in well organised extra-curricular activities such as yoga. Boarding pupils talked positively about the importance of taking part in activities which supported a healthy lifestyle, for example, after school dance clubs for relaxation and enjoyment.

3.20   Older pupils display strong organisational skills in their role as elected councillors, for example, arranging whole-school social events such as the popular 'Wychfactor'. This pupil responsibility along with the whole school council form part of the school's strong democratic tradition and its excellent work is fully endorsed by school leaders and governors. Older pupils in the sixth form, have developed a strong set of service skills through well planned training activities including; first aid and safeguarding. Boarding pupils demonstrate highly effective collaborative skills when participating in environmental activities, for example, taking part in the 'Oxclean' project led by the local community. Throughout the school, pupils work effectively as teams supporting both local and global charities, such as the year-long charity effort of raising funds for the Soldiers of Oxfordshire.

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, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses 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 Alison Hope Hedley	Reporting inspector
Mr Peter Sharp	Team inspector (Director of teaching & learning, HMC school)
Mrs Deborah Leonard	Team inspector (Headmistress, HMC school)
Mrs Emma Picken	Team inspector for boarding (Head of boarding, GSA school)