



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION REPORT

THE ELMS SCHOOL

MARCH 2018



CONTENTS

SCHOOL'S DETAILS	3
1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION	4
About the school	4
What the school seeks to do	4
About the pupils	4
2. REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION	5
Preface	5
Key findings	6
PART 1 – Quality of education provided	6
PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils	6
PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils	6
PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors	6
PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools	6
PART 6 – Provision of information	7
PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled	7
PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools	7
THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE	8
Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision	8
Effectiveness of leadership and management	8
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	9
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	9
Outcomes for children	10
Compliance with statutory requirements	10
Recommendation for further improvement	10
3. INSPECTION EVIDENCE	11

SCHOOL'S DETAILS

School	The Elms School			
DfE number	830/6000			
Registered charity number	527180			
Address	Derby Road Long Eaton Nottinghamshire NG10 4AD			
Telephone number	0115 849 4942			
Email address	elmsschool@trentcollege.net			
Headmaster	Mr Keith Morrow			
Chair of governors	Mr Andrew Crompton			
Age range	6 weeks to 11 years			
Number of pupils on roll	449			
	Boys	271	Girls	178
	Day pupils	448	Boarders	1
	EYFS	148	Juniors	301
Inspection dates	7 to 8 March 2018			

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 The Elms School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged 0 to 11 years, founded in 1999 as the junior school to Trent College. The schools share a campus and some facilities, both being owned by Trent College Ltd and overseen by its board of trustees.
- 1.2 The school is organised into 3 phases: the Nursery caters for children under the age of 3 years; Lower Elms is for pupils aged between 4 and 7 years; and Upper Elms is for pupils aged from 7 to 11 years. Since the previous inspection a new building has been constructed for pupils in Year 5. The school's single boarder is accommodated in Trent College. The inspection of boarding provision can be found the senior school report.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school seeks to provide high-quality academic provision and strong pastoral care, enabling pupils to flourish in a changing world. The school also aims to ensure the well-being and engagement of all members of the school community and to provide an inspirational environment.

About the pupils

- 1.4 The majority of pupils are White British, with a significant minority coming from other backgrounds. Most come from professional families in the nearby cities of Derby and Nottingham. Standardised test data provided by the school indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average. The school has identified 39 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who receive additional support with learning, social and emotional issues. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. English is an additional language (EAL) for 8 pupils, none of whom requires support in class. The school has identified 168 pupils as being more able or talented, meeting their needs through challenge in the curriculum and extra-curricular provision.

2. REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

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

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

This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such 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.

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 2014](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

Key findings

- 2.1 The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the 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, changing and showering facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.
- 2.12 **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 those with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, and its results in public examinations, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

2.14 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision

- 2.19 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.
- 2.20 The setting provides excellent learning and care, which is highly effective in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. All children make excellent progress from their starting points and are very well prepared for the transition to the next stage in their education. Children's personal and emotional development is outstanding. They feel safe and secure and enjoy coming to the setting. Members of staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding and welfare requirements, and fulfil their responsibilities for protecting children in their care diligently.
- 2.21 Since the previous inspection and in fulfilment of its recommendations, the management structure has been strengthened and all policies are rigorously monitored to ensure that they meet the most recent requirements. Strong leadership with a clear vision for the future ensures that the setting demonstrates highly evaluative practice and secures continuous improvement for the improvement of children's life chances.

Effectiveness of leadership and management

- 2.22 The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.
- 2.23 Leaders demonstrate an ambitious vision and have high expectations for children in all aspects of the care and education they provide. Governance is strong and works closely with leadership and management to ensure that welfare and safeguarding requirements are implemented effectively and rigorously adhered to by all members of staff. Leaders undertake robust self-evaluation to ascertain the quality of provision and outcomes for the children. Areas for development are identified through a collaborative process and prioritised for implementation.
- 2.24 Leaders place great emphasis on staff development. Staff are well qualified and their performance is carefully monitored by annual appraisal, supported by an effective system of supervisions, enabling staff to discuss issues and identify solutions as they arise. All staff regularly attend a wide range of professional development courses to ensure that they keep their practice up to date. High priority is given to safeguarding and the rigorous implementation of all health and safety policies to ensure that children are kept safe. Regular update training for child protection ensures that all staff are knowledgeable about every aspect of safeguarding, including measures to prevent radicalisation and extremism. The setting's stated values reflect those of British society, and are strongly promoted by staff.
- 2.25 Leaders and managers promote a consistent and positive approach to behaviour management which helps guard against bullying and discrimination, and serves to promote equality and tolerance of diversity. Staff act as excellent role models for the expected norms of behaviour, enabling children to become confident learners and show respect towards one another. The curriculum is very well planned and meets the relevant statutory requirements whilst responding to the needs and interests of children. The education programmes provide many opportunities for children to increase their communication and language, support their personal, social and emotional development, and develop their physical skills. Assessment data is regularly analysed to identify both the progress made by children and gaps in provision, and areas that require further attention are quickly identified and addressed. This thorough evaluation ensures that children are given a very good start and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

- 2.26 In discussions and in their pre-inspection questionnaire responses, parents were extremely positive about the setting. They felt that it is a true partnership and that their views are always taken into consideration. Parents said that they are extremely well informed about the progress their children are making and greatly value daily email reports on their children's activities during the day. Parents feel valued and said that their children benefit from the exemplary standards of individual care and the highly approachable staff in the setting.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- 2.27 The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.
- 2.28 Well-qualified staff have an excellent understanding of the requirements of the EYFS and how young children learn. Detailed planning shows that staff have high expectations of what each child can achieve in relation to their ages and stages of development. They plan appropriate activities to enthuse the children, and know when to intervene to move the learning on. For example, toddlers enjoyed exploring how to make different patterns in the sand, using toy wheeled vehicles, with staff asking them to find other things to make patterns with. Detailed assessment information, including the likes and dislikes and the daily routine of each child, is gathered on entry to the setting. This is used effectively to ensure that each child is provided with stimulating activities, enabling them to make progress. Regular assessments, recorded on an online system, contribute to the staff's extensive knowledge about what each child can do and help them to plan the next steps for each child's learning and development. Care is taken to ensure that any who are falling behind are given additional support.
- 2.29 Staff readily engage with children during routine activities and take every opportunity to develop language and social skills, such as talking to them about what they are going to do when helping them change their shoes and reminding them to share and to play together. They communicate with the younger children through sign language and songs to help their understanding and model language well, so that the older children develop their vocabulary. All staff are aware of the need to promote equality and celebrate diversity. Celebrations of different cultures are displayed, although there are fewer resources available to enable children to become aware of the differing needs of those with disabilities. Well-established routines to encourage independence and confidence, and sensitively handled transitions help children prepare for the next stage in their learning.
- 2.30 The importance of engaging with parents permeates the setting, and this has led to very positive partnerships being established. Parents are fully involved in their children's learning and readily contribute to assessments. They felt that they are kept very well informed on a regular basis about the progress their children are making and how they can support learning at home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- 2.31 The personal development, behaviour and welfare of children are outstanding.
- 2.32 There is a very strong commitment to developing very warm and caring relationships between staff and children. All staff are very supportive of each child's efforts and achievements which nurtures a positive environment, enabling children to thrive, develop their confidence and become active learners. Children show great pleasure and enthusiasm as they investigate and explore. They join in with songs, clapping as a sign of enjoyment, and invent their own activities when using the treasure baskets and choosing their own toys to play with. Children are encouraged to try things for themselves and experiment, such as when finding different ways to wash the farm animals in the soapy water. They are learning to take risks within a safe environment, such as learning to climb up the steps to the slide.

- 2.33 Physical and emotional health is given a high priority. Children readily seek reassurance from staff whenever they need it and staff are very responsive to each child's needs, such as when calming a very tired child down with songs so that they were able to go to sleep. Parents commented that they are very pleased with the high standard of emotional support given to their children and how they feel that they entirely trusted the setting to look after their children in the very best way. A very well-planned system for preparing children for the move to the next age group room is in place. Staff take time to ensure that each child is ready for the move and that the new staff get to know as much as possible about each child so that it becomes a seamless transition.
- 2.34 Systems for registration and tracking absence ensure high levels of attendance. Staff ensure that children do not have access to social media, and strict guidelines about the use of photography in the setting are in place. Personal hygiene routines are well embedded and carefully followed by everyone. Children are learning how to lead a healthy lifestyle through regular access to the outdoor learning area and the wider school grounds for exercise, and by the provision of nutritionally balanced lunches with fruit and vegetables for snacks.
- 2.35 Children demonstrate excellent behaviour and respect for one another. Older children were seen playing together and helping one another, whilst younger ones were encouraged to join in with applause to celebrate each other's successes. Staff give gentle reminders about how to behave, such as reminding children not to throw a toy in case they hurt someone. Good manners are encouraged at all times. The children's personal development is supported by excellent role modelling by staff which helps them develop respect for others and prepares them to contribute to wider society and life in Britain.

Outcomes for children

- 2.36 Outcomes for children are outstanding.
- 2.37 All children, including those with EAL and/or SEND, make good or better progress from a wide range of starting points. Carefully targeted interventions provide suitable support in order to help narrow any gaps in learning.
- 2.38 Babies are well supported by adults so as to be able to clap to rhythms and join in with songs and repeat phrases when being read to, showing great enjoyment in these activities. They are learning to use sign language to help them communicate with those around them. Babies were seen playing with building bricks and were able to build towers and place rings in the right order according to size. Toddlers are beginning to repeat words, and try to use them when talking to adults. They are starting to show interest in early writing skills as they use wax balls to mark make, whilst also developing their fine motor skills. Toddlers make good use of the outside area to develop gross motor skills, climbing on the apparatus, jumping over objects and learning to use the wheeled vehicles. Children display high levels of engagement and curiosity and enjoy exploring what the setting has on offer.
- 2.39 The setting is highly successful in meeting its aims to provide a happy and caring environment where children acquire a zest for learning.

Compliance with statutory requirements

- 2.40 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.**

Recommendation for further improvement

The school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years.

- Increase the range of resources available to help children to learn about the needs of those with disabilities.

3. INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 3.1 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 assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Karen Williams	Reporting inspector
Ms Jill Walker	Compliance team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mrs Ros Ford	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former deputy head, IAPS school)