



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

## **Regulatory Compliance Inspection Report**

**Old Palace of John Whitgift School**

**September 2019**



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## School's Details

<b>School</b>	Old Palace of John Whitgift School			
<b>DfE number</b>	306/6082			
<b>Early Years registration number</b>	EY376554			
<b>Registered charity number</b>	312612			
<b>Address</b>	Old Palace of John Whitgift School Old Palace Road Croydon Surrey CR0 1AX			
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8688 2027			
<b>Email address</b>	schooloffice@oldpalace.croydon.sch.uk			
<b>Head</b>	Mrs Jane Burton			
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Dean Sutton			
<b>Age range</b>	1 to 18			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	656			
	<b>EYFS</b>	100	<b>Preparatory</b>	105
	<b>Seniors</b>	361	<b>Sixth Form</b>	90
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18 to 19 September 2019			

## **1. Background Information**

### **About the school**

- 1.1 Old Palace of John Whitgift School is an independent day school for female pupils aged 1 to 18 years and for male pupils from 1 to 4 years. The nursery and preparatory departments are based in south Croydon and the senior school is sited in central Croydon.
- 1.2 The school opened in 1889 and is one of three schools in the Whitgift Foundation. Although the governance of the school is overseen by the Court of the Whitgift Foundation, it has its own governing committee which is responsible to the Court for reviewing and monitoring all statutory regulatory requirements.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) facilities have been more closely integrated with the preparatory school. The current head of Old Palace of John Whitgift School has been in post since September 2019.

### **What the school seeks to do**

- 1.4 The school aims to equip pupils with the confidence, skills and knowledge needed to lead independent, successful and happy lives in an ever-changing world. It seeks to provide a safe, stimulating and caring environment where each individual is empowered to gain a strong sense of self-worth and purpose through recognition of their own talents and abilities as well as their contribution to the community.

### **About the pupils**

- 1.5 Pupils come from a diverse range of backgrounds, reflecting the local area, with most pupils living within a five-mile radius of the school. Nationally standardised test data provided by the school indicates that the ability of the pupils is above the national average. The school has identified 20 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include autism spectrum disorder and physical needs, all of who receive additional support. Two pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 112 pupils, whose needs are supported by their classroom teachers. Data used by the school have identified 111 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified 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.

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 In the preparatory school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.
- 2.3 At GCSE in the years 2016 to 2017, performance has been above the national average for maintained schools. IGCSE results in the year 2016 were higher than worldwide norms.
- 2.4 In the sixth form, A-level results in the years 2016 to 2017 have been above the national average for sixth formers in maintained schools.
- 2.5 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.
- 2.6 The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

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

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

### **PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

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

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

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

## **PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools**

2.13 Suitable toilet 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.

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

## **PART 6 – Provision of information**

2.15 A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for 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.

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

## **PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled**

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

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

## **PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

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

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

## **The quality and standards of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

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

- 2.21 The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is good.
- 2.22 The curriculum is well structured and meets the needs and interests of the children. All children make good progress relative to their starting points and they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- 2.23 The personal and emotional development of the children is excellent. They feel safe, secure and happy. Staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding and welfare requirements and they fulfil their responsibility for protecting the children in their care diligently.
- 2.24 There is evidence of a strong commitment to continuous improvement. Following the recommendation of the previous inspection, improvements have been made to the curriculum to take greater account of individual interests and to include more opportunities for children to make independent choices.

### **Quality of education**

- 2.25 The quality of education is good.
- 2.26 The curriculum provides opportunities for children to develop their communication and language and physical skills and enables their personal, social and emotional development.
- 2.27 Leaders undertake regular monitoring and scrutiny of the curriculum to ensure that all children are well supported through their engagement with the activities provided and that their needs are met. However, not all planned activities are fully evaluated; there is a lack of consistency by the leaders in the monitoring of the evaluation process which occasionally leads to activities not being given the appropriate oversight.
- 2.28 Staff demonstrate that they have a good understanding of how children at this age learn and they plan appropriate activities both inside and outdoors, which reflect the interest and stage of development of each child. These experiences allow children to explore, discover and be creative. Staff encourage children to try new things and adapt and extend the activities as needed. For example, one child, having built a tower, was asked to build a bridge. However, not all activities are consistently or fully evaluated and therefore some opportunities to broaden or accelerate a child's learning are overlooked.
- 2.29 Staff readily engage with children and take every opportunity to develop language and social skills. They read and sing with children, encouraging them to repeat words, answer simple questions and join in with songs with actions. Positive feedback is given to children through appropriate use of praise and encouragement, which helps them acquire the skills and capacity to learn effectively.
- 2.30 Regular and focussed assessments of the children's performance serve to inform staff about what each child can do and help them to determine the next steps in a child's learning. This also helps to identify those children with specific needs so that the curriculum can be tailored to help support them appropriately. These assessments, when measured against the expected norms of development for the age-group, show that children make good progress.
- 2.31 The experience that children receive allows them to develop at pace and provides them with a solid foundation for future learning. Children are well-prepared for the next stage of their education.



## Behaviour and attitudes

- 2.32 Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding.
- 2.33 Children show great enjoyment in their learning and are very inquisitive. They are very keen to explore their surroundings and try out new things. Children make excellent use of the *Discovery Area* which enables them to explore different textures and to have different sensory experiences, involving sight, sound and touch. For example, one child was seen playing with a magnet and using it to explore and discover what it could be used for. Children are encouraged to be inventive in their play and are able to choose what they want to engage with from the many resources that are readily accessible to them. Children demonstrated a high level of curiosity at the movement of hoops which they rolled down a slope. Some developed the experiment by attempting to spin the hoops, demonstrating a willingness to try out and master new techniques. Children can use a spoon and fork to feed themselves and some can find and put on their own shoes showing that they are developing their independence.
- 2.34 Children maintain their focus on activities for appropriate periods of time and staff encourage children to play, without intervening unnecessarily. For example, children were absorbed by building towers out of wooden boxes and hiding model animals in them for other children to find. They showed great enjoyment when an animal was discovered and took great delight in their own successes. Staff are well motivated to encourage these activities and are quick to praise the children for their achievements.
- 2.35 Independent thinking was seen when children used playdough to cut out shapes and to make their own patterns. Staff encourage children to be creative, such as when asking them to construct pictures of snakes using string on paper.
- 2.36 Children demonstrate excellent behaviour and show respect for one another, often helping each other to fetch things or joining in applause to celebrate each other's successes. Staff often use facial gestures to enable younger children understand how to manage their own feelings. Children respond well to gentle reminders about how to share things and how to play in a co-operative manner.
- 2.37 Prompt and regular attendance at the setting is encouraged and procedures are in place to investigate unexpected absences. The setting works very closely with parents and communicates most effectively with them to ensure that children do not miss activities and that attendance is in accordance with school procedures, enabling children to develop positive attitudes towards their learning.

## Personal development

- 2.38 The personal development of children is outstanding.
- 2.39 Highly effective care practices serve to promote and support the children's emotional development and their emerging individuality, so that children feel very safe and very happy in the school. Staff reassure and respond promptly, in a very sensitive and caring manner, to the children's needs. Strong relationships between children and staff foster a very positive culture and a sense of belonging. Staff are extremely supportive of each child's efforts and encourage them to do things for themselves and to persist, such as when using a spoon at lunchtime or collecting their own water cups.
- 2.40 Staff encourage children to take appropriate risks both indoors and in the outside area. Children try to do adventurous things, such as to climb onto the see-saw unaided and to try to use a wheeled trike by themselves.
- 2.41 Staff know the children well and there is a strongly embedded key person system so that the children feel very secure and happy in the setting. They know that they can seek reassurance from their key person at any time and they will frequently go straight to them on arrival at the setting. Parents reported to inspectors that they have great confidence in the standard of care offered at the setting.

- 2.42 Staff help children to lead a healthy lifestyle from the very beginning of their time in the setting. The setting provides them with high quality home-cooked food, fresh drinking water and fruit for snacks. All children have access to outside areas that are well equipped to promote physical activity.
- 2.43 Gentle reminders, for example to sit on their chairs and how to avoid knocking into the fence, help children to understand when they might be at risk. All access to digital technology is closely supervised by staff so that the children are not put at risk. Staff follow and promote strict guidelines about the use of mobile phones and photography.
- 2.44 Leaders and staff give high priority to safeguarding, and the rigorous implementation of all health and safety policies and procedures ensure that children are kept safe.
- 2.45 Hygiene practices, which are followed by everyone, ensure that the personal needs of the children at this age are met appropriately. Staff encourage the older children to wash their hands independently before meals.
- 2.46 The setting prepares the children for life in modern Britain through a very well embedded programme of cultural events which celebrate diversity, such as celebrating Diwali and the Chinese New Year. All children are offered the same experiences. Children are encouraged to take responsibility and learn to care for and respect others. British values of fairness, tolerance and kindness towards each other underpin the setting.

### **Leadership and management**

- 2.47 Leadership and management are good.
- 2.48 Leaders have a clear vision for the setting and provide high quality experiences and care for the children. The leaders identify how the care and provision in the setting could be improved, including the monitoring and evaluation of planning. They have high expectations for what children under two can achieve.
- 2.49 Leaders expect and encourage all staff to attend regular professional development courses to improve and update their practice. Staff disseminate the information learnt on these courses to their colleagues. Leaders encourage staff to implement any new ideas.
- 2.50 An effective system of supervision supports staff to improve their own professional practice, but it is not as thorough as it could be, as records of these discussions do not always identify opportunities to help staff develop further.
- 2.51 Leaders show good knowledge about how to support all children and they possess detailed knowledge of how to access support for those with SEND.
- 2.52 The setting has strong links with parents. They are encouraged to contribute to their children's assessments and in interviews they reported that they are very well informed about the progress their child is making and how they can support their learning at home. In conversation with inspectors, parents reported that they feel very confident about leaving their child in the care of the setting. The setting has good links with outside agencies through the local authority and can access specialist help if required.
- 2.53 The governing body has good oversight of the setting through the EYFS committee and are supportive of the department. They ensure that resources are managed effectively and efficiently.
- 2.54 Leaders ensure that all staff receive comprehensive safeguarding training to keep them updated about the procedures. Staff are aware of the requirement to prevent radicalisation and extremism. Leaders ensure that all children are kept safe through rigorous implementation of safeguarding and health and safety policies.

## **Compliance with statutory requirements**

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

## **Recommendations for further improvement**

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

- Ensure all planned activities are consistently evaluated so that opportunities to broaden or accelerate a child's learning are implemented quickly.
- Implement a more thorough system of supervision so that staff discussions are suitably recorded and identify how staff are supported to improve their personal effectiveness.

### 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 house meetings and chapel. 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 Fiona McGill	Reporting inspector
Dr David James	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Anna Savage	Compliance team inspector (Deputy head, HMC school)
Mrs Ros Ford	Co-ordinating inspector for early years (Former deputy head, IAPS school)