



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Orchard House School

November 2022

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School's Details

School	Orchard House School			
DfE number	307/6074			
Address	Orchard House School 16 Newton Grove London W4 1LB			
Telephone number	020 8742 8544			
Email address	info@orchardhs.org.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Kit Thompson			
Proprietor	Dukes Education			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	270			
	EYFS	55	Lower Juniors	81
	Upper Juniors	134		
Inspection dates	1 to 3 November 2022			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Orchard House School is a preparatory day school located in a residential area of Chiswick, London. It opened in 1993 and in February 2020 became part of Dukes Education, who own and govern the school. The head has been in post since September 2021. The school is on two sites within walking distance of each other which accommodate pupils aged 3 to 6 years and those aged 7 to 11 years respectively. It uses two other local buildings on a daily basis.
- 1.2 The school aims to provide a dynamic child-centred education within a friendly, welcoming environment that fosters courtesy, kindness, respect and teamwork. It strives to create a culture that instils resilience and perseverance in which a child's individuality is nurtured and where all members of the school community are valued equally.

About the pupils

- 1.3 The majority of pupils are from the local area. The school's assessment data indicate that the ability of the pupils is above average when compared with those taking similar tests nationally. The number of pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is 30, all of whom receive specialised support, mostly for dyslexia. There are no pupils with an education, health and care plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for 42 pupils, two of whom require additional support. The needs of pupils identified as the most able in the school's population are met through extension activities in lessons.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Inspections of schools with early years settings not requiring registration also report 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, inspections report 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. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are 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 FOCUSED 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 standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; 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 standards 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, 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 In the prep school, the school's own framework for assessment confirms that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).
- 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 Pupils receive relationships education. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.
- 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.
- 2.7 The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is 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 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

- 2.10 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required.
- 2.11 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

- 2.12 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.

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

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes 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. It also includes 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.

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

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.16 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.

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

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.18 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.

2.19 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.

The headline judgements apply 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:

<i>School name</i>	<i>National Curriculum name</i>
The Den	3 – 4 year-olds
Lower 1	Reception

Key findings

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

- Pupils of all abilities are motivated learners who achieve high standards across the curriculum by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning.
- Pupils have excellent communication skills; they are highly articulate and confident speakers who listen and respond maturely.
- Pupils achieve excellent results in sporting activities and in the creative arts.

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

- Pupils are highly self-aware, appreciating and consistently adhering to the school's values.
- Pupils have a strong moral code; they understand the need for rules and their behaviour around school is excellent.
- Pupils' social development is excellent; relationships between pupils and staff, including those from different cultures, are warm and positive.
- Pupils of all ages undertake leadership roles conscientiously and contribute positively to the school community.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Enable all pupils to develop their appreciation of the non-material by ensuring all are able to participate equally in reflective mindfulness activities.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent.
- 3.5 Pupils of all ages and abilities develop excellent knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning. This is due to consistently high expectations from teachers who ensure work appropriately challenges those of differing abilities. In the pre-inspection questionnaire parents unanimously felt that the range of subjects, including online learning, was suitable for their child. In the EYFS, children engage wholeheartedly in their learning as warm, caring staff include children's personal interests in their planning. Pupils develop enquiring minds through a range of open-ended activities in science, history and geography. Younger pupils used scientific vocabulary to describe food groups and older pupils could explain infiltration and transpiration when describing the process of precipitation. Pupils achieve high standards in creative subjects due to inspirational and engaging teaching. They sing enthusiastically and reflect their understanding of dynamics in their singing; they use a variety of artistic techniques to create laudable pictures such as oil pastel portraits in the style of Modigliani. Subject leaders systematically monitor their subjects and follow a co-ordinated approach to assessment and tracking which enables pupils to see the progress they are making, thus meeting both recommendations from the previous inspection. The varied programme of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits, including a residential trips, greatly enhances pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world.
- 3.6 Highly positive attitudes to learning are evident in pupils of all ages and abilities. They are keenly aware that their learning improves through hard work and perseverance. They are curious, eager to tackle interesting tasks, and thrive within a culture of praise and encouragement so that they feel good about their work even when mistakes are made. The youngest children concentrated hard to colour in a picture within the lines and when writing numbers and sounds on individual white boards. Older pupils showed great concentration in mathematics, English and science, fully engrossed in their written tasks as well as practical ones. Pupils work conscientiously in pairs, small groups and independently. They benefit from the many opportunities to take leadership in their learning, as seen when younger pupils contemplated how to display their knowledge of the life cycle. Excellent collaboration was seen in many lessons, as teachers routinely included time for pupils to discuss. Pupils are highly attentive, in response to the consistent application of effective teaching strategies which ensure lessons are engaging, well-paced and appropriately challenging. Regular reinforcement and praise when good choices are made instils a confident, positive attitude to work and raises pupils' self-esteem, thus meeting the school's aims.
- 3.7 Pupils of all ages and abilities demonstrate excellent communication skills. They convey their ideas confidently in response to the many opportunities available for them to participate such as poetry recitals, speech and drama examinations, house meetings and assemblies. Teachers encourage the sharing of ideas and provide sensitive, targeted support for those that need it. As a result, pupils feel at ease within the classroom environment when freely and eloquently expressing their thoughts and feelings. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their love of books, and particularly appreciate opportunities to use their excellent skills to read class texts aloud, to read in pairs and share books with younger pupils. They communicate clearly on paper and write effectively for a number of audiences in different genres, using mature vocabulary. Children in the EYFS wrote simple sentences about kindness using a joined cursive script, making plausible attempts at spellings they did not know. Younger pupils confidently wrote instructions, labels and captions based on their study of the *Dragon* stories. Older pupils effectively used story planners to structure their thoughts. Creative writing often reflects higher-order skills such as the use of imagery and personification, as seen in the persuasive and entertaining work entitled 'Have you ever?'
- 3.8 Pupils' mathematical skills develop rapidly and they apply their knowledge successfully to other areas of the curriculum. Children in the EYFS accurately perform calculations with numbers to 10 and can name simple shapes. They counted the items of cutlery at mealtimes and used coins meaningfully in role play. Younger pupils used equipment purposefully to consolidate their learning on number bonds.

They understand how mathematical wording such as ‘the sum of’ and ‘the difference between’ are other ways of saying adding and subtraction. Older pupils created balanced equations and used advanced mathematical language when breaking codes in a thinking skills lesson. Pupils are extremely positive about mathematics and feel they make excellent progress due to engaging teaching and interesting, challenging work. This was seen in a lesson about calculating square roots through a game of noughts and crosses, with lively debate and plausible attempts at finding the square root of ten. Pupils of all ages usefully apply their mathematical learning across the curriculum, such as when using co-ordinates in geography and measurement in science.

- 3.9 Strong technological skills are fostered in pupils of all ages and abilities which they usefully employ across the curriculum to support and extend their learning. These include word-processing, creating posters and presentations, editing and manipulating images and recording information graphically. The youngest children demonstrated excellent proficiency when using QR codes to log into art software in order to design fireworks. They could programme a remote control car using a simple code. Older pupils expertly manipulate the school’s learning platform that enables them to share work, ideas and feedback with staff and peers at home and at school. Enthused by energetic, fast-paced teaching, pupils confidently used tablets to complete challenges in preparation for a schools’ international technology challenge. Use of their own portable electronic devices in Years 5 and 6 enables instant access to the internet and software applications, but pupils’ use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance their learning in other subjects is not as well developed in younger years. Pupils are aware of the great potential of information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning, and how they can apply it to school life, as seen when library ambassadors scanned books being taken out and returned.
- 3.10 Pupils of all ages develop extremely strong study skills that promote learning across the curriculum. Supported by highly professional role models and a well-structured thinking skills programme, pupils throughout the school are actively encouraged to express their opinions, to question and to debate. In the questionnaire, almost all pupils felt teachers knew how to help them learn. Children in the EYFS apply problem-solving strategies and reasoned thinking to practical situations. This was seen when they hypothesised why one car would roll down the slope faster than another. Younger pupils predicted then tested which crisps were the fattiest, and therefore the least healthy, in a practical science experiment. Pupils’ ability to synthesize learning was evident when Year 3 pupils used their historical knowledge and written evidence to explore the thoughts and feelings of those who experienced the disaster at Pompeii through role play. Excellent hypothesising was seen as older pupils articulately explained their theories about why a shadow changed length at different times of the day and year. Pupils confidently apply their well-developed skills to other areas of school life, including extra-curricular activities, house projects, class assemblies and problem-solving tasks that require initiative.
- 3.11 The school’s own assessment data and work seen during the inspection shows that the attainment of pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with SEND and/or EAL, and those who are more able is excellent. Sensitive teaching in the EYFS ensures that individual needs are catered for and enables all children to make appropriate progress. Almost all achieve the expected learning outcomes by the time they finish Reception. Pupils’ attainment and progress is strong because teaching addresses their individual needs, takes account of their preferred learning styles and appropriate targets are set through the school’s internal assessment and tracking system. Senior leaders ensure work is carefully matched to the pupils’ ability to enable lower attainers to achieve well and have high self-esteem. They ensure that pupils do not feel overly pressured by regular assessments, which they feel well prepared for and take in their stride.
- 3.12 Pupils achieve excellent results in competitive entry examinations to local independent and maintained grammar schools, with almost all pupils gaining places at their school of choice, and some being awarded scholarships. Most pupils participate enthusiastically and successfully in the wide range of sporting activities provided, and show great pride when representing the school in competitive

matches. Encouraged by dedicated staff who run a number of early morning squad sessions, pupils are extremely proud of a high level of success in inter-school matches and tournaments. Motivated by passionate teachers, a large number of pupils learn a wide range of instruments and achieve commendable results in instrumental, speech and drama examinations. They grow in confidence through regular participation in school plays and performances in assembly. Governors support pupils' participation through running a variety of competitions open to all schools in the group. Successes outside the classroom are warmly celebrated by the whole school community, such as selection for local art exhibitions and acquiring professional acting roles. The busy programme of extra-curricular activities and house competitions instils great pride in pupils for their many achievements across the full range of school activities.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils of all ages and abilities have particularly high levels of self-knowledge, self-discipline and resilience. As they progress through the school, pupils grow in self-esteem as they become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. Supportive staff have instilled a 'have a go' culture where pupils are confident in taking calculated risks. This was seen in music, drama and art, where pupils reflected on their performances in order to improve in the future. Children in the EYFS demonstrated an understanding of who they were and what made them special in their work on 'All About Me'. They showed perseverance as they carefully wrote short phrases when writing a card to a friend. Older pupils displayed great resilience when pushing themselves beyond what was physically comfortable in physical education lessons. They reflected on how their brain worked in a thinking skills lesson on code-breaking in order to improve their approach to answering questions. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that the opportunities provided for them in preparation for moving to their senior schools have enabled them to feel ready for the next stage in their lives.
- 3.15 Through the palpable reflective culture in the school, pupils of all ages and abilities quickly come to learn that the decisions they make have a direct bearing on their own success and well-being. Open-ended questioning by staff in the EYFS carefully encourages children to think about the choices they make when considering what they would like to learn and what equipment to use. Through the personal, social, health, citizenship and economic education (PSHE) curriculum and relationships education, pupils think about the impact of their actions on others. Year 4 pupils debated vehemently the age at which they should be allowed to go to the shops on their own. School council members were aware that decisions deemed appropriate for one age group may not be the right for another age group, and that it was necessary to make a decision that best served everyone. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors explained that making the wrong decision can be the first step in learning, and how the staff placed great emphasis on pupils taking responsibility for their own actions.
- 3.16 The 'Orchard House Values' modelled by senior leaders and the school's strong culture of reflection contribute to pupils' firm spiritual understanding and appreciation of non-material aspects of life. Younger pupils identified good codes of behaviour through hearing stories of the parables of Jesus, and older pupils explained differences and similarities between other faiths including humanism. Pupils of all ages develop a deep awareness of non-material aspects. The youngest children were captivated as they moved purposefully to music in an eurythmics session. Older pupils explained how people of the Baha'i faith used meditation in their daily lives and how mindfulness techniques helped them to calm down and be positive. The school's commitment to mindfulness as a means of promoting well-being is firmly embedded and pupils talk enthusiastically of its benefits, though some felt they did not have as much opportunity to partake in as many activities as their peers.
- 3.17 Pupils of all ages are extremely polite, respectful and courteous, reflecting the school's consistent application and a supportive approach to behaviour. Children in EYFS understand which codes of behaviour enable them to work happily together. They routinely use the calm setting of the Peace

Rose table to help resolve issues through explaining to their peers what behaviour has upset them. They understand the need for good choices from an early age, in response to gentle guidance calmly delivered by patient, kind-hearted staff. Older pupils can articulate how the school's values provide the backbone for all their behaviours. They explained how classroom rules and protocols created a positive classroom environment where they could comfortably engage with learning. They reflected on how they are taught to both present their own views yet disagree respectfully with their peers. Pupils appreciate the school's new approach to behaviour which focuses on restorative conversations rather than reflective strategies, making them feel more responsible for their own behaviour. They effectively use the strategies taught to them in PSHE for dealing with playground conflict without the help of an adult.

- 3.18 Pupils develop a strong social awareness and almost all parents agreed in the questionnaire that the school helped their child to develop strong teamwork and social skills. Children in the EYFS acquire an understanding of why it is important at playtimes to include everyone so that no-one feels left out and are mindful of each other's personal space at lunchtimes. Pupils of all ages are adept in working together through the regular opportunities provided to work in pairs or as a team. This was seen as older pupils worked together in ICT on a number of logic challenges and when playing maths games. They used 'speed dating' techniques to find a new working partner other than a pupil they normally worked with. Pupils participate in a range of activities outside the classroom which help them to understand the benefits of collaboration and teamwork across different age groups, such as in clubs, house activities and on the games field. They are quick to recognise each other's successes and offer help and encouragement where needed. This was seen when a pupil who hurt their finger in the playground was immediately surrounded by pupils offering their help and showing sympathy. Teachers provide excellent role models and inculcate a positive sense of mutual respect with the pupils.
- 3.19 All pupils thrive within a school where the 'family feel' is tangible and they are encouraged to contribute positively to the school community. The oldest pupils conscientiously perform the varied leadership duties they are given such as school council representatives, sports and eco captains and head pupils. Pupils were firmly of the view that suggestions made to the schools council often bore fruit, citing new playground equipment and menu changes as examples. Equally important to pupils across all age groups are informal roles such as being a 'buddy' for a new pupil, helping with lunchtime arrangements in class and playground monitors. Pupils are extremely motivated to take part in fundraising activities for the annual charity they have voted to support. In addition, they enthusiastically support self-initiated fundraising activities such as selling wristbands to raise money for Ukraine.
- 3.20 Pupils show great respect for those of other faiths, backgrounds and traditions, and value the diversity within their tightly-knit school community. They are eager to find out about different beliefs in religious education lessons, assemblies, and when their peers engage in discussion about their personal faiths. Special events such as Black History Month and International Day enable pupils of all ages to appreciate each other's differences through a range of meaningful activities such as storytelling, music and playground games. Younger pupils were keen to explain how families might be made up from different people and that there was no right 'model' for a family to be. Older pupils talked with understanding and empathy about people in history who did not have the same rights as today such as Rosa Parks and British women who did not have the right to vote until a century ago. Pupils are very accepting of each other, supported by the school's principles espoused in the school's values, and genuinely see no difference between pupils from the various ethnic groups represented in the school.
- 3.21 Pupils of all ages are highly aware of how to stay safe and keep healthy in school. They are alert to the potential hazards of walking between the different venues used by the school and know why sensible rules are in place to ensure their safety. Children in EYFS consistently follow simple rules that are clearly embedded in their daily routines which enable them to stay safe, such as washing hands and holding scissors correctly. Younger pupils were able to explain the importance of eating a variety of

different foods at mealtimes and what constitutes a balanced lifestyle. Older pupils are keenly aware of the importance of keeping physically fit and appreciate the supportive role of the school's mental health ambassadors and pastoral team. Pupils are extremely alert to staying safe online, understanding the dangers that are present in the technological world. In the questionnaire pupils unanimously felt that the school was a safe place to be.

4. Inspection Evidence

- 4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with two governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended an assembly. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Dr Wendy Bowring	Reporting inspector
Mrs Joanna Coventry-King	Compliance team inspector (Head, IAPS school)
Mr Nathan Close	Team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Mr David Edwards	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)