

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Reports

Elmhurst School

February 2020



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School's Details

1. Background Information

About the school

1.1 Elmhurst School is an independent day school for male pupils aged between 3 and 11 years. It was founded in 1869 and remained privately owned until 2013, when it became part of the Bellevue Education Group Limited, of which Elmhurst School Limited is a subsidiary. Bellevue's directors act as the school's proprietors, and the management and governance of the school are overseen by the group's education committee chaired by Bellevue's Group Education Director. Since the previous inspection, the school has developed a new thematic curriculum and a specialist maths programme, and the outdoor play areas have been enhanced.

What the school seeks to do

1.2 The school aims to identify, nurture and celebrate the talents of each boy in an inspiring environment which blends innovation with tradition and successfully prepares them to excel in their future. The school's mission is expressed through three core values that form the guiding principles of everything the school does. The school aims to nurture and support the boys through every step of their learning, inspire them by offering a broad and stimulating curriculum and celebrate the unique and natural talents of every boy.

About the pupils

1.3 Pupils come from a range of professional families mostly living within a 10-mile radius of the school, with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is broadly average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 18 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, five of whom receive additional specialist help. One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for eight pupils, none of whom require additional support. Data used by the school have identified 11 pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them and for six other pupils because of their special talents in sport.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards' (the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage 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 FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY, the report of which appears later in this document. The COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards. The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as <u>met</u> or as <u>not met</u>. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key regulations and standards have been inspected in detail. These are the regulations on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety, arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information to parents; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

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

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

Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: <u>The Education (Independent School</u> <u>Standards) Regulations 2014, Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework</u>.

Key findings

2.1 The school does not meet all of the required 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 should take immediate action to remedy deficiencies as detailed below.

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; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable and provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required. A disability access plan is in place.
- 2.8 The school does not pay due regard to current statutory guidance or fully implement their own health and safety policy with specific reference to the management of asbestos and the control of substances hazardous to health. The school has not actioned the requirements identified in a fire risk assessment dated January 2019. The school has a suitable risk assessment policy, but not all identified risks have been addressed in a timely manner.
- 2.9 The standards relating to welfare, health and safety in paragraphs 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14 and 15, 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 but those in paragraphs 11 (Health and safety), 12 (Fire safety) and 16 (Risk assessment) are not met.

Action point 1

• the school must ensure that it responds to the Asbestos Management Survey 2018, as required by the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 [paragraph 11; EYFS 3.54]

Action point 2

• the school must ensure that it stores, handles and uses hazardous substances in accordance with legal guidelines and the school health and safety policy [paragraph 11; EYFS 3.54]

Action point 3

• the school must ensure that it responds to the fire risk assessment undertaken in January 2019 and in the risk management report of the same date, particularly with regard to carrying out a fixed wiring electrical test as required by the Regulatory Reform (Fire safety) Order 2005 [paragraph 12; EYFS 3.55]

Action point 4

• the school must ensure that it implements its risk assessment policy by addressing all identified risks effectively [paragraph 16(a) and (b); EYFS 3.54 and 3.55]

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. Acoustics and lighting are appropriate and 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 in paragraphs 22–24 and 26–31 are met, but paragraph 25 [maintenance of premises] is not met.

Action point 5

• the school must ensure that the premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety requirements [paragraph 25; EYFS 3.54 and 3.55]

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.14 A range of information is variously 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

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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 has not ensured that the leadership and management demonstrate the skills and knowledge or have fulfilled their responsibilities effectively so that the other standards are met consistently. The leadership and management does not promote the well-being of pupils as they have not complied with statutory requirements connected with health and safety, fire safety regulations and risk assessment.

2.19 The standard relating to the leadership and management of the school in paragraph 34 is not met.

Action point 6

• the school must ensure that its leadership and management develop the skills and knowledge to ensure that the school meets the required standards consistently, in particular by creating a management framework which is resourced, implemented and monitored for health and safety, and fire safety [paragraph 34(1)(a), (b) and (c)]

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

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

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

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

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

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

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

Key findings

- 3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
 - Pupils are confident and coherent speakers throughout the school.
 - Pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND and EAL, make good progress.
 - Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, although they sometimes lack opportunities to develop their higher order thinking skills.
 - Pupils' competence and skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are highly developed across the age range.
- 3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
 - Pupils demonstrate excellent collaborative skills to achieve common goals and contribute to the school and wider community.
 - Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong, taking responsibility for their own actions.
 - Pupils' social awareness is excellent, and they demonstrate considerable maturity for their age.
 - Pupils have a strong sense of fair play, and they draw no distinction between those of different backgrounds.

Recommendations

- 3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:
 - Ensure that there is consistency in the application of policies surrounding marking and lesson planning.
 - Ensure that all pupils, including the more able, are encouraged to develop their higher order thinking skills.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

- 3.4 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.5 Pupils' communication skills are well developed throughout the school. In EYFS, children listen attentively to the teacher in phonics lessons, and they actively participate in the word-building activities. Younger pupils speak confidently in science, for example describing what they know and what they would like to find out about forces. Pupils are keen to talk about what they have learned and enjoy speaking equally with their peers and with adults. Older pupils were articulate and sensitive when discussing the different issues surrounding the migrant crisis in geography, and they demonstrated a social awareness of the difficulty faced by some. In English, pupils analysing newspaper articles listened attentively to their peers who were describing the importance of different religious days. Two pupils made an excellent presentation explaining a project that they were developing outside school. Pupils were confident communicators in activities, lessons and general discussions. They are very clear about what constitutes good communication through the embedded framework of the all-rounder award. The pupils explained that this Elmhurst all-rounder award is based on the importance of developing strong skills in the six Cs: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creative thinking, citizenship and character. Throughout the inspection, pupils of all ages were clear about how they are inspired to become excellent in these areas; the award created by the school helps it fulfil its aims of helping to nurture, celebrate and inspire all-round individuals.

- 3.6 Pupils demonstrate a good grasp of numerical skills both with mathematical concepts and in other subjects. Pupils have adapted exceptionally well to a new mathematics scheme of work which has increased their level of progress. They find this approach, which places considerable emphasis on a topic based style, to be highly effective in learning mathematic concepts; the school is now adapting this highly successful method into other parts of the curriculum. Pupils have become much more confident and some have represented the school in local and national mathematics challenge competitions. Pupils are intrinsically well motivated and use various software to continue their highly developed problem solving and analytical skills. Pupils have relished linking up with a live seminar at a university and working at a deeper level within the subject. Pupils enjoy a real sense of collaboration and creativity and enjoy creating their own problem-solving mathematics books which are then used by their peers and others within the school.
- 3.7 Data provided by the school indicates that pupils' attainment across the curriculum is good with a majority of pupils making good progress and working above their teachers' expectations in most areas. In Year 6, a few pupils do not achieve their potential in writing, and the school has addressed this with booster sessions for all pupils who would like them. Pupils' progress in numeracy is strongest in Years 5 and 6 and less strong in Years 3 and 4. Pupils benefit from subject societies such as mathematics club and different interventions, such as booster sessions, have helped their levels of achievement increase. Observations of lessons and a selection of pupils work indicate that pupils demonstrate good progress in their work, although they sometimes lack opportunities to develop their higher order thinking skills.
- 3.8 Most pupils who answered the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their teachers helped them to learn and make progress. In the junior school, the majority of pupils reach their expectations and their basic skills are high; pupils show increased progress against national norms throughout Years 1 and 2. Children in EYFS are able to maximise their potential in all areas due to a personalised learning plan which considers the voice of the parent, teacher and child and forms the basis of daily targeted intervention ensuring they get the support they need from all areas.
- 3.9 Analysis of the school's data shows that pupils with SEND and EAL make similar progress to other pupils. Pupils spoke about some of the extra support they receive. All pupils with SEND have individual education plans which are reviewed termly with the parents. Pupils at the school mostly speak two languages and almost all speak English as an equal first language. All pupils who need it have access to group and individual support including interventions from external specialists where necessary.
- 3.10 Throughout the school, pupils work well together and demonstrate positive collaborative working. In form time pupils worked together to develop the ideas of being a critical thinker, and in the woodland learning environment pupils are always very keen to have a go, try hard and do things together. Younger children worked together on building a shelter and carrying equipment, working collaboratively and following instructions to build a bird bath.
- 3.11 From the earliest stages of engagement, pupils have an excellent understanding of ICT and use it across the curriculum to support their learning. Pupils display confidence in programming, word processing and coding on both desktop computers, laptops and tablets or the class tablets and chrome books. Pupils use ICT both in and out of lessons with one of the popular after-school activities being *micro geeks*, where young pupils were building a plastic brick robot and then creating a program to make it move. Pupils showed familiarity and competence with a variety of computer programs and their application. Some demonstrated what they were doing for an out-of-school competition titled 'making a project for a sustainable city for the future'. They are using a single chip computer, then developing additional software by using coding to better measure particles in the air that could be used to support towns and cities at risk of a virus spreading. Pupils throughout the school had good access to ICT allowing them to develop their skills.

- 3.12 Pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding at a gradually increasing rate as they move through the school, particularly with the new thematic curriculum which is being developed. Pupils always understand the context of their lesson as they are given clear criteria for achieving success and lesson objectives. In the best examples of marking seen, pupils are able to gain a clear understanding of areas for improvement, however this was not applied consistently between subjects. They benefit from a carefully planned curriculum which includes sufficient time for the consolidation of core subjects, languages and creative subjects including art and music. Pupils are highly creative with their music with over 80 pupils learning a musical instrument, 30 in an orchestra or an ensemble, and 30 in a choir.
- 3.13 Pupils enjoy considerable success in their sporting activities both at team and individual level with major and minor sports. Pupils take pride in performing strongly in the major sports of swimming, cricket and football and they have recently achieved national level success at both swimming and athletics. Pupils can access a variety of creative and physical pursuits after school which has recently been enhanced to meet demand from pupils and parents who commented that they would like to see more opportunities. Pupils have a wide variety of different schools to move onto and most pupils will get into their school of choice with some gaining scholarships, in line with the school's aims of preparing the pupils to excel in their future.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.14 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.15 Pupils show excellent levels of self-understanding for their age, and they are very self-reflective. They demonstrate high awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. Pupils successfully develop self-esteem and are self-confident. Regular feedback from staff in lessons, combined with clear targets for success both in individual lessons and over time, mean that pupils understand how well they are doing, reflect on their learning styles and identify for themselves how to improve. Pupils feel that some of their homework is helping them build self-reliance as well as maximise their potential. Pupils are very keen to do well and Year 6 pupils spoke articulately about their 'growth mindset' explaining that they believed that they can improve their intelligence, ability and performance through more effort. Pupils displayed creative thinking collaboratively in form time to develop the key attributes of a critical thinker. They were particularly confident in explaining what contributes these skills due to the embedded 'super Cs' which are part of the all-rounder award.
- 3.16 Pupils exhibit an excellent array of developmental skills through the woodland learning environment which are appropriate to the age range. Pupils show resilience when walking through bumpy ground, falling over and getting back up again. Pupils are excited when talking about the woodland and how it develops their confidence. They more easily understand what they are able to do all by themselves as the teacher allows the freedom to explore and discover things for themselves. Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of collaborative working in the woods, becoming highly social and communicative when devising their own games, projects and writing. Pupils contribute their time and interest to local community volunteers who work in the woods, helping with making bird boxes, picking up litter and supporting the woodland environment. Pupils make excellent links between their experiences outdoors and the classroom in terms of sustainability, science and geography, fuelling their interest in these areas.

- 3.17 Pupils make appropriate decisions as they understand the fully embedded behavioural system which combines both individual and team structure, as the outcomes feed into the all-important house system to which all pupils belong. Pupils can easily see the structure of this system and were seen to encourage each other in their behaviour and discuss the visually clear system, pinned up in each classroom. They understand the impact of their decisions on themselves and each other. Pupils recognise that teachers guide them to make the best choices about their behaviour and are positive about accepting help to recognise the consequences of making poorly judged decisions. In EYFS, teachers ask the children to consider what is going to happen if they make a particular decision and help them to understand the consequences. In lessons, pupils are used to choosing their own techniques in art, or in mathematics, the carefully sequenced and structured approach of pushing themselves on to the extension tasks at their own pace.
- 3.18 Pupils have a keen sense of fair play and they draw no distinction between those of different backgrounds. Pupils in the upper school are clear about the conflict resolution strategy of 'switch': stop, walk away, ignore, tell someone, count to ten, help a friend. Pupils hold and express open minded views on diversity, challenging if they perceive unfairness and speaking intensely about their feelings as was seen in geography and English. Teaching strategies in this area help relate the pupils' learning to real life, further that empathy and understanding of others.
- 3.19 Pupils' awareness of the non-material aspects of life starts to develop, helped as they move through the school through a clear assembly programme and use of outside speakers, including parents who have come in to talk about faith. Pupils demonstrate a broad spiritual understanding of issues that impact on themselves and others. At other times, such as in assemblies, older pupils actively support younger pupils in their encouragement of individual and group performances. The strong buddy system that operates throughout the school is a practical system as well as pastoral where year six pupils support younger pupils in Little Elms or Reception. The senior pupils can go to visit them at any time but have weekly times to meet for lunch and have structured games. Older pupils build a sense of responsibility and gain experience by modelling appropriate play and behaviour. Pupils of both ages develop their communication and collaborative skills and help create the strong sense of community that is exhibited in the school.
- 3.20 Pupils willingly assume responsibility from an early age, in following school routines in the younger years and the older pupils in organising themselves and others. They enjoy leading their peers in teams and in house events such as inter-house table tennis, which was competitively battled over in wet weather. Pupils display excellent leadership through the school council, where they become active contributors to school decisions and policy. The pupils said that their views are taken seriously and there were aspects of school life that had been changed because they had suggested them, such as an extension of the behaviour system to include bronze, silver and gold awards for positive behaviour. Pupils say that taking on leadership responsibility and working with pupils of different ages builds up their self-confidence as they face moving to senior schools and becoming the youngest in the school again. Pupils exhibit the characteristics of the super citizens and are involved in local and international charities such as raising money for Restless Development which provides support for underprivileged children in the UK and abroad and Joshua's Community Care, an orphanage in Malawi. Pupils exhibit positive relationships with each other and adults in the school community; these, supported by excellent pastoral systems, enable pupils to strengthen their resilience encouraging their uninhibited have-a-go attitude.

- 3.21 Pupils enthused about the popular international day where they wore their national dress with pride and shared experiences of their own cultures and learning from others. Pupils said they enjoyed the event, with staff and parents joining in this special celebratory occasion. Pupils appreciate the close bond of community with those involved in it, and they have an immense pride in it and what it represents.
- 3.22 Pupils have an excellent understanding about how to keep safe and healthy. They are at the focus of the school's aim of valuing the individual through developing pupils' self-awareness and enhancing their well-being. Pupils' and parental responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire show that most feel the school encourages a healthy lifestyle and keeps them safe. Pupils know that exercise is good for them and they enjoy the various opportunities they have to participate in a range of sporting activities. They have an excellent understanding of well-being which includes the importance of looking after themselves and having time to be active. Pupils' high awareness and comprehension is informed through personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, form time, special assemblies, visiting speakers and displays around the school. Pupils know that there is always someone that they can talk to. Older pupils understand the importance of managing their worries and they value the recently introduced practice of mindfulness including the recently created wellness room to experience calm, where they can be reflective. Pupils receive excellent support from staff and senior leaders who have created systems to monitor and support all pupils as individuals in line with the school's aims.

4. Inspection Evidence

4.1 The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the proprietor, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form time and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Miss Sue Duff	Reporting inspector
Mr Shaun Wilson	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, HMC school)
Mrs Sarah Gillam	Team inspector (Head, ISA school)