



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report

Willington School

March 2023

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School's Details

School	Willington School			
DfE number	315/6080			
Registered charity number	312733			
Address	Willington School Worcester Road Wimbledon London SW19 7QQ			
Telephone number	020 8944 7020			
Email address	office@willingtonschool.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Keith Brown			
Chair of governors	Mrs Meredith Brickwood			
Proprietor	Willington School Foundation Limited			
Age range	3 to 11			
Number of pupils on roll	197			
	EYFS	52	Pre-Prep	59
	Prep	86		
Inspection dates	7 to 9 March 2023			

1. Background Information

About the school

- 1.1 Willington School is an independent day school. Established in Putney in 1885, it moved to Wimbledon in 1990. The school comprises three sections: the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), for children in nursery and Reception; pre-prep for pupils in Years 1 and 2; and prep for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- 1.2 The school's governors oversee the management of the school, and set and monitor the overall strategic direction of the charitable company, Willington School Foundation Limited, which owns the school.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection a nursery has opened, and the school has become co-educational. Female pupils are currently in every year group up to Year 2. The current headmaster was appointed in 2018.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.4 The school seeks to provide a broad education, where kindness, honesty, respect and humility are core. It aims to develop confident young people who are proud of their learning, contribute positively to society, and strive to achieve their full potential, all within a nurturing environment.

About the pupils

- 1.5 The majority of pupils come from professional and business families living in the local area. Standardised data provided by the school indicate that the ability of pupils is above average compared to those taking the same tests nationally. The school has identified 40 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, of whom 26 receive specialist support. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. English is an additional language (EAL) for nine pupils, of whom five receive extra support. For those pupils who are identified as being the most able in the school's population the curriculum is modified and additional activities are provided.

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 (EYFS) 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 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 wellbeing 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.

Key findings

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

- Pupils demonstrate high levels of achievement in both English and mathematics, preparing them well for the point of transfer to their chosen secondary school.
- Pupils develop notably strong knowledge, skills and understanding through the broad and stimulating curriculum.
- Pupils study skills develop rapidly as they progress through the school.
- Pupils' competent skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are used effectively in some areas of the curriculum but this is not replicated across the age range.

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

- Pupils are highly confident and self-assured yet possess a conspicuous level of humility.
- Pupils demonstrate an acute understanding of right and wrong and a mature appreciation of the importance of kindness.
- Pupils decision-making abilities and skills are at an extremely high level, and they are aware of the impact this has on their own success.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to be physically and mentally healthy.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Ensure that all pupils apply their excellent skills in ICT more widely, to further enhance their learning across the curriculum.
- Enable pupils to develop their ideas regarding charity and community projects.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

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

3.5 Attainment of pupils across the school is high and represents successful fulfilment of the school's aim to develop confident pupils who achieve their full potential. The achievement of all learners is supported by a wide and well-planned curriculum, which includes areas of learning beyond mainstream subjects, such as Latin, textiles and the school's own outdoor learning programme. Throughout the school, pupils achieve high standards, benefiting from leaders' regular monitoring of

attainment and progress. Children in the EYFS make excellent progress from their starting points, actively encouraged by sensitive teaching where children reach the expected levels of development, and many start tackling a level of work normally associated with pupils in Year 1. Pupils with SEND and those who have EAL also make excellent progress so that their attainment meets their expected levels in relation to their individual starting points, with data used very effectively to identify pupils needs at an early stage. In response to the pre inspection questionnaire, all parents stated that teaching, including any online provision, enables their child to make progress.

- 3.6 Pupils are excellent communicators who respond positively to the extensive range of opportunities provided and clear expectations set for them. Pupils across all age groups listen carefully and speak their thoughts without fear. This was apparent in a Year 2 religious education (RE) lesson where pupils openly shared their ideas about the nature of miracles. Reception children use their phonic knowledge to write their own sentences, spelling most familiar words correctly and making sensible attempts at new ones, such as when observed writing about Spring. Pupils read widely, with fluency, comprehension, and expression advanced for their age. They respond well to complex instructions from an early age. Nursery children followed what they were asked to do when taking responsibility for their snack at break-time. Pupils write effectively for a number of purposes, as seen in a Year 5 English lesson, where they developed their persuasive writing using emotive vocabulary, inference and clever use of rhetorical questions. The most able are challenged to apply a range of tools to extend their writing, such as uplevelling their own work. As a result, they step up to the challenge, flourish and make excellent progress.
- 3.7 Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are excellent across all areas of learning. Very good relationships help create a productive learning environment, which encourages pupils to take risks, and learn from their mistakes. Year 1 pupils showed strong resilience in a games lesson as they honed their dribbling, shooting, catching, and passing skills. Pupils are keen to acquire new knowledge and respond positively to their teachers' suggestions for making improvements to their work. Pupils draw accurately upon previous learning and are successful in applying their knowledge. Pupils in a Year 6 science lesson made use of their newly acquired knowledge about acids and alkalis to skilfully carry out an experiment regarding the pH of a range of liquids. Pupils across the age range have excellent performance skills; these were apparent in a wonderful production of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* in which Years 3 and 4 sang and performed with clear diction and a lovely vocal tone. The youngest children demonstrated a good understanding of their topic 'opposites' when discussing the qualities of an ice block, declaring that they needed to paint it quickly while it was frozen, as it would soon melt. A very large majority of pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt their skills and knowledge improve in most lessons. Inspection evidence confirms this.
- 3.8 Pupils are continually challenged in numeracy and as a result achieve an excellent standard. Children throughout the EYFS are provided with notably strong foundations in numeracy facts and key vocabulary, thus ensuring that by the time they are in the older years, they use number competently as a natural tool. The oldest pupils exhibited well-developed understanding of mathematical sequences, proficiently producing spirals with a suitable range of complexity. Pupils say how much they enjoy mathematics lessons and that being taught a variety of methods to resolve mathematical problems helps them to overcome any difficulties. Pupils confidently use their numerical skills across the curriculum because authentic examples of numeracy in action are laced throughout the pupils' learning. For example, Reception children discussing how many were eating lunch, confidently used their knowledge of counting in tens. They apply their mathematical skills to other subjects, such as drawing graphs in science, timelines across history and using grid references and coordinates in geography.
- 3.9 Pupils' display excellent ICT skills. Children begin to acquire skills in ICT in the EYFS, and subsequently pupils learn to use different programmes to present and interpret information and to write in code as they move throughout the school. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were suitably challenged creating keyrings using 3D design software. Pupils understand the difference between ICT as a subject and its use to

support learning, and when given the opportunity, they show confidence in applying it more widely to other areas of the curriculum. In some lessons observed, ICT was fully integrated and greatly enhanced pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 6 humanities lesson, pupils expertly used software to research the population of coastal cities around the world. However, lesson observations indicated that the use of ICT to support learning is limited overall, especially in the younger years and pupils confirmed this view in their conversations with inspectors.

- 3.10 Pupils achieve success in a range of academic and other achievements throughout their time at school, encouraged by the celebration of their successes through a plethora of different avenues. Pupils gain places at their chosen senior schools, with many attaining academic, sports or creative arts scholarships. In the inspection questionnaire, all Year 6 pupils agreed that they felt well prepared for senior school. Despite being quite a small school, sports teams achieve considerable success in various sports including football, rugby, and cricket and leaders ensure that all prep pupils have the opportunity to represent the school in fixtures. There are many pupils who play musical instruments at a level beyond grade 4 and pupils who play sport at county level and higher. Pupils' creative talents and expertise were evidenced through the high-quality displays seen around the school, including a vibrant display of 3D fish, and wonderful mixed media flame pictures created as part of a cross curricular topic by Year 2 on the Great Fire of London.
- 3.11 Throughout the school pupils have an excellent, well-developed range of study skills that they use to great effect from an early age. Children in the EYFS are focused and attentive, and confidently choose from a range of activities. Pupils are able to analyse texts in English and draw conclusions from data in science. Pupils research skills are developed through a range of independent tasks with an element of choice, which is most effective when there is not an overreliance on worksheets. They frequently use discussions to challenge their own understanding. In a Year 5 history lesson pupils maturely discussed why some people would not have wanted to abolish slavery and encouraged by well-directed questions, successfully synthesised the information to write high-quality answers. Pupils in Year 1 confidently hypothesised that their heartbeat would beat faster once they started exercising. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school equips their children with the team-working, collaborative, and research skills they need in later life.
- 3.12 Wonderfully spirited pupils display excellent attitudes to learning, whether they are working individually, in pairs, or in groups. Children in the EYFS show imagination and independence, encouraged by the effective support they receive from the adults. Throughout the school, pupils are both curious and ambitious, taking leadership in their learning. Their considerable success is a result of the evident ethos of working hard, following clear instructions, and having their progress closely monitored by teachers and overseen by leaders. In a Year 4 science lesson, groups of pupils worked diligently on an experiment and applied themselves wholeheartedly to the activity. Pupils report that they are able to develop initiative and independence through being part of the community; a safe and nurturing environment where character, confidence and creativity can take root and blossom.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

- 3.13 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 3.14 Pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem are excellent, without a hint of arrogance. They are most confident in verbalising their thoughts and feelings to each other. Younger children showed great awareness of their feelings as they placed their picture on an appropriate emotion jar, whilst justifying their reasons. Older pupils who spoke to the inspectors were reflective about their own development and pupils' books feature very thoughtful and accurate self-evaluation. Detailed marking and feedback strengthen pupils understanding of the quality of their work. Highly effective use of success criteria by dedicated staff guides the pupils' own awareness of how they can improve it further. Pupils' self-confidence and self-awareness are supported by the school's promotion of resilience and a 'can-do' attitude. Throughout the school it was evident that there is a determination not to give up when

difficulties are encountered, with pupils stating that mistakes are essential in the learning process. A very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their children to be confident and independent. Inspection evidence supports this view. The school lives up to its motto to encourage pupils not to learn just for school but for life.

- 3.15 Pupils show a keen awareness and strong appreciation of non-material aspects of life such as learning, friendship, and family. For example, when asked what they value most in life, pupils suggested positivity, treating others how you would like to be treated and being happy. Older pupils demonstrate deep philosophical thought when discussing such concepts as ‘why would people go to war when there is so much loss?’ Year 6 pupils demonstrated high levels of awe and wonder when describing images of the Fibonacci sequence, declaring that, ‘nature is beautiful’ and quickly adding, ‘but so is maths’. In their RE lessons, pupils learn about a broad range of religions including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, and an appreciation for all of God’s creation, irrespective of faith or not. Pupils have a heart for humankind, with a mature capacity to think beyond their own immediate lives. Kindness is embedded into all interactions. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about making donations to the local foodbank and the school council clearly enjoyed helping children in the EYFS make purple bracelets for International Women’s Day.
- 3.16 Pupils show extremely strong moral development and distinguish clearly between right and wrong behaviours. In discussions, pupils felt that their strong moral code was developed through an appreciation of the school’s four pillars; kindness, honesty, respect and humility, that are displayed in every classroom, referenced frequently and embedded well. Pupils accept responsibility for their own actions, understanding that rules benefit everyone. They explained that the school values and expects excellent behaviour, as celebrated in assemblies, newsletters and contact with home through the school communication platform. The success of these expectations is characterised by there being very few behavioural incidents amongst pupils; any that occur are dealt with swiftly and skilfully before any escalation of behaviour management is needed. Relationships are extremely positive, and a palpable culture of modesty and tolerance pervades all aspects of school life. In the questionnaire all parents responded that the school actively promotes good behaviour and all pupils agreed that the school takes bullying seriously.
- 3.17 Pupils make decisions effectively and assuredly through the numerous opportunities provided for them to make choices that will affect their progress and impact on others. In many of the lessons observed, pupils were highly effective in choosing tasks appropriate to their level of learning. Year 5 pupils showed great wisdom in a mathematics lesson when they chose problem-solving worksheets that matched their current levels of learning. From an early age, pupils are aware that the decisions they make will have an impact on their success both in the short and long term. Nursery children showed a mature ability for their age to bounce back after difficulty sharing toys whilst mixing bubbles and went on to seek a new challenge and take risks. The school council and the eco-committee are effective in helping pupils to develop their decision-making beyond the classroom, such as suitably placed signs regarding recycling and saving electricity. Pupils feel empowered in voicing their opinions, advising others, and making good decisions that will positively impact on their relationships and well-being now and in their future lives.
- 3.18 Pupils’ social awareness is excellent, and this helps to create a harmonious and happy community. This is engendered by the school culture that encourages relaxed relationships and social confidence. Pupils collaborate well in every aspect of school life, both in lessons and elsewhere. During lunchtime, younger children were observed, without being asked, helping their friends with adjusting their coats and hoods. Pupils in a Year 4 English lesson showed genuine concern for peers struggling with fine motor skills, instinctively extending offers to help. Pupils’ team skills and independence develop strongly, improved by many opportunities to engage with others in joint ventures, for example in working together as a team in sports competitions, and in residential trips. The vast majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school equips their child with the team working

and social skills they need in later life. A very large majority of pupils said the school helps them build positive relationships.

- 3.19 Pupils engage naturally and without hesitation with those of backgrounds and cultures other than their own, in response to the ethos of kindness and mutual respect that permeates the school. Pupils have developed this understanding because leaders, governors and staff constantly promote the importance of acceptance, positive mindsets and sharing worries. Parents support this positive picture with all agreeing in the questionnaire that the school promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. Pupils have a thoughtful awareness of British society and in particular the role of tolerance. Pupils confirmed in discussion that they aim to be the best version of themselves, recognising that others may have different views, but everyone is equally valued, irrespective of ability, opinion or belief. Pupils value the opportunity to learn about their own and other cultures, and their knowledge and understanding of these is well-developed as opportunities for them to do so is woven through the core curriculum. For example, in Reception, every family comes in to talk to the class as part of their topic, 'Themselves'.
- 3.20 Pupils delight in making a significant contribution to the school through roles such as anti-bullying ambassadors, digital leaders, and prefects. They have a strong sense of belonging and they nurture and care for those younger than themselves. The school council suggests initiatives to, in their words, 'make the school an even better place'. These include ideas such as putting a plant in every classroom and improving playground equipment. Pupils enjoy taking ownership for running a democratic system during form time, as they discuss and vote on a question, posed by the school council, such as 'What is your favourite way of fundraising?' However, currently the pupils have limited opportunities to take their great ideas further, as they rely on staff to action them. Pupils show a mature understanding of how they can help those less fortunate than themselves and with a little more guidance could develop some exciting community projects. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of the need to contribute to the lives of others, raising funds for a number of causes including the Wimbledon Guild and Save the Children.
- 3.21 Pupils understand how to be physically safe in terms of diet and exercise and show an extraordinarily positive mental attitude towards challenging academic demands. They have an excellent awareness of how to take care of themselves in circumstances ranging from crossing the road, to staying safe online. They appreciate the provision of healthy options at lunchtime, with pupils from different year groups discussing what constitutes a balanced meal and showing a clear understanding of the benefits of exercise. Pupils understand the ways in which they can nurture their own well-being, including through the ample resources provided by the school to support them. They are aware of how to maintain good mental health, understanding the need to balance stressful activities against others that offer relaxation and the protective nature of resilience to combat stress. They show wisdom beyond their years when explaining the importance of the availability of the school counsellor and mental health champions. Many pupils highlighted the support systems in place were things to go wrong, showing confidence in the professionalism and caring nature of staff, stemming from a strong leadership team.

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 a group of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. 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

Mrs Ruth Loveman	Reporting inspector
Mr Nigel Helliwell	Compliance team inspector (Former head, IAPS school)
Mr Ant Falkus	Team inspector (Head, IAPS school)